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Rural Sociology: A Partial Review

Bruce Curtis

Abstract

This article briefly reviews the international debates and trends that have buffeted rural sociology. It is argued that rural sociology should be understood as a sub-discipline rather than a topic for study. Particular attention is paid to the changing character of the "new" sociology of agriculture.

Introduction

Rural sociology is a contested sub-discipline of sociology and arguably a poor description for what is in actuality an inter-disciplinary topic: rural studies. In this vein, the webpage of *Rural Sociology* (the oldest and arguably the most prestigious journal in the field) notes that it: "provides a forum for cutting edge research that explores inter-disciplinary approaches to emerging issues, new approaches to older questions and material, and policy relevant discussions of rural development, environmental impacts, the structure of food and agricultural production, and rural-urban linkages" (Rural Sociology, 2004). This editorial précis is illuminating in that, among other things, it suggests a willingness among sociologists to embrace inter-disciplinarity which is generally not reciprocated. However, it is premature to assign inter-disciplinarity to rural sociology *per se*. Rather, the disciplinary dynamics that have buffeted rural sociology in recent decades are better described in terms of an ongoing intellectual colonisation. A great deal of this dynamic can be understood as an academic form of isomorphism, in which successful research agendas are replicated across supposedly distinct disciplines. Such isomorphism is not peculiar to rural sociology and defines much of contemporary research and teaching, especially within the social sciences. Sociology has enjoyed a central position in the playing out of this isomorphism, insofar as many recent developments within the academy (typically constituted as inter-disciplinary initiatives) are experienced as a hollowing-out of various sociologies: rural sociology,

sociology of media, sociology of gender, sociology of education, sociology of medicine, and so on.

Hence, rural sociology has been particularly important for human geographers and anthropologists seeking to update their studies of 'the other': facilitating a transformation in study of the cultural features of a place into the more sociological concerns with context and structure. This engagement involves a double movement: allowing human geographers and anthropologists to shed the trappings of positivism, while shifting from idiographic to nomothetic approaches in studying community. The sub-discipline of sociology provided one venue for this sea-change, in part, because from the early 1970's there was an increasing overlap between rural sociology of the developed economies and of the underdeveloped economies. Thus, much of the canon of Marxist and populist thought - that addressed the revolutionary capacity of the peasantry - was introduced to rural sociology and beyond through the *Journal of Peasant Studies*. The process was begun by Teodor Shanin (1973), and extended in accounts of simple commodity production (Chevalier, 1983; Friedmann, 1978; Mann & Dickinson, 1978), populist accounts (Harrison, 1979; Hunt 1979), Lenin (Levine, 1982; Patnaik, 1979) and Kautsky (Banaji, 1990). All the explanations grounded in political economy resonated with assumptions of the marginality of farmers and recycled Marx's initial dismissal of the peasantry. This recycling was commented on by many writers, all of whom then proceeded to do much the same (Busch, Bonanno, & Lacy, 1989; Cox, Lowe & Winter, 1986; Friedland, 1991; Hamilton, 1985; Kane & Mann, 1992; Kenney, 1989; Marsden, Lowe and Whatmore, 1990).

The manifest result of this theoretical updating was the creation of a political economy of agriculture (Friedland, 1991), branded the new sociology of agriculture (Buttel & Newby 1980; Buttel, Larson & Gillespie, 1990; Friedland, 1984) or the new geography of agriculture (Buttel 1996; Buttel & Goodman, 1989; McMichael 1994; FitzSimmons, 1986; Wallace, 1985) depending on the audience.

Consequently, rural sociology has undergone two major shifts in the last 40 years. Firstly, a move from studies of rural communities to the study of farms and agribusiness as sites of production and reproduction.

This change began in the late 1960's and was part of the displacement of concern with the specificity of community by those of context and structure. Secondly, an ongoing expansion in the boundaries of the refigured sub-discipline, encompassing feminist and constructivist critiques about the productivist blindspots of the new sociology of agriculture. Stuart and Campbell (in this journal) describe the result of this pressure as being an approach that "moves beyond the confines of rural space to follow the dynamics of whole agri-food systems from production to consumption: taking in links with labour studies, traditional rural sociology, consumption, food policy, the sociology of food and technology, and questions of nature/culture". Accordingly, the role of women in agriculture, an acknowledgement of consumption (of food), pressing environmental issues and the dilemmas of participatory research have moved to the foreground of debate (see Dixon, 2002; Lockie & Pritchard, 2001). However, it is important to note that none of these shifts are disruptive of traditional rural sociology, to the extent that: (i) community studies have remained a leitmotif; (ii) the recycling of Marx still has considerable traction; and (3) the founders of the new sociology in the 1970s are still active, albeit in a contemporary repackaging of environmentalism (Goodman, 1999, 2004; Marsden, 2004; Spaargaren, Mol and Buttel, 2000).

The "new" sociology of agriculture, family farming and AAFNs

Extant rural sociology has its origins in the obliteration of the rural-urban continuum suggested by Durkheim and Tonnies and a consequent repositioning of the mainstay of rural sociology, community studies. The demolition of these foundational concepts was completed most famously by Ray Pahl, who in building on community studies in both Britain and the USA concluded that, "Any attempt to tie particular patterns of social relationships to specific geographical milieu is a singularly fruitless exercise. Some people are of the city but not in it, whereas others are in the city but not of it... " (Pahl, 1966, p. 85). Similarly, Newby's research on rural areas of Britain offered confirmation that rural life was increasingly urban in its character (Newby, 1980, 1985). At the same time, the conceptual reworking of the rural-urban continuum

overlapped with a political agenda concerned with agribusiness and the "capitalist penetration of agriculture" (Shanin, 1990). Thus, Carter notes (in this journal) that: "Goaded by these criticisms, a stroppier American 'new rural sociology' (or 'sociology of agriculture') was born. Strongly neo-Marxist in orientation, this enterprise probed production chains for particular agricultural commodities".

The heart of the new sociology of agriculture was/is the fate of family farming. This concern, impelled by the rediscovery of Marx, provided a praxis for the reconfigured sub-discipline (Cox, Lowe, & Winter, 1986; Friedmann, 1978; Hamilton, 1985, Kenney, 1989). Hence, Nolan (1994) noted that accounts of family farming centred on its survivalism or subsumption. Indeed, a host of writers have assumed the future of family farming is to subsist in misery or to be ruined, displaced and its practitioners cast down into the rural proletariat. Such accounts of family farming tend to explore manifestations of decline and have entailed discussions of the forms and stages of this disintegration, including the phenomena of part-time farming or pluriactivity (Gasson, 1986; Zabawa, 1987) and the resurgence of share-farming (Wells, 1984; 1996). This anxiety is an enduring theme and currently permeates discussions of alternative agro-food networks (AAFNs) (Goodman, 2004), which have replaced regulationist food regimes as the normative framing of debate (Friedmann and McMichael, 1989; Marsden, 1992; McMichael, 1994).

Nevertheless, the early debate about family farming provided an opening into arguments about the role of women and unpaid domestic labour, and appreciation of the household form of production as being actively embedded in industries (Shanin, 1988). Consequently, there are now a host of gynocentric accounts of farming and food production that often stand alongside discussions of empowerment and participatory research. More generally, the sociology of agriculture deals with the institutions that are central to farm production and food consumption. Where these institutions are expressions of farmer control they appear in the literature as subordinated and transitional assemblages (Curtis, 1999; 2001). For example, informal forms of co-operation (Hedley, 1985) and co-operative firms are well documented in food processing and the marketing of produce, but in each case a dynamic is also identified for

the political arrangements that are sustained by farmers to be pressured and marginalised.

Farmers' appeals to the state have similarly received attention. Goodman and Redclift stressed the perceived instability of such arrangements nearly two decades ago: "The capitalised family producer has sought, and in large measure achieved, political legitimacy by seeking to distance himself from 'capitalism' at the ideological level, while fully embracing it at the economic level." (Goodman & Redclift, 1985, p. 242). Thus, European writers examined the agricultural policies of the state chiefly in terms of corporatism (Hamilton, 1985; Coulomb & Delorme, 1989; Cox, Lowe, & Winter, 1989). North American writers privileged the legacy of the New Deal (Kenney, 1989; Tubiana, 1989). In both cases emphasis was placed on the demise, or at least the impending demise, of these state-sponsored arrangements (Buttel, 1989). The farming lobby was portrayed as being previously successful in linking state support for family farming, mainly in terms of non-capitalist appeals, but these statutory arrangements were now taken as being imperilled by events (Smith, 1990). The rise of a European literature on AAFNs does no more than tweak these assumptions. In other words, farmers become victims of the unintended consequences of their earlier successes. Subsidised agricultural sectors are presented as effectively promoting the growth of large-scale farming.

There is now a long history of food industries as sites of capitalist threat. Thus, Burns, McInerney and Swinbank (1983) offered accounts of the food industries in Britain as series of sites across which the tide is turning against all forms of small business. Earlier and still paramount, Friedland and others (Friedland & Barton, 1976; Friedland, Barton, & Thomas, 1979; Friedland, Barton, & Thomas, 1981) explored fruit and vegetable production in California in terms of the victory of capitalist farming.

As a consequence, farming is framed as being hemmed in by new technologies that engender greater costs of production and indebtedness (Buttel, 1989; Lawrence, 1990). Over the long term, appropriationist and substitutionist strategies prefigure a complete transformation of food production through the deployment of

biotechnologies (Goodman & Redclift, 1991; Goodman, Sorj, & Wilkinson, 1984, 1987; Vergopoulos, 1985). Further, even those new technologies that fall into the hands of producers are represented as being leased to them, rather than sold to them, by agribusiness firms. This argument is now played out only to the extent that family farming is no longer imagined as autonomous or as a significant political player. Salvation, it would appear, can come only from an alliance with consumers. Thus, in discussing AAFNs, Goodman (2004, p. 13) asserts: "Politically, to imagine radical change in food production, systems of provision, and the spatial scaling of everyday foodways without the agency of consumers is simply quixotic, given the formidable economic and spatial power concentrated in the hands of leading food manufacturers and retailers".

There is a strong element of continuity in the turn to consumption. Specifically, the "Mann-Dickinson hypothesis" (Mann & Dickinson, 1978) that family farming is sheltered from the capitalist penetration of agriculture by technological barriers (which are nevertheless constantly diminished by the appropriationist and substitutionist strategies of agribusiness firms) is revivified through organic food (Campbell, 2004). This helps explain why the coverage of organic foods in rural sociology is so disproportionate to organic food production and consumption in actuality. It is argued (in Goodman's terms, imagined) that farmers (i.e., in alliance with consumers) can, by growing organic food, reverse the narrowing realm of family farming.

Food chains, actor-networks and environmental history

The study of food chains constitutes an important elaboration in the sociology of agriculture. While the sociological study of food chains has its origins in French scholarship (Senker, 1988), William Friedland pioneered its broader application in studies of the networks of farms, factories and agribusiness firms involved in Californian fruit and vegetable production (Friedland & Barton, 1976; Friedland, Barton, & Thomas, 1979; 1981). These studies are notable for their attention to the political component of the relationship between producers, processors, and distributors.

Friedland posited that a food chain can be understood as a complex

of sequential processes differently located in space (Friedland, 1984). He suggested that the study of food chains (stretching from farming into retailing) offered a potential synthesis of research (rather like the re-centring of sociology desired by Carter (1990)), because it could incorporate studies of production practices, grower organisations, the deployment of research and development, the construction of marketing and distribution and account for labour relations. Further, the conception of sectors as food chains is an attractive proposition for investigations of international industries and the approach has gained considerable favour (Gereffi & Korzenienic, 1994). In this respect, Richard Le Heron and a number of other New Zealand geographers played a leading role in developing food chain analysis, albeit within a somewhat limiting regulationist framing (Le Heron, 1988a; 1988c; 1989; Le Heron & Park, 1995; Le Heron, Roche, & Anderson, 1989; Moran, Blunden and Bradly, 1996; Moran, Blunden, Workman and Bradly, 1996).

In short, food chains privilege the interpenetration and diversity of the global and the local networks of family farms and agribusiness firms that were otherwise blurred by determinist accounts of the eclipse of family farming by agribusiness firms (Pritchard and Burch, 2003). This nuanced appreciation is largely achieved by emphasizing the physical product and its transportation to, and transformation at, sites that may be scattered across the globe. Unsurprisingly, such conceptions of industry as a physically mediated food chain imparts their own productivist slant. That is, a focus on the linkage of sites and, what is most important, on what happens to the physical product at those sites foregrounds the labour process debate. As a result, food chain analysis has tended to emphasise the confrontations of capital with labour and to reconsider the workings of "agro-industrialisation" (Ufkes, 1995). Nevertheless, Le Heron encapsulated the early developments:

> ... capitalist food and fibre production incorporates the basic features of capitalism, especially the wage-relation. This holds for farming through to distribution and retailing. Critically, lines of antagonism are likely to appear at any site of production (e.g., processing plants) or in some relational form within the chains (e.g., farmers contracted to agribusiness companies). (1988b, p. 8)

An important advance in food chain analysis is found in the relaxation of the conditionality for action, and is associated with an engagement with actor-network theory (Curtis, 2002; Lockie & Kitto, 2000). This expansion to the field of action involves an appreciation of non-human actors (or actants) and an epistemological agnosticism decidedly at odds with the drivers shared by Karl Marx, Henry Ford and most of the other protagonists for any sociology of agriculture. The most famous paper in this respect is Michel Callon's (1986) account of the troublesome scallops of St Brieuc Bay. While deconstructing an initiative in the science of aquaculture, the paper demonstrates the key elements of actor-network theory: the processes of inscription and translation (Akrich and Latour 1992; Callon, 1991). Indeed, the engagement with actor-network theory (ANT) constituted the main theoretical endeavour for the sociology of agriculture dating from the mid 1990s. ANT was championed by "the usual suspects"; providing a fillip for the "new" geography (Arce & Marsden, 1993; FitzSimmons & Goodman, 1998) and "new" sociology of agriculture (Busch & Juska, 1997; Goodman, 1999). A thoroughly convincing synthesis is yet to be developed, while Michel Callon (1998) is a central figure in a genuinely inter disciplinary initiative to synthesize ANT and the latest variant of economic sociology (Swedberg, 1997). There is great potential for such a synthesis to transform both the sociology of agriculture and its bedrock of rural sociology for the better. Unfortunately, the important first movers in the sub-discipline seem to have moved on to greener pastures (Lockie & Kitto, 2000).

Gereffi and Korzenienic's (1994) collection on commodity chains is an early example of post-productivist analysis and is directly relevant to the sociology of agricultural production and consumption. However, in the decade since the publication of this exemplar, the turn to consumption has also coincided with a decomposition of the political economy which kick-started the new sociology/geography. Seemingly, with an appreciation of consumers comes an increasing prioritisation of the local (and, at times, the trivial). The trajectory of Harriet Friedmann's work is edifying in this respect. In the late 1970s, she analysed farming as a variant of simple commodity production (Friedmann, 1978). By the late 1980s, she was advancing the regulationist conception of food

regimes (Friedmann & McMichael, 1989). At a recent Agri-Food Research Network conference (2001), she outlined a research agenda primarily concerned with recycling and roof-top gardens.

The development of environmental histories has paralleled post-productivist analysis, including the recent fascination with consumers and AAFNs. As a result the rediscovery and reworking of classic accounts of settling settler societies is characterised by all the strengths and weaknesses of post-productivism. Clearly the rush to the local is not all one way traffic, for example Spaargaren, Mol and Buttel (2000) posit the fascination with environmentalism in terms of social theory and sociology. However, there does appear to be a coincidence between inter-disciplinary work and localism. Thus, the local collection from Brooking and Pawson, (2003) is to be commended for its breadth, for challenging the notion of farmer as hero and similar underlying productivist assumptions (Brooking, Hodge, & Wood, 2003). The collection is less convincing in sum, however, as a representation of the historical contingencies faced by actors. Arguably, what is missing from this, and similar works is, sociological analysis.

Rural sociology in New Zealand: A small world

In 1967, Stanley Milgram published "The small world problem" in *Psychology Today*. Milgram outlined in this and subsequent papers the "small world phenomenon": the theory that everyone in the world is connected by an average of six acquaintances (more famously by "six degrees of separation"). Milgram further posited a 'funneling effect' in which only a few individuals were responsible for much of the world's connectivity. While it is contentious that the contemporary world is in reality small, Milgram and social psychologists who followed him have demonstrated a multitude of functioning small worlds. While sociologists would favour the term network, we can agree that rural sociology is one such small world.

Putting aside for a moment the extent to which this special edition adequately captures the sub-discipline of rural sociology, this collection illustrates the close and nested character of academic work in New Zealand. And, it is worth noting that three of the seven contributors to

this special edition are not certified sociologists, being two anthropologists and a historian. Regardless, the world of rural sociology can be spanned not in six degrees of separation but in one-and-a-bit. Thus, five requests for contribution resulted in four essays and the suggestion (from an overworked John Fairweather at the Agribusiness and Economics Research Unit) of an alternate. As might be expected the funneling effects of the network are readily discernible and cluster around key institutional bases of rural sociology. In no particular order, we can note that: (i) Carter (the senior Professor of Sociology in New Zealand) supervised Loveridge's PhD (Loveridge, 1991) and examined Curtis (Curtis, 1996); (ii) Campbell, Curtis, Loveridge, Morris and Hunt have all worked with John Fairweather at the Agribusiness and Economics Research Unit (AERU) (Fairweather, Maslin, Gossman, & Campbell, 2003; Fairweather, Skoko, & Curtis, 1998; Hunt, Fairweather, & Coyle, 2003; Morris, Loveridge, & Fairweather, 1995); (iii) there are ongoing institutional links between the AERU at Lincoln University and the Centre for the Study of Agriculture, Food and Environment (CSAFE) at the University of Otago, of which Campbell is the Director; and, (iv) all of the contributors to this special edition –with the exception of Hunt and Stuart- have presented at conferences of the Agri-Food Research Network in Australia and New Zealand. Obviously, other thick and thin ties between contributors could be presented, the totality of which would go some of the way to describe the academic careers of a cohort of baby boomers.

The institutional elements are determining of this network. Indeed, any account of rural sociology in New Zealand, or at least its recent history, would be well served by paying particular attention to the AERU and the Agri-Food Research Network as principal sponsors of rural sociology. Founded in 1962 from an annual grant provided by the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research (DSIR), the AERU has evolved to become an independent, major source of business and economic research expertise. DSIR funding was discontinued in 1987. In 1999 the AERU became part of the Commerce Division at Lincoln University and continues to provide research on agribusiness, resource, environment and social issues (AERU, 2004). Most importantly, the AERU

has weathered storms in which other [DSIR] initiatives have foundered (Carter, 1990), and in doing so has directly sponsored the greater part of rural sociology (while providing important opportunities for post-PhD work for the majority of contributors found here). In passing, it should be noted that the now defunct Rural Affairs Unit of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry also deserves an honourable mention for its research on restructuring, communities and the rural downturn (Pomeroy, 1998).

Likewise the Agri-Food Research Network was established in 1992 to provide a forum for Australian and New Zealand researchers analysing contemporary agri-food systems. Its aims are to facilitate and maintain the exchange of information, to encourage collaborative research, and to organise conferences and meetings (Agri-Food Research Network, 2004). The Network has provided important links with Australian and Pacific Rim scholars (keynote speakers include Fred Buttel, Harriet Freidmann and Philip McMichael), and offers opportunities for publication (Burch, Goss, & Lawrence, 1999; Burch, Goss, Lawrence, & Rickson, 1999; Burch, Rickson, & Lawrence, 1996; Lockie & Pritchard, 2001).

In closing, the contributors to this special edition can be said to cover the main institutional bases of rural sociology in New Zealand. They also provide an apt account of rural sociology as a sub-discipline buffeted by international debates and trends. Specifically, the collected articles frame contemporary rural sociology in New Zealand and offer diverse examples of post-productivist accounts. A perhaps unintentional theme is the mistrust of food and agricultural scientists (see Hunt, Fairweather, & Coyle, 2003), farmers and a reassessment of normative accounts of progress. Thus, Ian Carter examines the 'science' of dietetics in the hidden history of rural sociology. Annie Stuart and Hugh Campbell, and Lesley Hunt revisit arguments about GM food and the introduction of DDT, respectively. Carter's article, alongside those of Alison Loveridge (in this journal) and Carolyn Morris (in this journal), also uncover subordinated narratives and in doing so gives voice. Loveridge analyses farm autobiographies and compares the comments made about the Depression with what rural people said about the restructuring of

the1980's. Morris focuses on the life story of one woman, Alice, as she dealt with serious financial uncertainty and the potential loss of the family farm in the 1990's.

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The Missing Link: Dietetics and Rural Sociology in Thirties New Zealand

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Abstract

This article explores three episodes in an emergent New Zealand rural sociology. First, is W.T. Doig's *Survey of standards of life of New Zealand dairy-farmers* (1940), the only monograph from the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research's short-lived Bureau of Social Science Research. Second, Crawford Somerset's *Littledene: A New Zealand rural community* (1938), the founding community study. Third, the establishment in 1945 of a Rural Sociology Section in the state's Department of Agriculture. The study of dietetics is central in the articulation of these episodes and to rural sociology in New Zealand in the 1930's. Indeed, as rural sociology has matured into the sociology of food, dietetics has become more interesting to, and important for, sociologists.

Introduction

At odd times over the past two decades I have pondered puzzles about three key episodes in New Zealand rural sociology's faltering youth. First among these is W.T. Doig's *Survey of standards of life of New Zealand dairy-farmers* (1940), the only monograph to hit print from the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research's short-lived Bureau of Social Science Research. Second comes Crawford Somerset's *Littledene: a New Zealand rural community* (1938), the founding community study. Conventionally, these two books are thought to comprise New Zealand rural sociology's founding charter. The third event was the establishment in 1945 of a Rural Sociology Section in the state's Department of Agriculture. So what's odd about these three episodes? Two things: that each appears to have been separated by Chinese walls from the others, and that certificated sociologists played almost no part in any of them. By training, Doig was an economist, Somerset a teacher. And apart from its office manager, Donald Viggers - a commerce graduate who took his ex-serviceman's scholarship to the University of Wisconsin,

Madison, returning to Wellington with an MA in Rural Sociology centred on a demographic dissertation (Viggers, 1947; 1952) - the Agriculture Department's dozen "rural sociologists" all possessed home science qualifications.

After a time, I gave up worrying about these paradoxes. Like the All Blacks' in-and-out form, some things lie beyond human comprehension. For reasons to do both with my own biography and with my discipline's, my research and teaching interests soon drifted from an increasingly sclerotic rural sociology to the sociology of food's less trampled pastures. Let me explain. On the personal level, when I came to New Zealand in the early eighties I expected to build on the body of culture-infused rural social history which I had produced in northern Scotland, and on my deep involvement with the Rural Economy and Society Study Group (RESSG) which Peter Hamilton and Howard Newby had established from sociology departments in Essex University and the Open University. The first of these objectives soon turned out to be a mare's nest since the cultural riches which lay to my hand in Aberdeen, detritus from a doomed nineteenth century defence of highland and lowland peasant life, simply did not exist in Aotearoa. As so often happens, a copycat New Zealand RESSG duly appeared but, like its British progenitor, this body's agenda soon was controlled by human and economic geographers rather than by sociologists. In Britain, sociologists withdrew from the RESSG as geographers turned it into another machine for grant-funded abstracted empiricism (and citation rings), though masked this time by ritual genuflections to a caricature of Marx. Terry Marsden and Philip Lowe's monograph factory is exemplary here: see Whatmore, Marsden and Lowe (1994), that remarkable piece of reflexive referencing.

Suspecting that much the same process was setting in down in these parts, and with the discipline of sociology itself moving (largely as a result of feminist fire) from a fixation with production to a somewhat more balanced interest in unpredictable relations between production and consumption, I started teaching and researching issues in the sociology of food – a field which encompasses agriculture but extends far beyond that single industry, a field where production must presume

consumption and consumption must presume production (Carter & Maynard, 2001; Carter, 2004). Exploring this field led me to battles over the medicalisation of food in New Zealand. In turn, this took me to the New Zealand Medical Research Council's intriguing history. And quite unexpectedly, that history exposed hidden connections among our three episodes. This article analyses those connections. We start with a thumbnail sketch of the nodes, then explore their articulation.

Three vignettes

Standards of life of New Zealand dairy-farmers

W.T. Doig's monograph seems to sit comfortably within a familiar form of rural sociology: a practically oriented abstracted empiricism born and nurtured in early twentieth century north American land grant colleges (Galeski, 1972, pp. xiii-ix). Although American connections turn out to have been important here, this was a less straightforward piece of technology transfer than one might suspect.

Competently analysing a competently-undertaken large scale sample survey, Doig's monograph is famous in local social science circles - even if, like that Lemon and Paeroa bottle, it is famous only in New Zealand, and only as a monument to be observed in passing. Its celebrity arises less from research results than contingency - from the political storm which is thought to have surrounded its publication. Conventional wisdom still holds, in the Ministry of Agriculture's historian's words, that "The Labour Government found the report hard to accept and tried to suppress it." (Nightingale, 1992, p. 232). Infuriated by his inability to block publication, the grudge-bearing Peter Fraser is taken to have destroyed the body which produced this offensive monograph, DSIR's Board for Social Science Research [BSSR]. Alas for simplicity. Nightingale gives us a myth. This does not vitiate its value of course: that accounts like these were (and are) believed so widely reveals brutality and loathing permeating the first Labour government, an entity too often sanctified these days. But Jim Robb's (1987) careful reconstruction demolishes the usual tale about BSSR's demise. He documents internal problems emerging once the Bureau had been established early in 1937 - faction-

fighting over what should comprise social science, over priorities for research work and over report writing - but these seem little more than routine agonies familiar in any large-scale externally-funded social science programmes. It seems clear that while Peter Fraser did try to delay the dairy farmer study's publication, he made no serious attempt to suppress the final report. Nor did he prevent work continuing on standard of living surveys for other occupational groups. A draft report on tramway workers was complete when BSSR died, and fieldwork for a third - on boot and shoe operatives - was well advanced. Nor did Fraser murder the Bureau. Robb concludes that the Public Service Commission's failure to appoint the principal investigator, Wattie Doig. To a permanent civil service post was the decisive factor here. When Doig resigned early in 1940 to take a job with the Workers' Educational Association in Christchurch, BSSR lost its lynchpin. Under wartime's stern manpower and resource exigencies, his departure doomed the Bureau. It died not from a politician's stab in the back, but from inanition.

Littledene

Primed both by Canterbury's fake-English fetishes and by secondary sociological sources, we will be tempted to root Crawford Somerset's book in early British rural sociology's characteristic form: the qualitative, contemplative and ideographic community studies tradition born from social anthropology's collision with Celtic ruralist nationalism (Arensberg & Kimball, 1940; Rees, 1940; Bell & Newby, 1971). We would be mistaken, for two reasons. First, *Littledene* is rooted in sociology, not social anthropology. Second, it looks to urban America, not to rural Britain. Anatomising Muncie, Indiana as a "typical" small American city, six categories organised the argument in Robert and Helen Lynd's *Middletown* (1929): getting a living, making a home, training the young, using leisure, engaging in religious practices, and engaging in community activities. Less openly than in the prototype, these categories organise *Littledene* - another book researched and written by a husband-and-wife team, though Kiwi misogyny ensured that Gwen Somerset's contribution went unacknowledged.

Writing this book was not the Somersets' own idea. *Littledene* took

shape in a tight social network. While on leave in the United States on a Carnegie fellowship in the early thirties, James Shelley, professor of education at Canterbury University College and the kingpin in local rural community education (Carter, 1993, pp. 131-166), found social scientists of a progressive political cast full of *Middletown*. He read the study, and was entranced. Returning to New Zealand, Shelley determined that somebody should replicate the Lynds' work here, but in a country township. By analogy with *Middletown*, and offending social anthropology's celebration of local cultural specificity, social life in one settlement would stand for social life in all country districts: hence the book's subtitle, *a New Zealand rural community*. Shelley even coined the cloaking soubriquet. Shelley was a political radical, but he was a Cambridge man. Crawford Somerset taught in Oxford, north Canterbury. Together with its twee title, *Littledene*'s location distantly evokes sentimental deference to an English south country mandarin archness. What a pity that early settlers failed to call this Canterbury township Wigan! Having decided that his acolyte Crawford Somerset - and Crawford's fiancée Gwen, who was a less wholehearted fan, would do the research, Shelley's foreword introduced their book. Another Shelley client, C.E. Beeby, edited the finished text, then published *Littledene* from his newly-established New Zealand Council for Educational Research. Tiring of university teaching's grinding routine, Shelley himself had contemplated taking this body's founding directorship before passing it to Beeby.

Rural Sociology in the Department of Agriculture

"Rural sociology is just good sociology at work in the country", J.H. Kolb told a New Zealand reporter as war's clouds loomed. "We help the various farm organisations all we can. We help them with their local programmes of adult education, which includes dramatics, music and other arts, and with their country planning" (*New Zealand Farmer Weekly*, 2 March, 1938). In its time, this was an authoritative judgement. Kolb was a full professor of rural sociology at the University of Madison, Wisconsin; a principal powerhouse for the American sub discipline. Given his glowing endorsement for the liberal arts' central place in rural

community education we should not be surprised to learn that Kolb arrived in New Zealand through the Shelley network's machinations: funded by James Shelley's usual financier, the Carnegie Corporation of New York, to speak at C.E. Beeby's 1938 New Education Fellowship conference. But when that talkfest finished Kolb moved on to a second task - advising W.T. Doig on technical aspects of BSSR's dairy farmer study. Networks overlap. But Kolb also told the journalist who interviewed him that:

> Results had shown that [rural sociology] had great practical value in making farmers' organisations more effective both in agricultural and in social relationships. It helped them to improve their social activity and to make their needs demands more effectively recognised - not politically, but from a social and economic point of view. It opened up aspects of farming life which they had probably not realised before. There were agricultural agents, home agents and junior club leaders working to organise discussions on current problems and to open up broader spheres of activity (*New Zealand Farmer Weekly*, 2 March, 1938).

Not all this was unfamiliar in New Zealand. By the late thirties Department of Agriculture advisors had plodded the countryside for decades, recommending current best agronomic practice and urging farmers to adopt technical innovations. These men worked in the sphere of production; but Kolb's praise for home agents gestured to farming's reproductive sphere, to women's lives rather than men's.

Though this was a fallow field for New Zealand state agencies, some voluntary efforts already had sprouted, notably in the far south (Carter, 1986). In 1920 Ann Gilchrist Strong became the second dean of Otago University's home science school. Having served as dean of home science at the University of Tennessee, Strong - like Kolb two decades later - assumed that state-funded home science extension services for farm women should parallel agricultural extension services for farm men; but she failed to persuade New Zealand state agencies to support such work (Strong, 1936, p. 24). The Carnegie Corporation eventually agreed to fund a pilot programme in Otago. From 1930 to 1935 this Home Science Extension Service's two tutors broadcast twice-weekly radio talks, lectured to Women's Institute and Women's Division of

Federated Farmers' branch meetings, ran leaders' schools for country women, ran Boys' and Girls' Agricultural Clubs, prepared home study boxes, and answered a multitude of individual written questions (Macmillan, 1939, p. 51). In 1935 Carnegie ordered that this programme be combined with James Shelley's Carnegie-funded rural community education programmes in Canterbury, to form a new Association for Country Education [ACE] operating throughout the lower South Island (Council of Adult Education 1947, p. 10; Carter, 1993, p. 147-8, 164).

Then, in October 1935, the first Labour government came to power. This changed many agenda. Hitherto excluded from official patronage by their political radicalism and by habitual state parsimony, key members in Shelley's circle exploited these new conditions, shifting from regional prominence in Canterbury to central control in Wellington. In 1935 James Shelley ran Canterbury University College's education department, assisted by C.E. Beeby and with Geoff Alley trundling dusty roads as an ACE travelling tutor. But when ACE's Carnegie money dried up in 1939, Shelley was New Zealand's founding Director of Broadcasting. Alley was director of the new Country Library Service, set on the road which would make him the National Library's founding director. In 1939 C.E. Beeby still directed the newish Council for Educational Research, but in the following year Peter Fraser managed his appointment as Deputy Director of Education. Soon after that, Beeby inherited the top job, starting his term as twentieth century New Zealand's iconic liberal educational bureaucrat.

Since each now commanded his own institution's budget, none of these men now needed financial support from the Carnegie Corporation or other external sources. Not so ACE's rural home science extension tutors, still working on a regional scale from Otago University. Among many other tasks, these women had written regular articles on dietetics and on home craft for women's pages in the *New Zealand Journal of Agriculture*, the Department of Agriculture's house journal. Direct, if insecure, grants from government sustained their programme until 1948, when home science extension was subsumed within Otago University's new Adult Education department (Home Science, 1962, p. 14-15). But by then a more ambitious enterprise competed with ACE's tattered remnant:

the Department of Agriculture's in-house rural sociologists. This seemed a timely innovation. A refugee from Hitler's Germany, Ferdinand Tönnies' last postgraduate student urged rural sociology's pertinence for New Zealand's land-based economy (Jacoby, 1947). Returned from Madison with his shiny new qualification, Donald Viggers was presented with a demanding research agendum for the Department of Agriculture's new Rural Sociology Section:

> Agricultural geography – climatic regions and microclimatology. Rural sociology – rural community life; rural population; surveys of rural communities. Countryside, villages and country towns; institutions, organisations, businesses and social services and amenities. Community centres: places and purpose. Social, education and recreation needs of various age groups. (Smallfield, 1946)

A couple of disastrous, and highly public, forays into survey research showed that "rural sociologists" working under Viggers' command were quite unfitted for this rubric (Carter, 1988, pp.218-9). Though operating exclusively in rural New Zealand, their sociological practice (to say nothing of their disciplinary knowledge) was nugatory. Silently they retreated to the task for which their training fitted them: running a home science extension programme.

