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Editorial Note

New Zealand Sociology enters its second volume with four papers, three reviews and a listing of recent sociological MA's and PhD.'s. Our list of subscribers grows steadily, but we very much need the support of the sociological sorority/fraternity to maintain our activities. One innovation in this issue is the addition of contributing editors from the main centres, to aid the process by which material from centres away from Palmerston North is considered for the journal. We welcome papers and offers of reviews from New Zealand Sociologists everywhere.

The November issue promises to be full of reviews of recent books, and we hope to be able to maintain a much wider coverage of new material in the future. The editors welcome suggestions for likely candidates for review.

HISTORY FROM THE HIGH WIRE:

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SOCIOLOGY AND HISTORY

IN NEW ZEALAND

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Massey University

'There are very distinguished historians who are impatient with any discussion of historical method...They remind one of trapeze artists who can perform only provided they never look down.' (John Cannon (ed), *The Historian at Work*, Allen and Unwin, London, 1980, p5).

A dominant theme in recent British historiography has been a markedly self-conscious reflexivity about the nature of historical practice in general and, in particular, the relationship between sociology and history. More specifically, the debates such reflexivity has engendered have clustered around a number of interrelated themes: class analysis, the development of the modern State, culture, ideology, and feminist history. We wish to argue here that such reflexivity and the debates associated with it have had little impact on the writing of New Zealand history. This assertion is based on an analysis of *The Oxford History of New Zealand* (1981), and a survey of ten years of contributions to the *New Zealand Journal of History* (1975-1984). The important question of why this body of writing has generally neglected the British debate is taken up in the concluding section of the paper.

We begin by briefly sketching some significant themes and concerns evident in recent British historiography. This overview is, of necessity, limited,[1] serving simply to situate our subsequent examination of recent writing on New Zealand history. As will also become clear, our choice of British material is selective. We are concerned primarily with work that is at the interface, if you like, between history and sociology, work that is largely situated within the tradition of left scholarship. British social historians have, of course, had other preoccupations in addition to developing a sociologically informed history: for example, the relationship between history and anthropology; quantification, particularly evident in demography; and the notion of "total" history, through the influence of the Annales school. While important, however, these are not part of our project here. It should also be noted that we largely restrict ourselves to work on post-1830 British history.

The juxtaposition of New Zealand historiography and what, to some, may appear a narrow selection from debates in post-1830 British history, is a fruitful exercise on several grounds.

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[1] For a fuller discussion, and extensive bibliography, see Raphael Samuel, "History and Theory", in R. Samuel (ed.), *People's History and Socialist theory*, London, 1981. In addition to the studies cited below, much of value has appeared in journals such as *History Workshop*, the *Journal of Social History*, and *Radical History Review*.

The British debates stress the central position occupied by theory in the writing of history. "History" is the product of the questions which historians use in examining their material evidence, and the quality of this interrogation of the evidence depends, as in other disciplines, upon what starting points are chosen. The British contributions surveyed here, then, suggest some possibilities for an "historical sociology", working towards a productive synthesis of social theory and historical empiricism.

HISTORY AND SOCIOLOGY: TOWARDS A DIALECTIC?

While history and sociology are intellectual neighbours the precise nature of the relationship between the two remains a matter of considerable debate. In an influential essay published in 1976, Gareth Stedman Jones expressed misgivings that 'the prevailing view appears to take it for granted that history and sociology should achieve some painless form of symbiosis.'[2] He was particularly concerned at historians' sometimes simplistic adoption of historical notions of class and social structure, arguing that the lesson to be drawn was that historians (and sociologists) 'cannot afford to take theoretical propositions on trust.'[3] More recently Tony Judt similarly attacked some social historians for their 'obsession with models' and for treating social history as a 'testing ground for sociologically-derived propositions.'[4]

The seemingly steady convergence of sociology as a theoretical discipline and history as an empirical discipline is also questioned by Philip Abrams, as:

> '...too simple and too bland to do justice to a tangled, difficult relationship which is actually productive just because it is tense and distanced and complicated because it is built on antithesis as well as a community of interest.'[5]

Leading social historian E. P. Thompson has strongly criticised the influence of sociological importations into historical writings. In Thompson's polemical broadside 'The Poverty of Theory' as he defends history against the attacks of Althusser, the French 'structuralist sociologist', it is often unclear which of the two epithets is the more damning label.[6] Thompson's own 'socialist-humanist' approach to history gave rise to an extended debate in *History Workshop Journal.*[7] Raphael Samuel, an editor of *History Workshop Journal* and a leading figure in the debate, covered much of this ground in his introduction to *People's History and Socialist Theory* (1981), the contributions to which exemplify attempts to produce 'a theoretically informed approach' to history.[8]

A similar project is at the heart of the historical work produced by the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies[9] with its ambitious claim to offer 'a practical demonstration that

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2   Gareth Stedman Jones, "From Historical Sociology to Theoretic History", *British Journal of Sociology*, 27, 3 (September 1976), p295.

3   ibid, p304.

4   T. Judt, "A Clown in Regal Purple: social history and the historians", *History Workshop*, no. 7 (Spring 1979), pp74, 77.

5   Philip Abrams, "History, Sociology, Historical Sociology", *Past and Present*, no. 87 (1980), p4.

6   E.P. Thompson, *The Poverty of Theory*, London, 1978.

7   See issues 6, 7, and 8.

8   Samuel (ed.), Editorial Preface, pp.xl-lvi.

9   Roy Shuker, "Review Essay: History, Theory and Birmingham", *History of Education Review*, 14, 1 (1985), pp53-60.

Marxist forms of analysis...need not slip into a historical abstraction and mechanical 'functionalism' balanced only by a hopeful rhetoric.'[10]

From these debates have emerged several interesting attempts to settle the boundary dispute between the two intellectual neighbours. Historian Peter Burke has been enthusiastic to officiate at an agreeable and fruitful union,[11] while other leading historians have recognised the value of more intellectual interchange between history and sociology.[12] Sociologist Philip Abrams has cogently argued that many of the most serious problems faced by sociologists need to be solved historically, and suggests that 'many of the supposed differences between sociology and history do not really stand in the way of such solutions.'[13] Abrams's assertion would, in fact, be disputed by few sociologists. The work of the founding fathers of the discipline exemplify it, while a leading contemporary figure, Anthony Giddens, has argued that while 'sociology' and 'history' may be ordinarily taught as though they were distinct fields of study, 'I think such a view to be wholly mistaken.'[14]

Abrams considers that there is much to be gained from reconstituting history and sociology as 'historical sociology':

> 'I am not talking about the need to give historical work more 'social context', nor about the need to give sociological work more 'historical background', nor even about the desirability of each field of work being 'informed' by work in the other. What I have in mind is a more radical recasting of problems, a deeper and subtler, modification of styles of analysis, a more open and thorough-going recognition of the extent to which in some fundamental respects the two disciplines are trying to do the same thing and are employing the same logic of explanation to do so. The argument rests on the claim that at the heart of both disciplines is a common project: a sustained, diverse attempt to deal with what I shall call the problematic of structuring.'[15]

It would appear that, in Britain at least, 'There has been a shift from indifference to cautious amicability in the mutual relations of sociologists and social historians or, more precisely, a greater interest by each group in what the other produces.'[16]

While any image of convergence remains premature two common concerns stand out: firstly, the relationship between structure and agency; and, secondly, the question of historical method, particularly the status of 'empiricism'.