Digging Deeper

New Zealand's pioneer episodes of rural sociology turn out a mixed bag. As the subjects for later investigations (tramway workers, boot and shoe operatives) reveal, the rural setting for Doig's *Survey of standards of Life of New Zealand dairy-farmers* was adventitious. Somerset's *Littledene* was an American urban study translated to rural Canterbury, the Department of Agriculture's Rural Sociology Section an attempt to mount empiricist American rural sociology with staff owning a trained incapacity for that task.

Both the Shelley network's rural community education interests (which spawned *Littledene*) and Otago home science extension (which spawned the Department of Agriculture's Rural Sociology Section) relied on American foundation money, because New Zealand state agencies

refused support. But government parsimony also underlay the establishment of DSIR's Bureau of Social Science Research. The living standards studies for which this unit is remembered today originated in the (American) Institute for Pacific Relations [IPA]'s research agendum. By repute a politically progressive organisation (it would be proscribed in the McCarthy witch-hunt) IPA sought to document workers' living standards in many national settings. To enhance comparability, initial studies focussed on a common occupational group: transport workers. To encourage international work, IPA would part-fund research in other nation states. Following an approach from the director of IPA's Hawaii office, the leftist New Zealand economist Horace Belshaw, a New Zealand committee loaded with local progressive luminaries congealed to plan a local study of transport workers. Recruited to Wellington government service by Walter Nash, the new Labour government's finance minister, W.T. Doig proposed to D.G. Macmillan, minister in charge of DSIR, that a New Zealand IPA study could subsidise establishment costs for a national social research agency. Jim Robb reports (1987, p.6) that DSIR's director, the physicist Ernest Marsden, was not keen on this idea; but networking among Doig's political patrons carried the day. Several departmental officials and a Labour member of parliament, T.H. Combs, sat as a planning committee in October 1936. The new BSSR's General Committee met first in February 1937.

That IPA money would part-fund living standards research in New Zealand ensured that this topic would enjoy high priority among the Bureau's early activities. But here the IPA's prime research interest - transport workers' living standards - slipped to second place. Dairy farmers' life conditions came first, for local political reasons. Hitting all New Zealanders very hard, the early thirties' depression had not spared family farmers. Responding to this hardship, an unprecedented number of farmers abandoned support for their usual right wing parties, handing Labour its victory at the 1935 general election. The new government rewarded this unexpected support through price stabilisation legislation, and with parastatal single-desk marketing boards for a range of primary export commodities. Doig's interviewers were despatched to document the wondrous improvement which these initiatives had wrought for brave

Labour-voting cow cockies; but the draft report showed that improvement was slighter than had been expected. This awkwardness was compounded by the report's very thoroughness. Delay might be a useful tactic – as the egregious Harold Wilson taught, a week is a long time in politics – but grin and bear it could be ministers' only long-term strategy. IPA's financial support ensured that Horace Belshaw possessed the ultimate sanction - publishing the dairy farmer report from Honolulu - but there never was any real possibility that Fraser could sit on it permanently.

For this episode to have doomed BSSR would have required a response quite out of scale with its flea-bite stimulus, even for revengeful Peter Fraser. Apart from Doig's departure, which other factors might have been at play? Let us consider BSSR's birth and youth rather than - as is customary - only its death. In April 1937 thirteen people sat around a Wellington table. Minutes identified these thirteen, the new bureau's General Committee, with particular institutions:

W.T. Doig	Secretary, BSSR
C.E. Beeby	Director, N.Z.C.E.R.
Elizabeth Gregory	Home Science Department, Otago University
Elizabeth Gunn	Health Department, Wellington
E.H. Langford	Office of Minister for Railways
George Lawn	Economics Department, Canterbury University
T.H. McCombs	Member of Parliament
D.H. Macmillan	Member of Parliament
Ernest Marsden	Director, DSIR
Evan Parry	Barrister and Solicitor
R.W. Soutar	Professor of Economics, Otago University
F.B. Stephens	Department of Internal Affairs
Ormond Wilson	Member of Parliament
David Wilson	Secretary, New Zealand Labour Party

This committee was charged with overseeing a remarkably broad research agendum:

1 Standards of living.
2 Occupational earnings.
3 Wage, price and production indices.
4 The use of leisure, 'including the education of the adolescent and the adult in regard to social and economic questions.'
5 Public opinion trends on social, economic and political developments.
6 The basic wage.
7 National income distribution.
8 Socio-economic aspects of nutrition.
9 Nutritional standards and pertinent legislation.
10 Agricultural economics.

Robb (1987, p. 8) cuts this list in three: standards of living (item 1), nutrition (items 8 and 9), and a weighty residuum marked by "a strongly economic concern." I propose that we divide the list in four, then allocate board members to each division according to their principal interest. Assuming that Ernest Marsden merely wanted to ride shotgun on this doubtful new enterprise and that Evan Parry was there to ensure that everything was legally kosher, I exclude these men from this exercise. We end up with this pattern:

1	*Economic*	
	Doig	Living standards (1)
	Langford	Occupational earnings (2)
	Lawn	Wage, price and production indices (3)
	Soutar	Basic wage (6)
		National income distribution (7)
2	*Political*	
	McCombs	Public opinion trends (5)
	Macmillan	
	D. Wilson	

O. Wilson

3 *Sociological*

Beeby	Leisure (4)
Stephens	

4 *Nutritional*

Gregory	Socio-economic aspects of nutrition (8)
Gunn	Nutritional standards and legislation (9)

Clearly enough, Jim Robb was right to identify a strong economic component in this remit: five items massively outweigh the one or two in each other category. And BSSR's demise did not mean the end of state research on any of these topics. As physics envy pulled economics away from other social sciences and towards mathematics in postwar years, so ministry after ministry hired its own technicians. BSSR undertook no research on public opinion - which is just as well given this committee's disgraceful political imbalance, with the Labour party's secretary and three Labour M.P.s complacently contemplating using state funds for what look suspiciously like party purposes - but postwar research of this kind swelled inexorably in university politics departments, in private research agencies, and in political parties' private research departments. Though BSSR's sociological category was there to ensure that the Shelley circle kept its finger in this new pie, postwar institutional growth saw adult education funded independently through Vote:Education, an income stream controlled by C.E. Beeby and the successors whom he had groomed. F.B. Stephens played a significant figure in this. Remove all these folk from BSSR's general committee and we are left with just two people for whom to account. What were the two Elizabeths, Gregory and Gunn, doing there? Was these women's presence mere gender tokenism? However familiar it might seem to us, is not 1937 a little early for that? But if they held their seats by right, then in New Zealand sixty-odd years ago nutrition was

taken to be a social science. How could that be? Is not nutrition a sub-discipline of biochemistry?

Articulation

Nutrition is a laboratory-based biochemical science, but mechanisms necessary to transfer research results to the public arena are not. Logically enough, today Americans call these mechanisms *nutrition education*. Following British practice, in New Zealand they are called *dietetics*. Dietetics was an important part of the syllabus at Otago's Home Science School, the place from whence ACE tutors and Department of Agriculture rural sociologists were recruited. Perhaps the nutritional element in BSSR's founding research remit was no more than the Shelley circle's sociological category, a sop thrown to an inconveniently influential interest group? Not so. Bridging the boundary between biological and social science, dietetics is the skeleton articulating early New Zealand rural sociology's flabby flesh. In order to appreciate this, we first must recognise that our earlier matching of BSSR's general committee members to particular topics was too schematic. Consider that committee's three Labour members of parliament. Though the depression's worst years had passed by 1937, each of these men would hold harrowing memories of the slump's effects. Each would appreciate the value of any economic research which might ensure that this devastation did not return. Ormond Wilson hailed from Bulls, McCombs and Macmillan from Canterbury - where they had long fallen under James Shelley's spell in Workers' Educational Association evening classes and summer schools. Though now sitting in parliament, these two men retained the Shelley circle's commitment to leisure as rational recreation - *Littledene*'s driving passion. C.E. Beeby once told me that this circle's organising text was Upton Sinclair's *The jungle* (1906), that muckraking novel of the Chicago stockyards in which appalling food adulteration is firmly sheeted home to unregulated robber-baron capitalism. For McCombs and Macmillan as for Shelley, Beeby and Somerset, food was politics. Nutrition and dietetics research must play a proper part in politically progressive public policy.

If one doubts this argument then consult the Te Puna database. It

lists three books by Crawford Somerset, all published by NZCER The first is *Littledene*, dating from 1938. The second is *Littledene: Patterns of change* (1974) - the restudy which remained incomplete at its author's death, largely because his hopes for rational recreation in the Canterbury countryside proved so hopelessly sanguine. Like *Littledene* before it, this book's text was prepared for the press by C.E. Beeby, now retired from his posts as Director of Education, Ambassador to France and Vice-Chair of UNESCO Somerset's third book is much less well known today. It is a slim monograph, *Child nutrition in a rural community* (1941). Here he reports results from a systematic investigation of the height and weight of boys entering Oxford High School between 1934 and 1938. This investigation was grounded in Somerset's fears that depression-era malnourishment had undermined an entire generation's physical and mental development. Here nutrition is a directly political and economic topic.

Crawford Somerset was not alone in fearing that the thirties' slump had caused long-term human damage. His research may well have been sparked by an official document: in 1933 New Zealand's Director-General of Health published a special report on the depression's effect on public health, with particular reference to childhood nutrition (Director-General of Health, 1933). And Dr Elizabeth Gunn, who later would sit on the BSSR general committee, spent many years trying to improve school children's health. But things were moving beyond New Zealand's shores, too. In 1925 the Yugoslav delegation asked the League of Nations to undertake cross-national studies of connections between food and public health. Though this request failed, pressure continued. Financial collapse in 1929 and 1931 made this issue more urgent. In 1935 Australian, New Zealand and American delegates to the International Labour Organisation successfully urged that the League of Nations should sponsor a world-wide study of nutrition. A rapidly-appointed committee brought down three deeply influential reports (League of Nations, 1936a; 1936b; 1937). While noting that nutritional problems were not stable across nation states, the first report concluded that "In every country...there is a problem to be solved, a defect to be corrected, a task to be undertaken" (League of Nations, 1936a, p. 11). In developed

countries the world crisis had exacerbated existing problems. Now even in these "advanced" places, that "inadequacy of diet is widespread" could not be denied: "Malnutrition is manifest in the prevalence of rickets, scurvy, poor musculature, teeth of poor structure, anaemia, chronic fatigue, poor condition of the skin and subnormal growth and weight, to name only the more easily observable symptoms" (League of Nations, 1936a, pp. 15-16). Though no medical man, Crawford Somerset had investigated the last two factors' incidence among adolescent boys in his Canterbury school.

The League's committee did not mince its words when proposing measures to tackle this public health crisis. Each nation state, it insisted, must establish a national nutritional policy, with "some central authority having special responsibility for this matter in order to utilise to best advantage the teachings of science and to apply them in the practical field" (League of Nations, 1936a, p. 27). Local specificities could dictate local modifications, but the pattern from which these would depart must be Britain's Medical Research Council - with the rider that other countries' agencies, unlike Britain's, must see nutrition research bridging medical, biological and social science. The first two domains would create validated scientific knowledge about diet's significance for health and illness. To social scientists would go the task of disseminating this knowledge throughout society. In a real and urgent sense, dietetics was conjured as a social science.

Writing their final report one year later, members of the League's nutrition committee could welcome substantial progress. Nation state after nation state had rushed to establish national nutritional policies, policed by "national nutritional committees" (League of Nations, 1937, pp. 36-7). But not New Zealand. By 1937 the Director-General of Health, Michael Watt, had been struggling for a decade to establish a local medical research council. Exacerbated by depression conditions - in fiscal 1932 the New Zealand state spent ten pounds on medical research, eight pounds in fiscal 1934 - government parsimony defeated him. But Labour politicians had supported the idea of a medical research council while in opposition. Though the 1935 general election heralded better times (Watt, 1935), none could have expected that nutrition would be the

key to turn this lock. But with an internationalist Labour government in power, New Zealand's failure to heed the League of Nations' call was deeply embarrassing, particularly when federal Australia had moved so rapidly. Thus it was that a Health Department clerk passed a pregnant note to his colleague when preparing documents for the Medical Research Council's first meeting on 8 December, 1937: "Nutrition: on this subject Dr Watt desires us to obtain a statement issued by the League of Nations giving advice to Governments in regard to work which should be undertaken" (Drake, 1937). Addressing that first meeting, the Minister of Health, Peter Fraser, "referred to the widespread attention being given to the subject of nutrition and stated that he had no doubt that matter would receive attention" (*Evening Post*, 24 January, 1938). From this man, that hint was sufficient.

NZMRC's Nutrition Research Committee sprang rapidly to life. Chaired by John Malcolm, Professor of Physiology at Otago University, this committee contained two other members: Charles Hercus, Otago's medical dean, and Muriel Bell. Bell was the key figure, soon taking the committee's chair as Malcolm's health deteriorated. A medical doctor, she had undertaken postgraduate study at Kings' College, London with Professor Jack Drummond, among the world's most eminent nutritional scientists. At Kings' Bell met (or, possibly, again met) Elizabeth Gregory: the two women co-published papers with Drummond. Returning to Dunedin, Bell became John Malcolm's indispensable assistant: "Physiologist, researcher, nutritionist, sometime Lecturer in the Department of Physiology, Professor Malcolm's right-hand man" (*sic*) (Hercus and Bell, 1964, p. 163). Already sitting on the Board of Health by 1937, Bell became the new Medical Research Council's founding councillor, largely because the Council was established as an internal Health Department committee with funds channelled through the Board of Health. Bell was a "sometime lecturer in physiology," because from 1937 she was engaged full-time in nutrition research. Indeed, she soon was engaged far more than full-time, for in 1940 she was appointed Government Nutritionist, running this demanding task alongside her NZMRC research career. She made two stipulations before agreeing to accept the government post. First, that though this was a Head Office

position she would not be required to move from Dunedin to Wellington: her labourer husband did not wish to shift cities, and the federal University of New Zealand's medical school's location in Dunedin made this the logical place from which to work. Her second stipulation was methodological. "I accepted the position," she recalled much later, "only on condition that I would have a research department to find out the things that I wanted to know before I could relay them on" (Bell c1963). In fact, of course, she already possessed this research department, the MRC Nutrition Unit which lay under her direction. More clearly than in many nation states which hastened more rapidly to heed the League of Nations' call to establish national nutritional committees, Muriel Bell's labours - directing, and herself undertaking laboratory-based nutrition research in her Unit; disseminating nutritional advice by lecture, letter, *Listener* article, radio talk and a host of other means to individuals and groups throughout New Zealand as Government Nutritionist - integrated hard scientific research with social scientific extension precisely as the League's committee had hoped.

Ann Gilchrist Strong's protégée and Muriel Bell's former fellow research worker, Elizabeth Gregory succeeded Strong as Otago's dean of home science in 1940 (Home Science, 1962, pp. 37-8). Bell and Gregory remained friends and collaborators. In 1937 Bell's local mentor, John Malcolm, sat on DSIR's main board. Gregory sat on BSSR's general committee, from whence she directed Elizabeth Wilson's research project on the nutritional adequacy of New Zealand working class diets: just the kind of project which the League of Nations' committee wanted to see undertaken (Robb, 1987, p. 40). Although this project was reported as if it pertained to all working class diets (echoing *Littledene*'s claim that Oxford could stand for any small town from Kaitaia to Nightcaps), its occupational focus was much tighter. This was a study of dairy farm families' diets, integrated closely with Doig's living standards survey. Wilson drew her sample with Doig's help: "Those housewives who had furnished accurate records for the SSRB survey of standards of living were approached, and those who were willing and able to undertake a further, more detailed keeping of records, this time of food consumption during a week, were included in the present study" (Wilson, 1940, p. 11).

Though they appeared too late to save BSSR her conclusions would have been music to Peter Fraser's jaundiced ear, since Wilson reported that New Zealand working class diets were inadequate only through significant calcium deficiencies - which could be erased through increased milk and cheese consumption.

Elizabeth Wilson started her study as a DSIR employee, but she wrote it up as a Health Department worker. In 1938 the Board of Social Science Research's nutrition topics were transferred to the new MRC nutrition research unit. This is not the place to explore that unit's history in detail. Put briefly, for a generation it combined biochemical and physiological research with field surveys of dietary patterns among at-risk groups (Maori, urban infants, particular islands' indigenous and introduced populations, the Hillary trans-Antarctic expedition) in New Zealand and the Pacific. But though central to NZMRC's activities at its foundation in 1937, developing academic medical imperialism pushed the nutrition unit to medical research's margins as time passed. As we have seen, this Council was established as a committee of the state's Health Department, and funded through the Board of Health. This ensured that initial research priorities were concentrated on topics with a clear policy pay-off: nutrition, goitre, hydatids. But this was a narrow paddock in which to establish international research reputations. As New Zealand's stock of medical academics increased with growth in the old federal university's medical school at Otago and with the establishment of a competing school in Auckland, and as the academic appointment and promotion game turned ever more international, so pressure grew for state funding to support a much wider range of research topics. In consequence, biomedical research steadily squeezed out public health research. A second factor exacerbated this trend: NZMRC councillors' push for greater autonomy from government, on the model of the British Medical Research Council, to ameliorate the council's perceived "lack of status" (Anon, 1977). Triennial funding from 1950 eased direct government pressure, but council membership still mated badly with local professional hierarchies. The breakthrough came with the 1965 Medical Research Council Amendment Act. Council membership shifted decisively. Government medical bureaucrats'

influence had been waning for years; but now they found themselves eclipsed by medical academics, and by royal college nominees. Now donnish dominion ruled (Halsey, 1992). In New Zealand's medical setting, donnish dominion meant strong priority for blue-sky biomedical research over policy-relevant public health research.

Muriel Bell and her colleagues had not failed to notice straws blowing in these winds. Her nutrition unit's publications show a steady trend over time towards laboratory research and away from survey work, as public health issues lost traction within the broader council (NZMRC, 1963). It was not enough. Bell reached retirement age in 1963. The British Medical Research Council's secretary, Sir Harold Himsworth, himself a distinguished researcher in the field, told local councillors that nutrition research's classical era was closing, and that advances in biochemistry would mop up residual issues (Shorland, 1980, p. 9). (Ironically, Himsworth's own council then cranked up massive expansion at his own Dunn Laboratory, in Cambridge). Working from this advice, and facing down widespread public, political and academic criticism, NZMRC decided to close its nutrition unit. Muriel Bell sank into a deep depression which lasted until her death in 1974, convinced that the nutritional and dietetic bridges between biological, medical and social science which she had laboured so hard to construct on the pattern recommended so vigorously by the League of Nations' nutrition committee now lay in ruins, murdered by biomedical imperialism. Vicarious revenge for her personal tragedy arrived in 1990 - when the minister of health, Helen Clark, destroyed an unreformable MRCNZ in order to rebalance public health and biomedical research in the new Health Research Council.

Conclusion

This rebalancing brought no joy to Muriel Bell: she was long dead by 1990. But we should recognise that with her there died a crucial link to New Zealand rural sociology's infancy. Introducing a brief extract from DSIR's annual report for fiscal 1938, Jim Robb (1987, p. 44) devotes one line to Elizabeth Wilson's transfer from BSSR to Bell's new nutrition unit before tramping on with his quest to explain why the Bureau died. But transferring Wilson's dietetic study to NZMRC converted a broad

research programme into a dangerously narrow project focussed on occupational living standards. The Bureau became vulnerable when dietetics decamped, not when Peter Fraser took offence at the dairy farmer study's unpalatable research findings. This removal hacked BSSR from the skeleton which, however tenuously, articulated thirties' rural sociology in thirties New Zealand.

In the long run, perhaps all this mattered less than one might expect: after all, rural sociology developed weakly in New Zealand on either the American or the British model. But from the late 1960's this sub discipline came under challenge on its home range. Critics castigated British community studies as idiosyncratic ethnographies which failed to build into larger explanatory structures (Bell & Newby, 1971, p. 17). Famously, C.Wright Mills' (1959, pp. 50-75) castigated abstracted empiricism in fifties American sociology; but American rural sociology was even worse: a dismal backwater institutionally isolated from the broader enterprise, its practitioners uncritical under labourers for powerful groups dominating (and profiting mightily from) research in land grant colleges' agro-industrial complex (Hightower, 1978). Goaded by these criticisms, a stroppier American "new rural sociology" (or "sociology of agriculture") was born. Strongly neo-Marxist in orientation, this enterprise probed production chains for particular agricultural commodities - among the earliest studies, and still among the best, is Bill Friedland's scandalised exploration of corporate monopoly in the Californian lettuce industry (Friedland, Barton & Thomas, 1978). But even at its best this sociology of agriculture faced difficulties. Like other projects rooted in Marx's work, it had a profound productionist bias, while food (even more than other commodities) production only made sense when framed by consumption - and *vice versa*, of course. Beyond this, agriculture is a waning element in food production today, as more and more value is added to farm-grown commodities in industrial plants. These factors have seen the cutting edge in sociological investigation shift from agriculture (let alone rurality) to food (Beardsworth & Keil, 1997; Warde, 1997); compare Friedland's lettuce study, so excellent in its time, with Boisard's (2003) recent splendid account of how Camembert has been made and remade, moulded and eaten, promoted and struggled

over, as cheese and as myth. Borrowing from medical sociology, one important current research focus in the sociology of food concerns struggles over medicalisation (Germov & Williams, 1999). The act of ingesting food always has borne implications ranging far beyond bodily nutriment: consider *sweet, bitter, savour, taste, spice, refinement,* all words which migrated from gustatory to cultural lexicons. Food is a battleground today, with health scares a principal weapon. Public health warriors struggle against more-or-less "ignorant" beliefs, from the Atkins diet to the virtues of lettuces grown under pyramidal cloches, hampered only by the fact that their own scientific' recommendations change as rapidly as fashion's hemlines. Manufacturers exploit every turn in this battle, commodifying each new scientific fashion (vitamin-enriched foods in the 1920s, lower calorie "diet foods" sold at higher prices today). Sociological food research on topics like these has scarcely begun in New Zealand, but it holds immense promise. As that research proceeds, we should not lose sight of what went before. In a concealed manner, research in nutrition and dietetics articulated what passed for rural sociology in 1930's New Zealand. But as rural sociology has matured into the sociology of food, dietetics has become more interesting to, and important for, sociologists. Hidden from our discipline's history, Muriel Bell was a real foremother for New Zealand sociology. Let us honour her.

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"Business as Usual": Contextualising the GM/Organic Conflict Within the History of New Zealand Agriculture

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Abstract

This article argues a counter narrative to narratives of "the new". Specifically, that the conflict between GM and organic actually represents "business as usual" in terms of New Zealand's agricultural history. Without denying that GM does have unique features, or the unusual intensity of the conflict, this article puts the case that, in the light of some key historical moments in New Zealand agriculture, the current conflict is strikingly familiar.

Introduction

The rationale for this article emerged from an engagement between several new disciplinary areas (together with a few old ones). Grounded in rural sociology, and in particular the new variant rural sociology called Agri-Food theory, the research presented here commenced as an analysis of GM as a sociologically-challenging technology crisis (for our purposes in agriculture, but also across wider realms of New Zealand society), before deepening into a more extensive examination of the history of technology crises and conflicts in New Zealand agriculture. The result is a body of research which takes Agri-Food theory, together with an analysis of social movements, into territory that is otherwise being opened up by new Environmental Histories. As this summary suggests, the theoretical and disciplinary genealogy of these areas is tangled, but a brief overview can assist in identifying the major issues and players.

Over the last 25 years, the somewhat marginal area of rural sociology[1] (both in New Zealand and abroad) has been revitalised by the emergence of the neo-Marxist New Rural Sociology (see Buttel & Newby, 1980; Buttel, Larson & Gillespie, 1990). Similar theoretical trajectories in rural geography have recently resulted in a cross-

disciplinary body of research that can be termed the "Agri-Food" approach (Buttel, 1996; McMichael, 1994). This approach moves beyond the confines of rural space to follow the dynamics of whole agri-food systems from production to consumption: taking in links with labour studies, traditional rural sociology, consumption, food policy, the sociology of food and technology, and questions of nature/culture. While the overt rationale for the agri-food approach is to illuminate the theoretical complexity of some contemporary agri-food concerns (such as GM or the rise of organic agriculture), questions have always remained about the uniqueness of some of these "contemporary" phenomena. Clearly, science and technology studies (and the presence of New Social Movements) have influenced the Agri-Food approach and shifted the new rural sociology's focus away from the community studies, rural class conflicts, and family farm crises that have previously constituted the stock in trade of rural sociology (as summarised for New Zealand by Carter, 1990). However, both science and technology studies and the related study of new social movements implicitly privilege *contemporary* phenomena, and thus risk underplaying the importance of history in the analysis of agri-food phenomena.

Nor are the outside influences of science and technology studies (and new social movements) alone in promoting a tendency to characterise contemporary agri-food concerns as "new" phenomena; indeed the rhetoric of novelty also appeals to some currents within agri-food theory itself. In the once-popular food regimes narrative (Friedmann & McMichael, 1989), the current period is characterised as being a period of instability and flux in which the stable post-war order has disintegrated. Some advocates of this theory speak of a new (third)

[1] The centrality of agriculture to the history and formation of New Zealand as a settler state has not always been reflected in a similar concentration of sociological research on some of the key questions of agrarian and rural society. It seems, as Australian rural sociologist Geoff Lawrence has often argued, that the urban focus of sociology in the industrial west has been directly transferred onto societies like Australia and New Zealand, haphazardly bypassing what made us socially unique in a heady rush to discover why we weren't a rural backwater, both geographically and intellectually remote from 'real' industrial societies. Ian Carter raises similar concerns in the New Zealand context (Carter, 1990).

food regime which will re-configure basic relationships within the structures of global agricultural political economy themselves. As these examples suggest, the typical impetus has been to search for *propulsive* food systems that signify "new times" in the world food system (see Campbell & Coombes, 1999).

To embed these theoretical/historical concerns within a more specific contemporary case, we can consider the extent to which GM represents a "new" conflict in agriculture. At a surface level, GM is a technology that is clearly different to any prior iterations of the science of animal and plant breeding. Further, recent social and political conflicts over GM in New Zealand have been characterised by a tendency to construct an oppositional binary between GM and another "newcomer" to New Zealand agriculture - organic production (see Campbell, 2004). This clash of productivist agricultural science and new alternative agriculture systems appears to provide a paradigmatic case for our times, in which technological engagement across the nature/culture binary meets the new politics of risk articulated by the organic social movement. In New Zealand, the GM debate has even provided an arena for a resurgent Maori critique of Western scientific values and approaches to environmental management.

This article argues a counter narrative to these narratives of "the new", specifically that the conflict between GM and organic actually represents "business as usual" in terms of New Zealand's agricultural history. Without denying that GM does have unique features, or the unusual intensity of the conflict, this article puts the case that, in the light of some key historical moments in NZ agriculture, the current conflict is strikingly familiar.[2]

In proposing this argument, we engage with some new currents in the historical analysis of New Zealand agriculture. Just as Agri-Food theory in general has been grappling with the significance of technology,

[2] The need to engage with the agricultural history of New Zealand explains the interesting alliance of disciplinary interests of the authors; being a historian and a rural sociologist. This kind of analysis situates contemporary agri-food analysis as a site where wider interests in history and rural sociology can productively meet.

environment, and nature - in the contemporary setting, for example, by means of a complex dialogue with Bruno Latour and Actor Network Theory (see Lockie & Kitto, 2000) - the new environmental history of settler states like New Zealand has also been under revision. Environmental history takes insights such as Crosby's ecological imperialism and creates narratives of landscape transformation - and human/environment interactions - as the dynamic centre of a revisioning of New Zealand history, a development best exemplified by the recent collection of papers by Brooking and Pawson (2003). In particular, recent work on the "grasslands revolution" creates a compelling context for understanding science and technology conflicts in New Zealand agriculture, specifically as they occur around the historically central resource, soil.

This article accepts the value of the new environmental history/ies of New Zealand, and seeks to enlarge on the understanding of the grasslands revolution by introducing elements of the sociological analysis of New Social Movements alongside contemporary insights of Agri-Food theory. While our ultimate ambition is to draw out the clear similarities between conflict over soil technologies and the more recent conflict over gene technologies, this article can predominantly only address the first half of the argument. Here, therefore, we contend that from 1840 onwards different discourses of science within agriculture have been in conflict, with the dominant discourses tending to inform and authorise not only significant soil degradation in New Zealand agriculture but also significant disempowerment of indigenous land-use and management strategies. Critically, the emergence of the organic social movement in New Zealand in the 1940s marks a point of strong debate over the declining fertility and sustainability of pastoral farming in New Zealand. The resulting configuration of both scientific discourses and interest groups in the conflict provides a backdrop against which we can examine contemporary conflicts over GM and organic futures for New Zealand agriculture. GM as a technology may be new, but if we substitute "soil" for "genes", then every significant actor from the current conflict has already been clearly prefigured at key points in our agricultural history.

Divergent agricultures and points of conflict in New Zealandís history

Our analysis begins with a strange coincidence around the year 1840. European settlement in New Zealand began at a critical point in the development of western agricultural systems; Britain's Agricultural Revolution had just completed its first major phase as the empirical approach that had transformed farming systems during the eighteenth century reached its technological limits (Grigg, 1992, pp.181-183; Alley & Hall, 1941, p. 31). Enclosure and consequent innovations produced substantial increases in output and attendant rural under-employment, which in turn accelerated urban growth and industrial development (processes of intensification that became increasingly the model for agriculture), and stimulated an outflow of migrants seeking opportunities elsewhere. New Zealand's apparent agricultural potential was attractive (Wood, 2003), but tensions around settlement led to British annexation in 1840, with the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi. In the same year, the German chemist Liebig published *Organic chemistry and its application to agriculture and physiology*, the seminal text for a modern agriculture based on reductionist science that asserted the right to control elemental life processes. New Zealand and its farming future therefore began in the unstable space between two periods of agricultural change - one that had embedded new practices but was nevertheless still grounded in traditional attitudes to soil husbandry; the other based on more radical, qualitatively different paradigms that would encourage chemical inputs and industrial processes. While for decades the initial fertility of virgin soils neutralised the potential for conflict between these approaches in New Zealand, the longer-term effects of colonial exploitation inevitably brought them head-to-head.

From the start, circumstances in New Zealand forced agricultural development away from the concentrated agrarian settlements that immigration organisers had envisaged. While some flourishing Maori farms demonstrated how productive newly-introduced crops could be, colonists themselves had limited access to the promised land. Drawing on the Australian experience, some turned to pastoralism, negotiating leases with Maori to sidestep the government's pre-emptive land purchase clause in the Treaty. By the early 1850s New Zealand's

economic future was firmly tied to pastoral sheep farming and wool exports from the extensive open grasslands of both North and South Islands (Gardner, 1988; Holland, O'Connor & Wearing, 2002, p.72). Pastoralism continued to dominate even after Maori defeat in the 1860s wars ensured Pakeha dominance and access to fertile North Island acreages. More diverse agricultural practices followed, including dairying, wheat growing, and transition from native to sown pastures. Depression, debt, and disease, however, brought New Zealand farming to crisis point in the 1880s. It was rescued only by developments in refrigeration technology that opened up export markets in Britain for meat and dairy products, and transformed agriculture. Changes in land use, technology, and approaches to soil fertility also made smaller, more intensive family farms viable. Many of the large pastoral runs were broken up through the 1890s, but ongoing demand for land expedited alienation of much still in Maori ownership. Between 1890 and 1900, 27 per cent (3.5 million hectares) of existing forest was converted to farmland.

The crisis of soil fertility: Science, State and (fertiliser) industry

With more intensive farming, New Zealand producers who had drawn on virgin soil potency, renewal through periodic burning, and the recycling of nutrients from open-grazed stock, were now forced to confront real evidence of declining soil fertility. Such concerns were also widespread in Europe's increasingly industrial agricultural systems (Conford, 2001, pp.44-46). Here, Liebig's chemical analysis of plant nutritional requirements in 1840 had catalysed the development of a synthetic fertiliser industry; and although plant physiologists disputed his assertion of chemistry's leading role in defining the biological processes of growth (Werner & Holmes, 2002), the reductionist paradigm gained ground. Lawes opened the first superphosphate factory in 1841 in Kent, and by 1845, Britain was using 51,000 tons of his artificial fertiliser. In response to this worrying decline of fertility, a range of scientific discourses began to circulate around the problem of soil. We can initiate an analysis of these narratives from Liebig's revolutionary coupling of soil fertility to fertiliser, a link which unarguably came to dominate political

initiatives in New Zealand agriculture. Decreasing soil fertility brought new attention to issues of soil management, and the need for supplementing natural fertility with off-farm inputs of lime and fertiliser. Initially, the latter were organic by-products of local slaughter-houses, although unprocessed imported guano had been in use since 1867. Superphosphate imports began in 1875, and within six years, Kempthorne opened a manufacturing plant near Dunedin under government license; a second near Auckland soon followed, while basic slag, a phosphatic by-product of the European steel industry, was imported from 1891.