The 'culturalist' position, perhaps best epitomised in the work of E.P. Thompson (though he is personally not happy with the label), stresses the active making of culture through human

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10   *Unpopular Education*, p246.
11   Peter Burke, *Sociology and History*, London, 1980.
12   For example, R.S. Neale, *Class in English History*, Oxford, 1981; Jean Chesneaux, *Past and Futures, or What is History For?* London, 1978.
13   Philip Abrams, "Historical Sociology", *Open Books*, Somerset, 1982.
14   Anythony Giddens, *Sociology. A Brief but Critical Introduction*, London, 1982, Preface; see also C. Wright Mills, *The Sociological Imagination*, 1970.
15   Abrams, *Historical Sociology*, Preface.
16   Dennis Smith, "Social history and Sociology - more than just good friends", *The Sociological Review*, 30, 2 (May 1982), p286.

agency. Accordingly, there is a concentration on the recovery of 'experience', the human responses to social structures. The 'structuralist' viewpoint, on the other hand, argues that people can only live and experience their conditions through the categories, classifications and frameworks which shape human symbolic exchange. Without necessarily becoming reductionist, the structuralist approach is concerned with the determining properties of structure, particularly the mode of production.[17]

The two perspectives have to a degree been falsely dichotomised, with a consensus emerging from the theoretical debates that what is required is an analysis of *both* experience and structure. The historical work of the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (BCCCS) for example, represents a significant attempt to work through the two paradigms of structure and culture, to create an integrated perspective drawing strongly from Gramsci.[18]

The question of historians' supposed empiricism has also been the focus of considerable attention. Several sociological contributions have derided the 'empiricist' view that all knowledge is reducible to a series of empirically verifiable propositions, arguing that when professional historians describe their research procedures they consistently employ empiricist formulations. Elton's views are frequently quoted in illustration of this point.[19] While it is conceded that they are perhaps an extreme, 'we also think that they still accurately represent the common sense of historial professionalism.'[20] The debate between the BCCCS history group on the one hand, and E.P. Thompson and Harold Silver on the other is illustrative of the arguments here.[21]

However, while the structuralist stance that theoretical propositions are not to be derived from empirical evidence is an arguable proposition, it by no means follows that the inverse is true, i.e. that the construction of new theoretical concepts can proceed by a purely deductive process of reasoning without reference to empirical work.[22] With this point in mind, perhaps the distinction between Birmingham and Thompson and Silver is not so great, with Thompson's view of 'historical logic', and his description of history writing as 'in the empirical mode',[23] theoretically close to Birmingham's 'realism'.

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[17] For a concise survey of the culturalist (experience) and structuralist positions, see Stuart Hall, "Cultural Studies at the Centre: Some Problematics and Problems", in Hall, S. et. al. (eds), *Culture, Media, Language*, London, 1980, pp.15-47.

[18] See Hall for a fuller discussion of this point. The development of the Birmingham Centre is well-known and does not bear repeating here; for an overview see Lesley Johnson, *The Cultural Critics*, London, 1979.

[19] "He (Sic.) [The Historian] cannot escape the first condition of his enterprise, which is that the matter he investigates has a dead reality independent of the inquiry". G. Elton, *The Practice of History*, London, 1969, pp52-53.

[20] Richard Johnson et. al, *Making Histories. Studies in history-writing and politics*, London, 1982, p.221.

[21] Thompson (1978), Harold Silver, *Education and History*, London, 1983, p253. Gregor McLennan, "Philosophy and History: some issues in recent marxist theory", in *Making Histories*, pp 133-152; Gregor McLennan, *Marxism and the Methodologies of History*, London, 1981; and Richard Johnson, "Reading for the best Marx: history-writing and historical abstraction", *Making Histories*, pp 153-204.

[22] *History Workshop*, Issue 6 (Autumn 1978), Editorial: History and Theory", p4.

[23] Thompson (1978), p231.

In similar fashion, Harold Silver has recently argued that while history is clearly informed, influenced, or governed by some kind of theory, a distance needs to be maintained between 'experience' and 'theory', in order to bring about 'a sensitive dialogue between the historical evaluation of experience, and the intrusive nature of theory.'[24] It seems that we can usually distinguish betwen the notion of empirical dialogue (between theory and evidence) and empiricism as such. Furthermore, both sides of the argument would share two basic propositions: firstly, that the theoretical position of the researcher provides a structure wherein historical material is selected and analysed; and, secondly, the historical material informs and transforms theoretical starting points.

THEMES

Under the broader umbrella of the tension between agency and structure as explanatory perspectives, are subsumed substantive discussions of the closely interrelated issues of class, culture, ideology, and the modern State. Cutting across these, as it were, is the impact of feminism on historical writing. As with our earlier discussion of historical practice and the nature of the discipline, we can only provide a cursory overview of developments.

'Class' has been a major preoccupation of sociologists. Attempts to theoretically define and empirically identify class structures, class consciousness, and class mobility have resulted in a now massive literature.[25] Class also has been at the heart of British historiography, particularly its marxist variants. Various theorectical approaches to class are now integral to any informed discussion of topics such as the State, the economy, religious and cultural life, and education. Two broad approaches to class have proved influential: the culturalist, and the structuralist.

E.P. Thompson advocates a culturalist view of class.

> 'By class I understand a historical phenomenon, unifying a number of disparate and seemgly unconnected events, both in the raw material of experience and in consciousness. I emphasis that it is a *historical* phenomenon. I do not see class as a 'structure' nor even as a'category', but as something which in fact happens (and can be shown to have happened) in human relationships...Class is defined by men as they live their own history, and, in the end, this is its only definition.'[26]

Such a definition of class as a fluid relationship, the result of complex interaction between people, has enriched the scope of historical inquiry, particularly in the impetus it gave to 'history from below.'[27]

Alternative, structuralist-influenced views of class are elaborated in the work of John Foster, Perry Anderson, and Gareth Stedman Jones.[28] In his most recent work, Stedman Jones, while

24 Silver (1983), p241.
25 See A. Giddens, *The Class Structure of the Advanced Societies*, 2nd edition, London, 1981; E.O. Wright, *Classes*, New York, 1985; Gareth Stedman Jones, *Language of Class*, Cambridge, 1983; Neale, 1981.
26 E.P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*, Harmondsworth, 1968, pp9, 11.
27 Thompson (1968), p13; see Paul Corner, "Marxism and the British Historiographical Tradition", in Z. Baranski and J. Short (eds), *Developing Contemporary Marxism*, London, 1985.
28 John Foster, *Class Struggle and the Industrial Revolution*, London, 1974; Perry Anderson, *Arguments within English Marxism*, London, (1980); Stedman Jones (1983)

clearly conscious of the need to avoid economic determinism, writes of the historian's theoretical task as 'the location and construction of an invisible structure capable of both illuminating the direction of change on the surface and suggesting the limits within which it operates.'[29] With regard to class, he stresses that the concept is embedded in language and needs therefore to be analysed in its linguistic context. For Perry Anderson