The period from 1880 until the outbreak of world war in 1914 was characterised by intensification, diversification, increased use of top-dressing with both synthetic and natural fertilisers, and increasing mechanisation. State involvement expanded, with the Department of Agriculture established in 1892 to coordinate agricultural production (Nightingale, 1992). In 1900, the Department began soil research into the chemistry of soils and then began comparative fertiliser experiments. By 1908, the country imported nearly 41,000 tons of fertilisers, predominantly phosphates. From the first decade of the twentieth century, therefore, New Zealand had instituted an agricultural regime that linked agricultural science, government activity, and the emerging fertiliser industry.

In 1914, when war required further intensification, New Zealand had over 14 million acres of sown pasture. War-related labour shortages encouraged mechanical technology, while imports of popular European slag ended and superphosphate manufacture increased to fill the gap. Demanding cheaper fertiliser, North Island farmers organised their own company. Supplies of phosphates were guaranteed by 1919 negotiations for Pacific mandated territories, which ensured New Zealand's interest in the rich Nauru and Ocean Island deposits (Macdonald, 1982). Wartime technological and scientific development stimulated popular interest in science, which in turn meant that organised scientific endeavour turned readily to reconstruction and agricultural issues once the war was over. With only marginal lands available for new acreage, improved productivity now relied on finding ways to increase stock-carrying and crop capacity, and thus the early 1920s saw

the Cawthron Institute, the New Zealand Dairy Co-op, the Meat Producers' Board, and a Soils Improvement Committee all enter into research. In 1926, following the advice of leading English grasslands scientist Sir George Stapledon, the government established the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research, and also finally began organised investigation into grasslands improvement, determining the nature of soil deficiencies and the real effect of phosphate applications, and developing plant varieties appropriate for New Zealand conditions.

Post-war, competition increased in the fertiliser industry. "Fertiliser wars" developed as new companies entered the market to profit from the move towards off-farm inputs (McCaskill, 1929, pp. 71-81). One result was that fraud and poor quality production of fertilisers (and also new fungicides and insecticides) became issues that prompted legislated control and registration - without actually denting state commitment to the industry. By 1927, over 1.4 million acres were top-dressed annually, with a further million acres by 1931 (Belshaw, 1933, p.27). The combined efforts of research and fertiliser use undoubtedly helped reverse declining productivity and alleviate low prices - even after Britain pulled out of wartime purchase agreements in 1920, with the resultant loss of markets.

However, even research and fertiliser could not counter the emergence of both hill country erosion and over-capitalisation of farmland, and many farmers faced serious debt after 1928, when world commodity prices collapsed in the Great Depression. Faced with economic crisis, the chosen policy was to intensify production further, easing the farmers' plight with debt remittances and providing labour at relief rates. Nevertheless, both urban and rural incomes dropped and unemployment spiralled, creating desperate, almost subsistence conditions for many, with significant concern about under-nutrition and declining health status in sections of the community. In 1935, on the verge of improvements in the global economy, an electorate disillusioned with government attitudes and past policies voted in the country's first Labour government. For many, Labour epitomised the possibility of change and a brighter future after the preceding years of social and economic distress. Because the Depression had highlighted endemic

weaknesses in New Zealand's agricultural practice and its vulnerability as a primary produce trader, new financial and marketing policies attempted to avoid wasteful overproduction and protect farmers - and the economy - from price fluctuations. The Primary Produce Marketing Act also included a subsidy for superphosphate, demonstrating that chemical inputs - and the tight relationship between the fertiliser industry, government and science - were considered vital to functional agriculture.

Divergent agriculture: The culture and politics of the early organics movement

The collision and collusion between State, science and the fertiliser industry in formulating a response to the soil crisis was resisted from a number of points in New Zealand. Most importantly, an emergent social movement based on the idea of organic agriculture brought together alternative scientific discourses with cultural and political visions of an independent New Zealand.

For those concerned with wider issues of land and nationhood, Labour's measures failed to adequately address social and environmental concerns. However, in the 1930s and 40s, agriculture continued its steady move towards industrialised practice, backed by the combined forces of commercial (fertiliser) interest, State, and a reductionist science that assumed an engineering and input-based approach to life processes. Alarmed, those who held alternative views of good practice in human-Nature relationships moved to form an identifiable movement.[3] They argued that a new order was needed, with improved principles of land-use that could not only provide for a more balanced system of production but also, critically, heal the body social. Supporters demonstrated a complex interweaving of ideology and belief, with a mix of concerns about the direction of modernity and

[3] There were always individual and often high profile organic practitioners: notable was Sir Charles Alma Baker, New Zealand surveyor turned Malayan rubber planter who developed controversial cultivation practices (later acknowledged as more productive) and in 1926 began farming Limestone Downs south-west of Auckland, on organic principles (Macdonald, 1993). Alma Baker wrote several books, among them *The soil and its products* (1938), *Peace with the soil* (1939), and with S.L. Bensusan, *The labouring earth* (1940).

the growth of materialism; the relationship between food quality and health; environment; sustainable use of resources; and spirituality. Reified as "the organic movement", groups developed almost simultaneously in western nations. New Zealand led the way in formal organisation, but had strong associations with similarly-minded proponents overseas, drawing on research undertaken in Britain and in Germany, where anthroposophist Rudolf Steiner developed his bio-dynamic approach.

The Humic Compost Club/Soil Association

National health, rather than agriculture directly, provided the initial impetus for a viable organic organisation in New Zealand, through the posited linkage between declining soil fertility and poor nutrition qualities in food. Dental surgeon Guy Chapman became curious about the wide variation in dental health of First World War recruits and, in later professional practice, the high incidence of leave in New Zealanders' teeth. After research, he concluded that diet was a key factor, and in 1922 joined the Food Reform Society to promote an improved national diet. Chapman became convinced that only food grown on composted soils, without artificial fertilisers, could provide optimal nutrition (Meechin, 1993). From 1930 he corresponded with Sir Albert Howard, a leading English organicist totally committed to the connections between soil, plant, and animal health, and manuring as the key to maintaining soil vitality. During nearly three decades as Imperial Botanist in India, Howard had adapted indigenous practices to develop the Indore method, a composting process based on scientific research to maximise humus production (Howard, 1940).

Chapman began introducing the benefits of whole food and composting to various institutions and communities, working also with far north Maori and Te Puea (pers. comm., R. & N. Chapman, 2003), and achieving apparently convincing results for health and wellbeing (Meechin, 1993, pp. 51-54). A popular public speaker, he had a regular nutrition programme on public radio that generated keen interest in his views and provided a platform for New Zealand's first organics society, the Humic Compost Club, launched in 1941 to wide public support. The

Club's first pamphlet, *The living soil*, sold 25,000 copies in the first two years, while one public demonstration of composting drew an audience of 3000. By 1943 membership had reached 1200. No available record exists to determine how many of these were farmers or horticulturists, however, then-Minister of Agriculture Ben Roberts, an ex-farmer, actively supported organic organisations and encouraged research. His commitment to organics was on the grounds of agricultural sustainability and a belief in spiritual connection, and therefore responsibility between people and the land (Roberts, 1965).

Other high profile public figures also supported organics. Chapman's circle of friends and acquaintances comprised an eclectic mix of New Zealand's contemporary intellectual and cultural elite, among them poet and essayist A. R. D. Fairburn; surgeon and medical researcher David Robb; Dove-Meyer Robinson, public visionary and later Mayor of Auckland; and influential Maori leader, Te Puea. Not all were practical organic gardeners, but by contributing to an active and cogent critique of New Zealand's political, economic, and cultural directions, all maintained spaces for alternative developments.

For supporters like Fairburn (who was *Compost Magazine* editor for six years), the goal was to promote better health, to improve and sustain soil fertility in ways that conserved resources and lessened environmental damage, and to significantly reduce both household and national dependence on foreign trade. While the decline of farming was of concern, worse was the perspective that the nation's loyalty as a producer of meat and dairy products to Britain was demeaning; that it dangerously skewed New Zealand's economic production; damaged its unique environment; and stifled a distinctive, independent, national identity. The organic approaches proposed from the 1930s suggested improving local self-sufficiency and co-operative development as options to an increasing dependence on overseas markets and imports of fertilisers.

World War II provided the appropriate stimulus for the establishment of an organised organic movement. The country was under pressure to increase food production, specifically to supply the United Kingdom and the massive build-up of Allied forces in the Pacific. Shortages of

imported fertilisers, however, meant rationing, which in turn caused panic among farmers and growers now assuming productivity gains from frequent fertiliser application. The organics movement suggested alternative and sustainable management, recognising perpetual limits to resources and the need to build up rather than mine the country's essential wealth, its soil. It actively participated in the "Dig for Victory" campaigns that encouraged backyard and community vegetable gardens, but (particularly after Ben Roberts' ill-health forced his early resignation) had less influence with government.

It is nevertheless clear from contemporary sources that even supporters of the industrial approach took notice of organic arguments that farming systems needed to maintain soil health in ways that recognised the environment as a closed, cyclical system. In Belshaw's massive *Agricultural organization in New Zealand* (1936) for example, Hudson and Scrivener critique New Zealand's colonial history:

> The cream of the fertility of the land was skimmed off ... The soil was looked upon as a storehouse of wealth awaiting exploitation with no thought of the future. ...This has been a feature of agricultural adolescence in all new countries... Sooner or later, the viewpoint must change and the soil must be viewed as a medium for converting fertilisers into farm produce. Complete manuring and the replacement annually of all plant foods removed or sold off the farm combined with a consideration of the natural resources of plant food in the soil has become a recognised practice in all mature countries. (1936, p. 404)

However, the "concept of complete manuring" could be developed only after the country's overwhelming phosphate deficiencies had been addressed. Hudson and Scrivener acknowledged that many blamed top-dressing and reduction in arable cropping for increased disease in stock and the declining quality of New Zealand exports, and argued that more (rather than less) science, hand-in-hand with good technical advice for farmers, was the way forward:

> the modern treatment of grassland is such a new project that we are only beginning to understand its possibilities. ...Only since 1922 has the world as a whole and the British Empire in particular begun to realize the potentialities of grassland properly managed.

> One thing is certain – New Zealand has more to gain by an intensive study of grassland problems than almost any other country, and furthermore no country is so likely to develop a technique to meet modern conditions in grassland farming.
>
> ...The rapidity of the progress likely to be made...will also depend very materially on the knowledge gained in the use of quantities and kinds of fertilizers.
>
> ...[Fertiliser practices are] only one aspect of the business of farming...they must be considered in relation to the system of farming as a whole....It is certain, however, that the well-being of New Zealand is intimately concerned with the use of artificial fertilizers and the more proficient the farmer can become in their use, the greater will be the prosperity of this country. (Hudson & Scrivener, 1936, pp. 405-407)

Similarly, Alley and Hall's consideration of "The Farmer and the World", the final chapter of their centennial survey *The farmer in New Zealand* (1941), also addressed criticism that existing levels of chemical top-dressing over-stimulated productivity to the point of soil exhaustion. The writers cited Lord Northbourne, an English organicist, partly to dismiss his warnings as merely "unconsciously express[ing] the resentment of an English farmer undersold by colonial produce on his own market", about acknowledged his concern over the "spiritual dangers" to the nation of viewing farming purely as a commercial, industrial venture. They also included Northbourne's ideas that industrial farming, by producing food of lesser nutritional value, contributed to Britain's rapidly expanding public health bill (Alley & Hall, 1941, pp. 126-128). Despite this, however, they concluded that neither Northbourne's arguments for organics, nor the self-sufficient organic family farms advocated by American economist-philosopher Ralph Borsodi as a defence against increasing global insecurity and interference from state and capital, had a place in New Zealand's push for "modernity". Pragmatically, the country:

> will have to make the best of the new industrialisation of farming, which has reached New Zealand only as an economic and not yet a social fact, and if the profession of farming has become as

> unsatisfying as Borsodi and Northbourne allege, we must solace ourselves for it in leisure-time occupations, like the rest of mankind. (Alley & Hall, 1941, pp. 129-130)

The Humic Compost Club's overt aim was economic organic sustainability, but it was as a "social fact" that its influence continued. Later renamed the Soil Association, Chapman's organisation remained New Zealand's most vigorous exponent of organic cultivation through ensuing decades, predominantly at the grassroots level of household rather than commercial production.[4] Post-war, Dove Meyer Robinson, President of the Compost Club 1947-53, made a further serious attempt to integrate a sustainable organic core into New Zealand's *mentalité*. Entering local politics in opposition to Auckland city's plans to discharge partly-treated sewage into the inner harbour, his campaign soon extended to a complete review of New Zealand's approach to agricultural and environmental sustainability. "Robbie", as he was popularly known, gained massive public support with his principles of complete management and re-use of organic wastes (including sewage) to balance loss of nutrients through intensive agricultural production. A prolific correspondent, he developed close associations with Howard in England, and with both local and overseas scientists and engineers working on plans for large-scale municipal composting. An equally energetic lobbyist, he instigated a national petition for a Commission of Enquiry into the Auckland Drainage Board proposals and the wider issue of waste disposal. This was supported by nearly every county, borough, and town council; the New Zealand branch of the British Medical Association; most hospital boards; many local branches of Federated Farmers; and thousands of citizens. Although the Commission's findings concluded that municipal composting was impractical, the campaign generated renewed awareness of the problem and potential of organic wastes. It also won Robbie the mayoralty, a position that maintained

[4] This does not imply insignificance; after all, as Helen Leach stressed in *1000 years of gardening in New Zealand* (1984, p. 6), domestic gardening has made a significant if under-estimated contribution to household food supplies through out human history.

the visibility of organic perspectives [5].

Despite these successes, organics failed to gain full mainstream credibility after WWII. Once again, war had accelerated scientific and technological development, with its climactic nuclear event the ultimate assertion of human capacity to control natural forces at the most elemental level. Technology developed for military purposes was now turned to "peaceful" objectives, including addressing major concerns about world food supplies in order to restore food security. DDT, taken up as a potent anti-malarial measure during the Pacific War, was rapidly accepted as an invaluable pesticide (see Hunt, 2004, elsewhere in this volume), and demobilised airmen and planes took fertiliser top-dressing to new levels, extending the productive exploitation of marginal lands. In 1950, the outbreak of the Korean War and new demand for primary produce clinched the country's commitment to industrial agriculture. Two approaches to agricultural science were now clearly identifiable: the organic, compost-based cyclical view of soil fertility, and the highly authorised input-driven view of 1950s agricultural science.

As a result, although keen to influence the nation's agriculture, the founders of New Zealand's Humic Compost Club remained more gardeners than farmers, their appeal limited to the potential for individual action among suburban and urban dwellers. Although both composters and bio-dynamicists sought credibility as offering scientifically-verified, viable alternatives to agri-chemicals, they were overwhelmed by postwar developments in chemical fertilisers, pesticides and herbicides, application technologies, and discourses of plenty. Organics thus went through a period of quiescence from the 1950s to the 1970s, when it re-emerged with the same radical intent to contest mainstream agriculture in New Zealand.

Discussion

The time-period featured in this article revolves around two periods of crisis in soil fertility. The first decades of the twentieth-century -

[5] All aspects of Dove Meyer Robinson's campaigns are covered in his extensive papers in the Auckland City Library: Sir Dove-Meyer Robinson Collection, Acc. 822.

particularly after WWI - provide ample evidence of declining soil fertility, together with a coalition of State, science institutions, and the emerging fertiliser industry which gave a high level of authorisation to the Liebig revolution. The ongoing soil fertility crisis apparent through the Depression, however, also created an opportunity for alternative discourse.

Mobilising from the crisis of confidence in fertiliser-driven solutions to soil fertility problems, the organics movement linked soil in/fertility to a range of social ills: declining nutrition, colonial dependency, and reductionist technical solutions to environmental problems. Championed by politicians, scientists, and prominent cultural figures, the organic movement therefore emerged at the moment when New Zealand agriculture was in a state of instability and crisis before and during WWII.

The dimensions of this challenge operated across several arenas of social activity. The organic social movement certainly attracted, and was given, sympathetic support from a number of scientists and scientific authorities, particularly in the promotion of "systems thinking" for agriculture problems and the potential bankruptcy of continuing with reductionist intensification in New Zealand agriculture. Maori leaders provided clear contributions in support of organics as an appropriate strategy for land-use, while cultural leaders like A. R. D. Fairburn saw organics as part of the de-colonisation of New Zealand culture. Through this frame of reference, soil fertility strategies since colonisation were strongly critiqued as being symptomatic of a sense of legitimate resource exploitation supporting the activities of empire. In contrast, visions of self-reliance and an independent identity for New Zealand situated organics as part of a wider cultural transformation.

By ten years after WWII, the organic challenge had almost completely dissipated, relegated largely to the realm of domestic gardening. The huge boost to political and public profiles of transformative agricultural technologies in the years after WWII provided significant impetus for the wider elaboration of chemical inputs into agriculture. Emergent agri-chemical industries formed an even tighter set of relationships with the state and science in New Zealand

agriculture than had been evident in the 1920s and 30s. At a global level, New Zealand rejected an independent agricultural future after WWII and continued to act as a key supplier of staple products to the UK until the crisis of 1973 when the UK entered the Common Market. In short, exploitation of soil resources secured New Zealand's place as a participant in the global relationships of food supply and science.

Conclusion

Having established the key relationships and conflicts operating around the first emergence of the organic agriculture movement in the 1940s, a following publication from this work will address the extent to which the second emergence of the organic movement, and its opposition to GM, represent "business as usual" for New Zealand agriculture. While we lack space to fully articulate this argument within this article, we can now identify several important similarities which warrant further investigation.

First, it is interesting to note the conflict between intensive agricultural science and more "systems-based" approaches to agriculture. If the central resource under exploitation in the first century of New Zealand agriculture was soil, then we can effectively argue that the same can be said of genetic resources in the current conflict. The first soil crisis pitted a broad group of scientists and other prominent individuals against the institutional complex of State-funded agricultural science and the fertiliser industry. In similar ways, the current GM conflict pits State and industry-funded scientists at Crown Research Institutes against a broad coalition of scientists, the environmental social movement, the organics sector, and even cultural celebrities.[6]

Second, we need to examine the positioning of Maori, and even the formation of a colonial critique by Maori in supporting the original organic critique of soil exploitation. It is possible to see contemporary anti-GM campaigners like Moana Jackson as prefigured by the backing and involvement of leading Maori figures like Te Puea in the 1940s soil conflict.

[6] There is some appeal in creating an argument that finds similarities between Fairburn and Mothers Against GE organiser Allanah Currie.

Finally, significant parallels exist between the "public good versus industry good" dimensions of both conflicts. In the first organic conflict, the power of industry, and the solidity of political relationships between industry, science, and government eventually secured the intensification pathway for New Zealand agriculture, legitimised under post-WWII rhetorics of scientific progress. The public good opposition to intensification of agriculture collapsed first to the local government level, and then to the level of suburban gardening in the 1950s. Likewise, in 2000, the Royal Commission on GM privileged industry good over broader social concerns with the GM debate also collapsing back to the level of local government discussion of GM-Free zones.

While clear differences exist between GM in 2000 and the 1940s soil crisis, we can generally conclude that the GM conflict is not unique in New Zealand's agricultural history. The "new" politics of risk turn out to have deep roots, and by substituting "genes" for "soil", the nexus between state, science and industry can be argued to have yet again secured political licence to engage in "business as usual" in the exploitation of New Zealand's agricultural resource base. By understanding earlier crises in New Zealand agriculture, the historical politics of agricultural science, and broader engagements with public concerns over new technologies in agriculture, we see that a novel technology like GM reproduces existing institutional relationships.

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The Rise and Fall of DDT in New Zealand

Lesley Hunt

Abstract

DDT began to be used in New Zealand after World War II. The chemical proved an immediate success in the control of grass grub and the consequent improvement of pasture, however, by 1970 DDT was banned on farmland. This article examines the introduction of DDT into New Zealand farming practice, then details its subsequent prohibition, including the influence of Rachel Carson's book *Silent spring*. Ultimately, it was consumer and governmental resistance to DDT residues in food for export markets which ended the use of DDT in New Zealand.

Introduction

Prior to British settlement the beetle *Costelytra zealandica*, popularly known as grass grub, lived in a state of equilibrium on the margins of the bush and the tussock grassland in the country of New Zealand. When British settlers planted exotic grasses and clovers to transform the bush and tussock into pasture and farmland they disturbed this equilibrium. Unfortunately, the larvae of the beetle found the roots of these exotic grasses extremely nourishing. This attraction coupled with an absence of predators and diseases on the new pastures triggered a massive increase in grass grub numbers and significant damage to the new grasslands.

Grass grub infestation was arguably the major technical barrier to increased farm productivity. With the use of significant government funding New Zealand scientists studied the biological control of grass grub, searching for parasites from overseas that might control this pest. In 1921 the first imported parasites were released; more followed in 1922, 1928, and 1933. Despite no evidence that any survived, between 1945 and 1952, further parasites and a nematode and bacillus, were released by the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research (DSIR), again with no recovery (Given, 1963).

The failure of forms of biological control against grass grub meant that farmers had to constantly re-sow pasture in order to maintain productivity. New areas of farmland, converted from bush and tussock, were soon after colonised and damaged by grass grub. Indeed, it was not until the 1940s that an insecticide was developed in the USA, that had the potential to wipe-out grass grub, and at remarkably low cost to farmers: this was DDT.

The arrival of DDT

In the Boer War there were 35 casualties from diseases such as typhus and malaria, for every one from enemy action. By World War I the figures were nine to one (Mellanby, 1992, pp. 18-19). When New Zealanders went to war again in 1939 this differential was reduced owing to the discovery of the insecticidal properties of a chemical known after the war as DDT. It is unlikely that many New Zealand soldiers in the Pacific came into contact with DDT as it was kept a military secret; it was used by the Americans for proofing leather and other articles prone to insect damage (Friedman, 1992, p. 363) and for aerial spraying against mosquitoes (Berns, 1996; Mellanby, 1992). However, several entomologists "spent 1943-44 in malaria control units with the New Zealand forces in the Pacific" and had an early introduction to this new insecticide (Galbreath, 1998, p. 93). At least one of them was involved in research into the biological control of grass grub and wrote cautiously about DDT on his return (Dumbleton, 1945).

The war with Japan finished with the explosion of two nuclear bombs. DDT was soon hailed as the "nuclear bomb of the insect world" (Dunlap, 1981). The first recorded experiments with DDT in New Zealand occurred in 1946 and were on codling moth and other orchard pests (New Zealand Parliament, 1945, p. 24). In part this reflected a growing use of agricultural chemicals in the form of fertilisers and trace elements, to make up for soil deficiencies that limited production. By 1948 DDT had been used on the grass grub beetle, but there were concerns about its harmful effect on bees (New Zealand Parliament, 1948, p. 30). No formulation had been found that sufficiently penetrated

the soil, but shortly it was reported that DDT and BHC[1] mixed with superphosphate looked promising in the control of the porina moth (oxycanus) in its caterpillar stage (Kelsey, Hoy & Lowe, 1950; New Zealand Parliament, 1950, p. 39).

DDT is wonderful but how can we use it?

At one stage grass grub research occupied more staff in the Entomology Division of the DSIR than any other project (New Zealand Parliament, 1950, p. 34). In 1951, the superphosphate-DDT mix developed for porina proved effective against grass grub (Kelsey, 1951; Kelsey & Hoy, 1950). Although scientists were also experimenting with other chemicals (New Zealand Parliament, 1954, p. 13) and the search for a means of bio-control continued (Given, 1963; New Zealand Parliament, 1950, p. 34), DDT seemed the way forward. The superphosphate-DDT mix was cheap (5 shillings per acre) and appeared to last for two years. Dosages of up to 2lb per acre were tested extensively in both the North and South Islands with no adverse effects found on earthworms or the germination of grasses, cereals and crucifers (New Zealand Parliament, 1951, p. 32). By 1952, DSIR scientists were experimenting with different methods of applying superphosphate- DDT: by aeroplane, spin dresser, top dresser and through drill tubes (New Zealand Parliament, 1952, p. 34). The report of the Entomology Division for 1954 estimated that of the 150 tons of DDT used that year, 107 tons would be used to control grass grub and porina, 20 tons would be used in orchards, and 20 tons in fly sprays (New Zealand Parliament, 1954, p. 13).

By the late 1950s, so many agricultural chemicals were entering the country that the Government decided registration and regulation of their use was necessary. In 1959 the Agricultural Chemicals Act was passed, the main thrust of the legislation being the correct labelling of chemicals and clarification on how to use them. At the time, DSIR listed 120 certified materials in 60 different classes. There were 15,000 agricultural chemicals on sale. At the first reading of the Bill the Minister

[1] Benzene Heptachloride, later known as Lindane was the British answer to DDT. Dieldrin was the American answer.

of Agriculture noted that in the past the main uses of chemicals had been in the horticultural industry, whereas now there were various DDT mixtures, 2-4 D, 2-4-5 T and others used in pastoral agriculture. The main argument in Parliament was who should be on the resulting Agricultural Chemicals Board which was to administer the Act, regulate sales and set standards and procedures for the manufacture and distribution of agricultural chemicals. In passing, scientists were congratulated for solving the problem of grass grub (New Zealand Parliament, 1959, pp. 1519-20, 1916-33, 2552-4). It was estimated they had saved New Zealand £15,000,000 (Miller, 1963, p. 105).

The residue problem

The first concerns about DDT residues in soil and meat in New Zealand surfaced in 1953 (Galbreath, 1998, p. 96). The Entomology Division's Annual Report to Parliament said, "A careful watch is being kept on the possibility of DDT accumulation occurring in the animal fat of export meat" (New Zealand Parliament, 1954, p. 13), and in 1955 the report stated: "The question of insecticide residues and uptake by stock is important and being investigated" (New Zealand Parliament, 1955, p. 15). By the 1960s, America and European countries were expressing concern about the impact of organochlorine insecticides on other organisms and on human health, raising the possibility of trade problems if countries importing meat from New Zealand placed restrictions on insecticide residues in meat and dairy products (Galbreath, 1998, p. 97).

The political activity surrounding the European Economic Community (EEC) and a debate about whether New Zealand should join the International Monetary Fund overshadowed a very significant event in June 1961, when a shipment of meat was rejected by the United States for chemical contamination. There were conflicting reports about what had happened and how the contamination had occurred (e.g., Chisholm (1992), "Dr Cunningham"(1961), "Frenzy" (1961) and Anon. (1963)), nevertheless, this was the first time the reality of the residue problem hit home to the New Zealand Government. A flurry of activity ensued. Topdressing of land against insect pests was to be subject to controls drawn up by the Agricultural Chemicals Board. The first

regulations to reduce the residues in agricultural produce covered the maximum height of grass over which DDT was to be applied and instituted withholding periods after application ("Regulations", 1961). The *Stock (Insecticides & Oestrogens) Regulations 1961* prohibited "the use on livestock of preparations containing aldrin, dieldrin, benzene heptachloride (BHC), lindane, DDT and methoxychlor". Farmers' stocks of these chemicals were confiscated (farmers were paid compensation) and they were sprayed or buried on marginal land throughout New Zealand (AgResearch, 1993).

The reaction to these decrees was mixed. *Straight Furrow* reported on an address given by the Assistant Director General of Agriculture in which he stressed that "insecticides and related agricultural chemicals play an essential part in agriculture" ("Dr Cunningham", 1961). They were estimated to increase production by fifty percent. He also spoke of the growing awareness of the long-term risk from exposure to minute quantities of poison, explaining how tolerance levels were set. No residues of any kind were permitted in milk; fat in meat was allowed up to seven parts per million DDT but no BHC:

> For the future [the Department of Agriculture is] making sure by educational and legislative means that future production is uncontaminated and carrying out research that will help in ensuring safe and effective use of pesticides ("Dr Cunningham", 1961).

A *New Zealand Farmer* editorial titled 'Frenzy over farm chemicals' (1961) was concerned that farmers would so fear chemicals they would stop using them. Farmers made strong representations to government through Federated Farmers for reimbursement for confiscated chemicals. A letter to the Prime Minister "made no bones about saying that the government had been slow to act, slow when acting, and niggardly in its approach to the question of farmers' losses" ("DDT and all that", 1961).

The *Compost Journal* was the strongest voice against the use of artificial chemicals in agriculture and horticulture and foreshadowed much of the later debate. While policymakers and farmers had concerns about the impact of DDT residues on export markets, the *Compost Journal*

was alone in questioning the safety of produce sold on the New Zealand market. The editor wrote: "I, as a medical practitioner, would strongly advise my friends not to consume the produce produced in such a manner [using DDT] until adequate research has been done on the effect on consumers" (Abraham, 1961b, pp. 25-26). In the same issue an account was given of a Federated Farmers meeting where the chairman said, "These insecticides have been spread on farms and market gardens throughout New Zealand, often on the advice of officers of Government Departments who should have known better". He was worried that if DDT was discovered in butter the U.K. margarine manufacturers would be "pleased" as this would provide a case against New Zealand exports. In short: "It was imperative that the high prestige of the Dominion as a primary producing country should be maintained" ("Insecticides found", 1961).

Regulate or educate? Limiting the debate

> It would therefore be unfortunate if any official frenzy for clapping on regulations on the use of farm chemicals resulted in fear of using them spreading like contagion over the farming community. Instead of resorting to regulatory control, a more rational and less objectionable method of achieving safeguards ... would surely have been through a campaign of farmer education and advice. The possibilities of this approach have apparently been ignored in the panic following the incident ... No-one questions the gravity of the chemical problem so far ... Although many farmers have been careless, and indifferent in the past, it can be assumed that, following the spate of publicity and near hysteria in some quarters the farming community is now well aware of its responsibilities and has a good grasp of the practical recommendations for the safe use of insecticides on pests. It should have been possible for the Department of Agriculture to contact every farmer direct through the various publicity media etc. It is likely that such an approach would have earned more good will and co-operation than the course adopted of hastily gazetting regulations few, if any, of which are capable of being policed ("Frenzy", 1961).

This excerpt from the *New Zealander Farmer* expressed the debate about

the need to educate farmers about the use of DDT rather than use regulations. It was also a question of limiting the debate in order to minimise its negative consequences in export markets. *Straight Furrow* frequently reported Department of Agriculture officials stressing the need for farmers to control the use of DDT. Officials appealed for the "co-operation of farmers" and stressed that the "Department didn't want to give it undue publicity but rather to make the regulations known by contact at meetings or individually" ("Insecticides and residues", 1961). The Director General of Agriculture, (also chairman of the Agricultural Chemicals Board) was reported as saying, "The over tolerances were not dangerous, nor would they taint the meat, but U.S. health and agriculture authorities had set the maximum very low to give a wide safety margin" (Abraham, 1961a, pp. 3-4).

The restrictions on the use of DDT became more stringent each year. For example, stock withholding periods were continually increased, and the maximum height of grass on which it could be applied was decreased (Agricultural Chemicals Regulations 1961, amendments made in 1962 and 1963). But, farmers had become so reliant on the use of DDT to control grass grub that these restrictions created a big problem. The *New Zealand Farmer* magazines of the early sixties carried many articles about individual farms which mentioned that DDT was applied routinely every three years. Table 1 gives an idea of how the use of DDT increased from 1951 to 1962.

Table 1: Use of DDT-superphosphate over the years 1950 to 1962

Year	DDT-superphosphate used (in tons)
1950-51	153
1951-52	2,109
1952-53	4,467
1953-54	6,200 (estimate)
1957	7,000
1957-58	600 DDT only
1960-61	92,100 (10 months)
1962	75,000 DDT super with 1,200 DDT

Source: New Zealand Parliament, AHJR H-34 reports over the periods mentioned. The seasons do not necessarily match.

Silent spring

In 1962, Rachel Carson's *Silent spring* was published and received great acclaim. The book alerted consumers to the dangers of DDT and subsequently changed attitudes to the use of agricultural chemicals world-wide (Lear, 1997). The book had its greatest impact in the USA. Indeed, President Kennedy personally instigated a review of all government departments associated with pesticide use and said this was due to the book (Lear, 1997, pp. 414-420).

Silent spring provoked responses in New Zealand. *Straight Furrow* indirectly referred to *Silent spring* in an article headed "Common sense about insecticides" and asked:

> Are insecticides a danger to human life? ... Lately there has been a revival of interest in this problem because of a number of reports, on little evidence, that they are all more damaging to the body than has been thought. ("Common sense", 1962)

The article compared the risks to that of being killed by a motor car and quoted a professor of pharmacology who argued: "The march of science is the march of progress in increasing efficiency and combating disease and want" ("Common sense", 1962). Further, the Agricultural Chemicals Board discussed the book:

> The board was not concerned with the literary merits ... but with the writer's assessments of possibilities. After some discussion members agreed that, in achieving "entertainment value" in her book Miss Carson made predictions of disaster more sweeping than were justified, and open to misconstruction by some readers. It was considered, however, that subject to this qualification the interest aroused by the publication was timely from the board's point of view as it would draw attention to regulations and safety precautions governing the use of modern compounds. ("Board", 1963)

The board went on to emphasise that all chemicals can be dangerous if misused and outlined the board's responsibilities. Similarly, the *New*

Zealand Journal of Agriculture reviewed *Silent spring*, supporting the pro-chemical views of the Department of Agriculture:

> It is unfortunate that Miss Carson has not dealt more with the benefits which agricultural chemicals have conferred on farmers throughout the world ... she must realize that without them, the world would be a poor place to live in, however beautiful it might remain, and that the search for biological control of pests and diseases which she advocates as an alternative is too slow and inefficient to be a decisive factor in the eternal struggle between man and his natural enemies. (Ministry of Agriculture, 1963, p. 503)

Residue identification and the development of grass grub resistance to DDT

Following the crisis of 1961 the Meat Producers Board had been given powers to impound meat with high chemical residues. The costs of this were averaged across all farmers by levying all meat exports at the rate of 1/20 of a penny per pound to pay farmers for lost income from such residues. However, by late 1963 it was reported that Mr Hilgendorf, a member of the Meat Producers Board, had noted that "the number of tests showing a high DDT content were too large and in fact there was even some indication that there had been an increase in the number of tests showing residues" ("Residues", 1963). Further, the Meat Producers Board argued it could not continue to pay out this money for farmers' losses when obviously nothing was being done to correct the problem:

> DDT will be with us for some time - nothing can touch it in safety and economy ... We ask that farmers do their utmost to observe the proper precautions in applying DDT. If you can do this it will help us considerably to increase farm production in New Zealand. ("Residues", 1963)

"It is a case of the careless few spoiling things for the great majority", said the Director of the Entomology Division of DSIR in another *Press* article on the same day ("The careless few", 1963). In short, the problem remained to balance the risk to export markets from residues against undoubted gains in production from DDT. However, the issue of chemical residues became increasingly prominent with the development of more

accurate methods of measurement. Minute dosages in food could now be measured and were increasingly linked with chronic illnesses in international publications. This health concern was codified in 1966, when the first international meeting of the Codex Alimentarius Commission was held in the Hague and set tolerance levels for pesticides (New Zealand Parliament, 1966a, p. 12).

Also problematic was the issue of grass grub resistance to DDT. In 1961 the *Compost Journal*, which took a strong line against the use of any pesticides, reported that the World Health Organisation had stated that many countries were finding insect resistance to DDT (Abraham, 1961a, pp. 3-4). In New Zealand, the ineffectiveness of DDT was initially attributed to soil type or incorrect application, not to the development of resistance (Department of Agriculture Advisory Division, 1963), but others at the time admitted that there were some problems about the dosages of DDT required to kill grass grub ("Residues", 1963). Perrott (1963) talked of immunity and Elliot (1963) asked "resistance or tolerance?" Scientists were aware of the disquiet that resistance to DDT would cause and suggested:

> The choice of wording used by those of us who come into contact with the public is important ... Recent developments in the field of literature [i.e., *Silent spring*] render it desirable that we should speak with one voice, however, and there is a public-relations policy problem. (Elliot, 1963)

Resistance was confirmed early in 1965, when Mr Fenemore, leader of the newly formed Chemical Control Section of the Entomology Division of DSIR, reported that grass grub from an area with a 10 year history of DDT treatment were 50 times more difficult to kill than those from an untreated area ("Grass grub", 1965).

To ban or not to ban? The search for alternatives

The first suggestion that DDT-superphospate should be banned altogether came in 1963 from the Agricultural Chemicals Board. However, the Government decided against it, as there was no alternative form of control available that was as effective or economical ("The careless few", 1963). Eventually, though, it came to be accepted

that a total ban was inevitable. Work on alternatives increased through the late sixties. Bio-controls were still sought (Helson, 1963; New Zealand Parliament, 1966b, p. 21) and trials with other chemicals continued. The DSIR reported in 1967 that 43 insecticides had been tested in the previous year. Lindane use was allowed for DDT resistant grass grub (New Zealand Parliament, 1967, p. 15). An article in a farmers' newspaper in 1968 asked the question "After DDT - what?" (1968). That year the Minister of Science wrote to pesticide manufacturers asking for possible alternatives for the control of grass grub which resulted in many chemicals being tested but no suitable DDT substitutes were found (New Zealand Parliament, 1968, p. 9).

The Department of Health continued routine sampling and no tests showed residues above those allowed by the Food and Drug Regulations ("Pesticide residues", 1969). However, this statement conflicts with that in an article in *Soil and Health* (the new name of the *Compost Journal* from August 1965) reporting on a joint meeting of the World Health Organisation and the Food and Agriculture Organisation in Geneva, which said, "No food is regularly analysed in New Zealand" ("Poison", 1969). Meanwhile DDT residues were found far from their source when DDT was measured in the fat and liver of Antarctic seals and penguins (Anon., 1969). (The Ecology Division's report to Parliament in 1971, "DDT in the Environment", indicated that the DDT found in seals and penguins in the Antarctica probably originated from human food wastes at nearby bases (New Zealand Parliament, 1971b, p. 28).

In 1968, the Agricultural Chemicals Board recommended to Government that applications of DDT to dairy pasture be subject to permit and that these permits be very severely restricted. Markets overseas had introduced more stringent measures for residue tolerances (New Zealand Parliament, 1968, p. 13). The withholding period for sheep and cattle was increased the next year (New Zealand Parliament, 1969a, p. 14). However, the Entomology Division's report said, "Providing residue limits for DDT can be kept within acceptable limits, DDT may still be used for grass grub control for a number of years." Forty more alternative insecticides had been evaluated without success (New Zealand Parliament, 1969b, p. 13).

Life without DDT: More chemicals?

By 1970 international resistance to the use of DDT was mounting and the regulations on its use in different countries were regularly reported in *Soil and Health*. At the beginning of 1970 the Minister of Agriculture announced that all DDT use was to be banned on pastoral land from the end of June ("DDT banned", 1970). This announcement appeared unexpected: the *New Zealand Farmer* carried an advertisement for DDT in the issue the week prior ("DDT" (advertisement), 1970).

The responses were many and mixed. *Straight Furrow* in an article titled "Overall balance in use of pesticides beneficial to man" (1970), wanted to reassure its readers about the use of chemicals. Farmers and their representatives were quick to point out that the substitute chemicals were much more expensive ("DDT banned", 1970). Advertisements appearing in the same newspaper stated that the non-DDT products advertised for grass grub control were government subsidised. Farmers were not satisfied with the alternatives. The first reports asking for an additional subsidy appeared in March and had titles such as: "More help needed on pest control since DDT ban" (1970) and "Increased assistance needed on pest control"(1970). The latter article argued that 1,000 tons of DDT was sufficient to "insect proof" three million acres of land in pasture. The cost had been 45c per acre per year. It would now be between $7.48 and $14.46 per acre for two applications to control grass grub and porina separately. This information was published alongside a request for subsidies on fungicides for facial eczema, worm drenches and bloat control, all of which were turned down. In the same article mention was made of the fact that farmers were already receiving subsidies on 34 items.

Elsewhere, the cost of the new chemicals and changes in practice were emphasised, though farmers wanted to make clear they were still thinking of their country: "The protection of overseas markets is vital to our economy, but the banning of DDT will impose a heavy financial burden on many farmers," said the Dominion President of Federated Farmers, Mr P.S. Plummer ("DDT", 1970). Mr Kelsey of the Entomology Division of DSIR, questioned whether the new chemicals in the organophosphate group proposed for grass grub control would be more

dangerous than DDT ("DDT alternatives", 1970). He pointed out that one of the possible replacements, fensulfothion, which was still killing soil organisms after a year, had caused the deaths of many birds and was highly toxic to humans. This was also reported in *Soil and Health* ("Care needed", 1970), which quoted the *Christchurch Star* version of the Kelsey report in full (Meechin, 1970). This edition also has a full page collage of headlines from newspapers and one of them is a quote from Dr McQueen, Director of the National Poisons Centre, saying this chemical was more dangerous than DDT ("From the newspapers", 1970). Questions were also raised about the need for the DDT ban - did it have any scientific foundation (Chapman, 1970) and had it just resulted from the imposition of restrictions in export markets? ("DDT alternatives", 1970).

There was one report in the farming press at the time on the Entomology Division's bio-control research but the greatest emphasis was on the search for new insecticides ("Ban on DDT", 1970). *The Press* suggested hope for alternatives. For example, it reported how one farmer, Mr C.E. Maindonald of Morven, ploughed early in the morning at weekends, when other farmers were not likely to be working, to let the maximum number of available sea gulls "do a marvellous job." He said, "They do not charge any overtime". Mr Maindonald also used stocking levels that kept the grass short at the time the beetle was flying which allowed the gulls easier access to the beetles as they had nowhere to hide ("Success", 1971).

In 1971, the range of scientific disciplines of staff researching grass grub in DSIR was expanded because a "thorough understanding of the biology and behaviour of insect pests and host plant relationships" was required for the "development of pest control without the use of toxic chemicals". Forty new DDT substitutes were evaluated and rejected in 1971. Meanwhile the "integrated control" of insect pests was studied in orchards (New Zealand Parliament, 1971b, p. 18). Each year the Agricultural Chemicals Board reported on how many products it had registered and how many applications for new agricultural chemicals it had received. For example, in 1971 it had 1,271 registered products and had received 177 applications (New Zealand Parliament, 1971a, p. 16). In

short, with the banning of DDT and other toxic substances the number of new agricultural chemicals a farmer had to deal with was growing, such that "in one year every New Zealand farmer is likely to use well over one hundred different chemical compounds as part of his or her normal farming practice" ("A hard look", 1984). This article further noted that:

> One argument is that it's [the Pesticides Board] simply a rubber stamp for the chemical companies - with farmers paying the price for any mistakes. The counter argument is that the board, with limited resources, successfully walks the narrow path between over-regulation and allowing farmers reasonably rapid access to new chemicals. The economic advantage of this to farmers more than makes up for the occasional inevitable mistake. ("A hard look", 1984)

In 1989, the Pesticides Board banned all use of DDT (Ministry for the Environment, 1997, p. 8).

Long-term impact of DDT

One initially welcomed attribute of DDT was its longevity. In pastoral farming on most soils it only needed to be applied every three years, however, not realised was that the form in which it was used - consisting of large particles - takes a long time to break down in soil, particularly in dryland (Boul, 1995). As a result some agricultural produce still contains DDT residues. Thus, scientists in the late 1980s and early 1990s (Morton & McBride, 1991, 1990) became involved in studying ways of managing farms with high levels of soil DDT and its breakdown components DDD and DDE (Boul, 1995). In 1998, the Alpine Dairy Company had a DDT officer, whose job was to encourage dairy farmers to minimise DDT residues in their milk. Part of this practice was to declare that certain land areas with high soil DDT were not suitable for dairying; when the returns for dairy products were higher than those from wool and meat, this had a significant effect on some land values. The residual legacy of DDT use lives on.

The search for bio-control and other techniques

Grass grubs also live on! It is considered that over nine million hectares of grassland in New Zealand is prone to damage by grass grub, and this causes losses in production through reduced carrying capacity and the need for more frequent pasture renovation. This loss was estimated to cost the pastoral sector $41 to $89 million in 1993 (Garnham & Barlow, 1993).

At present grass grub occupy a team of scientists in AgResearch at Lincoln who have produced a bacterial biological control product marketed as *Invade*, first isolated in 1981. In 1986, the Pesticides Board allowed this bacteria to be tested in the laboratory and it finally achieved full registration in 1991 (Jackson, Pearson, O'Callaghan, Mahanty & Willocks, 1992). It was the first endemic bacterium to be considered for registration. Its formulation as a commercial product has been difficult, with real success coming only in 2000. This commercial development has been all the more challenging because in the present research environment, in which products are expected to compete in an international market, such a product would have a limited market because grass grubs are only endemic to New Zealand.

Despite these scientific advances there has been no breakthrough to rival DDT. Recently mainly 'cultural' methods of grass grub management have been advocated. These entail an awareness of the life cycle, and the natural pathogens and predators of the grass grub (Pers comm., Joan Pearson, 1998).

Conclusion

Rachel Carson is quoted as saying in a CBS television panel discussion:

> Man is part of nature, and his war against nature is inevitably a war against himself ... I truly believe that we in this generation must come to terms with nature, and I think we are challenged as mankind has never been challenged before to prove our maturity and mastery, not of nature, but of ourselves. ("Rachel Carson", 1964)

Similarly, Dunlap argued there are parallels between DDT and the atomic bomb: "DDT ... came home in 1945 on a wave of publicity and high

hopes. It was the atomic bomb of the insecticides, the killer of killers, the harbinger of a new age of insect control" (1981, p. 3). Without doubt, DDT has a toxic legacy that survives far beyond the euphoria of its discovery and use; rather like the radioactive fallout from the atomic bomb. Hynes (1989) has suggested some guidelines for the analysis of biotechnology, directly applicable to the 'rise and fall' of DDT and that generalise from the Manhattan Project. Thus, the development and use of the atomic bomb and DDT share at least four elements: (i) the development of a mythology around the technology that makes it seem as if the country cannot survive without it; (ii) the lag of policy, risk and ethical analysis behind technology development; (iii); the new technology is produced as the only solution, not as one among many possible solutions; and (iv) those who profit from the technologies are not at risk from them. The latter element is particularly significant. A crucial reason why the banning of the pastoral use of DDT came so quickly in New Zealand was that those who used the technology and profited from it (i.e., farmers) were also at risk from it as it affected their economic base (i.e., access to export markets).

Parallels with the atomic bomb also extend into the dissemination of information. Thus, information about the banning and restriction of DDT was limited in the public press in the 1960s and 1970s, while the farming newspapers were seen as a medium for communicating the regulations and encouraging adherence to them. Indeed, the *New Zealand Farmer*, particularly in its rare editorials, produced very emotional responses, expressing the fear that farmers might abandon the use of chemicals altogether. But, an educational process among farmers *per se* did not work. DDT residues in agricultural products actually increased after 1961 (as did, more pertinently, the capacity for measuring residues), so in response to the risks posed to farmers (as well as 'the country') further regulation of DDT use was tried, and eventually DDT had to be banned from use on pastoral land in 1970, and in total in 1989.

Interestingly, there was never a loud public or mainstream expression of concern about DDT. Local opposition did not bring down DDT. Only those on the margins, such as the subscribers to the *Compost Journal*, expressed fears about DDT long before its regulation and abandonment

was considered. At the same time, it is important to emphasise that New Zealand had controls for DDT use in place before *Silent spring* was published. Certainly those of us who were adolescents in the 1960s knew about *Silent spring* and had a developing environmental awareness, but we did not know about DDT use in our own country unless we were on farms ourselves. Right through the 1960s the regulations were continually modified as scientists struggled to find ways of keeping DDT in use with minimal possible residues in animal products, and to give them time to come up with alternatives. But external events intervened, lowering DDT residue tolerances even further, finally resulting in the banning of its major use on pasture, two years before the same thing happened in the United States.

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Crisis and Identity: Autobiographies and Farm Life in the 1930s and 1980s.

Alison Loveridge

Abstract

Over one hundred "farm" autobiographies have been written since 1984. Some are published professionally, others are self published. Virtually none have reflected on the impact of the Fourth Labour Government's neo-liberal policies on farming, raising questions about the social context that produces such work. The writers have often retired, and are writing about a way of life they feel is disappearing. Stories about the 1930s Depression are common. This article compares the comments made about the Depression in autobiographies of farm people who lived through this era, with what rural people said about another era of significant economic hardship – the restructuring of the mid-late 1980s. This paper explores the way farm people present their experiences of hard times, and speculates on how a coming generation of farm writers might finally present the 1980s as a moral tale for the younger generation.

Introduction

When most of our memories have disappeared after a few months, remembering is based on social understandings of what is most important in our lives, and what is most important to our current selves. Repeated events disappear into distillations of underlying meaning rather than video-like recordings of events (Kotre, 1995). The moments that most stand out in our lives are often social ones, from unique moments like the announcement of the end of World War II, to Christmas celebrations, where family ritual aids memory through repetition. Sharing an experience heightens emotion, and emotion enhances remembrance (Misztal, 2003, p. 81). Social context also tells us what a life that is lived well is like: this comes from family interaction, from communities such as ethnic groups in which we are immersed,

from the media, and ultimately the state via the education system and national commemorations such as New Zealand's ANZAC day (Misztal, 2003. pp.17-18). We remember intensely as we grow towards adulthood. We do things for the first time, becoming independent, developing a sense of self and direction. This leads to generational memories – where events of major significance can create defining moments for those who lived through them, particularly those in a common relationship to that event (Misztal, 2003, pp.86-87). The Depression of the 1930s is such a defining event, an experience that has come to be socially constructed, which people use as a guide to how a life should be lived. In this article I compare the comments made about the Depression in autobiographies of farm people who lived through this era, with what rural people said about another era of significant economic hardship – the restructuring of the mid-late 1980s.

Autobiographies

Because of the significance of the 1980s to farm owners and employees, and because the experiences of this era are ongoing in some marginal farming areas, I originally sought stories from New Zealand farm autobiographies about this era that would be meaningful to those engaged in contemporary economic struggle, particularly stories about coping, even of transcending farming by leaving and establishing a satisfying life elsewhere. I wondered if such stories could be useful in helping to turn private pain into a social problem and give people a positive new identity outside farming in a country where farm life occupies a unique status in our sense of national identity.

But although over 105 farm related autobiographies have been published since 1986, when nearly one third of farm people marched on Parliament in protest at government policy, none of them provided the stories of making do - the moral confirmation that the people count not the job - that I expected. Hugh Campbell interviewed people about the impact of restructuring in mid Canterbury and their accounts vividly portray how farm people coped (Campbell, 1994). Why were such stories absent from the autobiographies? This led me to an exploration of the nature of the autobiographies of farm employees and owners. The

autobiographies provided the stories about coping I was hoping for, except they were for the 1930s Depression. Seventy years later, what do they mean and what can they tell us about coping in the present?[1]

Partial answers to these questions can be found through reading farm autobiographies themselves. In New Zealand as elsewhere, more autobiographies are being produced and they are widely read. Because these are usually retirement projects, a high proportion of the writers had lived through the Depression and 50% of those studied commented on it. Although the mean publication date was 1984, the mean date of birth of the writers was 1908. Their mean age in 1931 was 23, they were at an age when the Depression was likely to be formative and memories preserved in detail.[2] Those under seven years in 1931 had little to say about the Depression, and of the 14 who commented at greater length, half were aged between 10 and 29 years.

There are startling similarities among the farm autobiographies studied. The age of the writers is crucial, as these are not only retirement projects but are often written as active retirement is drawing to an end. Over time, autobiographical memory gathers "the people, places, objects, events, and feelings that go into the story of your life" (Kotre, 1995, p. 5). Over time, many memories are lost and those that are retained may change in nature. After a while, recollections pull more activities together, become more interpretive, and begin to reflect a self-image. Although memories of distant events can be recalled, these interpretive memories relate to the contemporary self (Kotre, 1995, p. 103). After 50 years of age, people forget recent events more quickly and give more

[1] My collection of farm autobiographies is itself a social artefact. The 120 farm autobiographies examined in this paper were produced between 1949 and 2002. To further understand the context of production of farm autobiographies for two decades, from 1960 to 1971 and from 1993 to 2003, non-farm autobiographies were also studied. Theoretically, the National Library's Bibliographic Database holds the details of every New Zealand writer's books. In reality, many farm autobiographies are informally published, and may not be sent to a professional printer who might advise on acquiring an ISSBN number, nor may they reach a local library, which would forward their bibliographic details to the National Library (Broadbent, 2003).

[2] A few books were published by family members after the writers' deaths, so the mean age of 76 at publication was high.

space to memories of the past. By 70 years of age, people are preparing to transmit both personal and cultural heritage to the next generation – the personal passes into collective life (Kotre, 1995, p. 169).

What stories do farm people transmit? These are stories of success, even if the success is moral rather than material. They are gendered stories, which celebrate the status quo. Class differences are described, but without criticism. Virtually all are stories of white settlement, of moving into neglected land and making it fruitful. Continuity across the decades from the 1950s to 2002 is remarkable. Unlike many contemporary autobiographies that make the best seller lists, farm autobiographies include little introspection. The self presented is a public self and typically one who has met community expectations rather than challenged or transformed them, though as Bruner (2001) indicates, each presents as an individual. Morris (2002, p. 41) discusses the role of narrative in mediating the contradiction between stasis and change. The common experience of the self is that it has a core of constancy and continuity that persists through change in the world, and through change in the self over time. Morris cites Ochs and Capps (1996, pp. 20-21) in order to define the self as "broadly understood to be an unfolding reflective awareness of being-in-the-world, including a sense of one's own past and future" (Morris 2002, p. 45). Narratives presented in autobiographies draw on linguistic and cultural resources which shape the story and require interpretation by the reader. Morris notes that achievement of continuity in lifeways and identities in high country women is fostered by their elite status. She notes that narrating coherence is a practice, and that particular identities (such as "high country woman") are not equally available to all. The identity of high country woman is most available to women who are upper class, white, preferably Pakeha, who narrate a pioneering history and live in tightly specified areas. Those who don't conform are sanctioned, and other roles - wife, mother, farmer etc. - are lived out within the high country position (Morris, 2002, p. 42). Autobiographies by high country men and women confirm her analysis, and although there are variations within farming, many of the notions she applies to high country women are generally applicable.

Autobiographies are written for readers. New Zealand has traditionally had a large number of bookshops per head of population, a high rate of purchase of New Zealand books (Sturm, 1998, p. ix) and a "surprisingly vital" local publishing scene (McEldowney, 1998, p. 683). These writers are not necessarily aiming for a popular audience, though many meet publishers' criteria in terms of human interest, characterisation, drama, style of language, and so on. Mona Anderson's first autobiographical work *A river rules my life* (1963) sold out in three days, and 48,000 copies were sold by 1966 when a second autobiographical volume came out (Anderson, 1966, p. 174). She wrote a number of books, her first three selling 100 000 copies in eight years (Rogers & Rogers, 1993, p. 12). Two of the most common occupational groups writing autobiographies in New Zealand are farm employees and farm owners. In the decade 1993-2002 they produced 11% of all autobiographies, in 1960-1971 they produced 19 percent of the total. Farm owners currently outnumber employees and are more likely to produce autobiographies.

In the 1960s a lower proportion of farm autobiographers were writers in the conventional sense compared with autobiographers as a whole, and the split has widened since then. Self-publication is growing alongside new technologies such as computers, scanners and photocopiers that allow a wider range of people to self-publish, and produce cheap, attractive publications which are accessible to a wider readership than the self published books of the past[3]. Misztal (2003, pp. 46-7) notes that today, anniversaries of the past become media events, losing their meaning, with individuals lacking knowledge of the past. At the same time there is an obsession with memory, both community based "small" memories, and extra-territorial global memories. Both are facilitated

[3] My research assistant for this paper, Faye Hawtin, had developed an interest in farm women's stories after her parents and aunt wrote their own autobiographies. These were intended for their family circle, and were not included in the National Bibliographic Database. She explained that in retirement they had time to read a lot and reflect on their lives for the first time. There was a history of writing in their family – they maintained extended family networks in several countries through letters. Faye was struck by the similarities between her parents' writing and the other farm autobiographies that she read.

by new technologies. Most contemporary farm autobiographers are writing for a very local audience: people they know, people who know the area they lived in, or other people who lived that lifestyle or who want to know about it.

Rural New Zealand holds an iconic place in our national identity, drawing upon stories of pioneering heroism and intimacy with nature. Our largest selling novelist, Barry Crump, drew on his experience as a farm worker and deer culler to glorify a mythical real man, competent, creative and free from restraints and respectability. Humour is a major feature of farm autobiographies. A decade before Crump's *A good keen man* became a best seller, the "Me and Gus" stories were popular (Sturm, 1977, p. ix). These humorous stories follow the desperate attempts of two accident prone and ignorant "new chum" farmers to keep afloat on hopelessly uneconomic farms bought during the roller coaster years of the 1920s.

Perpetuation of New Zealand's rural myths has been studied extensively, beginning with *A man's country?* (Phillips, 1987). The dominance of male roles, of engagement with nature, of the construction of community through the melting pot of pioneering endeavour, is well documented. Bell's (1997) analysis of the popularity of heritage sites in New Zealand raises many elements present in rural autobiographies. She draws on Samuel and Thompson's *The myths we live by* as she identifies "'Rural Arcadia (an idyllic way of life within nature) and 'familial Arcadia' in particular ... options that still persist as components of the 'great way of life'" in New Zealand. (Bell, 1997, p. 1). Bell discusses the production of local histories praising pioneers from 1940 on, but autobiographies bring out many of these themes in a more personal way, bringing the past into the present as they draw stories of pioneering into their own lifetimes. Overall, these stories were written to provide a model for coming generations, sometimes with a sense that young people should turn back to the values of the past. Their emphasis is on pioneering, or overcoming physical hardship, hard work, of having the right values. They continually praise community, and the most detailed and often most interesting sections are childhood reminiscences. Detailed writing on farm practices is also common. These books are

social histories, full of practical detail on how people lived: how they cooked in camp ovens and on cantankerous coal ranges, how they socialised down at the local hall even though they travelled over treacherous roads by horse to get there, working with horses or the excitement of new machinery, and in many cases stories of hunting for leisure or work. Some male writers barely mention their families, although they often wrote to preserve past life for grandchildren and other young people. The low percentage of female farm autobiographers from the 1990s (20 percent compared with 43 percent in the 1960s) may reflect the emphasis within national mythology on men's confrontation with nature as the norm, with the 1960's figures shaped by the publishing success of Mona Anderson. Women writers provide far more personal and family information as well as detailed accounts of the multiple ways that the women supported their families, but still provide canonical accounts of how to be a farm woman with the strong emphasis on duty typical of other oral histories conducted with the generations of women born before the 1950s (from Ebbett, 1981; to Toynbee, 1995). But the only world or even national events either men or women reflect on are the World Wars and the Depression.

Farm people's writing about the Depression, during the Depression

Writing by ordinary farm people at the time of the Depression engaged with it as a social phenomenon in *some* of the ways present in more recent accounts. Two sites where ordinary farm people wrote about their experiences that have been closely studied are *The Dairy Exporter* (O'Connor, 2001) and the children's pages of the various regional newspapers (Holt, 2000). *The Dairy Exporter* had a women's section which included paragraphs contributed by readers and short story competitions with "Tui" as editor (O'Connor, 2001, p. 6). The contributions of readers created a space for writing about farm life and helped to shape such writing. Tui provided explicit feedback to individuals on what is good writing as well as offering what was then a substantial amount for published pieces:

> The whole countryside love our bits of gossip, and I want you to describe a thing, or tell an incident in your own natural way; write

> it just as you would tell others – when they return home, and bring out the point in as few words as possible. (Tui DE [Dairy Exporter] April 1928, cited in O'Connor, 2001, p. 49)

Nevertheless, little was written about the Depression during these years outside a short story competition entitled "What are the causes of the Depression?" (O'Connor, 2001, p. 122). There were many conversations among contributors about money though, and the payments for stories were welcome to women who had few sources of independent income for personal or household spending. The social context of women's lives reveals the hardship many faced, compounded by the Depression:

> My neighbours hold away, and forget how a visit and kind words help to cheer us; I have not seen a woman for two months, and it's nearly a year since the last one called. We women just long for women's company sometimes. (Loma DE [Dairy Exporter] August 1930, cited in O'Connor 2001, p. 7)

The Dairy Exporter writings show women in "coping mode" where writing was a problem solving strategy, and discussion of how to improve their writing was extensive. Writing appears as an extension of women's nurturing role. Other styles of writing about the Depression were available to people at the time, for instance through newspapers, which were widely read in the country. These rarely challenged the governments' policies. Even the *Truth*, with its populist leanings, was slow to report the Labour Party's progress or anticipate its success in 1935 (Joblin, 1990). The personal advice columns of magazines give the emotional responses of readers: "If I believed in hell, I'd tell you that I am writing from there. It would be hard to imagine circumstances more frightful than those in which we live" (cited in Ebbett, 1981, p. 16). But the supportive environment and the commercial success of some of the members of *The Dairy Exporter* reading and writing network suggest it would be a powerful shaper of accounts of the Depression in years to come.

Obviously the editors of these interactive sections of newspapers or magazines were able to assist in this creation of a sense of community. Both O'Connor (2001) and Holt (2000) note that writers reinforced editorial advice when they advised each other through these pages about

readers' preferences. These networks were not the only force shaping rural writing; there was also the style of writing: observation of everyday life, told as if to a neighbour, is discernable in most rural fiction and autobiographies written since then. Accounts of farming since the 1930s continue the themes of pioneering, hard work, understanding how to work with nature, being in a community, and coping through humour. Overall, despite hardships, farming is presented as the best way of life. The social construction of collective memory can be seen in action.

Farm autobiographies and the Depression

Given the impact of the 1930s depression and the birth date of many farm autobiographers, it is not surprising that it was mentioned by half of the writers. The impact of what people did say is deepened because so few national or world events are discussed. The few books that concentrate on the Depression give distressing accounts of people making do in ways that were often both humiliating and dangerous, though they also present this material as a triumph of spirit for those involved, usually through the use of humour. They help people who haven't experienced it appreciate what a long drawn out grind many of this generation went through.

The sections on the Depression vary in length, most briefly mention that there was a Depression and that times were hard and development was delayed, fewer provide detail on the impact on their lives and their neighbours' lives. There is almost no discussion of the cause of the depression or comments on government policy, good or bad. A typical comment is understated:

> I had been saving for 12 months in order to get married, and my cheque for the season on the mill [threshing mill] brought my savings to £95. Not a lot, but it had taken quite an effort to save during those depression years. (Coates, 1995, p. 51)

Two of the three books that are solely about depression experiences draw heavily on the "Me and Gus" genre, turning disasters into comedy. The humour does not mean that the situation was not serious: Amy Tremenheere Yorke lost her first child and nearly died because getting medical care was so difficult. Despite her pride in the way she adapted

to the deprivations of the time she finishes thus: "For us they were the years the locust had eaten. There are many now who are suffering similar deprivation. To regard those thousands of individual human beings merely as statistics and to sweep them under the carpet lest they embarrass the more fortunate, is both cruel and unjust." (Yorke, 1980, p. 144). But the tone of the book emphasises learning, coping with dignity and getting on with it rather than despair.

Having bought their station at the beginning of the Depression, David McLeod and his business partner were unable to pay rent for several years in spite of improved production under their management. They cut back on all spending. Interest on the mortgage was not paid either. Finally McLeod himself felt unable to marry until the financial situation eased. He talked about the "years of weary penury which had threatened to become a virtual way of life so that one lived with a perpetual feeling of despair" (McLeod, 1974, p. 183). David McLeod used some "new chum" humour in his three volume autobiography, but in addition to the comments on despair for the future there is a story of successful management, or battling with the extremes of mountain weather:

> These ten years had been a chequered series of disasters and triumphs, of hope and despair, and in 1933 we had come as close to bankruptcy as it is possible to get. Looking back on those years, I would not have had them different because they taught the true necessities of life and how little you can do with if you must. (McLeod, 1974, p. 220)

Few writers are as expansive as David McLeod on the moral value of hardship, but his experiences are repeated by others. The superiority of the pioneers is closely linked to the assumption of the moral superiority of rural life:

> I can remember them [his parents] going without food to give it to me, one doesn't forget things like that, it helped form a strong bond within the family. The Depression from 1930 to 1935 also made a strong bond within the district. Very few had much but what they had they would share. ... People talk about the recession we have had in the last ten years, well it has been like a pea on a pumpkin compared to the 1930 lot and I say it here right now that

> if the population of today had to go through what we went through – 50% of them wouldn't survive including the M.P.'s. (Hargreaves, 2000, pp. 68-69)

Accounts do vary, some people clearly benefited from rock bottom land prices and were able to buy farms otherwise too expensive. Some had to do little more than cut back on cash expenditure such as boarding school fees. Many on farms had already suffered through inadequate settlement of returned servicemen or the fluctuations in price during the 1920s and experienced the 1930s as more of the same:

> The land had usually been valued in 1921 when the dairy companies paid out 33d per lb. of butterfat; they'd paid too high a price; many of them were unsuited to farming; and now they'd just walked off with nothing. Men the German soldiers had been unable to defeat, beaten now by worry, weeds and water.... (Williamson, 1991, p. 110)

The personal costs of trying to live up to the ideals that hard work and sticking to it would overcome all problems must have been enormous but are seldom described so vividly as by James Gibson. The Gibson's took a low cash offer from State Advances in 1930 and left their farm:

> After a few years I began to have a sense of failure in this, my first farming venture. Trying to keep my worry and concern hidden from my wife and very young family was an added burden. ... Apart from the uneconomic farm I was on, my concern was for the future of my wife and family if I left the place. Jobs were very hard to get anywhere in New Zealand. The war had just started. The country was in a bad depression. ... I was beginning to lose sleep at night and seemed to have a perpetual gnaw in the pit of my stomach wondering what was the best thing to do. I knew I had to make up my mind soon. I had had enough of struggle. ... As far as I can judge there are many parallel cases about today. Young couples with a love of the land and farming have to make their minds up. ... My advice, as one who has felt the pangs of doubt and indecision in a like situation, is to make your decision quickly and save yourself, your wife and family a lot of soul-destroying worry. (Gibson, 1990, p. 86-87)

James Gibson got work in a Labour Department Scheme on Department of Lands and Survey projects and as with all those who wrote about

their own loss of a farm, went on to be a success in farming although in a different capacity. People who left farming with ongoing regret were difficult to trace through the catalogued detail in the approximately 1300 records I studied.