> 'It is, and must be the dominant *mode of production* that confers fundamental unity on a social formation, allocating their objective positions of the classes within it, and distributing the agents within each class...*Classes are constituted by modes of production, and not vice versa*[30]

The issue of class is central to considerations of the origins and maintenance of the modern State. In the sociological literature there was a general lack of interest in the State until the late 1960s. But for nearly twenty years now, studies of the role of the State have constituted a broad problematic for sociology, initially sparked by two books, and an extensive debate between their authors in a series of journal articles. In 1968, the French sociologist Nicos Poulantzas wrote a text on the State, *Pouvoir Politique et Classes Sociales*[31] which criticised Marx's 19th century work on the State, and developed an alternative model of considerable sophistication. At almost the same time, Ralph Miliband wrote *The State in Capitalist Society* (1969) which reviewed the role of the State in Britain. Together with four articles in *New Left Review*,[32] this debate led to an extraordinary growth in Europe and the United States of studies which theoretically examine the relation of the State to society, in particular how social classes control and fail to control the State, and what particular influence the Welfare State exerts on social formations. This body of work now embraces five or six separate schools of discourse, and a basic literature of between two and three hundred texts, together with journals and research programmes.[33] This literature has had an obvious impact on British historical writing, most notably through the work of Perry Anderson.[34]

If class has been a central concern, the role of ideology in contemporary society has also provided a focus for major contributions in recent years. A large literature has developed around the work of Althusser, particularly centred on the article, 'Ideology and the Ideological State Apparatus'.[35] Concern with ideology has been the focus and centre of attention for a series of schools of social theory, most notably the Frankfurt School,[36] the BCCCS and those influenced by Michel Foucault's work in Paris. This organisation around the problematic of ideology has generated a large and imaginative literature, stretching from the early work of the Frankfurt school,[37] to the later Frankfurt School's Jurgen Habermas,[38] to the Birmingham

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29 Stedman Jones (1983), p12.
30 Anderson (1980), p55.
31 Subsequently translated as *Political Power and Social Classes*, London, 1973.
32 See *New Left Review*, issues 59, 60, 82, and 95.
33 See B. Jessop, *The Capitalist State*, Oxford, Robertson 1982, for a thorough review.
34 Perry Anderson, *Lineages of the Absolutist State*, London, 1974. See also Philip Corrigan et. al. (eds), *Capitalism, State Formation and Marxist Theory. Historical Investigations*, London, 1980. S. Cohen and A. Scull (eds), *Social Control and the State*, New York, 1983.
35 L. Althusser, *For Marx*, London, 1977.
36 See Martin Jay, *The Dialectical Iminagination*, London, 1973.
37 Adorno, T. et. al., *The Authoritarian Personality*, New York, 1950.
38 Jurgen Habermas, *Legitimation Crisis*, Boston, 1973, *Knowledge and Human Interest*, Boston, 1971.

Centre's studies.[39] A concern with ideology has been at the forefront of feminist scholarship, while the sociology of education has been preoccupied with the 'reproduction' of ideology through the structure, pedagogy and curricula of schooling.[40]

In historical work, State and class are closely allied to the concept of ideology in examinations of the development of various 'modern' institutions; for example, prisons, asylums, and State schooling.[41] Much of this work draws on the efforts of Continental European theorists such as Foucault, and the methodology of discourse analysis. Partly due to Thompson's pervasive influence, we have also seen increased attention paid to popular or working class culture, as part of attempts to move beyond the traditional dichotomy between 'high' culture and 'low' (mass) culture.[42] These studies, strongly influenced by the work of Gramsci and Althusser, pay considerable attention to the role of ideology in the formation of contemporary ideas, in particular the articulation between economics, politics and cultural pracatice. Of particular note are attempts to develop an identifiably 'feminist' history. The women's movement has inspired some provocative attempts to analyse historically gender roles and the social construction of sexual identity. The significance of such attempts is partly indicated by a burgeoning of the literature[43] and the *History Workshop Journal's* change of subtitle in 1978 to 'The Journal of Socialist and Feminist History'. It is clear that *adding* women to history is not the same as developing feminist history. The latter has at its base a determination to link theory with practice and the past with the present. Male power and women's resistance to it thus becomes a significant dynamic in history.[44] Feminist historians have demonstrated how most modern institutions 'have systematically extended gender differences as a fundamental part of social order.'[45]

NEW ZEALAND HISTORIOGRAPHY

These debates within English historiography have been important not only in themselves, 'but also because they make evident the central position occupied by theory in the writing of history. In so doing they have helped to break down that impervious empiricism which has for so long characterised the liberal tradition.'[46] In New Zealand, in contrast, the liberal tradition continues to go largely unchallenged. British debates, particularly those of a Marxist hue, seem to have but gently lapped at our shores. Our discussion of New Zealand historiography draws on two references: firstly, but briefly, the *Oxford History of New Zealand* (1981), and,

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39 Stuart Hall et al. (eds), *Culture, Media, Language*, 1980; and *Ideology*, London, 1978.

40 See the discussion and references in the Introduction to J. Codd, R. Harker, and R. Nash (eds), *Political Issues in New Zealand Education*, Dunmore, Palmerston North, 1985.

41 Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish. The Birth of the Prison*, London, 1977; Jacques Donzelot, *The Policing of Families*, London, 1980; Michael Ignatieff, *A Just Measure of Pain: The Penitentiary in the Industrial Revolution 1750-1850*, London, 1978; Cohen and Scull.

42 J. Clarke et. al., *Working Class Culture*, London, 1979; Raymond Williams, *Culture*, Glasgow, 1981; Alan Swingewood, *The Myth of Mass Culture*, London, 1977.

43 See Joan Scott, "Women in History. Survey Article II: The Modern Period", *Past and Present*, no. 101 (November 1983), pp141-157.

44 Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, "Placing Women's History in History", *New Left Review*, no. 133 (May-June 1982), pp5-29; London Feminist History Group, *The Sexual Dynamics of History Men's Power, Women's Resistance*, London, 1983.

45 London Feminist History Group, 1983.

46 Corner, p.102. (see footnote 27).

secondly, in more detail, a survey of ten years' contributions to the *New Zealand Journal of History* (1975-1984).

The *Oxford History*, to quote editor Bill Oliver, represents those 'actively at work' on some aspect of the chapter they have written, as well as 'performers' who have 'remade the shape of New Zealand history.'[47] We assume it is representative, therefore, of the best amongst current historical scholarship in this country. Certainly, there is no doubt that the volume is a major contribution to the field. It is not our intention to offer a review of the *Oxford HIstory*; that has already been ably undertaken. Rather, we wish simply to draw attention to a general absence in the volume, the lack of theory. Oliver himself has conceded 'In my case, and I think in the case of most New Zealand historians, we are not over endowed with theory and that may be to our detriment.'[48]New Zealand Cultural Studies Working Group Journal ü », Issue 5 (Spring 1982), p4.
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The *Oxford History* is offered as a social history: 'the analysis of social systems, of the relationship of classes and groups, of stratification, mobility, consensus, and conflict, is to be found here, as well as social history of a more qualitative kind, chiefly devoted to taste, leisure, culture, and habits of social interaction.'[49] Few contributors, however, make any *sustained* attempt to theoretically situate their treatment of such concepts and topics. Terms such as 'class' and 'the State' are frequently used in a shorthand fashion, as if they had a commonly agreed meaning. Nor, as Wynn has noted, is there much attempt to put development in New Zealand into the comparative perspective of 'a broader discourse about the nature of new world economics and societies."[50] Dependency theory, it seems, has had little impact amongst historians here.