Women's tasks differed dramatically from men's but the commitment to work and coping was similar. One woman described in detail how she made first tea towels, then a dress, then dining room curtains out of dyed and embroidered flour bags. "We would often gather at each others homes for afternoon tea and our latest efforts would be proudly displayed" (Easy, 1991, p. 42). Her account was not just about pride in coping. "There was one little incident during those depression days that still makes me sad when I think of it." She would have given her husband's spare pair of boots to a swagger whose boots were falling to pieces, but they were the wrong size. "I often wondered how long it was before his boots finally fell to pieces and if anyone had been able to give him a pair" (Easy, 1991, p. 43).

Personal pain was often expressed in relatively neutral terms. "It was too much for a friend of mine - he went out into the scrub and shot himself, leaving a widow and family. The general effect was to make us feel that if this could happen all effort was futile" (Moore, 1969, p. 109). Note the collective use of "us" rather than personal expression. Moore goes on to support management of the monetary system which makes the loss more acceptable because others will benefit from past mistakes: "because public opinion is sufficiently well informed to insist on sensible measures" (Moore, 1969, p. 111). Accounts tended to support welfare measures by government:

> Probably little wonder that I left there with a small chip on my shoulder and maybe, too, the thought that if it ever came within my power to help others from receiving the same treatment, I would at least try. ... In the light of experience I am certain the Tutaki property was not suitable for subdivision or closer settlement. ... At least the Tutaki experience did do some good in that the mistake made then was a guide for future settlements. Or I hope so. (Waters, 1976, p. 107)

Compared with the oral histories collected by Tony Simpson during the late 1960s and early 1970s for *The sugarbag years* (which was first

published in 1974 with several reprints and new editions published since then), the farm autobiographies focused more on the pioneering and the heroic element. The stories from *The sugarbag years* come from more varied backgrounds, and include antagonisms based on conflict of interest between the unemployed and the government or the lowly paid and their employers. The dramatic detail provided in *The sugarbag years* accounts of crisis, riots and relief camps make a clear political point:

> Williams spoke [Chairman of Directors of the Dominion, owner of Lansdowne] "Well men, times are hard. But none of you need worry. I'm not going to sack any of you. You'll all get three meals a day and a roof over your heads as long as you work hard for me. But for the present, while times are bad, there'll be no wages for any of you." With that, Williams dismissed the relieved station hands with a wave of his podgy hand and walked back to the car with the manager. "There you are", he said." You can't complain now. See how lucky you are still to be receiving a lot more than your men are. (Simpson, 1984, p. 65)

Nor do the farm autobiographies dwell on the humiliation people felt when treated badly by those who controlled their finances:

> There was a neighbouring farmer who told us that he had to present his store account to his firm who used to question him about various items. He remembers once there were two toothbrushes on the account and the manager queried what they were for. "Oh, one for myself and one for my wife," he replied. "Can't you make do with one?" the manager wanted to know. I suppose it was petty humiliation at that level which was what the Depression was all about. (Cited in Simpson, 1984, p. 72)

In both sets of accounts conflict over resources is described: the woman or man who found a partner had given needed food to a swagger, the son frustrated by having to stay on the home farm and help his father without wages. Some things are not shared: stories of husbands who drank tended to be about other people's husbands. Simpson himself acknowledges the role of the editor of oral histories in shaping the final story (Simpson, 1988, p. 14). Like the autobiographies, Simpson's oral histories tell public stories whose details have probably been kept alive

by repeated sharing with family and friends over the intervening years. The effect seems to have been to minimise the differences between them. Despite the greater political analysis and extensive criticism of government inaction in Simpson's collection, the farm autobiographies appear as a more conservative subset of Simpson's oral histories rather than as the product of a different context and process. One element that Simpson has not cut out completely, but may have minimised, is often present in the autobiographies: the explicit moral messages for the younger generation about coping with hardship and mutual support.

Social context and commentary on the 1980s restructuring

A review of the presentation of the 1980s in the autobiographies produced only a few references to post 1984 events and experiences, and one was from a man with major interests in forestry, who was not solely a farmer. The references we did find were brief, unemotional, with no detail, and those writing before 1986 were just as likely to cry out that the hardships of the past should never be repeated as those writing after. Interviews carried out by Hugh Campbell (1994) show that people's experiences were similar to those of the 1930s at an emotional level, even though the details of people's lives, such as their dependence on cash income, had changed. The establishment of a relationship with the researcher may have created the emotional space for the stories to be told in a way that was not available to those writing autobiographies. It seems unlikely that none were aware of this level of crisis within their local communities even if they did not personally experience distress.

The two eras differed in a number of ways that may have contributed to this difference in their general presentation. In the 1930s export prices dropped by 40%. Government policies provided no support for farming until 1932, when it was realised that mortgagee sales were resulting in land going out of production and regional commissions were set up to remit interest if appropriate (Simpson, 1990, p. 70). Private arrangements were also struck by lenders who realised they had no hope of retrieving their money if mortgagees left and the land became run down. A similar sized drop in value began in the late 1970s and proceeded more gradually with government support for productivity in

the sheep-beef industry available until 1984 (Sandrey & Reynolds, 1990, p. 28). After 1984 neo-liberal policies were introduced, with the sudden withdrawal of subsidies that had softened the impact of low export prices causing major hardship for some.

In the 1930s, farming provided 95% of export earnings (Simpson, 1990, p. 39). This meant that a farm led Depression rapidly spread to all sections of the economy. In the 1980s rural communities dependent on farm servicing suffered badly, but unemployment was not as widely spread in urban areas and often not farm related. Children suffered from inadequate diet in both periods and were provided with food through schools (Simpson, 1984, p. 69; Kelsey, 1993, p. 337).

Experience of hardship was much more privatised in the 1980s. There were no relief camps or queues outside soup kitchens, people made individual appointments with social welfare services or foodbanks. Organisations of unemployed were unable to muster people for marches even after the benefit cuts of 1991 because people were so spatially isolated (Dunstan, 1995, p. 205). Farmers also suffered without the community support that is given so much praise in the 1930s: "There were a lot of farm sales that on the surface the neighbours never had any idea that trauma that went on" (NZ Federated Farmers officer quoted in Campbell, 1990, pp. 256-257).

The 1980s restructuring could be retrospectively constructed as a temporary phase that led to improvements in prospects for farming (Walker & Bell, 1994, p. 73). Not all farmers were equally hard hit in the 1980s. This may reduce the formation of collective memories. Johnson (2003, p. 134) interviewed people long enough after the main impact of restructuring was over to discuss the "partisan reconstruction of past events". A conservative local farm culture attuned to survival of periodic droughts constrained people from expressing the seriousness of their financial situation within their neighbourhood and increased the pain of implementing major changes (p. 147). Based on the demographic profile of existing farm autobiographies, detailed reminiscence may emerge when the cohort of young adults who were 20-40 years old in the 1980s reaches their 70s, between 2014 and 2034. I expect such accounts may be less pervasive, more personal than those about the 1930s. When

they do emerge, they will probably draw on the resources for framing that have been consistently applied in farm writing, both fiction and autobiography, so the 1980s may provide the chance to demonstrate adaptability, hard work, perhaps with a greater emphasis on farming as a business. It is not so clear how those whose experiences were most privatised will handle the theme of community pulling together.

Conclusion

This article began with the assumption that memories of the 1930s Depression can be understood as collective, generational memories and has explored aspects of rural writing that might have shaped their formation in order to understand the potential for such memories to emerge for the 1980s. Detailed written accounts of the 1980s crisis will emerge, but the generational aspects will be muted. This was argued on the basis that experiences were more privatised. It is not that the experiences were less traumatic than those of the 1930s, or that people lacked awareness of the pressure members of the farming community were under. Clearly, experiences of the 1980s have been shared with journalists and researchers who have sought out participants. But the two periods also differ in important ways. Upheaval was more widespread in the 1930s, with commentators like Simpson noting that even those who did not suffer loss of income suffered from the social malaise (1984, p. 18). The fact that only the Depression and the World Wars are widely discussed shows that generational memories at this level require extreme events. If memories of the 1980s do emerge, their final shape is speculative, in that these memories will themselves have been transformed through the life experiences of the intervening decades.

Review of large numbers of farm autobiographies produced over 50 years shows that farm life has changed far more than key elements of its presentation. Although similar themes emerge in rural writing across time, the context and meaning attributed to them at the time of writing may vary. "Independence" and "community" were both mobilised as attributes of farm life during the accounts of the Depression, but where they supported state intervention during the 1960s-1980s, they may

support neo-liberal ideals in the future. "Independence" and "community" could defend farmers from criticism during the prosperous 1950s. Since many autobiographies constitute life reviews, transmitting the values of the past and managing intergenerational tension will continue to challenge writers in an environment where safety, conservation, tourism, lifestyle, and production battle for attention. Farm women needing an income or outlet off-farm frequently work in local towns rather than turning to writing, or are required to spend more time in farm work as paid labour has declined. Daley (1998) compares the childhood memories of brothers and sisters and notes that men and women have different memories, partly because they were involved in different activities because of their gender, and partly because they remembered what was "appropriate" to their gender. Women could tell their own stories of change. As the women who grew up in the 1960s reach retirement will they radically challenge traditional values through writing, or will they be too busy doing other things? Self-publishing and autobiography seem set to expand. Freedom from the constraints of the market currently appears to support white male accounts of farming life, but this situation may diversify over time. Perhaps variety in rural writing will emerge with popular rural fiction and non fiction becoming more romanticised for an urban audience with less and less contact with actual farm life, while farm people continue to practice continuity and support a more marginalised style.

What seems most certain is that future stories will not praise life off the farm and will encourage people to hang on in adversity.

A crucial focus of the new agricultural sociology of the 1970s was to understand why the food and fibre industry had retained so many family labour farms when economics seemed to dictate that they sell out and start more successful urban lives. Why didn't farming reflect the high tech, big business investment, and large wage labour workforces common in manufacturing? Rejecting the ahistorical functional analyses of the past that accepted farmers' accounts of the superiority of their current social relationships, the new sociology of agriculture suggested many structural reasons for the survival of the family labour farm (Buttel, 2001, pp 169-170). Big business would not invest in a sector where risk

from the bio-physical sphere could not be controlled. There were long periods when no labour was required to promote growth, reducing the labour available for exploitation (Mann & Dickinson, 1978). Running a farm with family labour gave the owner opportunities for exploitation on age and gender lines, which allowed them to remain in business when capitalists would have been forced to withdraw. For farms of all sizes the seasonal nature of farm work also encouraged the exploitation of vulnerable groups such as migrant workers. More positive accounts also emerged: opportunities for part-time farming gave a more viable life style than the term "propertied labourer" seemed to indicate. New Zealand seemed to represent a place where the structural supports for family labour farms were unquestionable before the restructuring of the Fourth Labour Government (Le Heron, 1989, p. 20) while resilience is a common description of the situation more recently (Walker & Bell, 1994; Sandrey & Reynolds, 1990).

The introduction of feminist theory examining women's contribution to apparent stability led directly to qualitative work as researchers sought the reasons for women's satisfaction with farming in spite of their apparent exploitation (O'Hara, 1998). More actor centred analyses seeking to understand farming styles also introduced qualitative work on the meaning of farming to farmers, integrating these insights with accounts of structure within the framework of production (Buttel, 2001 p. 172). These maintain the need to integrate the biophysical and human activity.

The cultural turn in sociology has brought a new set of players into the examination of the biophysical. Accounts of human - nature relationships may barely acknowledge the existence of farming as they explore the urban population's fascination with zoos, pets, gardens, and nature oriented leisure activities (Franklin, 2002). Work on autobiographies straddles these two very different traditions. From sociology of agriculture we take the need to set farmers' accounts in context, to see how farmers use similar accounts as tools to support their activity in radically different times. From accounts of human-nature relationships, often in a postmodern vein, we see that farm autobiographies cannot be separated from broader cultural issues. The

way farm people see themselves reflected back by the urban majority shapes autobiography in ways that need further examination. The affinity that urban people may feel for nature, and particular styles of farming that are thought to promote an authentic relationship with nature, is as much about their own lives as they seek to protect themselves against the loss of stability, tradition, or legitimacy. In either case, understanding identity and the way actors actively construct their sense of self is central.

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The Great Depression and the Downturn: Narrating Continuity in the High Country

Carolyn Morris

Abstract

This article focuses on the life story of one woman, Alice, as she dealt with serious financial uncertainty and the potential loss of the family farm in the 1990s. Through asserting the stability of her self across the course of her life Alice narratively constituted change as continuity, and in doing so transformed the disruption of the downturn into something manageable.

To document the stabilizations of identity in any domain or across them in an essentially deconstructive world is a primary task of all ethnography. George Marcus (1998)

Introduction

According to many social commentators, we live in detraditionalising and destabilising times (e.g. Appadurai, 1991; Beck, 1992; Dunant & Porter, 1996; Lifton, 1993; McDonald, 1999), times in which "standard cultural reproduction...is an endangered activity" (Appadurai, 1991, p. 99). But in the face of these forces for change there is also a considerable continuity in lifeways and identities which is often overlooked. Just as late capitalism provides the imperative for change, it also provides the means for continuity. A key contribution of ethnography to the study of processes often glossed as globalisation, is the attention such work pays to the micro-practices of the constitution and reproduction of identities in everyday life, for it is here that people work to achieve subjective stability.

The economic downturn of the 1980s and 1990s in New Zealand's agricultural sector, and the political circumstances that produced it, marked a profound change in the place of farmers in New Zealand society, signifying a loss of power and status. Behind the farm gate the downturn presented considerable challenges to farmers, in terms of

both sheer economic survival and in understandings of themselves and their place in New Zealand. The Depression of the 1930s is a major event in New Zealand social and economic history, and in the literature of rural New Zealand it features as a key experience because of the ways in which it expresses significant values and notions of personhood. In life stories of older high country farm women from the South Island recorded in 1996 - a period of very low fine wool prices - the 1930s depression emerged as a central narrative for women who had lived through it as they sought to make sense of the current crisis (see Morris, 2003). This paper focuses on this aspect of the life story of one woman, Alice, as she dealt with serious financial uncertainty and the potential loss of the family farm. Through asserting the stability of her self across the course of her life, Alice narratively constituted change as continuity and in doing so transformed the disruption of the downturn into something manageable.

The narrative construction of identity

In the last decade or so narrative has become an important focus of theorising and analysis in the social sciences. This has arisen in line with the move to theories which understand language, subjectivity and social life to be deeply connected (Burke et al, 2000, p. 2). In association with this move there is a recognition of the centrality of narrative and story telling as a means through which people make sense and meaning out of the things that happen to them (Niles, 1999; Ochs & Capps, 1996, p. 19). Storytelling "is a cultural practice deeply embedded in everyday life, a creative activity in which everyone engages" (Dawson, 1994, p. 22). Out of all the things that could be recounted in telling their life story, people select those they consider significant (White, 1981, p. 10, cited in Davis, 2002, p. 14), and what makes an event or experience significant is its relevance for making sense of present circumstances and for planning for the foreseen future. Commonly, people tell stories in connection with difficulties and problems (Ochs and Capps, 1996, p. 25), when there has been "a breach between ideal and real, self and society" (Riessman, 1993, p. 3). Drawing on the two meanings of the verb "to compose", Dawson (1994) notes that in composing a narrative people seek to achieve

"subjective composure" (1994, p. 23). Narration is a means of managing and containing "troubling and disturbing" aspects of life (Dawson, 1994, p. 22), and through the production of coherence in events, a means of creating a coherent and satisfying self. As such, a life history is always a work in progress, constantly revised as circumstances change, with earlier or previously unhighlighted events and experiences taking on sudden or alternative significances.

Following Marx, we can say that while people compose their own life stories, they do not do so in conditions of their own making, for "whether we are aware of it or not, our culture gives us an inner script by which we live our lives" (Conway, 1998, p. 6). Within any social or cultural milieu there are a series of available scripts out of which a person can construct a life story and make sense of events and experiences. In constructing their narratives tellers "pour their ordinary lives into these archetypal forms" (Riessman, 1993, p. 19). So, in order to understand a narrated story it is necessary to come to know the discursive repertoire – the scripts and plots - available to the individual in their project of narrating their life (Summerfield, 1998, p. 15).

Some plots are "returned more readily to the discursive formulation of popular or collective memory" than are others (Summerfield, 1998, p. 28), and so the scripts available for emplotting a life story in a way that is both comprehensible and acceptable to others, are both limited and hierarchically arranged. Though stories are the tools with which individuals strive to achieve composure, they also constrain through the imposition of a set of norms of behaviour and attitudes considered to be appropriate (Davis, 2002, p. 25). There are dominant and subordinate scripts with differing degrees of social and cultural legitimacy; these scripts provide alternative subject positions and subjectivities, again with differing degrees of social acceptability. People position themselves vis-à-vis these scripts in different ways, in contradistinction to those prevailing as well as in line with them (Chanfrault-Duchet, 1991), and they also take up different positions within them, as, for example, central characters who control action or as victims who are acted upon (Riessman, 1993, p. 2). So, narrative is simultaneously constitutive of the self and a social order, and there are

rewards, in terms of composure, from being able to narrate oneself into a dominant and socially legitimated script.

Narrative in rural sociology

Following the demise, several decades ago, of the rural-urban continuum as a possible analytic framework, a new political economy of agriculture provided the central problematic for the field (Buttel, 2001). In the last decade or so there has been something of a cultural turn in rural sociology, and a revival of an interest in questions of rurality (Friedland, 2002, p. 350), as evidenced by articles published in the *Journal of Rural Studies*, and books such as the collections by Cloke and Little (1997) and Ching and Creed (1997). Qualitative methods are now well established in rural sociology (Gillespie & Sinclair, 2000; Morris & Evans, 2004). The necessity of understanding the experiences of the people who are on the receiving end of rural restructurings and globalising agricultures if a full picture of such processes is to be gained is, I would think, generally accepted. There has been something of a revival of what could be called community studies, though they are not, of course, of the same type as earlier structural-functionalist ones (e.g., Bell's (1994) study of Childerley). Much of this work addresses aspects of rural, or farmer, identity. There have also been a few anthropological studies of rural areas in Western societies (e.g. Cohen, 1987; Rapport, 1993; Gray, 2000), including two ethnographies of rural New Zealand written by American anthropologists: Hatch's (1992) ethnography of social standing, and Dominy's (2001) exploration of high country farmer attachment to place. However, to date little use has been made of narrative theory. Two recent theses, Morris (2003) and Robertson (2000) make extensive use of narrative theories of identity in their analyses.

If one of the criticisms of analyses of rural change that focus on structure is that they make "abstract systems of power seem primary and [reduce] ... individuals to re-actors rather than ... actors in their own right" (Scaglion & Norman, 2000, p. 122), then narrative analysis has the potential to provide a corrective to this by restoring agency to actors. As such, exploring the narrative of a single individual can show how abstract processes manifest in actual lives, and how creative and

resourceful actors strive to create secure and stable lives and identities in the face of change.

Depression narratives

In the case of older high country farm women one of the key scripts used to account for and manage their experiences of the downturn of the 1980s and 1990s was what I will call "depression narratives". These draw parallels between the current situation and the circumstances of the Great Depression of the 1930s. Continuities were sketched in terms of the causes of the economic downturn and, more importantly, in terms of the kind of person that one needed to be in order to deal with current difficulties. This narrative frame, then, provided the material with which the women composed their life stories and worked to achieve a sense of composure in their lives, to present themselves as good and successful people despite the economic straits they found themselves in.

There are several Depression scripts available for narrating a life story, including stories of deep and unrelenting deprivation and misery (see Simpson, 1984). Among high country farmers this narrative strategy is not common. The farm women generally told positive stories of the Depression, focusing on values and character and the kinds of persons that that series of events produced. There are three key Depression scripts in the high country, and which one is narrated depends on the experience of the particular person. Below are examples of the three types, taken from the life stories of high country farm women (all extracts from Morris, 2003; all names are pseudonyms). The first type of narrative was told by people who did not suffer too greatly during the Depression. In their stories they position themselves as good people through the help they gave to others:

> I remember it as a very happy time. People say it was a hard time, some people were very poor. But I think that people were looked after in a way that they're not looked after today, it's very impersonal today. ... there was a tremendous spirit of, it was your duty that you did it, because it was your life. People were cared for. People cared about other people. And we respected people. We were brought up to respect people. ... There could have been a lot of hardship too. I remember the swaggers. And

> the thing that stands out in my mind was that if people were roaming the country today, we would immediately be on our guard, wouldn't we? If somebody came up here with a billy on his back, look at him twice. Well I'd be only a little child then, probably preschool, and I can remember them coming, and we weren't afraid. Mind you, we'd be round about the house, but there were a lot of trees. They would just walk through the hills, from station to station looking for work. And they would be given a billy of tea and then they'd be told to come when dinner was ready and they would be given a plate of a meal, and they ate it on the chopping block on the back porch. And that was just life. It was the swagger there getting his meal. And there might be two of them. And they would sleep probably in one of the barns, and then they'd be up and away. I feel that people tried to help each other... And it was a very respectful time, I mean no way were we allowed not to be respectful. No matter whether people were rich or poor, we were taught to respect them. (Kate in Morris, 2003, p. 172)

The second type of narrative is told by people who lost their farms. One woman recounted the classic story of this (see also Park, 1991, pp. 97-98), in which the honour and morality of her family is demonstrated and her father is presented as a successful and good man, despite the fact that he lost a farm:

> I believe it was the Labour government, the Labour government brought in an Act where they .... I know they had an opportunity where they wiped all the mortgages, I think that was about 1947 - '46, '47. My father he actually - the place was misrepresented when he went in there, but he admits that, I mean he took that, he bought it with his eyes open and that's where I feel that he was a very honourable man. Because he could have had that mortgage wiped. And I think he paid forty four thousand - I've got it all here - he paid forty four thousand pounds for the place but they put miles of sheep on, and they had miles of cattle on just to sell it, because they just couldn't run it, and it was just misrepresented. So, OK, he could have just had that all wiped and started afresh, but he stated, he said "No, these people" he said "They sold me this in good stead and I bought it in good faith", and he said "I'll pay the money back", and he did. He paid every penny of that back and it took him from when we went onto the place which was probably about the time of Mum and Dad's marriage which would be 1932 right until about 1948 to get debt free of it. And I

> think he lived about three months afterwards. But he had filled his obligation. Yes, it's quite amazing really. So we were always poor because of it, but that was beside the point. I mean, you know, a lot of other people probably became quite wealthy afterwards because they had the place and no obligations and everything else, so they just carried on, but that was just the way of it. I feel quite proud that he did that rather than - I feel better for it, put it that way. (Margaret in Morris, 2003, p. 198)

The third type of story is a kind of morality tale of lessons learnt and dispositions acquired, in which the past is favourably contrasted with the present, and the contemporary kind of person contrasted unfavourably with that of prior generations:

> Nobody had any money, it was straight out of the Depression. And I can remember my mother and father really being hard up, and they'd never readily spend money. Even in the 1950s the early 50s when wool rose and my father suddenly had a bit of money, he'd never spend it and he'd never go anywhere. To get him to go to Christchurch was a big thing. And he was always conscious that I've got to have that money in the bank, or I've got to have that extra bit. And so that really made a big bearing, or it certainly had a big bearing on their lives. They never travelled or anything but I think that it was just - you would never have got him to because he would have been too scared that he would have overspent. I often think that, you know, in today's society we've got a lot of people that - it wouldn't really hurt if a lot of them thought the way that our parents used to think actually. Things are so different in the sense that we've got all these luxuries that we wouldn't have had in those days and nobody's prepared to go without. My mother never had an electric washing machine or an electric anything. (Margaret in Morris, 2003, p. 200)

These are the narratives that dominate popular memory of the Great Depression in the high country. They provide a socially legitimated framework for narrating the Downturn of the 1980s/1990s, and for presenting a successful and moral self in the face of serious economic decline.

The history of New Zealand farming

The history of the farming of fine-wool sheep in the New Zealand high country is a story of a steady prosperity, punctuated by downturns or depressions of varying severity. Until the 1880s the primary staple export was wool (Gardner, 1981, p. 57), produced on the vast leasehold runs on the East Coasts of both islands. The confidence of the mid 1800s was dented by a depression in 1869-70, when wool prices declined (Gardner, 1981, p. 70). Throughout the 1870s prices for agricultural products continued to fall, and the collapse of the City of Glasgow bank in 1878 ushered in a period of economic stagnation, known as the Long Depression, that lasted until 1895 (Gardner, 1981, p. 75). The impacts of this depression varied geographically and by agricultural sector. Canterbury and Otago were hard hit, but established farmers continued to prosper because while wool prices fell, so did labour, transport and input costs, so that profit margins were maintained. This depression, though it forms part of farming memory in terms of a general understanding of the fortunes of farming as fluctuating and cyclic, is no longer remembered by anyone still alive.

The end of the First World War marked the first of a string of recessions that lasted throughout the 1920s (Brooking, 1981, p. 227). As with the Long Depression the impacts of this series of recessions was variable, this time by occupation rather than region, and well established runholders continued to prosper since they were able to extend their holdings by buying up cheap land (Brooking, 1981, p. 247). People who lived through the depression that began in 1929, known as the Great Depression, are still alive, and this time remains for some a defining event in their life stories (Loveridge, this volume[1]; Simpson, 1990, p. 8). As Belich notes, "in New Zealand folk memory, and in some history books, the Depression of 1929-35 is both the great watershed and the great nadir of the twentieth century" (2001, p. 254), and as such is "indelibly etched into New Zealand memory" (Belich, 2001, p. 255).

After World War II New Zealand farming entered a period of

[1] Loveridge (this volume) notes that while few people make any mention of wider social processes in their autobiographies, the two events that are noted are World War II and the Depression of the 1930s.

prosperity, based on the demand for agricultural produce that the war had created and boosted by the 1950-53 Korean war (Rayner, 1990, p. 16). By the 1950s, in per capita income terms New Zealand was among the richest of the world's nations. Policy of the time protected domestic industry through import restrictions, and to compensate farmers for the high costs of inputs that resulted from this policy, the government began to subsidise the costs of production (Rayner, 1990, p. 17). As New Zealand continued to rely on agricultural products to earn export income, succeeding governments were anxious to increase production, and to secure it the state invested heavily in the sector. Farmers' economic power translated into political power, as evidenced by ever increasing subsidies. Britain's entry into the EEC in 1974 marked the beginning of the end of economic security for farmers. Commodity prices fell through the 1970s (Rayner, 1990, p. 16) and the international economy was volatile, buffeted by inflation and oil shocks. From the 1972/73 season to the 1974/75 season, real wool prices halved, and the real price for mutton fell over 75 percent (Griffith & Martin, 1988, p. 3).

In response the government further increased and expanded subsidies to protect the incomes of farmers and to promote development and increase production. The various forms of direct governmental assistance to agriculture amounted to more than $500 million in the 1983/84 season (O'Connor, 1993, p. 136). Most money from the Supplementary Minimum Price (SMP) Scheme, which supported farmer incomes, went to sheep farmers, with 40 percent of their income coming from the Government at the peak of the scheme (Walker & Bell, 1994, p. 5). This scheme alone cost around $1192 million (Griffith & Grundy, 1988, p. ix). Moreover, because their land was underdeveloped, and because their properties were large, sheep farmers were well placed to take up development loans.

By the early 1980s agricultural subsidies had risen to unsustainable levels, and the government set about reducing them. In 1984 Labour won the election, but it was a Labour government unlike any before. Infused with free market economic zeal, and not dependent on the rural vote (Gouin et al., 1994, p. 15), this Government removed subsidies and exposed farming to the chill winds of the market almost overnight.

Farmers no longer had access to cheap loans, subsidised transport and fertilizer, income support or free farm advice. "Deregulation" and "user-pays" were the catch cries, and government departments, the financial sector, and local government were radically restructured. Many government services were privatised, and the tax system was fundamentally reordered with the introduction of a Goods and Services Tax (Fairweather, 1989, p. 1). In the 1984/85 season more than one billion dollars of government money went into the agricultural sector; in the 1992/93 season this amount had declined to less than $200 million (Gouin et al., 1994, p. 2).

These changes had dramatic impacts down on the farm, as both income and equity declined, and interest rates and costs spiralled. As with earlier depressions, the downturn of the 1980s impacted on different sectors differently. Sheep farmers, the major beneficiaries of the earlier subsidies, were hit hardest. At the time that I carried out my fieldwork in the Mackenzie Basin in 1996, the area was in the grip of a what was regarded locally as a severe economic crisis.

Simpson argues that there are strong continuities between the Great Depression of the 1930s and the Downturn of the 1980s (1990, p. 9), but whether this downturn will become implanted in folk memory in the way the Great Depression has is unclear at this stage (Loveridge, this volume). Prior depressions, recessions and downturns have been generally understood within a narrative of fluctuations in farming fortunes in which bad times are regarded as anomalous and the good times as normal (Simpson, 1990, pp. 14-15). Whether the most recent downturn can be constituted within this narrative has yet to be seen, though this is precisely what Alice, and others, sought to do.

The downturn played out on specific high country properties according to the position of the station in the farm developmental cycle, its debt loading, size, make up of the property, potential for diversification, and so on. I was told of forced sales, and a considerable number of the women I spoke with were concerned that they would not be able to survive for many more seasons, or even until the next season, if prices did not improve and costs were not reduced. Women worked to manage the threatened loss of the station, and therefore of high country

identity, both practically and narratively in terms of the 1930s Depression. In practical terms they worked hard, "helping" outside on the farm in order to save labour costs, and exercising thrift within the household, gardening, preserving, baking, sewing. In talking about this work several women made connections between themselves and their mothers or mothers-in-law, noting that they were simply continuing in the tradition of these women. In narrative terms the kind of person that was formed through the experience of the 1930s Depression was held to be the kind of person that you needed to be to manage the current downturn. Living through the Depression instilled a particular set of dispositions, what Wevers (1980, p. 244) calls the "stoic virtues ... patience, courage, the ability to 'manage'".

Alice's story

The life story of one woman, Alice[2], illustrates the way in which the depression of the 1930s, and the subjectivity that series of events is considered to have produced, provided a resource for understanding and managing the downturn of the 1990s. Alice did this by composing a narrative in which a continuous self, formed during childhood in the Depression, persisted through time and provided her with the necessary coping skills and dispositions. In this way the profound change in circumstances signalled by the downturn was transformed into continuity with the past, and thus its potential disruption contained.

Alice spent her childhood on a high country station during the depression of the 1930s, and she portrays this time as positive. As a child Alice did a considerable amount of work on the farm, work that was necessary if the family were to survive. One of the main jobs she and her siblings did was rabbiting:

> We learnt to rabbit because money was so scarce. We worked with Dad in the winter time, on every spare day, weekends, we would go out. And we learnt to muster, we learnt to do everything as small children.... I mean, they worked so hard. Winter time was the only time that they had to rabbit, so they rabbited, all of us If we were home from boarding school, we went with them

[2] All extracts from Alice's life story are taken from Morris (2003).

> and they used the poisoned carrot, and you'd get, say, three thousand rabbits. We'd pick them up, we'd be up there early hours of the morning in the dark and pick them all up, and we'd skin them and bring the skins home here, and at nights we'd put a canvas down on the kitchen floor - in that little hut as I'm telling you's floor, and the coal range going, and an aunt and uncle with us, I helped mum and dad, they helped mum and dad and we would go up and do their place. And we would all do those skins. Now, our job as children, was to take those skins out and put them on lines, round trees, and we would put those skins out and then when we came home from school the next afternoon we would turn them, and at night time we would gather them all together and put bags over them, and then in the morning before we went to school it was our job to put them back around until they were dried out, and then we would bag them for Dad. At the same time they'd be poisoning another block. And that's the way they worked in those days, they worked as a family. Everything was done more or less as a family in those days.

Living conditions on the station were far from luxurious:

> There was no room inside for us, there was no bedroom, the house was just a hut. We slept down the path in a hut. Mother and Dad had a little bedroom, and then we had this hut. Now 1936 for Christmas we were given lino on the floor, that I've never forgotten. It was just bare boards, bare boards. We didn't have anything, but we didn't feel the cold. I can remember waking up and finding that where you breathed on the blankets there was ice, but we never got colds, we never got chilblains.

Alice also told me that she and her siblings had no shoes. There was no money for clothes and when the children went to boarding school (with money provided by the extended family) they used to take their heavy clothes and shoes off and hide them because they were not used to wearing such things. Life at boarding school was characterised as a life of luxury compared to life on the farm:

> I hated the thought of my dad working at home, and mother, so hard. And life seemed so easy, life seemed terribly easy and so unimportant, unimportant to what dad and mother were trying to do at home. They had so little, and yet we seemed to have so much at boarding school ... we had regular meals, we couldn't

> have that at home. ... I used to hear the children complaining at boarding school about the food - we thought it was wonderful.

Despite the hard work and the hardships Alice was very positive about this time in her life: "they were wonderful, wonderful, happy years, very happy years ... never bored, never thought of ever wanting ... wanting anything more than we ever had". The family was able to manage because of the hard work of the whole family and because they had learnt to make do with very little – "Dad, you know, took over after the first world war, and they went straight into a slump, they went straight into a slump ... but they were so close, brought them closer together as a family".

When Alice married a farmer things continued to be tough.– "we really didn't have enough money, but we battled on". Alice's account of the years of her marriage was organised around the same themes and same kinds of stories as her account of her childhood. Alice continued to work hard, both on the farm and in the house. As was the case in her childhood, herself, her husband and her children formed a close family unit, united through their cooperative endeavour on the land. Economically there were times that were hard and times that were easier, but in general, as Alice told it, there was never a lot of money. The family managed because of Alice's thriftiness and her ability and willingness to work hard, characteristics she considered that she had acquired during her childhood in the Depression. The practical skills and the dispositions so inculcated provided her with the material to narrate continuity.

Alice talked about the current situation on the farm:

> Things are not good in the farming life, things are not good. The banker was up this week, he wants us to sell. After all this time of hanging on and hanging on. The boys want us to hang on, they're going to try and pay for things and keep the place going ... its that difficult at the moment. The costs here are astronomical. Well, we got seventy two thousand the year before last for our wool, and we got thirty something last year. And our place was infested with rabbits. [He] paid out twenty thousand in shooting last year, and this year he's paid out twenty five thousand in poisoning. Those are the things that have crucified us. And the

> lamb went right down. It costs up here, with your drenches... I'm not sure how much it costs for a lamb, but fifteen dollars probably, perhaps more, twenty dollars perhaps for a lamb. We were only getting twelve. Everything was going back back back. So it was down to work this week and try and work out what we can do. We've got a house, luckily we bought a house, and we're going to sell the house. It was going to be our retirement, but they [the children] want us to try and stay on here, so we'll have to think of ways and means. ... But this is part of life, you know. If you hadn't had that beginning you wouldn't be able to take it. ... But I now would like at [my age], I would like to think that I had a little place and I could just ... Never mind, you know, the sun will shine again I suppose.

Later I received a letter from Alice in which the same themes emerged:

> Life has been a battle, prices so low, year after year we haven't made ends meet. The powers that be say you must change to meet the times, but that takes money and in our climate and conditions that's a big risk. At Christmas all the family decided we should try this year as prices seemed to be improving. Sometimes when you see your home falling to bits, paint and paper needed so badly, never being able to have a holiday, it wears you down at this age. But you remember your early years of training. We had nothing and yet we felt we had millions. We had each other, and we still have today.

Conclusion

Throughout her life story Alice emphasised how she coped with difficulty, how she had worked hard, and so the family had managed to carry on. She stresses the continuity between her childhood in the Depression and her life since the downturn of the 1980s, and how her experiences as a child made her into the kind of person who could cope with adversity. One of the key ways in which she contributes to managing the downturn is through her domestic thrift and ingenuity and through her ability to cope with troubles as they come, to stoically carry on, to be happy with what she's got. It is through this process that Alice manages change, uncertainty and threat, converting it into continuity and certitude by constructing her self as enduring. Through the act of composing a life

story and by virtue of constructing her narrative within the Depression script, Alice works to achieve subjective composure, to realise a satisfying self. The Depression narrative provides a meaningful mode with which Alice can discursively manage the economic and subjective hazards thrown up by the downturn because is has wider currency as an explanatory framework, both within the high country and within rural New Zealand as a whole (see Loveridge, this volume). The Depression narrative is a key cultural script.

It is clear from Alice's narrative that the impacts of agricultural change and economic downturn cannot be understood through studying the processes of restructuring alone. An analysis of complex economic and political histories and policy changes, while absolutely necessary, cannot provide a full account. It is also clear that the notion of "impact" is more problematic than it might seem at first glance. Even things like "economic impacts", which can be measured in terms of declining returns for lambs and wool and changing interest rates, are more opaque than the numbers that represent them suggest. People do not "understand" or "experience" passively - restructuring does not simply happen "to" them. Instead, they work actively to manage events and processes. They do this practically, in terms of changing their farming practices, but they also do it symbolically, through making sense of events as they unfold. A central way in which people make sense of these streams of history is through narration, hence analysis of their narratives, and of the available discursive repertoire, provides insight into the agency of rural social actors and into rural change.

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Escaping the Groove of Globalisation: Disentangling Description, Discourse and Action

Lucy Baragwanath

Abstract

This paper offers a way through the orthodoxy of the globalisation debate, providing a fresh way of thinking about how globalisation might be understood in a particular setting. It stems from the recognition that the term globalisation is often employed at a macro level to trace broad patterns, but proves inaccurate or unhelpful if anchored to a specific temporal and spatial context. By contrast, starting with empirical historical and ethnographic research in New Zealand, the author developed a conceptual framework that helps make sense of the globalisation debate by drawing an analytical distinction between understandings of globalisation as a *description* of contemporary reality (whether or not it is accepted as such); and understandings of globalisation as a *concept* that can be explored in terms of its discourses. As a description, the notion of globalisation is infinitely contestable, although historical research suggests that many of the themes now labelled "globalisation" have a long history. Noting that parallels with the past persist is however necessary but insufficient, for the term globalisation is nonetheless *used* to refer to contemporary circumstances by influential decision-makers whose views have practical consequences. Thus also analysing globalisation at a conceptual level as a set of discourses demonstrates how it has become reified and naturalised, receiving widespread acceptance as a super-human external force determining New Zealand's options. This imagery conditions the context within which policy decisions are made, privileging the global, novel and generic over the local, enduring and specific, and bringing into being the very conditions the term appears to describe. This double approach makes it possible to escape the conceptual constraints of globalisation, permitting reassessment of the possibilities for action.

Introduction

The overarching concept of globalisation has become increasingly fashionable, channelling analyses of contemporary reality. While the concept has been studied extensively, much of the analysis proceeds at a macro level, tracing broad patterns that often prove inaccurate if anchored to a specific temporal and spatial context, resulting in long-standing debates over the utility of the concept. By contrast, this paper offers an alternative perspective on how globalisation might be more specifically understood, through an empirical examination of what it might mean in the context of New Zealand. Anchoring the term in this way leads to the conclusion that globalisation is more than simply an over-used buzzword, for unthinking use of broad concepts or metaphors results from and in "grooved thinking". My doctoral research (Baragwanath, 2003c) suggests that globalisation and its related concepts have become accepted amongst policy-makers in New Zealand as an unproblematic description of contemporary reality. Through being invoked repeatedly, the term globalisation has become reified, naturalised and internalised, receiving widespread acceptance as a super-human external force determining New Zealand's options. This imagery conditions the context within which decisions are made, emphasising the importance of the global context, the novelty of recent developments and the way that these are held to be generically applicable; and thereby trivialising the local, enduring and specific. Because this image of globalisation has been widely accepted in policy-making circles, globalisation thus acts as a constitutive discourse, bringing into being the very conditions the term appears to describe.

The paper first presents the conceptual framework that I developed in my thesis (Baragwanath, 2003c) for understanding globalisation. To reach an understanding of what globalisation might mean in the context of New Zealand, two levels of analysis are necessary. The first examines globalisation as a *description* of contemporary life, while the second assesses the implications of *understanding* globalisation in this way. Approaching globalisation using my framework makes it possible to escape the groove, allowing present circumstances to be viewed from a different perspective, and thus permitting reassessment of the

possibilities for action.

My research into globalisation and New Zealand (Baragwanath, 2003c) comprised two components. First, I undertook an analysis of government budget statements, trade agreements and strategy documents from 1935 to 2002, and private sector annual New Zealand company reports from the same period. Second, I conducted 30 in-depth interviews with people in influential decision-making positions in a range of organisations across different sectors of New Zealand's economy and society, targeting influential "opinion-shapers" in New Zealand whose views are regularly reported in the media, and whose views consequently affect the policy-making climate. I examined my material using ethnographic and historical analysis techniques and Fairclough's (2003) critical discourse analysis.

A conceptual framework for understanding globalisation

The term globalisation is frequently employed in an indiscriminate way to refer to contemporary developments. A comprehensive review of the globalisation literature lies well beyond the scope of this paper but can be found in Baragwanath (2003c). Briefly, Held, McGrew, Goldblatt and Perraton (1999) and Scholte (2000) seek to clarify the positions within the globalisation literature by distinguishing between "globalists", who argue that globalisation represents a novel departure from the past; and "sceptics", who reject the idea that globalisation is anything new. Between these polar extremes there exist myriad permutations, for which Held, McGrew, Goldblatt and Perraton (1999), and Scholte (2000) use an intermediate category of "transformationalists". This describes those who are convinced that globalisation is the central driving force behind rapid social, political, and economic changes that are reshaping modern societies and the world order (Castells, 2000; Giddens, 1999; Held et al., 1999; Scholte, 1993). Those in this category accept that societies are having to adjust to a world where there is no longer a clear distinction between international and domestic, external and internal affairs (Cammilleri & Falk, 1992; Rosenau, 1992; Ruggie, 1993; Sassen, 1996), but reject the "globalist" assertion that the trend is linear or leading necessarily to "globality".

My categorisation of the globalisation debate (Figure 1), by contrast, stems from an initial distinction that I have seen nowhere else, between those who use globalisation as a *description* of contemporary reality; and those who analyse globalisation at a conceptual level as a *discourse* (or *set of discourses*). Each is discussed in turn.

Held et al. and Scholte tend to focus on the descriptive aspects of the globalisation debate. Within this descriptive category, Scholte (2000, p. 16) notes a division between whether globalisation is seen as "fact or fantasy". Based upon his terms, I divide those who view globalisation as a description of contemporary trends in two: first, "global-factualists" (labelled "hyperglobalists" by Held et al. and Scholte) who consider not only that globalisation is happening, but that it is *the* defining feature of contemporary life, affecting people the world over, with economic, political and cultural implications. Iconic examples of this genre include Castells (2000); Friedman (1999); Greider (1997); Ohmae (1995) and Reich (1991). Within the global-factualist group, I make a further distinction, between *defenders* who view globalisation as both real and positive (stereotypical examples include Ohmae and Reich), and *detractors* (such as Goldsmith and Mander (1995) and Klein (2000)) who depict it as both real and sinister. Secondly, "global-fantasists" (labelled "sceptics" by Held et al. and Scholte) are those who refute the idea of globalisation as a description, retorting that *plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose:* little has changed, we have seen it all before and globalisation is nothing new (see for example Chase-Dunn, 1997; Hirst & Thompson, 1996, 1999; Hirst, 1997; Ogborn, 2000; Williamson & O'Rourke, 2002). Each position is summarised in Figure 1.

Both global-factualist and global-fantasist positions can be, and are, strongly defended and contain elements of truth, although the insights gained are inevitably partial, for all consider globalisation as a description. At this descriptive level, it is possible to enter the globalisation debate on the basis of an empirical case study, in order to examine just what, if anything, is different about the present.

My analysis of government documents and annual company reports reinforced the continuities between past and present. New Zealand remains small and sparsely populated, isolated, internationally trade-

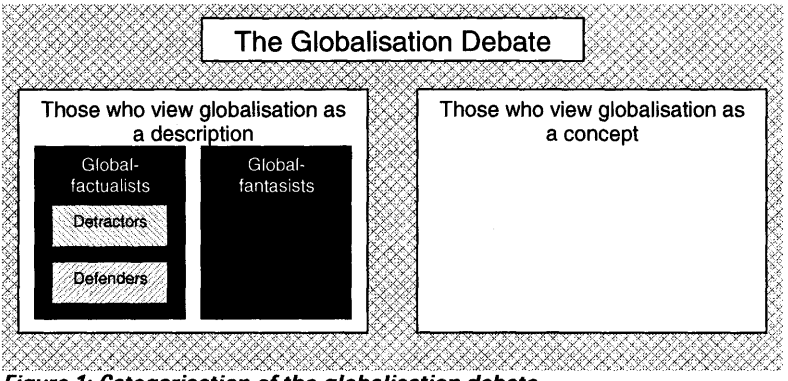

Figure 1: Categorisation of the globalisation debate

dependent, and globally connected, just as it has always been. In the same way, since 1935, decision-makers in both private and public sectors in New Zealand have been preoccupied with very similar issues. These include New Zealand's small population and hence constrained domestic market prospects; its heavy dependence on international trade and hence vulnerability; its narrow range of export commodities and hence need to diversify; its distance from other countries, and hence the tendency for hopes to be pinned on technological advances to overcome the tyranny of distance; and the need to increase its economic growth in order to maintain and improve quality of life.

Yet despite the evident continuities, my research uncovered widespread adherence to a global-factualist notion of globalisation that causes past experiences to be dismissed as obsolete or irrelevant to New Zealand's present or future. This in turn leads to an underestimation of the ongoing importance of both history and geography, both of which continue to influence contemporary New Zealand in fundamentally important ways. It is, however, insufficient simply to draw attention to the persistence of parallels with the past, for whether or not these exist, the term globalisation is nevertheless used to refer to contemporary circumstances by influential decision-makers whose views have practical consequences.

It is therefore essential to undertake a closer examination of the term globalisation. As a description, globalisation is misleading, as it

seems to ascribe unity and specificity, masking the fact that it is used in a multiplicity of ways to refer to widely differing phenomena: globalisation is not simply a neutral expression, but a profoundly value-laden interpretation of contemporary events. My research suggested, however, that the difficulties inherent in using globalisation as a description can be transcended if an analytical distinction is drawn between the analysis of globalisation as a *description* of contemporary reality, and the analysis of the *discourses* of globalisation at a conceptual level. This leads to the unmasking of globalisation as a powerful concept that has acquired its own causal efficacy.

Globalisation as a concept

The widespread use of the term globalisation suggests commonality in meaning. Yet "the surface similarities language can present should not distract us from the important differences in the way concepts are used" (Moore, 2000, p. 226). "We remain unconscious of the prodigious diversity of all the everyday language-games because the clothing of our language makes everything alike" (Wittgenstein, 1967, p. 224). The diversity of phenomena labelled globalisation makes it necessary to examine the *ways in which the term is used,* by whom, and to what effect. This is the element missing from many analyses of globalisation, which seek to trace broad macro patterns rather than starting with analysis from the "ground up". Anchoring my analysis in the specific historical and geographical context of New Zealand and the region of Canterbury in particular led me to recognise the way in which the context fundamentally influences the way that globalisation is interpreted. This has implications for both the material context of daily life, and the discursive climate within which options are discussed.

To analyse globalisation as a concept, the term must be anchored in its specific spatial and temporal context, so that the different ways in which it is used can be examined, and the consequences of understanding or interpreting it in these ways can be understood. My analysis emphasises that New Zealand's historical development has been inevitably influenced by the global context since earliest European contact, and this conditions the path-dependency of contemporary New

Zealand in both material and discursive terms.

Materially, there have been vast changes in New Zealand – as elsewhere – since the 1970s. Technological advances, in conjunction with cultural, political and economic changes, exacerbate the sense of disjuncture with the past. The term globalisation provides a useful short-cut to refer to these developments, but this is in turn but a short step from viewing globalisation as a causal influence responsible for them. Discursively, my research revealed a prevalent sense of impending crisis regarding New Zealand's future prospects. An impression of disjuncture with the past is reinforced by powerful metaphors regularly employed by influential commentators which heighten the perception of impending doom: "we're at the crossroads", "we're at a watershed", "there's an escalator moving and you have to get on it", and "every indicator demonstrates that New Zealand is running the risk of sliding off the first world" (Brash, 2001; Clark in Edwards, 2000; New Zealand Government, 2002; Interviews, Chief Executive, Canterbury Employers' Chamber of Commerce, Canterbury Development Corporation). This lends urgency to the calls for economic transformation, and reinforces the notion of globalisation as a qualitative departure from anything that happened before.

Interweaving both discursive and material aspects is New Zealand's history, which not only established New Zealand's economic profile and (through the Imperial connection) enabled the achievement of living standards far higher than those of most exporters of primary produce, but also helped to engender a set of discourses through which material developments are interpreted. Recurring examples of these discourses include what I have come to label (agri)cultural cringe (the persistence of widespread embarrassment at New Zealand's "unsophisticated" pastoral heritage); the prevalence of Fortress New Zealand imagery (in which New Zealand's past is categorised as insular, parochial and isolationist, and hence irrelevant to the "globally connected" present); and the obsession with international competitiveness ("putting ourselves on the map"). This attests to the entwining of material developments and discursive interpretations, which together condition the way in which the concept of globalisation is understood and acted upon.

To explore the concept of globalisation further, then, these material and discursive strands must be disentangled, and here Fairclough's critical discourse analysis provided a useful framework. Fairclough's approach stems from a realist view of social ontology, which proposes "a dialectical relationship between social structures, social events, social practices, spacetimes, the material world and language" (Fairclough, Jessop and Sayer, 2001, p. 10). This suggests that texts are implicated in the processes of meaning-making, and that they also have causal effects, bringing about changes (Fairclough, 2003, p. 7). Fairclough (1989) suggests that text, interaction and social context are the three critical elements of a discourse, encouraging the three levels of analysis that critical discourse analysis entails: micro-level description of text (textual analysis), meso-level interpretation of relationships between text and interaction (interdiscursive analysis), and macro-level explanation of relationship between interaction and social context (social analysis). These three connected levels of analysis enable my historical and ethnographic material to be interpreted for both its descriptive content (in terms of describing "what happens"), and for its interpretative content (how changes are represented and understood by the person, whether the "author" of the text, or the interviewee).

Analysing the research using Fairclough's approach led me to the suggestion that while several discourses of globalisation exist, over the past decade one particular globalisation discourse has become hegemonic in New Zealand policy-making. This emphasises *novelty*, *generic applicability*, and the *global scale*. Whether in technological, political, cultural or economic terms, the overriding impression is a sense of a qualitative disjuncture with the past, evident in the repeated distinction between contemporary New Zealand as a "global player", as opposed to the insulated, isolated "Fortress" of the past. Consequently, I label this discourse "hyperglobalism", as it closely reflects the hyperglobalist position identified by Scholte and Held et al., noted above.

Emphasising the discourses of globalisation risks the implication that globalisation is "simply talk", a fashionable buzzword extrapolated too far. Sayer (1989: p. 670) suggests that buzzwords are initially attractive because they offer the promise of escape from old concepts whose

limitations are all too familiar and whose strengths bore rather than impress, but that they quickly die because their promise proves to be false, and their unities and generalisations full of holes. Yet viewing globalisation as simply a buzzword is to misunderstand the materiality of discourse through its dialectical link to practice. The fact that the concept of globalisation conditions the framework within which influential policy-makers evaluate options influences the way in which problems are defined and policies developed, encouraging the chronocentric (Standage, 1998) implication that we are experiencing something qualitatively different to anything that went before. This causes a narrowing effect: as Maslow observed, if the only tool you have is a hammer, you tend to see every problem as a nail. If the dominant concept is globalisation, alternative interpretations are limited by the "new planetary vulgate" (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 2000).

Hence a critically important aspect of the discourse of hyperglobalism is the link between language and power. "The exercise of power, in modern society, is increasingly achieved through ideology, and more particularly through the ideological workings of language" (Fairclough, 1989, p. 2). While power is not *only* a matter of language, this is an important dimension. Foucault proposed that power and knowledge directly imply one another, for "there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations" (Foucault, 1977, p. 27). Foucault directs attention to the dichotomous "othering" process whereby the negative is obscured, marginalised, and the positive is privileged; but also emphasises the *constitutive* effect of language and power.

> We must cease and for all to describe the effects of power in negative terms: it 'excludes', it 'represses', it 'censors', it 'abstracts', it 'masks', it 'conceals'. In fact, power produces; it produces reality; it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth. The individual and the knowledge that may be gained of him belong to this production. (Foucault, 1977, p. 194)

My selection of key informants reflected the fact that some "talk" matters more than others because of the way power relations operate

in society: opinions are differentially weighted depending on "who says it". In New Zealand, politicians have power as policy-makers in the public interest and business-people as decision-makers in the private sector. Their views therefore "matter" more, in the sense that they are more able to influence the policy agenda, than those of groups or individuals whose views are marginalised through the operation of power relations. I thus selected interviewees whose opinions are not only aired publicly but are also accorded weight because of the person's position in society, and which consequently affect the climate within which policy decisions are made. In addition, the views held by these "influential people" are reported in the mass media, which are an important source of information for most New Zealanders. Through such influences the discourse of hyperglobalism has become naturalised and accepted as "common sense", and has come to dominate discussions of New Zealand's contemporary prospects. This dominance is reinforced through an "othering" process, as globalisation is frequently depicted by influential people as novel, inevitable and qualitatively distinct from the insularity of the past, as each of these quotations demonstrates:

> Labour as a party accepts globalisation. It's not only inevitable, but it has a lot of desirable features (Prime Minister Helen Clark, in Clark expects..., 2000, p. 2).

> [G]lobalisation is not something that may happen... It is not something that can be avoided. It is something that has happened already (Sutton, in New Zealand must stick... 2001, p. 21).

> Globalisation. We all have to play – it's an increasingly integrated world out there (Interview, CEO, Canterbury Development Corporation).

> We are really right at the crossroads at the moment, in terms of where we are going, and that's really the interesting part from my perspective, is the future, and what we need to do as an economy and as a community to embrace globalisation, and how we can do that and be successful. At the moment we are not doing very much successfully as a country (Interview, CEO, Canterbury Employers' Chamber of Commerce).

While the emphases vary, my sources unequivocally imply that "things have fundamentally changed" over the past twenty years. My data reveal a battery of images disseminated through the media, business, government and academic writing which reinforces the impression of globalisation as an inevitable external force affecting New Zealand. "The global" has come to dominate the way that decision-makers consider New Zealand's position vis-à-vis the rest of the world, and this understanding is coloured by a sense of novelty and inevitability. It has become commonplace among policy-makers to define New Zealand's options as externally determined. A dominant image that emerges in the public and private sector, and amongst my interviewees, is of contemporary New Zealand as "globally connected", unlike the "Fortress" of the past. This presents a substantial contrast to past interpretations of New Zealand's external connections which depicted New Zealand as affected by external forces, but emphasised the considerable scope and indeed the *need* for government action to determine the terms on which external relations were conducted. My historical research demonstrates that policy-makers from 1935 onward recognised that New Zealand's fortunes were inextricably linked to the international context, *but considered it possible to mitigate the excesses of the global economy through a range of policy instruments.* New Zealand was, for example an enthusiastic early supporter of the GATT, in the belief that this would help to circumvent the agricultural protectionism of other countries. Minister of Finance Arnold Nordmeyer noted for example in 1958:

> New Zealand argues that there is no justification for industrialised countries to continue that protection of agriculture because this causes a deteriorating balance of payments problem in agricultural exporting countries and leads to industrial product protection. (Nordmeyer, 1958 B6, p. 20)

Many of the external circumstances confronting New Zealand bear strong resemblance to past circumstances. A decisive change has however been discursive, re-framing the realm of the possible for New Zealand policy-makers (Baragwanath, 2003c). The global-factualist notion of globalisation is thus reinforced and disseminated by figures

with the power to influence New Zealand's policy-making prospects, shaping them in such a way as to emphasise *novelty, generic applicability* and the *global context,* over continuity and local specificities, regardless of New Zealand's highly unusual circumstances.

Yet whilst the discourse of hyperglobalism is hegemonic, it is not unresisted. While my interviewees specifically used the term globalisation to describe the differences with the past, as the interviews progressed, the disjuncture was often blurred as people reflected upon the nuances of contemporary circumstances, often resulting in a reaffirmation of the similarities of past and present. My historical analysis further elucidated the parallels that persist for a small, isolated country with a small population aspiring to high living standards, whose income is perennially inadequate to cover its wants. Yet amongst contemporary sources, the sense of *difference* overrides. Changes since the 1980s reinforce the sense of disjuncture, which has come to be understood as externally driven, and is frequently attributed to a process called globalisation. This has the effect of minimising the relevance and significance of factors that do not fit these parameters, removing from consideration New Zealand's uniqueness and peculiarity, and similarities with the past that persist.

My argument is supported by my analysis of the Government's "Growth and Innovation Framework", launched in 2002. The strategy, code-named *Growing an innovative New Zealand* (New Zealand Government, 2002) is circumscribed by the hegemonic discourse of hyperglobalism, with the consequence that the strategy has considerable shortcomings. It seeks to reposition New Zealand as an "innovative" economy through encouraging biotechnology, information and communication technology, and the "creative industries"; but seems to represent an explicit attempt to distance New Zealand from its "old-fashioned" image as clean, green, and safe. In doing so, the strategy undervalues the ongoing and fundamental importance of these very traits to New Zealand's continuing competitive advantage, given their long-established "brand equity" in terms of international recognition, and their rarity amongst New Zealand's trading partners. The emphasis on novelty and the global context, and the implicit acceptance that

generic solutions developed elsewhere will suit New Zealand's specific circumstances overlooks New Zealand's highly distinctive circumstances, belittles the role played by past innovations in achieving economic prosperity, and insufficiently acknowledges that similar strategies are being pursued world-wide by countries with vastly greater resources and political commitment (Baragwanath 2003a; 2003b; 2003c; Baragwanath, McAloon & Perkins, 2003).

It is highly significant that influential decision-makers up to and including the Prime Minister are framing their decisions through the lens of hyperglobalism. Opinions are shaped through this process because of the power that such figures command which ensures that their views are not only reported, but are authoritative, and come to be acted upon. This has the effect of marginalising opinions that do not correspond to the dominant discourse, affecting what is given credence and what can and cannot be discussed. The practical implication is that views that emphasise continuity rather than novelty, the local context rather than the global, or New Zealand-specific experience over generic international advice, are subjugated and rejected as obsolete, irrelevant, or "anti-progress".

The discourse of hyperglobalism encourages a focus on *novel solutions*, thereby effectively dismissing New Zealand-specific experience, despite the persistence of many past constraints. This emphasis is exacerbated by the "strange rage for novelty" that has long characterised New Zealand policy-making (Siegfried, 1914, p. 61). Dissatisfaction with New Zealand's agricultural reputation accounts for the attempts to distance the country from its past, leading to the determination to follow policies being pursued elsewhere. Yet the notion that economic decline can be reversed through the application of novel technologies – ICT, biotechnology and the "creative industries" – turns out to be a generic formula similarly being pursued by the British Government (1998; 2003), while iterations are evident in policies in contexts as diverse as Hong Kong, Singapore, the Netherlands and Australia[1].

The discourse also implies that the circumstances facing countries in an "era of globalisation" are *generic*, evident in the comparisons with

other countries seen to be performing more successfully in the "international competition" (such as Ireland or Singapore), and in the use of international management consultants in the development of public policy. This trivialises the significance of New Zealand's highly distinctive circumstances – its competitive advantage in the exploitation of natural resources, the small size of the domestic market, its high living standards – and dismisses the relevance of New Zealand-specific expertise to the country's current and future prospects. In emphasising the historical context and the ongoing salience of New Zealand's location, my analysis necessarily draws attention to the *dissimilarities* of New Zealand compared with the rest of the world. This challenges the tendency toward generic solutions, calling into question the value of generic management consultancy advice if this is not balanced against New Zealand-specific analysis; and raises questions over the value of external comparisons that fail to consider the differences between New Zealand and the countries considered.

Finally, the discourse emphasises the *global* scale. Of course, its external context is necessarily an important consideration for a small, trade-dependent country such as New Zealand. Yet focusing upon the apparently novel conditions wrought by globalisation induces long-sightedness that occurs at the expense of understanding local conditions. Politicians have for twenty years focused more or less on the global context, viewing the world as a seamless whole governed by the principles of general equilibrium theory. Yet the world remains as segregated and partitioned as ever, despite free trade rhetoric and the image of global connectivity. The global focus has blinded New Zealand policy-makers in recent years to this ongoing feature of the global economy and global society, with profoundly detrimental effects. For many of my interviewees, single-minded pursuit of free trade agreements in a context shaped by the idea that "there is no alternative" to globalisation has occurred with scant regard for New Zealand's own self-interest. A frequently-cited example was the dubious benefits of

[1] A snapshot of the similarities of policies being pursued across diverse contexts was clearly evident in presentations made at the "Creative Clusters" conference held in Brighton, UK in April 2004.

New Zealand's commitment to the GATS agreement, which extends far beyond that of most of New Zealand's trading partners (Baragwanath, 2003c). This implies the need for a re-valuing of local conditions, and a reappraisal of the remaining room that policy-makers in both public and private sectors in New Zealand have to manoeuvre, albeit necessarily within the context of the global.

By emphasising the novel, the generic and the global, the hegemonic discourse serves to distract attention from the *really existing situation* in New Zealand. Yet New Zealand's future options can only be usefully discussed if the specificities of its historical and geographical context are acknowledged, along with the recognition that the government can and does maintain an active role in determining the future for New Zealand, just as it has always done. Options are foreclosed by the hegemonic discourse of hyperglobalism. To tackle the issues confronting contemporary New Zealand, my research suggests the need to acknowledge its distinctiveness – indeed its uniqueness – in terms of its remote geographic location, the path-dependency of its economy, its small population size, its competitive advantage (both tangible and perceptual, in terms of the "clean, green and safe" image), *and the effects of government activity over the past twenty years.* These factors remain as relevant to New Zealand's contemporary prospects – social, environmental, political and economic – as at any previous point in its history, but are masked by the discourse of hyperglobalism.

Reappraising the options without the globalisation imperative

The term globalisation requires careful reappraisal, demanding more than simply a redefinition of what it *is*. If globalisation is understood as a concept rather than a description, its performative power can be recognised through the analytical device of discourse analysis (Fairclough, 2001; 2003; Thrift, 2001). Recognising and providing for the constitutive effect stemming from the nominalisation of globalisation, it becomes possible to re-evaluate the options confronting New Zealand. The concept cannot be understood unless it is contextualised in the specific history, discourses and domestic and international conditions within which it is used. Each of the dimensions of globalisation can be

elucidated if the discourse of hyperglobalism is recognised and resisted.

First, the implications of technological advances shift if the effect of the discourse of hyperglobalism is recognised and provided for. Recontextualising recent developments within a historical trajectory of increasing interconnections injects a note of caution into the techno-optimism that accompanies discussion of "high-tech" solutions to New Zealand's problems. While international communication and travel have been enhanced by recent technological developments, time-space compression (Harvey, 1989) and time-space distanciation (Giddens, 1990) remain intensely relative, the "tyranny of distance" continues to operate in New Zealand both materially and discursively, and location remains of pivotal importance in determining New Zealand's prospects (operating as both an advantage and a disadvantage).

Secondly, New Zealand's contemporary political circumstances can be better understood if globalisation is divested of its causal efficacy. This encourages questions over how New Zealand's self-interest might best be pursued within the inextricably global context, and permits assessment of the remaining autonomy of the state in facilitating this process and the agency that remains. Removing the external imperative of globalisation enables the power of "global institutions" such as the WTO, IMF and the OECD vis-à-vis New Zealand's domestic government to be reappraised, encouraging debate over what stands to be lost or foregone as well as gained by further political commitments, for example to freer trade. This broadens the arena for debate such that alternative perspectives can be encompassed and considered, rather than rejected as obsolete or irrelevant in an "age of globalisation".

Thirdly, the tensions that exist between cultural homogenisation or hybridisation and the cultural differentiation of New Zealand can be explored if an overriding external imperative of globalisation is rejected. Attempts to promote "New Zealand culture" within a context shaped by globalisation have led to the current emphasis of aspects that are visibly different, evident in the construction of tenuous links between authenticity, identity and "indigenous", or rather Maori, culture (Baragwanath, 2003c). Refocusing on the inevitable and historical connection between local and global leads to a more inclusive

appreciation of the *cultures* of New Zealand and the multiple identities that exist, enabling these factors, as well as fears over encroaching commercialisation, to be discussed in a context that takes regard simultaneously of the global and local contexts.

Finally, shedding the globalisation imperative enables questions to be reintroduced relating to New Zealand's economy that are overlooked within the discourse of hyperglobalism. Beyond question, New Zealand will remain dependent on international trade, if its living standards are to be maintained, as has always been the case. At the same time, there is considerable room for debate over the way in which international trade is to be conducted, and my approach suggests the need for further analysis of how markets *should* be regulated. This requires consideration of normative questions relating to ends as well as means, such as *why* we want GDP to increase, whether other goals might be more apposite, such as economic *development* rather than growth, and how much New Zealand's quality of life is valued. The debate is currently artificially restricted. Because hyperglobalism is hegemonic and unquestioned, trade discussions are dominated by the neo-liberal perspective that "open markets" are the only possibility, despite empirical evidence to the contrary. For the same reason, non-democratic actors such as APEC and the WTO continue to set the parameters for New Zealand's domestic regulations through the acquiescence and encouragement of government in the absence of the possibility of alternative perspectives, binding the future New Zealand state to particular courses of action. The New Zealand Government presents these as the inevitable consequence of globalisation, sustaining the focus on the global rather than the local, on generic propositions rather than locally-developed alternatives, and on novel developments rather than enduring features of New Zealand's economy and society. Yet each aspect can be contested, if the imperative of hyperglobalism is resisted. My appraisal challenges the notion of a novelty in the global focus, emphasising that for New Zealand at least, this is nothing new, for, indeed, New Zealand's development can only be understood in the global context. At the same time, this suggests attention to New Zealand's existing conditions and self-interest, rather than a generic view of the world as undifferentiated.