All this is not to suggest that we wish to impose some rigid conceptualisation of class, the State, or whatever on users of such concepts. Rather, what we are arguing for is a greater self-consciousness and reflexivity in their use. Interestingly, it is in the contributions of the *Oxford History's* two 'neo-Marxists',[51] Olssen and Gibbons, that we see a greater indication of such a stance towards theory. Even here, however, the discussion remains all too brief. For example, Olssen uncritically adopts modernisation theory to underpin his examination of the critical period around the turn of the century, while his essentially Weberian use of 'class' is also not without its problems.[52]

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47 "A History in the making", *New Zealand Listener*, June 6, 1981.
48 Shelagh Cox, "A Historian's Eye. An Interview with Bill Oliver", ü
49 W.H. Oliver with B.R. Williams (eds), *The Oxford History of New Zealand*, Wellington, 1981, Introduction, pviii.
50 Graeme Wynn, "Reflection on the Writing of New Zealand History", *New Zealand Journal of History*, 18, 2 (October 1984), p109. An interesting attempt at such a comparative perspective is Donald Denoon, *Settler Capitalism*, Oxford, 1983.
51 Oliver uses this term in the *Listener* piece, 1981; he does not identify the two writers, but the recipients of the label seem fairly obvious.
52 For a discussion sympathetic to modernisation theory, see A. Inkeles and D. Smith, *Becoming Modern*, London, 1974. Standing in ideological, theoretical and analytical contrast to the modernisation position is the dependency perspective; see G. Palma, "Dependency: A Formal Theory of Underdevelopment or a Methodology for the Analysis of Concrete Situations of Underdevelopment", *World Development*, 6 (1978), pp881-924. Olssen's use of class is discussed below.

Gibbons is concerned with culture. His chapter[53] is a valuable discussion of particular cultural practices, relating these to the position of various classes in New Zealand society from the 1890s to World War Two. The lack of any explicit theorisation of 'culture', however, means that Gibbons's analysis relies essentially on a simple high-low culture dichotomy. High culture is portrayed, to varying extents, as authentic, while low (popular) culture is largely viewed as the inauthentic product of the hegemony of 'middle class' values:

> 'In Europe [in the 1920s] this was the era of futuristic and surrealistic art, atonal music, James Joyce's *(Ulysses* and T.S. Eliot's *Waste Land*: in New Zealand it was the age of the cow-cockies...If the political influence of the cow-cockies was disproportionate to their numbers, so was their cultural influence, which was almost entirely negative.'

Even in the largest cities:

> 'there was a decline in cultural and intellectual vigour by contrast with the early years of the century, Instead, there was the cinema or the spurious vitality of febrile nightlife.'[54]

Gibbons emphasises the efforts of the 'small numbers of New Zealanders who struggled against the cultural poverty of the time', but pays little attention to working class culture as a product of resistance, struggle, and contradiction. This reflects his use of hegemony as the establishment of cultural equivalence:

> 'Those classes which had most power...established the hegemonic values for the whole society...The climate of opinion was that created by British-descended white adult males of the colonial ruling classes.'[55]

While this analysis is, as Gibbons demonstrates, of considerable explanatory power, it remains limited: hegemony refers to struggle, contestation and the continual re-establishment of equilibrium, rather than some all-pervasive total dominance.[56]

The sociological reader of the *Oxford History of New Zealand* then, is struck by the frequency with which its contributors deal with sociological issues and sociological concepts, and the scarcity of any analysis of these concepts, or any self-conscious awareness that they have their own history. This absence is further exemplified by a reading of the last ten years' of the *New Zealand Journal of History*. Our review begins with a brief examination of the State of feminist and women's history, following which our discussion focusses on the concepts of class, State, and ideology.

Obviously, the emergence of 'History' and the self-conscious attempt to create women's history has had a considerable effect of the writing of history in New Zealand. It is necessary to

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53   P.J. Gibbons, "The Climate of Opinion", *The Oxford History of New Zealand*, chapter 12.
54   Gibbons, pp314-15.
55   Gibbons, p303.
56   See Roger Simon, *Gramsci's Political thought: An Introduction*, London, 1982; Chantal Mouffe, "Hegemony and Ideology in Gramsci", in Mouffe (ed), *Gramsci and Political Theory*, London, 1979, pp168-204.

distinguish, as we have mentioned above, however, between women's history and feminist history. Women's history may recount history from the perspective of women participants, a necessary antidote to orthodox history as an account of 'great men'. The sociological orientation argues for a feminist critique of history, which brings feminist theoretical perspectives to the analysis of history. While displayed in the historical accounts now being produced outsdie universities, this unevenness is equally evident within academic circles. Thus Olssen[57] is able to refer to the 'cult of womanhood' and to the 'ideology of domesticity' without drawing on any of the apparatus that feminist history has to offer. Similarly, Brookes[58] is able to discuss the issue of Housewives' Depression with a mention of feminists, but at the same time no obvious theoretical assessment of a particularly pertinent issue is made. Thus, women's history as the (re) introduction of women's experience has its supporters.

A more conscious examination of feminist activity, if not a more conscious use of theory, is clear in the work of Dalziel, Tennant and Elphick. Elphick[59] undertakes a review of the lives of women in 19th century Auckland: her aim here is to examine the feminist debate as to the role of women in colonial society. This analysis argues for the energy and vitality of Mary Colclough as the main instigator of the debate. Further, the oppression of women is implicity expressed as an analytic view by Margaret Tennant.[60] In her review of Grace Neill and her work in health institutions she provides the reader with an original and detailed account of an early professional woman, and again an implicit concern with feminist questions is to be read from the text. Dalziel[61] perhaps most precisely of all the writers directly addresses the role of women. Here the alliance of 19th. century feminism with temperance, and its dominance by middle-class values, and an almost sacred belief in the family unit are of central importance. She comments:

'The prospect of women abandoning their domestic duties and neglecting their homes was untenable. The main band of active suffragists came from the Women's Christian Temperance Union - a society dedicated to removing the greatest evil threatening the sanctity of home and family.'

and further:

'This was what the new Zealand feminists of the 19th century
wanted. The role of wife and mother was for them a noble and fulfilling role...This attitude made necessary the launching of a second movement for women's rights a century after the first got under way.'[62]

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57   E. Olssen, "Truby King and the Plunket Society: An Analysis of a prescriptive ideology", *New Zealand Journal of History* (cited henceforth as *NZJH*, 15, 1 (1981).

58   B. Brookes, "Housewife's Depression", *NZJH*, 15, 2 (1981), p127.

59   J. Elphick, "What's Wrong with Emma? Feminist Debate in colonial Auckland", *NZJH*, 9, 1 (October 1975), pp126 ff.

60   M. Tennant, "Grace Neill in the Department of Asylums, Hospitals and Charitable Institutions", *NZJH*, 12, 1, April 1978.