This implies a turn toward the local in understanding what is happening, *necessarily within the context of the global.*

My argument draws attention to the chronocentricity inherent in many invocations of globalisation. Examining the historical parallels demonstrates that many of the issues confronting contemporary New Zealand governments have in fact emerged repeatedly throughout New Zealand's history. This is hardly surprising, for many of New Zealand's characteristics have remained the same: its small population, its remote location, its competitive advantage, the high expectations of its citizens, the difficulty in matching earnings with outgoings. Policy-makers in the post-war era operated within a context conditioned by a discourse of constrained autonomy, making decisions that influenced the way in which the external context impacted upon New Zealand even if they could not *control* it. Contemporary policy-makers operate within very similar conditions, yet the options considered are artificially restricted by the discourse of hyperglobalism, which has brought into being both discursive and practical limits on government action.

In offering an alternative perspective from that which dominates policy-making in New Zealand, a wider range of options emerges that the hegemonic discourse obscures. This not only provides new possibilities for action, but also raises the possibility that still other perspectives exist. That calls for an ongoing critical consideration of and engagement with dominant policy discourses, in order to explore what they obscure, what they constitute, and what are their results. Instead of relying *exclusively* on the wide-open lens of globalisation, my analysis suggests a reappraisal in which globalisation emerges as *one* of the concepts through which we can understand what is going on in contemporary New Zealand society, but not the only one. A consequence of this thinking is to recognise the existence and value of distinctiveness, of the multiple layers of contemporary reality as it is experienced in New Zealand, shedding light on the way globalisation is understood and acted upon. My analysis demonstrates the way in which the discursive constraints operate and how they might be otherwise constructed, offering an alternative point of view and thereby broadening the options available for consideration.

Deconstructing the concept dethrones globalisation from its position as *the* quintessential characteristic of the contemporary world. Viewing globalisation as a set of discourses within which hyperglobalism is hegemonic, it becomes possible to resist the image of globalisation as an externally imposed force demanding New Zealand's acquiescence, and to escape the conceptual groove dug by the concept of globalisation. This requires examining where we are, so we can then decide where we want to be and how to get there, which in turn requires a close examination of the existing circumstances, and a strong distinction between rhetoric and practice. This process can be assisted by ideas imported from elsewhere, but these must be evaluated critically in light of New Zealand-specific analysis stemming from our own particular experiences. This requires an understanding of our history, which is not as irrelevant to our present and future as is frequently implied. My analysis offers the possibility of jumping the rails and escaping the groove by recognising and resisting the constraints of the concept of globalisation, which remains an important representation of contemporary life in New Zealand.

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Review Article

Beyond Cultural Studese

Books Reviewed: ***Cultural studies in Aotearoa New Zealand: Identity, space and place.*** **Bell, C., & Matthewman, S. (Eds.) (2004). Melbourne: Oxford University Press.**
On display: New essays in cultural studies. **Smith, A., & Wevers, L. (Eds.) (2004). Wellington: Victoria University Press.**

Gregor McLennan

On first encountering these two collections, it seems only right to welcome them as making an upbeat attempt to – at last – establish cultural studies in Aotearoa New Zealand, this being seen, appropriately enough, as a matter of founding a specifically New Zealand cultural studies. Before long, unfortunately, this project reveals itself as strafed by a debilitating sort of ambivalence, on top of which the level of enquiry and argument in a number of chapters is fairly slight. These features might not have mattered very much had the Bell and Matthewman (B & M) not taken its bow as a veritable *reader* in Cultural Studies rather than a variable miscellany, or had the Smith and Wevers (S & W) not self-presented – neatly, one might think, since "display" is its overall theme – as a "showcase" of thinking around culture in Aotearoa. Yet these postures, together with the adoption by several authors, especially in the S & W volume, of the tone that could be dubbed "postcolonial smug", raise the stakes considerably. The result is a kind of spoiled identity for the inter- and post-disciplinary space that is being marked out.

Ambivalence and unsettledness, of course, are in many ways the trademarks of cultural studies discourse these days, but the ultimate value and status of these tropes remains debateable. To identify ambivalence and contestedness in some phenomenon is almost automatically regarded in some quarters as the hallmark of strenuous "critical" insight, even though countless scholars in the humanities and social sciences have been doing just this for generations. And to

"unsettle" ruling discourses and identities is taken as *the* radically political, and politically radical, move to make, even though this posture tends to fall short of positive commitment to any reconstructive social imaginary. Perhaps the priority, though, is not so much social reconstruction in some totalising frame – that too having been rendered contested and unstable – but instead a particularist postcolonial progressivism? That is certainly something that has *not* been done or claimed by generations of workaday academics. But it is hard to see how this can proceed in a transformative and inclusive fashion, given how inexplicitly its core tenets tend to be handled and underpinned, and how totally uncritical many of these writings are towards anything nominally indigenous, Maori, queer, young, or otherwise supposedly marginal.

So whilst ambivalence, unsettledness and marginality are productive critical resources, they sometimes act as little more than tedious mantras, punch-lines that obstruct rather than facilitate fresh thinking and observation. Thus, in their packaging of the Hokitika Wildfoods Festival, the primary goal of Philip Armstrong and Annie Potts (S & W, Ch. 2) seems to be to sniff out the way in which the (Pakeha) "treatment of animals demonstrates the continuity of settler unease, and the problematic blindness to both a colonial past and an ambiguous present". This reflex-action theorising is unfortunate, because these authors otherwise invitingly prepare their topic as "transitional space" for different social constituencies and contrasting "regimes of taste". Lacking any such substantive fall-back, unless we think that a quick run-through of the novels he's read since moving to London counts, Nigel Clark (B & M, Ch. 1) for his part seeks to disabuse people of the idea that nature in New Zealand is rock-solid, beyond culture, and, well, natural. So he sets out to "destabilise" the land, indicates that 100 percent pure New Zealand has been culturally "invented", and concludes that, as such, the entire terrain of nature represents "shaky ground". This is by no means wrong, but it is not altogether right either; above all it is just *thin* and *over-written*. Similar effects characterise two discussions of the politics of the local, in which inconclusive reflections on "the beach" as an emblematic figure are filtered through hazy snapshots of other

seaside places (Steve Matthewman, B & M, Ch. 2) or various creative writers (Chris Prentice, S & W, Ch. 7).

By comparison, chapters that display a certain lower-key ambivalence or which openly occupy a descriptive register – they don't, as it were, declare themselves as working under the theoretical sign of Ambivalence – strike me as more successful. Thus, Hector Kaiwai and Kirsten Zemke-Smith (B & M, Ch. 9) straightforwardly note the resurgence of the Kapa Haka form, and identify, affirmatively, some of the tensions it contains between contemporary dynamism and traditionalist echoes. Paul Walker and Justine Clark (S & W, Ch. 10) and Anna Neill (S & W, Ch. 11) are questioning but appreciative, after due consideration of the relevant contradictions, of the spatial politics of Te Papa and "the new museology" more generally. There are also useful, if unspectacular accounts of the concerns of the young – mobile phone technology, fashion, reality TV, and hip-hop (B & M, Part 3) – and of the significance of particular representational forms (Roger Blackley on museum plaster casts of Maori heads; Damian Skinner on the photography of Westra and Riethmaier, S & W, Ch. 3 and 5). The limits of descriptivism, though, do emerge rather sharply from time to time, whether expressed in no-frills, here's-another-issue, style (eg. Briar O'Connor on the dilemmas of toi iho TM recognition for Maori cultural goods, B & M, Ch. 10), or in super-precious reflexive mode (eg., Kylie McFarlane on her field trip to Port Arthur, Hobart, bringing together meditations on colonial history, prisons, Anne Ferran's photography, and the 1996 massacre, S & W, Ch. 8). For relief, one looks either for a blast of robust argument or the kind of conceptual crafting that is not merely a matter of obligatory cultural stud*ese*.

On the whole, more of these qualities are to be found in the B & M than in the S & W volume, though this perhaps only reflects my own intellectual prejudices, the former text being slightly more sociologically inclined than the latter. Avril Bell, for example, gives us probably the only example of a typology – whatever happened to typologies? – in her discussion of hybrid identities, as part of her frank opposition to Michael Kingian versions of being Pakeha. Nick Perry takes his customary route – indirect and name-smattered, but also cogent and knowledgeable –

through theoretical notions (here, "antipodality", globalisation and virtuality), rooting these in local empirical instances (his own students, sailing-watching software). And Claudia Bell lambasts "Kiwiana" in the name of a critical sociology of nostalgia. For one reason or another I didn't find any of these chapters entirely convincing (respectively: you cannot *dictate* one correct way of being Pakeha; too much reliance on one's own courses/students; unexplored tensions between the political condemnation of, and human recognition of the need for, sentimental attachments to past community). But engaging and argumentative they were. More fully winning, I thought, was Douglas Hoey's quite brave portrayal of plebeian Pakeha vernacular as positively carnivalesque in the Bakhtinian sense, as well as – of course! – its being "uneasy", paradoxical, and so on. Ian Carter's contribution to the cultural politics of food was also very satisfying. Morsels of DeLillo, Nietzsche, and Benjamin are followed by smart presentations of popular culinary habit, foodie journalism ("gastro-porn"), and nutritional policing. More sustenance, here, for populist transgressivism, and acerbic stuff from a seasoned social analyst.

But Carter's piece is no less an exemplar of cultural sociology for being an exploration in cultural studies, any more than some of the "new essays in cultural studies" in the S & W book cease to be recognisably art history, museology, and so on. So there *is*, at this late stage, an issue about what exactly is gained and risked by wanting to establish the cultural studies identity over and against defensible others at a time when, as all acknowledge, cultural studies is more thoroughly contested, "multi-accentual", and mainstreamed than ever it has been. In fact, there is less *sustained* attention given to that issue in these books than we might have expected, and there is *nothing* on the epistemological and methodological problems that lie, somewhere, behind or within it. It looked for a moment as though Steve Matthewman, judging by the subtitle of his chapter "More than Sand: Theorising the Beach", was going to delve instructively into the workings, and problematical status of, *theory* in cultural studies, and perhaps even exemplify it. But this turns out to be a mirage, unless "the beach is a relational concept" is the kind of thing you are looking for.

Something of those missing dimensions is wrapped up in issues surrounding the *history* of cultural studies, which *are* discussed, mainly in Alex Calder's chapter (S & W, Ch. 6). Like both sets of editors in their introductions, Calder describes how few New Zealand cultural studies precedents there have been, and like them he airs the feeling that, in spite of this, there is something odd about seeking to institutionalize it here and now. Unaccountably, these overviews wholly neglect the precedent represented by *Sites*, a journal of many years standing, coming out of Massey but with a wide-ranging group of contributors and associate editors, including prominent figures in London and Australia as well as other New Zealand centres. I guess this demonstrates, for any who doubted it, that it is not only those baddies overseas who sport metropolitan blinkers. *Sites*, initially conceived in "Birmingham mode", cumulatively embraced feminist and postcolonial themes, its subtitle becoming "a journal of South Pacific cultural studies". Apart from its publication of a large number of substantive features not at all unlike many of the contents under review here, periodic debates about the politics of cultural studies were staged, and the artwork on the front cover itself for several years in the 1990s constituted a considered "textual" contribution to the genre. *Sites*, for those reasons, represented – it seems to have trimmed its sails more recently – the possibility of a project without a discipline. I confess to partisanship here, since I was on the Sites board during my time in New Zealand. But the point here is simply that even a minimal engagement with the *Sites* archive might have honed further the new spokespersons' sense of the current danger: reinventing cultural studies as a discipline without a project.

But, this lapse apart, Calder does guide us through some of the key questions in an individual way, where this means individual-going-on-quirky as well as independent-minded. To show the possible narrowness rather than the ecumenical embrace of the trans-discipline, Calder delivers a definition of cultural studies that would rule out many people (including himself he says): "a sustained critical engagement with regimes of representation". But to start there, almost by fiat, is to sidestep a whole raft of disputes and vendettas around "idealist textualist" versus "material practice" constructions of "the project". Moreover, Calder

pulls his definition from the 1987 editorial of *New Formations*, another journal of which I happen to have been an editorial member. And the motivation for that publication, at that time, was not primarily to stake out a claim for "cultural studies" as such. Those words are not to be found in that editorial statement, and the rather different subtitle, "a journal of culture/theory/politics" only surfaced in issue 9. More, no doubt, could be tossed around about this, but the controversial starting point is the thing to emphasise. It is also worth noting that Calder's main intellectual preoccupation, "settlement studies", something that he feels lies outside the scope of cultural studies as he has just defined it, is in fact a close approximation to the style of historical-critical excavation that is nowadays practised or aspired to by some of the most respected cultural studies "names" in the UK and US.

To compound the matter, Calder finishes his piece with quite another sort of general definition: "cultural studies might be considered, albeit ideally, as a set of interpretive techniques for making ordinary everyday life heave into view...it is a mode of attention that makes the peripheral visible in ways that should give you pause". Here we need to mark a certain internal slippage, because making the peripheral visible is not always a matter of heaving everyday life into view, and a mode of attention is not the same as a set of interpretive techniques. I myself prefer the "attention" phrasing because I still don't know, after all these years, how, precisely, good cultural studies "techniques", methodologically speaking, differ from good textual criticism, good ethnography, good structural and interpretive sociology, and so on. There is certainly a strong argument that this was not always so: if the older disciplines nowadays provide welcoming spaces for all kinds of work as long as it is roughly about people and society, this is partly because of the effects of cultural studies, feminist, and related critiques of mandarin, conservative, and technicist versions of those brotherhoods. As for Calder's suggestion that the ultimate point of the various cultural studies repertoires is merely to "give us pause", rather than, say, helping to change the world in some very modest or even dramatic way, well, many of us would still baulk at *that*. And finally, suppose I want to understand and critique discourses about research

performance in universities, linking them to forms of organizational governmentality and the cultural styles, mentalities, class interests and so on, of Blairite elites. According to Calder's second stipulation, this looks like it too must belong outside the remit of cultural studies, because it is not obviously or immediately about ordinary folks or everyday life. It does, however, partake of the remnants of "ideology-critique", something that would seem to remain central to the purpose and practice of cultural studies, even if some cultural studies *aficionados* are now slightly queasy about the necessary neo-essentialist element of this critical strategy. (For a "neutral" rather than "critical" use of the ideology concept, see John Lyall on stamps, B & M, Ch. 7; and for a jolly analysis that seems not to require the concept in any shape or form, see Jonathan Smart on branding Aotearoa at the Biennale of Venice, S & W, Ch.9.)

There are several more intriguing and debatable formulations of the identity and promise of cultural studies. Sometimes "it" appears, faintly absurdly, as our guiding persona, the effect of personification being encouraged by its capitalization throughout B & M. Thus, Cultural Studies "reminds us" of this, "cautions us" about that, and "stirs up" the Other. Disappointingly perhaps, what it seems to remind us of most of all is not to be completely dim. Courtesy of Nigel Clark, for example, Cultural Studies reminds us to be "careful" to ensure that we don't take any single interpretation of nature as the "ultimate truth". Thanks for that, Cultural Studies. For Thierry Jutel (B & M, Ch. 4) it prompts us to agree with the version of Deleuze according to which the point of cultural criticism is to "start in the middle of things". It is this advantageous location, apparently, that enables this bold author to launch a discussion on the virtualisation of the landscape (through *Ring*ification and so on), a discussion in which he is "not looking for coherence", for fear of rendering messy things static. Gollum would surely approve. Not entirely won over to the gold standard of an incoherent cultural studies, Lee Wallace (B & M, Ch. 5) sees a "cultural studies approach" as something that might "give us more critical purchase" on particular local histories of sexualities and space, while Nigel Clark shares with us the inside info that "Cultural Studies likes to ask questions about how and where we are situated". The editors of S & W, however, whilst they allow that

cultural studies "renovates the cultural imaginary", offering "new readings of familiar objects and narratives", also feel that its "investment in the local" – a "contested place", obviously – is in fact quite a tricky business. Chris Prentice (S & W, Ch. 7) elaborates, in perhaps the most elevated terms to be found in either collection: whilst cultural studies "affirms and celebrates liberated identities", it must constantly *remind itself* of "its complicity in new globalized power relations of inequality".

Overall, then, my reading of the situation is this. The currently dominant modalities of cultural studies – interpretive ambivalence, postcolonial unsettling, exaggerated localism – can often produce interesting, critical, disruptive analyses. But these apprehending frames are by no means uncontentious or self-sufficient, whether this is taken politically, epistemologically, or empirically. Moreover, genuine debate around them is sometimes badly hampered by the way in which glib or shallow conceptualisation run alongside the sadly widespread tendency to substitute moralism for politics. In that "first order" context, to be ambivalent and uneasy *about the virtue and content of cultural studies itself* whilst at the same time calling for its further official establishment – if indeed that is what is on the table – is not a consistent or credible "second order" stance. Such, however, appears to be the predicament of whatever "project" is represented by these worthwhile but flawed volumes. The prospect of a revived or new cultural studies *journal*, or a series of *conferences*, in which all the testy debates, definitions, disciplinary and methodological inflections, political shades of opinion, and current cultural obsessions that hover around these texts can be aired properly, is undoubtedly attractive and supportable. But a whole stream of new or re-packaged courses and degrees in cultural studies, with their pseudo-innovative rationales for separate academic departments and new individual career pathways: this could not possibly, it seems to me, be the right thing to be doing at this stage. In fact, it might only help confirm Bourdieu and Wacquant's (1999, p. 47) otherwise fevered pronouncement that cultural studies has become merely a "fashion", a "commercially-driven fabrication of publishers", forming part of an awful new "planetary vulgate" of pseudo-progressive particularism.

Reference

Bourdieu, P., & Wacquant, L. (1999). On the cunning of imperial reason. *Theory, Culture and Society*, 16(1), 41-58.

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Review Article

Two Research Parties on the 2002 New Zealand Elections

Books Reviewed: *New Zealand votes.* Boston, J., Church, S., Levine, S., Mcleay, E., & Roberts, N. (eds) (2003). Wellington: Victoria University Press.
***Voters' veto: The 2002 election in New Zealand and the consolidation of minority government.* Vowles, J., Aimer, P., Banducci, S., Karp, J., & Miller, R. (eds)(2004). Auckland: Auckland University Press.**

Charles Crothers

Voting Studies

To a considerable extent, political studies in New Zealand operate according to the rhythm of the three-year electoral cycle, with each election surrounded by a clump of popular, and then later academic, overviews and analyses. This essay reviews, from a sociological perspective, the most recent offerings from the Auckland/Waikato research party (the New Zealand Election Study – NZES: Vowles, Aimer, Banducci, Karp, & Miller, 2004) and from the Victoria research party (the New Zealand Political Change Project: NZPCP: Boston, Church, Levine, Mcleay, & Roberts, 2003) against the background of the programme of almost a dozen books which have resulted from the work of these two groups since the 1987 elections. To be more precise, the Boston et al. volume is developed from the 2002 Wellington post-election conference (which was co-hosted by the New Zealand Politics Research group, although much of the research reported emanates from the NZPCP).

Elections involve a complex set of interactions between elites and the masses, mediated by a variety of mechanisms, including polling and canvassing, but especially through the media. The elites comprise the candidates and the organisations of the various parties, together

with a wider cast of supporting organizations (such as the Electoral Commission). At the more individual level, attention can focus on whether or not someone votes (turnout), and also on voter choice – together with the whole range of factors which might bear on these outcomes. Given the recent change-over of the electoral system in New Zealand to MMP, voter attitudes to the electoral system have a recent high prominence. Elections must be studied in a very time-dependent way too: often arbitrarily divided into "pre-election", "campaign" and "post-election" phases. Given this large range of variables, it is not easy to pull together material on elections into any particular coherent framework. The contents of particular books consequently seem to zigzag between levels and aspects, although usually within a clear time-frame.

These studies mobilize much information of value to sociologists, although their focus is much more tightly trained on "politics" and elections than sociologists might entirely appreciate. Yet, elections are sites where major societal choices are hammered out, and a very large range of social and other influences come to bear in a multitude of different ways. So, they offer an excellent, if partial, window into the operation of society more generally. Moreover, the data collected for election analysis purposes can later be "liberated" for more widespread sociological re-analysis. As well as describing and assessing these two volumes, the broader questions that I am addressing to these volumes is what value they have yielded to date, and what value they might in future yield, for sociological purposes.

Aims

Over time the various volumes in these two series have charted particular paths through the wide range of possibilities. For 2002, both volumes set clear aims: "In 2002, the NZES set as its key objective an assessment of the importance of public debate, public opinion and knowledge about the government: in particular, to examine the effectiveness of the election campaign as a means of mobilising and informing voters" (p. viii). In remarkably similar vein, Boston et al. present a focus on

> ...campaigning, both nationwide and in individual electorates. Various chapters examine the role of the media, and of political advertising, on voter perceptions and electoral choice. The circumstances under which the election was called receive special attention. How NZ parties select their candidates, and with what results, form the basis for 2 contributions. The role of leaders in NZ's politics and election campaigning is a theme running through several chapters. As for what resulted from this election, this is considered from several angles: the composition of the new parliament; the formation of a new coalition with its various support and consultative arrangements; and, through survey research, what it is that NZers thought they were accomplishing – and what they expected to happen – when they cast their votes as they did. (p. 9)

The book offers perspectives from party officials and organizers as well as from parliamentary candidates. To provide further documentation of the election, various resource material is attached to the Boston volume, together with the unique feature of a CD of video/audio segments from key campaign moments.

Methodology

In order to tackle the task of analysing these elections, teams of considerable size have been assembled and an array of data-collection exercises mobilized. The material in Vowles et al.. is mainly contributed by the 5 editors with 4 extras (3 of them co-authors of one chapter). The Boston volume has 5 editors, another 8 political scientist contributions and then another 14 "amateur" contributions from political actors.

Vowles et al. provide a crisp description of their main data-collection:

> The NZES provides the most comprehensive data with which to explore these questions, and a host of others. It obtains information from over 5000 voters picked at random. Many are contacted twice, once during the campaign and again after the election. Other participants in the 2002 study also participated in 1999 and 1996, allowing us to make more robust inferences about change. The NZES has also collected data from election candidates at each election since 1993. And for comparative purposes, we can draw on similar data from NZ elections since 1990, and from elections in many other countries from about the

> same time, as part of the participation of the NZES in .. the comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES). (p. viii)

NZES maintains a website (http://www.nzes.org/) and the data from each of its surveys back to 1990 can be downloaded by those interested.

For the VUW team we are told that: "For the third election in a row, the Victoria university pre-election survey interviewed a random sample of 1,000 voters in the week immediately preceding the election" (p. 310).[1] Both volumes mobilize data from a wide range of other New Zealand polls and surveys. Although the NZES has also conducted occasional mid-term surveys their 2001 dataset is barely referred to here. Whereas the TV analysis presented in Vowles et al. precedes a promised content analysis, a partial content analysis of newspaper coverage is presented in Boston et al..

These research programmes have been underpinned by FORST funding over a long period. Tragically, as Vowles et al. report, there is no ongoing commitment to further funding of either programme, although it is possible that alternative means of financial support will be found in the meantime.

Contents

It is difficult to adequately represent the content of books with 12 and 28 chapters each: let alone 4 or 5 supporting appendices in each case. The

[1]Interestingly, in a footnote on p372 we are further told that "each of these nationwide MMP election surveys was complemented by a special study of a key electorate. In 1996, this was Wellington central (which might have been needed to be won by the ACT party in order to win representation). In 1999, it was Coromandel, which might have been necessary as a "trigger" seat for the greens... The electorate chosen for special study in 2002 was Tauranga, which had been won so narrowly in 1999 by NZF leader Winston Peters". However, information from these studies has yet to be publicly revealed, and the Tauranga case-study is not otherwise touched on in this volume.

accompanying table provides some indication of chapter contents.

Topic	Vowles et al. (Chap. Nos.)	Boston et al. (Chap. Nos.)
Period since previous election	1	
Election campaign period	2,3	2, 4, 6-11
Media involvement	4	21-25
Candidates, Parties	6, 7	12-20, 26
Voter turnout	7	
Electoral system (MMP)		5
Values, opinions	8	3, 27
Party voting	5, 9, 10, 11	27
Overview	12	1, 28

The attention, especially in Boston et al., to what might be termed a "political ethnography" of the full communications apparatus is particularly interesting reading which includes accounts of billboard, TV, radio and newspaper coverage.

Results

One of the main tasks of any analysis of an election is to provide some overall encapsulated "story" of what are its key features . Vowles et al. argue for one key feature (which provides their title) and several subsidiary points. According to them one of the main features of the 2002 election was that ".. presented with the prospect (as indicated in early polls, and the expressed preference of Helen Clark) of a majority government, a significant number of voters decided to withdraw their support from Labour, and therefore vetoed that option.."(p. vii). They go on to indicate that "Much about the 2002 election was unexpected, notably its timing, and several of its outcomes. The election was 4 months early.. the centre-left virtually held its 1999 share of the vote..the center-right vote dissolved into fragments.." (p vii.). In sum, they suggest: "All this seems to make the 2002 election both a landmark and a puzzle" (p. viii).

In contrast, the Boston et al. team found it difficult to pin down any one main theme from the election. "In broad terms, the story of this

election is reflected in difficulties in choosing a title for this book" (p.27): there is no clear message in the aggregate of votes cast. (However, alternative titles which the team had canvassed include ones which drew attention to features such as the early election, the "centring" of the aggregate vote, the return of a Labour government, and an overall quest for stability...). However, despite this team denial, in the first substantive chapter Church abandons the team spirit and declares that "going early" was the most significant aspect (p.28).

Both studies present mountains of information on the dynamics of the election. Undoubtedly, the increasing focusing of political science attention on the media has yielded excellent results. Both books incisively critique the media coverage of the election, with Vowles et al. portraying the arrogance of TV journalists in framing the election as a "horse race", and trivializing most issues.

Consideration of sociological questions is not so well developed. There is not a large amount of concern for the views and behaviour of particular cleavages/groups in either book. For example, neither has chapters presenting the politics of Maori or women. Such concerns are addressed in the Vowles et al. volume, and I can now draw attention to some of their more important "sociological findings".

Vowles et al. provide a broad perspective on the extent to which voting choice in the 2002 election was driven by social structure:

> Class voting, which had shown a 'somewhat unsteady recovery' since 1990..collapsed in 2002 to its previous lowest level. Combined with the evidence of sagging party identifications, this slump in the level of structural (or class) alignments identified the 2002 election as the most dealigned election since the early 1930s. The[se] two factors that might have been expected to stabilise individual party preferences were weaker than ever in 2002. (p.27)

They go on to then provide a detailed examination of the social profile of the voters for different parties, along the lines of their first example:

> Among labour voters, compared to all other electors, there were more middle-aged and elderly people, women, pacific islanders, people with university degrees, and non-Christians. Labour also continued to dominate the party vote among those enrolled in

> the Maori electorates. .. Overall, though, when socio-economic variables are taken into account, Maori somewhat surprisingly were no more likely to vote Labour than anyone else. .. Labour's support had only weak roots in social structure. The party has redeveloped a more middle-class social base reminiscent of its support-profile in the late 1980s, provide more evidence of the success of Labour's obvious strategy to occupy the political centre. (pp., 27-29.)

Vowles et al. also bring in the effects of ongoing economic performance on polling results through the previous 3 years.

Vowles et al. advance analysis of public opinion in New Zealand by describing and analysing its underlying structure. This analysis reveals underlying social and economic value dimensions beneath the 33 or so attitude items covered in the NZES.

It is possible to develop a hierarchical model of influences on voting. This is made simpler given the possibility of comparing Labour (as the sitting government) voters to all other parties. The distribution of the different amounts of influence (from the overall 60% of variance in individual voting explained by the variables in this model) is described as follows. "The various social structure influences ... account for 9% of choices. Putting the two sets of basic attitudes ..next is more controversial, but the argument here is that they provide the content of political choice, and they are dimensions of attitudes rather than attitudes themselves. Adding them adds another 9%..." (p. 191). To this can be added concerns with the economy (4%), party identification (16%), trust (11%), attitudes to leaders (11%), and to candidates (1%). As well as providing NZ figures, comparative work show that "Somewhat unexpectedly, NZ is relatively strong in the influences of social structure and ideology on choice competed to two major European countries, Germany and France, where one might have expected such influences to be stronger" (p. 189).

Commentary

The studies provide very sound descriptions of the party elites's behaviour in selecting candidates (but less in developing policies) and in attempting to propagate their views through the media and other

channels. Media and communication efforts are finely dissected, as promised in the aims of the volumes. At the individual level, turnout and voting are described and trends and patterns identified. There is an array of highly competent studies which advance analysis on their particular topic. Finally, and heroically, each book in its conclusion turns to how things fit together: for NZ's political institutions in Boston et al., and for voters in Vowles et al..

The two books differ considerably in tone and audience. Vowles et al. are more explanatory and sophisticated, Boston et al. more descriptive and less academic. In large part Boston et al. is an enthusiastic celebration of politics, in all its glory and gore. (Perhaps this enthusiasm is a nice counterpoint to the low level of trust in politics and politicians and the anti-politics nastiness revealed, for example, in letters to the editor.)

Both hew closely to the boundaries of the political system. Moreover, it is largely only one fairly short time-slice of the electoral cycle which is studied, and the dynamics of politics outside this period are only partly linked. Neither really broaches the deeper question of what this election was all about? Whose interests were served through it?. What were the costs and benefits? Another issue that seems not to be adequately raised in either book is the extent to which the different sizes of campaign chests affects the outcome. This is an issue only partly affected by "state" involvement in party funding and allocation of broadcasting time. In sum, the political economy of the elections is not covered, let alone of political life more generally.

The candidate selection process is covered (in two somewhat overlapping treatments) in Boston et al.. But, how party strategies are developed, and manifestoes generated from these considerations is barely touched on, yet surely their content (or silences) lie at the heart of the electoral process. Neither book digs behind the scenes into the powers that be, or the wider economic and social forces which may be crucial shapers of electoral outcomes. How election issues are located within the broader dynamics of power is a particularly important issue. As a very important stream of political thought has pointed out, a deep level of power involves the ability to *not* have issues raised.

In large part, though, this is a completely unfair critique. It is the remit of other books to examine policies and programmes and to assess their effects, and indeed some of the relevant examinations have been produced by people from these research teams.

Can we measure the performance of the 2002 election against some standard of what should be involved in a democratic debate? Comments from the chapter written by Al Morrison (a Radio New Zealand political editor in 2002) provides material for consideration on this score. "The standout feature of the 2002 election campaign was the lack of nationwide debate around the big policy issues. ...despite efforts, debate over policy did not fire in this campaign. Health barely figured" (p.213). He goes on to point out that the three issues creating most noise were immigration, Treaty of Waitangi and tougher sentences, although even these failed to attract much analysis. Moreover, Labour's strategy was to rest on its laurels, and this approach squashed wider debate about issues.

There are more readily answered questions that need further attention than that provided in these two books. A more formal assessment of the impacts of the change in New Zealand's electoral system needs to be carried out. What has the impact of MMP really been? Is it the last throw of a Rogernomics that rigorously deconstructed all monopolies? Or, is MMP an anti-Liberal move? This is methodologically complex as significant design issues need careful attention. Comparative evidence is useful on this question, and several chapters in Vowles et al. make important steps to provide this, and therefore shed light on this question. A final issue concerns the longitudinal nature of both studies. The chapters in these two volumes largely provide yet another time-slice, rather than putting together more formally developed longitudinal analyses. Again, this is a partly unfair criticism, as two general volumes cannot hope to cover all aspects. Despite the herculean efforts of these two research parties there is still an array of further analytical issues to be pursued.

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Reviews

Exploring society: Sociology for New Zealand students (2nd ed.)
McLennan, G., Ryan, A. & Spoonley, P. (2004). Auckland: Pearson Education.

Sociology for the asking
Hird, M., & Pavlich, G. (2003). Auckland: Oxford University Press.

Reviewed by Brigid Thompson

As an undergraduate student, I was always on the lookout for good New Zealand sociology texts, and *Exploring society* is a great New Zealand text. It is set out nicely, and most importantly for a first year text, reduces a lot of complex material into easily understandable chunks. Each chapter begins with a set of chapter aims so that students can see at a glance what the chapter contains, and ends with a set of study questions that could be used as a guide for student study, or as the basis for tutorial discussion.

The book begins by describing C. Wright Mills' sociological imagination. This is a useful device for getting students to think about what sociology is and gives them a map for understanding the chapters that follow. This is followed by two chapters that trace the story of sociology. Predictably, this takes us through sociology from the Enlightenment and Marx, Durkheim and Weber to a discussion of twentieth century sociologists like Simmel, Parsons, Mead and Goffman. I was impressed by the (brief) discussion of the early feminist thinkers Charlotte Perkins Gilman and Mary Wollstonecraft. These women were noticeably absent from the sociology texts I read as an undergraduate, and although these theorists do not really appear again in the text it is good to see them included at all. The theory chapters are very well written, and are very accessible for new students of sociology. What I particularly liked about the beginning of the book is the attention paid to sociological theorising and research. This material helps to contextualise the substantive chapters, so that they seem less like a laundry list of

sociological curiosities.