61   R. Dalziel, "The Colonial Hellpmeet", *NZJH*, 11, October 1977.

62   Dalziel, pp122-123.

In each case, there is a fundamental interest with the rights of women, but in each case the emphasis is less on the use of feminist analytical apparatus than with the activities of feminists in 19th century movements.

Hence the broad approach to feminist issues has directed itself towards 'feminism as object' rather than 'feminism as analysis'. While the study of women's roles and of New Zealand feminism in historical context implies an implicit feminist analysis, a predisposition towards the study of feminism as a social-historical object has led to an unwillingness to extend the analytic component of such history beyond the level of implicit theory. Nonetheless the work already done augurs well for more extensive treatments in the future.

But perhaps the concern which most interests New Zealand historians and sociologists alike is the concept of class, and a quite considerable interest in matters relating to stratification.[63] Here, mention of class, class conflict, strata, inequality and the like abounds, while historians even debate the role of class in history. Yet, while historians evince an enormous pre-occupation with what constitutes class, there is little mention of what class might *mean*, nor any discussion as to the various ways class might be theoretically conceived.

Nowhere is this more the case than in the work of Eric Olssen, arguably one of the most intesting historians to sociology, who seems positively obsessed (and reasonably so) with the role class has played in shaping New Zealand's history. A recent example almost cries out for clear theoretical exposition. Here, a very interesting account of the Seaman's Union and their industrial militancy, the very stuff of class struggle, is peppered with mention of 'issues of class'; 'contagion of class' and 'class war',[64] yet there is no account of what might be considered a 'class' or any of its associations. No doubt historians take such a term for granted as self-evident. Sociologists are much less sure what it means, and have sound reasons for taking this view, which have to do with the forms of causation they apply to change in history. But this example is merely the last in a long line of pieces which use class in Olssen's historical work.

A much earlier example, and perhaps a more important one is afforded by Olssen in his 1974 article, where he argues that:

> 'many working men and women have seen the social system in terms of class and have acted accordingly. The most obvious evidence is political, for our most important political coalitions have been forged during periods of intense class consciousness. In 1890 urban-working men voted overwhelmingly for Labour candidates or radical Liberals which retained working-class allegiance for some twenty to thirty years.'[65]

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63   In our discussion here, we exclude work published by *sociologists* in *NZJH*; e.g. D. Pearson and C. Toynbee's contributions in *NZJH*, 13, 1 (1979). While it could be argued that the inclusion of this work in the *NZJH* indicates that historians *do* read sociologists, our argument here is that the writing on New Zealand history shows only limited evidence of such engagement.

64   E. Olssen, "The Seamen's Union and Industrial Militancy, 1903-1913", *NZJH*, 18, 1, p37.

65   "The Working Class in New Zealand", *NZJH*, 8, 1 (1974), p45.

Olssen thus appears to be on the side of those who see class playing a major role in New Zealand history. Yet this concern with class also leads to a deep and enduring ambiguity in his work, not entirely of his own making. Oliver has obliquely referred to Olssen's neo-Marxist work.[66] In sociological terms, such description immediately invokes a theoretical apparatus concerned with the social relations of production. But Olssen clearly does not fit this mould with any consistency. In the 1974 article for example, he comments:

> 'Social classes are no longer defined in terms of one variable but by income, source of income, edaucation, occupation, and residential area.'[67]

In a sociological sense, such a conception of class is much more precisely a Weberian disposition towards class, and has little or nothing to do with the social relations of production of Marxist analysis. However, even within this article, there is little consistency for, as Campbell has pointed out,[68] the remainder of the article is largely concerned with the implications of the Marxist position, in a discussion he develops on class consciousness (pp 45, 52, 55, 56, 66), class conflict (pp 45, 50), class tension (p59) and so forth. Each of these issues depends on the initial view of class as a social relation, rather than an individualised social attribute, which is Olssen's starting point. Thus what we see here is a willingness to define class in terms of a series of ambiguous categories, while at the same time an equal unwillingness to assert the importance of an unambiguous class conflict. This mixing of theoretical traditions fails to produce the necessary logical structure to make a strong case for class. It may indeed by the case that class structure (the position of people in the class system) and class consciousness have an important part to play in explanations of crucial events in social history, but the fundamental questions as to what constitutes class structure, and in particular, where the boundaries between classes lie, and consequently what consciousness is associated with what class, must derive from a theory which assumes class position and class consciousness have a logical connection. Starting with class categories structured by, for example, residential area, it is unlikely a plausible account of class consciousness can be provided.

In a later argument, Olssen looks at the political influence of class in an analysis of socialism in New Zealand. He comments:

> '(Red Feds)...viewed the State as the instrument of the bourgeoisie and destruction of bourgeoisie and State was the principal objective of revolutionary socialists. The method - revolutionary unionism - not only presupposed that industrial unions were, by definition, revolutionary but assumed that New Zealand's working class could impose its sectional view upon was neither industrial nor, in socialist terms, advanced.'[69]

In his review of Lee he says:

> 'Inherited socialist theory offered no solution...New Zealand just did not fit the equation.'

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66 See footnote 51.
67 Olssen (1974), p77.
68 C. Campbell, "The Working Class and the Liberal Party in 1890", *NZJH*, 9, 1 (1975), p46.
69 E. Olssen, "W.T. Mills, E.J.B. Allen, J.A. Lee and Socialism in New Zealand", *NZJH*, 10, 2 (1976), p113.

and:

> 'No socialist theorist had studies the strategies for reviewing socialism within a colonial economy because almost all of them believed that socialism would come only in societies where capitalism had reached its highest form of development.'[70]

There is considerable ambiguity possible here, for it is not clear whether Olssen is always paraphrasing Lee or speaking for himself. However, he seems now to be making a case against the naive use of socialist explanations of social change, which presumably rest upon Marxist conceptions of class structure and class consciousness. In a much clearer example, Olssen argues...

> 'the meaning of class in New Zealand at different times is a matter for investigation, not assertion.'[71]

What seems to emerge, therefore, is an unwillingness to establish a firm ground on which to base arguments about class, and a willingness on the other hand to use a loose set of theoretical tools from many sources to describe various events. More constructively, however, Olssen has also, by implication, pointed to most of the important questions to be answered in relation to class and history in New Zealand. For example, his is the most direct attempt to suggest, as he does in the above quotation, that class analysis is conjunctural, to be assessed not in a general sense, but in relation to specific social transformations. These transformations may well indicate, as Olssen infers above, that class structure and class conflict have their power at key instances, but fail to have such an obvious influence at other times. Finally, Olssen discusses the relation between class and socialism, and seems again to point out through his analysis of Lee, that New Zealand requires a relatively unique form of class theory to account for the colonial history of inequality. One can only hope that such beginnings are taken further.

But while Olssen has been one of the most persistent advocates of class ideas, he is by no means on his own. Sinclair asserts the role of class in the 1890 election,[72] though he does not appear to generalise this argument across broader stretches of history.[73] Oliver, too, has played his part in arguing largely against the power of class in explaining our society by pointing to the limited range of inequality here, and the ambiguous groups of people who formed political coalitions, which seem to transcend simple class categories.[74] While this debate, so carefully covered in Campbell's article,[75] stands outside the period covered in this review on the *New Zealand Journal of History*, it is worthy of mention here in its own right. A major article by Olssen on the working class in New Zealand attacked Oliver's position on class. Olssen comments:

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[70] Olssen (1976), p123.

[71] *NZJH*, 9, 2 (1976), correspondence.

[72] K. Sinclair, cited in Campbell (1975), p41.

[73] Witness the sharp attack in his review of D. Bedggood, *Rich and Poor in New Zealand* (a Marxist class analysis of New Zealand history), *NZJH*, 15, 2 (1981), p188.

[74] W. Oliver, "Reeves, Sinclair and the Social Pattern", in Peter Munz (ed), *The Feel of Truth*, Wellington, 1969, p168.

[75] Campbell (1975).

'Professor W.H. Oliver criticised Professor Keith Sinclair's biography of William Pember Reeves on the grounds that social classes have been less important in New Zealand history than the 'short expanse from floor to ceiling...[and] the persistence of social osmosis'. When men and women cannot find work, they attack obstacles to social mobility. When work is abundant and prosperity reigns, issues unrelated to social class have dominated political debate, or so Oliver argues.'[76]

This conjunctural analysis of class is, however, as we have seen, not far from Olssen's general use of the term. But, then we come to perhaps the clearest conception of class given anywhere, which is why this particular debate is so important. Olssen continues:

'Defined broadly, the issue at stake between Oliver and Sinclair is the role of social class is producing change in New Zealand. It is worth distinguishing between class and social stratification, the latter being used to describe the system of penalties and rewards allocated to society's members according to the ways in which they perform its functionally important and valued roles, while class retains the meaning given it by Marx of explaining certain types of change. The concept of class does not explain all change, but Ralf Dahrendorf has pointed out that the weight of evidence supports Marx's contention 'that society produces in its structure the antagonisms that lead to its modification', and that in any given situation one conflict is dominant.'[77]

Here Olssen makes an express and clear distinction between a Marxist and, as it turns out, a functionalist account of class. But while his own work is punctuated by both types of account, it is here he makes what appears to be an unambiguous break with Marx:

'Class does not have to embody Marx's millenarian hopes. Thanks largely to American sociologists, social classes are no longer defined in terms of one variable...'[78]

Oliver comes to his own defence in the next volume of the Journal. His reply is most interesting, and therefore quoted in some detail:

I hope Dr. Olssen will not expect me to cling too tenaciously to opinions first set down many years ago...I see the situation...rather differently now...I would now give much more prominence to social conflict before, during and after 1890. I would agree...there are plenty of signs that men and women began to think and act as members of identifiable social groups, which might as well be social classes...

Dr Olssen must surely be aware that I took a little care to say that I thought Professor Sinclair was using the word class in a Marxist sense...and that the question I was raising was whether the concept of class, especially when given a Marxist connotation, may be profitably put to work to clarify New Zealand society and history...I find it easy to agree with him that a quite different usage might illuminate the study of New Zealand history - but not so easy to see what the argument has to do with my essay. Nor do I agree that he has any right to the curious statement that Oliver claims that class has never been important.'[79]

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[76] E. Olssen, "The Working Class in New Zealand", in *NZJH*, 8, 1 (1974), p44.
[77] Olssen (1974).
[78] Olssen, ibid, p47.
[79] *NZJH*, 8, 2 (1975), correspondence, pp182-83.

Thus Olssen and Oliver come to agree about the value of class independent of Marx. But this is a very brief debate, and finishes as soon as it starts.

Perhaps the only account of class to rival the breadth of Olssen's work is that to be found in the work of Eldred-Grigg. In 'Whatever Happened to the Gentry',[80] he provides arguably the clearest exposition which exists in New Zealand history of what sociology would recognise as the phenomenon of class structure. In a discussion of rural stratification he says:

> Ashburton country farming may be represented as a steep and high pyramid. The social profile corresponded closely to its economic organisation...(wealth) was divided between a large number of levels of Ashburton rural society. Below the gentry were the farmers. Some of the farmers lived in two-storeyed houses, farmed intensively, bought machinery, kept servants and gigs, served on road boards and school commmittees, and educated their sons and daughters at high schools and at Canterbury College. Many more inhabited small cob cottages, used their work drays to travel to Ashburton on market days, and had to work hard to keep out of the bankruptcy courts, or to avoid foreclosure by the local landowner or a Christchurch finance company. At the very bottom of the pyramid was a large group of families struggling to subsist on meagre farmlets often held at back-breaking rents and unable to support stock at all. It was often necessary that the son of the family or the farmer himself should work on the local estate for much of the year as 'mere serfs for the larger properties'...Beneath them again were the largest single group in the rural community - the landless poor. Perhaps half the population of the county possessed no land in the early 1890s.'[81]

This extremely useful description of rural class structure in general is then developed at the level of the individual estate:

> 'There was a well-established hierarchy of employees on each estate. At the top came the landowner, his lady and family. Directly beneath them was a manager with a salary of 150 to 300 pounds a year...Beneath the manager was a chain of lessening responsibilities, overseers and foreman specialised in particular operations...and below them there were ploughmen, shepherds, stockkeepers, hut-keepers, station-labourers, cooks and odd-job men.'[82]

Thus Eldred-Grigg provides us with a detailed account of the social relations of a rural community, consciously conceived to be orchestrated around economic relations. In his account of Ashburton, he mixes a review of economic practice with a suggestion as to what lifestyles accompanied these economically-determined class positions, and the political office to which those strata who 'could' might aspire. The conception of a social system closely allied to economic relations, which in turn have implications for political and social activity is thus well-developed here, and has unambiguous parallels with sociological attempts to conceive a class structure as a social relation. Such conceptions no longer rest (if they ever did) on simple relations to economic practice, but do very much depend on the establishment of qualitative differences between those who own and those who do not, differences which shine through in Eldred-Grigg's work. Again, much of this theoretical structure in implicit in the social history provided, but the appeal of the work is in the thoughtful categorisation and the implications for broader social events which can be drawn from the same logic, designating locations in a class

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80   *NZJH*, 11, 1 (1977).
81   ibid, pp4-5.
82   ibid, p6.

structure according to the social relations of work. But here the model is less relational and more occupational: apart from the distinction between landowner and others, Eldred-Grigg's picture of estate hierarchy depends of quantitative distinctions of income rather than qualitative distinctions based on land use.[83]

Nonetheless, his developing interpretation of class relations extends to the analysis of the distinct forms of social relations undertaken within the class of landowner. He argues:

> '...most landowners had wide business investments. Many were large-scale mortgagees...Many too were renters with incomes from Christchurch or British investments, and there was a large group of Ashburton gentry who were active entrepreneurs in various branches of New Zealand's developing economy...'[84]

This form of argument, which makes connections between various modes of capitalist ownership, takes class analysis to a further level of discussion, because it begins to show how rural, urban, and international capital fit together in a broad process of agrarian-based capital accumulation.