The book uses three themes (the social and the personal; the local and the global; differences and divisions) to explore a broad range of topics, including: gender, sexuality and identity; the family; education; work and economic life; stratification and class; politics, state and nation; city life; racism and ethnicity; health, illness and medical power; deviance and crime; social movements; and sport and leisure. A surprising omission from the text is a chapter on migration. Although ethnicity is covered well and includes a discussion of colonisation and issues around citizenship, it would be appropriate to include a chapter that considered issues of migration in New Zealand, both historic and contemporary.

Each chapter begins with a general discussion of the topic area then moves through some issues of sociological interest using the three themes of the text. Included in each of the substantive chapters is a vignette from academics that are well known in their field. For example, Alison Jones writes about ethnicity and school achievement in the Education chapter, David Pearson writes a piece on postcolonial Pakeha in the Racism and Ethnicity chapter, and Ann Dupuis writes about gentrification in the City Life chapter. These vignettes work well for two reasons. Firstly, they provide an opportunity to highlight good New Zealand research without interrupting the flow of the more general information that needs to be covered in a first year text. Secondly, it gives students a chance to read a piece from a variety of authors, some of whom may be their lecturers. With twelve vignettes in total, students can get a sense of the range of topics that sociologists are interested in. It would have been good if all these authors could have been listed somewhere in the text.

A more recent and quite different introductory text, *Sociology for the asking* poses a number of sociological questions (hence the title) which it then addresses in turn. This text moves away from the more traditional "topics" model of first year texts. Although it still covers a wide range of sociological issues, it does not try to offer a definitive list of all that sociology encompasses. Instead, it focuses on a number of contemporary issues or controversies, with chapters set out as questions, such as: Am I Free? Am I a New Zealander? Is the Social

Dead? What is Sovereignty? Does Academic Freedom Exist?

The book begins with a discussion of the sociological imagination, then sets out a map for examining issues of sociological interest. Like *Exploring society,* this book uses three themes to explore its issues: Subjective Troubles (interpreting and explaining social relationships), Imagining the Social (examining patterns in social life), and Critical Sociology (understanding injustice and working towards social change). A set of sociological questions then follow under each of these headings.

Broadly, the first section deals with issues of identity, with chapters on the changing self in society; the idea of individual freedom; sex, sexuality and gender; New Zealand identity and ethnicity; and issues around representation and difference, using disability as a case. The second section addresses issues at the level of society, discussing topics like: the social versus nature; the death of the social as a political force; the welfare state; issues of life and death (for example, abortion, the human genome project and euthanasia); and sovereignty and the Treaty of Waitangi. The third section is an eclectic mix of issues with the common thread of social justice and social change pulling them together. It looks at justice for young offenders; academic freedom and the changing role of the university; and sociologists as critical researchers.

This is an edited text, which means that the reader gets a broad range of authors to read. As a student, I always preferred this approach to general texts – I imagined that I was getting access to a range of authors' specialist topic knowledge rather than someone who might know more about some topics than others. One of the strengths of this book is that it does not compartmentalise the theory and the practice of sociology. Instead, the reader is introduced to the various sociologists and sociological theory through the specific material that is being discussed. The book captures a sense of the importance of sociological inquiry. It goes some way to addressing the feeling amongst some university students that sociology is a dying discipline by asking questions that are of general as well as sociological interest.

Both these books are well suited as textbooks for a twelve or thirteen week course; *Sociology for the asking* has thirteen chapters, and *Exploring society* has sixteen. Both books are well set out, with a clear set of themes

to guide the reader through the material. What distinguishes them from each other is that *Exploring society* is a more traditional text with a set of chapters outlining the usual foci of sociological interest, while *Sociology for the asking* deals with issues that are perhaps more contemporary and of general interest.

Gender and the welfare state. Care, work and welfare in Europe and the USA
Daly,M.,& Rake,K. (2003). Cambridge: Polity.

Reviewed by Maureen Baker

Mary Daly and Katherine Rake explore the relationship between gender and the welfare state in eight countries: France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States. They combine their own statistical analysis (based on the Luxembourg Income Study (LIS) data base) with other empirical research and theoretical literature to examine the intersection of care, work and welfare in these countries. The arguments are meticulously presented, always critiquing the evidence behind them, and draw some important conclusions about the impact of the welfare state on men's and women's access to resources and power, both in the wider society and within their families. Numerous tables and figures reinforce and supplement their arguments.

The question of how welfare states affect gender relations is elaborated theoretically and investigated empirically by an analysis that focuses on patterns internal to a number of countries as well as cross-national variations. The first chapter introduces the key topics and relevant research in the area of welfare states and considers how gender relations have been conceptualised within this literature. The second chapter elaborates Daly and Rake's own feminist political economy framework and clearly defines the concepts and assumptions behind it. The following four chapters employ this framework to examine key aspects of the relationship between the welfare state and gender in the different national settings, focusing on care, work, and two chapters on welfare.

Daly and Rake note that public policies around care are complex, vary cross-nationally, and are not always internally consistent, especially for child care versus elder care. The care chapter focuses on mothers with young children and their labour force participation and financial

situation. They also discuss contests around care and the power relations involved. The chapter on work analyses gender differences and inequalities in the labour market and how the various welfare states deal with these discrepancies. The chapters on welfare examine the redistribution of resources through an analysis of gender differentials in income and poverty. Households headed by women are compared to households headed by men in each country, in terms of risk of poverty, possibilities of forming autonomous households, and mechanisms used by the welfare state to deliver benefits. They also explore the distribution of resources within the family, including men's and women's personal access to resources and their use of time. Daly and Rake recognise the family as an important site of redistribution and a place in which gender inequalities and conflict may exist.

The concluding chapter draws the theoretical, conceptual and empirical findings together to discuss some of the insights. In addition, the authors consider the value of their comparative methodology and the contrast between their findings and other comparative welfare state research. They also draw out some implications for policy and policy development. Main "pressure points" are outlined around care, work and welfare, and future challenges are discussed for the eight welfare states. The book also contains a technical appendix, which discusses their own analysis of the LIS data base.

Daly and Rake argue that the welfare state is a "site of struggle" and a political and politicised domain, but it affects both resources and interests in a way that may lead to change or resistance. They emphasise the diversity in gender relations and national welfare state configurations but state that attempting to categorize welfare regimes (such as Esping-Andersen did in 1990 and many feminists have done since then) oversimplifies the complexities of national policy patterns.

The authors note that demand for care is rising at the same time that the supply of care within the family is contracting. Women's rising employment rates, family instability, changing norms about care as a component of family solidarity, and an aging population all put pressure on social policy. Welfare states have struggled with these issues but competing views exist on how to deal with them. Using OECD data, they

show that despite attempts to reconcile work and family life, a wide divergence exists between the actual family and employment arrangements that people have and what they would prefer in most countries. In addition, despite rising employment rates for women, inequalities in paid work persist between men and women, and women more often make severe compromises in their paid work to reconcile family obligations. They also note that although paid work has changed women's lives, it has not transformed the structure or organization of work. Minor changes have occurred (such as more part-time work) but the typical male pattern of work still prevails and permeates social policy.

Daly and Rake identify a new set of themes emerging in welfare policy following periods of retrenchment and rolling back the welfare states in the eight countries. More welfare states are attempting to forge contracts between the individual and welfare, and individualisation and privatisation go hand in hand. They argue that women are disproportionately affected by any diminution of the welfare state. If risk reverts to the individual rather than being pooled by the welfare state, women will suffer. Generally, women are less able than men to accept risk at an individual level, with their lower incomes and greater reliance on family.

The authors question whether policy is sufficiently responsive to new and emerging risks, such as family instability, new family forms, and forfeiting earned income in order to provide care. They also note that the "fiscalisation" of welfare policy (or the trend to use tax credits) tightens the links between welfare and employment, which generally disadvantages women. Welfare states are constantly involved in negotiation processes but the authors argue that gender relations are not always central to these debates. In recent years, policy makers have focused more on the gender-neutral family.

This authoritative and comprehensive study provides an impressive and unique text that is a "must-read" for anyone interested in gender, social policies, and comparing welfare states.

Queer in Aotearoa New Zealand
Alice, L., & Star, L. (Eds.) (2004). Palmerston North: Dunmore

Reviewed by Justin McNab

Edited volumes with contributing authors from diverse academic disciplines and life experiences run the risk of failing to hang together as a coherent whole. It is a difficult task for a publication to overcome differing disciplinary conventions and theoretical standpoints and contribute meaningfully to a given field of inquiry. Given that definitions of queer and understandings of queer theory tend to be diverse and contested within disciplines, let alone within lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered and other "queer" communities, it is no small task that *Queer in Aotearoa New Zealand* has set itself.

It may be that proponents of queer theory - in its playful incarnation at least, embracing "refusals" of sexual and personal identity and encouraging diverse, creative, offbeat expressions of "queerness" - are keen to integrate their theory and practice. Hence one might not expect an edited volume on queer in Aotearoa New Zealand to hang together. In opening this volume, I took the conservative and decidedly unqueer view that most readers would be interested in advancing their knowledge of things queer in some vaguely coherent way. Although at first glance *Queer in Aotearoa New Zealand* looks like a prime candidate for the disparate edited volume, it is not. This is curious given the diverse approaches taken by the authors towards definitions of queer and queer theory. Editor Lynne Alice, in the book's introduction, says many interesting things about definitions of queer and the use of queer politics and theory. About the book itself she says "[t]he contributions to this book are neither definitive nor exhaustive, but they are original and give unique views of aspects of queer life in Aotearoa/New Zealand" (p. 10).

The first contributor, Alison Laurie, makes no reference, I think quite deliberately, to queer or queer theory, as she outlines the political strategies and the connected social movement that accompanied

homosexual law reform in 1985 and 1986. Michelle Erai, in her chapter "Exile, Maori and lesbian" states that while "queer theory has critically deconstructed gender and sexuality and hence challenged the bipolarisation of straight versus gay or lesbian, it also may have neutralised the potential for social and political mobilisation, and perhaps even appropriated civil advances made for and by lesbian activists" (p. 41).

Tess Lomax, writing on transgendered identities and the law, has a deeply ambivalent view of queer and says "Labels: we can use them to good effect and to abuse. Am I queer? I don't feel abnormal. What is queer. Now that I have accepted my difference, I feel more part of humanity than I ever did before... I'm an academically trained part-Maori transsexual. I'm an oddity. Does that make me queer?" (p. 67).

John Fenaughty writing on youth suicide and heteronormativity and Kathleen Quinlivan writing on young people and the possibility of a queer pedagogy use queer as a kind of shorthand for gay, lesbian and bisexual. This approach to queer is not uncommon and certainly has the advantage of shortening the rather clumsy lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender phraseology. However, it is worth noting that in John Fenaughty's provocative and powerful piece this use may obscure some important differences in the field of "queer youth" and suicide. Gender may be critical to the lived discriminatory experiences of young lesbian women and gay men. Gay men, for example, may be subject to physical violence or bullying centred around dominant constructions of masculinity that young "queer" women are not subject to in the same way. This is not to say that young women do not suffer other forms of discrimination, at least in schools, as Quinlivan's piece illustrates.

In her detailed discussion of same sex marriage and the law, Leah Whiu does not use the word queer at all but prefers to talk about takatapui, lesbians and gay men. Michael Ruguski, in a chapter entitled "Policing Cultures and Curtailing Queer Freedoms", uses queer "to suggest a range of non-straight expressions, as well as other potential (and potentially unclassifiable) non-straight positions" and that "queer discursive frames often act to police queer culture(s) and consequently nullify, or at least repress, the very thing we have been fighting for, our

freedom, to be who we are" (p. 134). In a thought provoking chapter based on qualitative interviews with gay men, Chris Brickell and Ben Taylor illustrate that gay men do not think critically, or "fluidly", or "queerly" about the connections between gender binaries, sexuality and masculinity and/or femininity. Rather they see "camp" and "butch" as aspects of personal journey and discovery, the road to true selfhood. These authors also point out that "drag, camp or other cross gender behaviour" is not subversive if the dominant group fails to grasp its subversion, and simply sees it as reinforcing stereotypes. The authors state that they "remain unconvinced that acts that are subversive in theory are likely to influence people's understandings of the world, let alone to precipitate material change" (p. 158).

In an interesting contribution to the debate Rosemary Du Plessis suggests that while "[g]ay men, lesbians, bisexuals and transgendered people have resisted homogenisation of their identities and practices and use queer theory as a source of insights to achieve these goals... [t]hose defined as heterosexuals can also use queer theory to challenge homogenisation of their practices and relationships" (p. 111). In his chapter entitled "The Home of the Whopper" Gerrard Malcolm deconstructs advertisements for sexual partners in the "queer" press via a dizzying romp through hanky codes, Al Pacino, Bears, and the inability of language to articulate sexuality, sexual identity, or even meaning. More in the tradition of film or media studies, Michelle Ellery, in her chapter entitled "Weaving the Wahine Takatapui", draws out interesting points through her analysis of an Te Awekotuku short story, while Lynne Star covers a great deal of queer theoretical ground in her analysis of the Peter Well's short film *Jewel's Darl.*

So what does this eclectic collection of works say about being queer in Aotearoa New Zealand? For one thing, it seems to be saying that the concept of "queer" indeed has a range of diverse meanings and uses (or lack thereof) both within "queer" communities in Aotearoa New Zealand, and within the communities of academics who are interested in it, or theorise within a "queer" framework. However, there is a sense of some ambivalence about "queer" as a useful concept in the more personalised accounts of Michelle Erai and Tess Lomax. In their

empirically based research Chris Brickell and Ben Taylor illustrate that gay men's experience cannot be characterised in any way "queer". Alison Laurie and Leah Whui did not find it necessary to use the term in their contributions, while Rosemary Du Plessis, and the editors Lynne Star and Lynne Alice seem to find queer theory the most useful.

This book is a decidedly queer mixed bag that nonetheless does manage to communicate something interesting about the lived experience of being lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgendered in Aotearoa New Zealand, regardless of the relationship, or lack of it, between these lived experiences and the concept and/or theory of queer. It also manages to communicate something of the differing theoretical standpoints and uses of queer theory in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Solving social problems: Southern perspectives.
Shannon, P., & Young, S. (2004). Palmerston North: Dunmore

Reviewed by Mary Nash

The authors of this book have set out to provide a coherent resource for advanced-level social work and social welfare students, on both sides of the Tasman, who seek to advance their critical and reflective skills. They have introduced their work with care, so that the reader is prepared for something rather different, and this review aims to give the reader a sense of what the book is about.

Social work educators, they argue, face a challenge, which is "to introduce students to the theoretical complexity, and even confusion, of social work, in a rigorous way while encouraging the creative, artistic nature of professional practice in a socially and culturally embedded context"(p. 9). Accordingly, the purpose of this textbook is to help social workers develop a systematic understanding of the theoretical foundations which underpin the models they use in order to analyse and intervene as professionally as they can, in the social problems that they will encounter in their work.

Social workers focus on the person-in-environment and this means that they take a holistic approach to assessment and intervention. Taking a holistic view, according to Shannon and Young, implies using a macro (social level), meso (organizational level) and micro (interpersonal level) lens to guide one's social analysis. At each of these levels, they identify world views, explanatory and intervention theory as well as practice models, for both general and specific settings.

Four macro theoretical approaches are introduced and examined for their sociological origins, explanatory power, and their implications for intervention and social change are then examined and discussed. The four macro theoretical approaches identified and worked with throughout the text are, in the authors' words: Liberal (economic rationalist), Industrial society (welfare state/Keynesian), Socialist (Marxist) and Alternative (constructivist). Practice examples of each of these theoretical approaches are included and this approach (of covering

theory and relating it to applied situations) continues throughout the book. In order to help the reader the authors have provided a series of egg-shaped diagrams depicting the relationship between social work perspectives, theories and models. These are detailed and complex, and represent the core ideas that inform this work (p. 27).

The result is a fascinating, complex and challenging discussion of the different ways in which we can explain social problems, and approach, understand and initiate social change. Five chapters cover key issues using this framework for analysis and action: "Deprivation and poverty", "Occupational change and unemployment", "Health problems and their management", "Law and crime: controlling social life" and finally, "Discrimination and society: Ageism, racism, sexism and disablism". The authors provide extensive coverage of social policy in these areas (arguing that social workers are inextricably involved with social policy analysis), as well as human rights information, historical and cultural background information and a rich diversity of examples from practice. Poetry is a powerful medium, and I was particularly taken with the following example, from Lao Tsu, which the authors have used to convey a very important principle in community development (p. 174):

> Go to the people
> Live with them
> Learn from them
> Love them
>
> Start with what they know
> Build with what they have
>
> But with the best leaders
> When the work is done
> The task accomplished
> The people will say
>
> "We have done this ourselves."

The authors make no apology for adopting a preference for the alternative approach for social change workers to use. This approach is described as one which looks at how power relationships operate in the

social world, and the opportunities such an analysis can offer for making small-scale but significant change in one's social, political, cultural, economic environment. They point out that in promoting this approach and there is no intention to coerce, and the student who wishes to follow a different path is obviously free to do so, but should have a clear understanding of why they regard their way as better.

Taking a bird's eye view of one chapter, "Discrimination in society: Ageism, racism, sexism, and disablism", the authors define discrimination, and use relevant international as well as social work sources to illustrate the concepts used. There an interesting chronological contextualisation of discrimination, beginning with indigenous society and moving on through the colonial period, the "family farm" era and modern society, until reaching the present day: post-modern society and the global environment. The chapter focuses on this last, and very new environment, examining its structures, and stakeholders, as well as counter movements in which oppressed and marginalized groups resist discrimination. The four categories of social discrimination are presented, in both the Australian and New Zealand contexts, and the reader then has each one explained in terms of the authors' four theoretical perspectives concluding with a discussion of the Louise Humpage's three models of social justice. The authors' aim is, as with each chapter, to show how one's choice of theory serves to illuminate one's understanding of a problem as well as how to begin to intervene in it. The chapter ends with a list of further reading and some useful websites.

This book will appeal to advanced social work students at all levels of development, looking as it does with a fresh and challenging eye at current theories and practices in social and community work. Prior knowledge of social science studies is assumed. The authors are widely-read and the wide range of web addresses and further reading which accompanies every chapter creates a rich resource relevant to Australian and New Zealand readers. I can readily recommend this book to those who wish to untangle and systematize their theoretical knowledge in relation to the practice of social policy and social work. There is a wealth of material here that the careful reader will not exhaust in a hurry.

The virtual self
Agger, B. (2003). Malden: Blackwell

Reviewed by Lesley Patterson

The virtual self is the latest addition to SUNY's *21st century Sociology Series*: a set of student texts written "with a distinct sociological voice and offer(ing) thoughtful and original perspectives" (frontispiece). Author Ben Agger argues for a new sociology: one that can adequately theorise the experience of "fast capitalism", and at the same time, harness information technologies to form (virtual) selves and communities capable of resistance to contemporary forms of domination that characterise late modern everyday lives.

Chapter one, "Everyday life in a wired world", is really a defence of sociology, and convinced me that "sociology remains the most exciting discipline in the university curricula" (p.5). Agger begins by linking social theory to his life story, and to what he sees as important social changes occurring at the structural, ideological and subjective levels. His familiarity with a range of theoretical positions, and his preference for a critical ethnomethodology (heavily driven by his interest in both the young Marx and the Frankfurt School) is engaging and reasonably persuasive. More importantly however, his introductory chapter reminded me again that experience is historically situated, and cohorts close in generation can live very different lives. Agger sets his involvement in left politics in the 1960s (something he identifies as central to his biography as a sociologist) at counterpoint to his students' experiences. He sees his students as individuated by information technologies, saturated in media imagery, and on the borders of a Marcusian one-dimensionality from which only sociology can save them. This chapter really made me think about the young undergraduate students I teach, and how relevant "my" sociology is to "their" lives.

In chapter two, Agger carefully outlines various sociological approaches to theorising the self, comparing and contrasting the various selves who inhabit sociology's canon. Agger's exposition of the self as

variously constructed within "Sociology's encyclopaedia" is usefully linked to an introduction to methodology through a history of the ontologies of social scientific knowledges. I especially liked Agger's discussion around positivism and empiricism, and his critique of the professionalisation of American sociology. By this, Agger is referring to the dominance of positivism as a falsely conscious "atheoretical" practice in American universities, marginalising what Agger characterises as a public sociology: a sociology engaged theoretically and empirically with the "big issues" of late modernity.

Agger is resolutely constructionist, describing all methodologies as literary strategies. His chapter on methodology, entitled "Does postmodernism make you mad or did you flunk statistics?" is not only an interesting overview of the old debates about what constitutes knowledge, but also gives a glimpse into the culture wars as played out in American sociology departments. Agger talks of being "labelled" a postmodernist (a label he rejects) because of his interest in theory and his critique of knowledge as socially produced. However, rather than argue for constructionism, Agger responds to an imagined series of criticisms by "mainstream people who go to great lengths to disqualify postmodernism" (p.78). His responses are well argued and clear. But it is the imagined criticisms that caught my attention. Alongside the anticipated "Postmodernists are relativists, denying truth" (p.79) sits "Postmodernism comes from Europe, especially France, and is un-American" (p.84) and "Postmodernism, because it is amoral and relativist, leads to amoral and immoral activities, such as September 11" (p.86).

Chapters four and five return to Agger's notion of fast capitalism, selves and everyday life. Fast capitalism is Agger's term for media saturated capitalist relations, where virtual selves are shaped by multiple and contradictory images and texts. Agger's argument that rather than being surpassed, capitalism has entered a new phase in which information technologies have changed the relationship between selves and society, is engaging and has a very contemporary feel. Nevertheless, Agger's commitment to the fluidity of selves thrown up by the pace of fast capitalism is seriously undermined in chapter five

("Girl Talk"), where he explores contemporary femininities and the position of women in fast capitalist societies. Here, most of Agger's argument rests on a binary of caricatures supposedly emblematic of social change. Agger compares a 1950s television character (June Cleaver) with postfeminist self-proclaimed "girls" to argue that "many younger women ... now embrace a sharper differentiation between the genders than did their sixties sisters and mothers, inserting themselves into a self-objectifying, self-trivialising culture of femininity" (p.140). Although this chapter touches on many interesting issues, Agger seems to blame women for choosing to be "girls", rather than locating postfeminism more critically in a broader landscape of hegemonic gender relations. He pays no attention to the productive capacities of contemporary gendering discourses.

The virtual self concludes by linking the emancipatory potential of the sociological imagination to the everyday experiences of fast capitalism. Agger identifies the internet as a paradoxical technology that both oppresses and liberates, and argues that it is "sociological selves" (those selves capable of critiquing the ideological dimensions of fast capitalism) engaged in and "enlightening" their virtual communities, as most capable of resisting domination. Here, Agger also argues that academic sociologists reclaim their "sociological selves". Agger argues for a deliberate engagement with the internet, and a reassertion of the tradition of sociologists writing for public audiences, rather than professional journals. In many ways Agger's book exemplifies how sociology can be made attractive to lay readers. The audience he identifies: "the readers of public books" (who do not have "advanced degrees" (p.147)) along with undergraduate students would perhaps enjoy much of this book.

So, is *The virtual self* "thoughtful and original"? It is neither a grand sociological muse, nor an empirically compelling work, but it does canvass some interesting sociological debates. Some chapters might have worked better as stand alone essays, and the authorial convention of cross referencing back to earlier material in the book is both tenuous and laborious. As a text, the book's major weakness is its American focus. Frequently, "society" is used where North America is clearly the

subject, and the particularities of North America are never set within any global context. Similarly, at times some sections of the text read as Agger's reaction to being a theoretically inspired sociologist trapped in the departmental and perhaps disciplinary quagmire of "professional sociology". Despite the American focus, *The virtual self* might generate thoughtful discussions amongst the more engaged sociological selves who, despite everything, still manage to turn up in our classrooms.

Urban social theory: City, self and society
Bounds, M. (2004). Melbourne: Oxford University Press

Reviewed by Harvey Perkins

This is one of a number of urban studies texts published recently and designed for advanced undergraduate sociology and social science students, advanced or postgraduate students in urban and regional planning, urban design and architecture, and advanced students in human service courses. The book comprehensively covers the development of urban social theory within the history of social thought and has chapters on: the social and economic history of the Western city; community, suburbia and social capital; images of the city and the social construction of meaning; urban deviance and crime; the divided city, inequality and uneven development; the state; urban politics; urban professions and urban planning; housing, citizenship and the politics of tenure; family and gender; postmodernity and the end of Utopia. Bounds writes from an Australian perspective and unlike recent publications of a similar type originating in the US or the UK (e.g., Savage, Warde & Ward, 2003), he uses case study material from the Northern *and* Southern hemispheres. There is much illustrative Australian material in the book that New Zealanders will find familiar.

The book begins by introducing the origins of contemporary theory about the formation of the self in society and the city. Bounds focuses on the social order of cities and introduces social theorists and philosophers who have either interpreted urban change and development, or whose thinking has been foundational for those trying to theorise the city. These luminaries include, among others: Plato, Galileo, Descartes, Bacon, Kant, Hobbes, Durkheim, Marx, Engels, Weber, Nietzsche, Toennies, Simmel, Thomas, Park, Wirth, Cooley, Mead, Schutz, Goffman, Gans, Fischer, Berger, Kellner, several members of the Frankfurt School, Habermas, Castells, Harvey, Pahl, Sassen, Bourdieu, Giddens, Lyotard and Foucault. His objective is to display comparative explanations for, and debates about, urban society and to

highlight the self and social structure and the ways they interact in mutually constitutive ways. The first chapter therefore establishes the ethos of the book – that each of the theorists, or groups of theorists, discussed has something useful to add to an understanding of the city – and as the book unfolds, and Bounds interprets various aspects of cities, reference is made continually to this theoretical work which ties the book together in a very skilful way.

The discussion of the history of the Western city, for example, incorporates Marx's evolutionary model of the emergence of capitalism, Weberian perspectives on politics and power in the city, and Durkheim's writing on the transition from a traditional to a modern social order. When Bounds discusses urban imagery and how the city carries meaning and emotional importance for residents he turns to the symbolic interactionists and action theorists, and makes use of the tools of environmental psychology (such as cognitive mapping). Contemporary theorists are relied on in an examination of the politics of identity, the risk society, social capital, networking and economic restructuring. Some readers no doubt will be concerned about this theoretical eclecticism. I'm sure, however, that many students using the book will ally themselves with Bounds' argument about the importance of the sociological imagination for grasping the social implications of urban development and the need to examine all ideas and paradigms which encompass this insight.

Any concerns I have about the book are relatively minor. Given growing interest in the social science of nature, or as Macnaghten and Urry (1999) would have it, natures, it would have been useful to have incorporated some discussion of this literature as it pertains to urban development. Bounds is rightly sceptical about much recent talk and writing about urban sustainability and triple bottom line accounting, but this should not blind us to the importance of urban residents' environmental concerns and the need to incorporate stronger bio-physical environmental management into urban governance.

I also wonder whether advanced social science undergraduates in New Zealand would find this book as accessible as the publicity material suggests. The book's great strength is that it is very readable, particularly

for those who have had some experience of urban social theory. Bounds has done a excellent job of bringing a wide range of complex arguments together but the result is still quite sophisticated and would be a struggle for the uninitiated. The book would certainly be a very good resource for postgraduate social science students and those in professional programmes and could be supplemented if necessary with the recommended reading and other resources offered at the end of each chapter. What is missing, of course, given that that book is published in Australia, is any significant New Zealand material. We are badly in need of a New Zealand urban studies text, the closest recent example being Thorns' (2002) *The transformation of cities*, but there, too, the demands of the international market mean that the New Zealand content is limited. Notwithstanding these concerns Michael Bounds is to be congratulated for a job well done and for making a very useful contribution to the Australasian urban studies literature.

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Feminism and the biological body
Birke, L. (2000). New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.

Reviewed by Rhonda Shaw

Lynda Birke writes as a biologist attempting to bridge the gap between feminist cultural analysis and her own scientific background. Her book, *Feminism and the biological body,* is an introductory reader to the literature on this subject. For readers who place store in language that conveys complex ideas simply, this book makes light work of some of the complicated issues surrounding feminist critiques of nature/culture, mind/body, and surface/depth binarisms.

Birke begins her book by acknowledging the body as one of the most popular areas of study for both contemporary feminist enquiry and for empirically nuanced sociology and social theory. After a long period as an "absent presence" in social theory and feminism, the question Birke raises in regard to the body is how we are to go about theorising or thinking its materialities. Birke identifies two issues as important here. The first pertains to whether we are to think of the body as discursive or fleshy, and the second queries the relationship of the representation of discourse and matter to our understandings of the inner and outer body.

While Birke acknowledges the revival of interest in the body over the course of the last two decades, she also points to the marginalisation of what she calls the biological body in feminist theory. As she sees it, there has been much discussion about the body in terms of representational issues, but at the expense of both the lived, experiential body and non-biomedical understandings of "the body's insides" (p. 26). Even Elizabeth Grosz's "corporeal feminism" is taken to task at one point in the book for its over-emphasis on bodily inscription and inattention to bodily interiority (see p. 2). While some readers will no doubt construe this criticism as contentious, Birke argues that the resurgent interest in the body tends to "end at the body's surface" (p. 2).

Birke's concern with knowledges and narratives that misrepresent or neglect to adequately discuss the inner body is linked to her account of the cultural representation (and abstraction) of inner bodies in the

diagrams, graphs, models and tables of scientific and biomedical texts. In chapter five Birke extends this critique to an examination of scientific narratives that describe the function and physiology of the body through the themes of "control and regulation" on the one hand, and through "traces and information" on the other. Birke's "disquiet" here, as she puts it (p. 77), stems from the fact that because these representations of our bodies affect how we perceive them, they also end up affecting how we live them. This has a bearing on how we live our bodies in relation to other bodies.

Recent visualisation technologies such as digital imaging and ultrasound scans illustrate Birke's point. Echoing earlier feminist work (notably Petchesky and Duden), Birke argues that the images these technologies capture are frozen and thus "extrapolated from their context". Moreover, when the body is separated into bits and parts, the dynamism and vitality of the processes of which the organisms involved are a part is lost. In the case of pregnancy ultrasound tests; "the image is framed as a screen, not a body" (p. 83) thus constructing the foetus as an obstetrics patient with personhood in its own right. When abstracted from the maternal environment, the foetus becomes the *primary* obstetrics "patient" in the same way that a fertilised egg represents the "potential for life" (p. 168).

The problem Birke has with conceptualising the body as easily separated into parts or as an "extended surface" (p. 32) is that this plasticity is too often seen as infinitely malleable. According to Birke, the postmodern conception of the body as extended surface tends to imply "the dissolution of the boundary between inside and out" (p 35) and this reinforces the idea of a non-problematic interchangeability of body parts. In addition, Birke suggests that this view of body as an extended surface works either to flatten its interior or to position the "inner physiological body" (p. 35) as an unacknowledged and fixed backdrop to the "surface".

While Birke explicitly states she doesn't want to deal with genetics and human reproduction in this book, her criticism of the postmodern "body-without-organs" in terms of transferable bits, parts, and "boundaryless" flows (p. 101) raises important ontological and moral

issues for the debates about advances in this area. Birke does in fact turn to this very issue in the final chapters of the book. In light of her overall critique of representations of the body that deny or downplay bodily integrity, Birke queries whether the figuration of the body-without-organs is the best way to represent contemporary body-selves. Certainly, as Birke points out, defining organs like the heart (see chapter six) strictly in terms of their mechanical function and as fundamentally separable (p. 134) underplays the emotional import of such organs in cultural life and glosses any ethical concerns we might have in regard to the transplantation of organs from one body to another.

Seen from Birke's perspective, the erasure of the organic body through bio-engineering and the "electronic collectivisation of the human body" (p. 101) as data, forecloses debate about the actual benefits, goods, harms, and risks of these technologies. Since these issues depend on the ability to define distinctions, the worry is that flattening or ironing out the body and re-conceptualising it in terms of endless flows of information or as open-ended symbolic expression also flattens out these distinctions. Clearly many people would like to retain these distinctions because they enable us to set limits on what we take to be acceptable and permissible – abandoning or denying them has ethical and political implications. Some commentators, for instance, would feel uncomfortable with attempts to rationalise all body modification practices, genetic therapies and technologies as expressions of personal choice and thus of equal value. Indeed, Birke herself wants to retain a focus on " "our bodies ourselves" [as] more than a set of reproductive organs" (p. 12) or as a single locatable gene (p. 146). Rather than endorse an anything-goes policy where the flexible body-self is concerned, Birke argues for the importance of holding onto "the organism as an entity" (p. 145), especially in terms of its relation to the larger cultural environment. Whether we agree with this position or not, in the context of recent local debate about the need to take into account substantive concerns about the cultural integrity of organisms, Birke's feminist discussion of the biological body makes a lot of sense.

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