Eldred-Grigg's interests in class do not stop here, however. He is also interested to show where class has its origins, and looking forward, how class may reproduce itself. In a discussion of class origin, he comments:

> 'It is possible to classify the social and national origins of fifty-one men who owned large estates in Ashburton county in the 1890s. Some 57% came from upper-class backgrounds which for the purposes of this study are defined as British noble and landed gentry families, the upper clergy, large merchants with country seats, and the upper military ranks. The second largest group, 39% of the total, was of middle-class origins; it included engineers, junior clergy and military, drapers and farmers. Only two men or 4% of the total were classed as of lower class origin - one was a blacksmith, the other a Scottish crofter. Not one of the landed gentry of Ashburton had ever been a labourer, and even the two called 'lower' were members of the lower middle class, rather than the working class.'[85]

As he looks for explanations of the future of classes, he rests on arguments which sociologists recognise as explanations about cultural reproduction. He is particularly concerned, as elite theorists in sociology are concerned, to identify the social institutions where forms of class dispositions are reproduced, as in the case of elite schools. He notes that schools created English gentlemen to inhabit the Stately homesteads of Ashburton. The forms of intermarriage, the types of houses, the development of conscious social manners, the emergence of a philanthropic spirit are all social activities that Eldred-Grigg finds to be associated with social class. This final part of a detailed account of these processes adds a broad-based description of lifestyles, beliefs, attitudes and social activities, which follow quite logically from his initial attempt to apply a social relational explanation of class to a wide range of human activities, and to explore the complexity of social, economic, political and ideological elements of rural life. While there is still some ambiguity present in this model, particularly in a movement away from

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83   ibid, p7.
84   ibid, p8.
85   ibid.

social relations to occupations when the focus is on estate life, nonetheless Eldred-Grigg's account is as systematic and full-blown an account of class relations as can be found in contemporary New Zealand history.

While Olssen and Eldred-Grigg present us with considerable material on class analysis, mention of class and inequality is widespread in the writing of other historians though often its application is implicit. Gibbons, for example, skirts around a direct use of the term, but produces an article full of its implications, when he writes of the co-operative camps of navvies which were established in Seddon's time.[86]

Holt's writing on the origins of compulsory arbitration in New Zealand is precisely about the mediation of class conflict by State intervention. Yet his argument seem to run counter to arguments about class. His view appears to be, though it is not without uncertainty, that the State actually constructed elements of class structure. A sociologist might take the view that State-based unions were the political arm of a moderate working class (and self-employed fractions in some cases). Holt says:

> 'Thus the compulsory arbitration system, which was supposed to mediate between already-existing groups of capitalists and workers actually created dozens of new unions and an entirely new system of wage-fixing.'[87]

What is unclear is why this form of arbitration is not a form of mediation between capitalists and workers. The ambiguity which Holt suggests - that the State set up arbitration procedures to do one thing, and ended up doing smething else, does not seem well-founded. To break the logic of the argument down into its component parts, presumably Holt acknowledges capitalists and workers as classes, and presumably the intent was to ensure industrial peace at the cost of support for unions. Perhaps what he finds less appealing is the support for unions rather than their subordination. In any event through unions or not, it is hard not to conclude that arbitration is entirely to do with classes and their conflict, if the assumptions of his argument are followed through. Yet here is an article which uses synonyms, metaphors and images of class, without any self-conscious suggestion at all as to what it is he might be talking about.

Paul Harris, in his *The New Zealand Unemployed Workers' Movement, 1931-1939*, is at pains to discuss the Gisborne activities of an unemployed workers' group, with interesting comments to make about communist involvement, cross-class alliances, in which small employers (shopkeepers) actually helped unemployed workers, and the way that the State-run unemployment board treated such people harshly.[88] Here a clearly-defined group within the social structures makes an attempt to improve their lot, but nowhere does Harris make any effort to discuss class seriously: clearly it is no use to an historian explaining a social movement.

But perhaps the most outstanding example of the implicit use of class formulations is offered by Barry Gustafson, when he seeks to explain Labour's lost legions.[89] This exercise turns out to

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86   P. Gibbons, "Some New Zealand navvies", *NZJH*, 11, 1 (1977), pp54 ff.
87   J. Holt, "Political Origins of Compulsory Arbitration in New Zealand", *NZJH*, 10, 2 (1976), p109.
88   P. Harris, *NZJH*, 10, 2 (1977).
89   B. Gustafson, "Labour's Lost Legions", *NZJH*, 10, 2 (1977), pp143 ff.

be an exercise in psephology which hinges around an implicit argument about the loss of the working-class base for Labour. However, what might constitute the working class at any period in history is not well-expressed. It might be that part of the explanation of a changed voting base for Labour lies in the changing occupational structure, and this therefore requires an analysis of class formation and class boundaries. This is not a line Gustafson pursues. His references are to 'rank and file unrest', to the fact that the Labour Party was 'out of touch with *traditional* supporters.'[90] Later he comments:

> '...the Second Labour Government's term in office from 1957-1960 proved decisive because the government's action produced a reaction which impelled many manual-worker activists out of the Labour Party's primary level organisation and helped to move many peripheral supporters into non-voting for most of the 1960s. The effect of the exodus on Labour's already depleted ranks and rather ramshackle organisation was shattering.'[91]

But the article gives no real evidence of the class basis of this exodus. There is a great deal of detail on branch expenditure, including the macabre assessment that in at least one branch, the major expenses centred on the purchase of funeral wreaths for deceased members. But this does not justify the sweeping conclusions Gustafson makes. We are led to 'assume' a 'Legion' for Labour, perhaps some antipodean version of the cloth-cap and clogs labourer of England's class structure. But to argue as he does for a new class basis for Labour requires at least a precise indication as to the original basis of Labour's vote, and an equally powerful documentation of how the structures of class themselves, or an account of how the activities of classes have changed in a *structural* sense. His conclusion is clearly dependent on class:

> 'The feeling grew and persisted among many traditional activists, particularly those with manual-worker occupations and family background that the Labour Party was no longer their party or that they had lost control of it...one disenchanted branch officer wrote...'The main reason for the Labour Party becoming a Liberal Party is the growth of the middle-class in New Zealand...This class and not the working class are the mainstay of the N.Z.L.P.'[92]

Yet there is no account as to why these classes are different, nor any analysis of class politics based on class analysis, which might have paid sound dividends.

Elsewhere class is mentioned capriciously, in Dalziel's analysis of the colonial help-meet,[93] in Fairburn's study of 'Rural Myth and the New Urban Frontier,'[94] in Cullen's work on British history,[95] and his paper on Chartists and Education,[96] in Olssen's account of Truby King,[97] in McGeorge's 'Hear Our Voices We Entreat',[98] in Brooking's critique of Eldred-Grigg,[99] in

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90   pp147-48; our emphasis.
91   ibid, p157.
92   ibid.
93   Dalziel (1977).
94   *NZJH*, 9, 1 (1975).
95   *NZJH*, 10, 1 (1976).
96   *NZJH*, 10, 1 (1976)
97   Olssen (1981).
98   *NZJH*, 18, 1 (1984).
99   T. Brooking's review of Eldred-Grigg, *NZJH*, 17, 1 (1983).

Phillips on rugby and other matters[100] and in Wynn's comments on writing New Zealand history.[101] Yet apart from the early discussion in 1974 between Olssen, Sinclair and Oliver, we cannot argue that class conceptions have been hotly debated, clearly used or highly valued. What is unavoidable is the conclusion that class conceptions are very widely invoked but are ambiguous in form and unclear in function. At its best, that history which employs class analysis to the full, as in the work of Eldred-Grigg, or which threatens to do so, as in the work of Olssen, offers forms of explanation and a clarity of purpose which are highly promising. Thus, at least from the sociological perspective there are signs which point to the value of a theoretically-informed account of stratification.

Given the considerable theoretical discussion surrounding the role of ideology in contemporary societies, it would be unsurprising to find that historians might have similar preoccupations. And indeed, the *New Zealand Journal of History* provides evidence of considerable reference to matters of ideology. However, while a case can be made that a certain amount of similarity and borrowing has occurred between sociology and history in relation to class, in relation to ideology there is very little influence to be found across disciplinary lines. Thus Olssen entitles his article on Plunket: 'Truby King and the Plunket Society: An Analysis of a perscriptive "ideology"'. Herein, we find a most interesting review of King's 'ideology'. King is represented as an ideologue who had connections with 'upper-middle class ladies'. (Now is this what is meant by ideology - the ideas of one class being foisted on another?) There is the proposal that what was important was 'the appeal of King's ideology to the colonial upper-middle class' and the suggestion that King presented 'the imperial claims of medical science as defence of traditional upper-middle class values', not to mention his conclusions connecting the cult of womanhood with loyalty to the Royal Family, and the ideology of domesticity. Olssen makes two interesting comments towards the end:

> 'Different strata within what are (very) loosely called the middle-classes probably had their own reasons for accepting the ideology'.

and

> 'King's brilliant synthesis of old and new provided the basis for Plunket's hegemony.'[102]

Here a persuasive argument on the relation between ideoloogy, class and science is presented, in which we need to read between the lines to discover the powerful central argument, which appears to suggest that upper-class fractions of colonial society, through the agency of Truby King, managed to establish a dominant ideology of motherhood and domesticity of a novel synthesis of 'old' social values and 'new' science. But the term 'ideology', so frequently used, has no precise definition, nor does its relation to social class, though this is strongly implied, ever come clearly. And in the last section, the Gramscian conception of 'hegemony' is brought into play to denote dominance, but we are left to infer what causal role this hegemony might have. Did it 'soften up' the lower classes for a change in the practice of motherhood - this is clearly implied from the earlier argument, and if so, what implications, in terms of social control of one class by another, might be develped?

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100 *NZJH*, 19, 1 (1984), p88.
101 Wynn (1984), p105.
102 Olssen (1981), pp8, 23.

This is a rather detailed account of ideology, but most other references to the subject are brief and cursory. Stenhouse in his 'The Wretched Gorilla Damnification of Humanity' presents a series of views on the matter of religion and science which to sociological eyes are largely concerned with ideology, yet the term is not mentioned.[103] Brookes examines the debate over abortion and birth control in the 1930s, but while the subject is intensely ideological, little interest is expressed in developing the concept.[104] In a further article, Olssen discusses the 'ideological dimension' and ideological currents[105] but there is a familiar lack of conceptual exposition. Further mentions are made in Pugh's Doctrinaire's on the Right,[106] and considerable discussion of values and myth is afforded in Fairburn's 'The Rural Myth and the New Urban Frontier.'[107] Campbell, in his review of the 'Working Class' debate mentions ideology, and Gibbons asks the question, in relation to New Zealand navvies, as to what role ideology might play:

> 'If the ideological element is important...then we have a partial explanation for the absence of militancy. There were no 'agitators' in the workforce along the main trunk to inspire and organise the cooperative workers.'[108]

It seems clear therefore that ideology is at the same time everywhere and nowhere. It is peppered throughout the work in a whole variety of substantive areas and periods of history, yet its use is almost completely unselfconscious and ambiguous. Thus, while it appears that class analysis in history offers some clear attempts, even if they are uneven, there is a quite systematic ignorance of the sociological literature on ideology.

But when our interest turns to studies of the State, for which an equally sizeable literature exists within sociology, there is neither a sociologically-informed approach nor a widespread use of the term itself. The examination of political structures might appear to the naive outsider as an area of vital concern to any historical account of New Zealand. Presumably the establishment of a neo-colonial State, the formation of universal voting rights, changes in political direction and the emergence of the Welfare State have their part to play in accounts which seek to explain why New Zealand society takes the form that it does.

It is therefore very surprising that none of the now voluminous literature on the State finds its way into New Zealand social history, and even more surprising that the definition of the State as an important social actor has no place in the field. Thus Holt, whose purpose is to examine a major piece of legislation, the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act 1894, fails to go further than a descriptive account of State activity.[109] Gustafson, in his explanation of why Labour lost roles, mentions the State very little;[110] Harris's account of the workers' movement

103 *NZJH*, 18, 2 (1984).
104 Brookes (1981).
105 E. Olssen, "The Seamen's Union and INdustrial Militancy, 1903-1913", *NZJH*, 19, 1 (1985), pp26, 36.
106 *NZJH*, 17, 2 (1983).
107 *NZJH*, 9, 1 (1975).
108 Gibbons (1977), p67.
109 Holt (1977).
110 Gustafson (1977).

pays little attention to the State;[111] and Fairburn, in his 'Rural Myth' article, which hinges for at least part of its argument on what the State's role was in 'Arcadia', cannot see its importance.[112] But the explanation of this absence is relatively clear. New Zealand history is most commonly explained without reference to institutions, but rather by reference to the view that history is made by great men, and, much less frequently, br great women.[113] Accordingly, the unit of analysis appears appears modally distinct between sociology and history, at least for many practitioners. Great actors (and sometimes actresses) *in* the State do herald a mention. W.P. Reeves, Seddon, Grace Neill in the health Department, John A. Lee's socialism - all these are fruitful topics for debate. But in a general sense, even if exceptions do exist, it does not seem plausible to consider the State as a social actor. This would be to move the level of analysis to another plane entirely.[114]

In our concluding section, we review the implications of this treatment of sociological concerns, and suggest some constructive channels of dialogue for the future.

CONCLUSIONS: SOCIOLOGY AND HISTORY

We have now established some fundamental ways in which New Zealand social history has made use, and failed to make use, of sociological concepts. Class analysis has held a firm place in New Zealand historiography, though its use was not unambiguous, nor the results always convincing. At its best however, class analysis in social history works well in explaining social differences, and in particular how it is that economic relations and broad social relations are articulated. Ideology is a term much used but hardly thought out: while it is a term widely debated in sociology, such concerns have apparently been of little interest to historians. When we consider the State as a concept in the writing of social history, we come full circle, since it is neither mentioned widely nor considered in any detail. We argue, therefore, that the gaps are wide between sociology and history in New Zealand, and this virtual chasm appears to contrast with some recent British historical writing, which has made very creative use of recent sociology.

Why should this be the case? The *New Zealand Journal of History* offers some obvious examples of the adversarial attitudes which historians hold about sociological work, and which serve as the most obvious level of explanation. The first set of objections have to do with language. Barrie McDonald has commented on 'specialist sociological terminology (the uncharitable might call it jargon)'.[115] Fairburn is more abrupt and direct:

> In other countries, where such issues are taken more seriously than in New Zealand, a growing number of historians and sociologists have attempted to use sociological concepts to illumine the past. The results generally have not been applauded. The response of many in the historical fraternity is to insist that sociology has nothing to offer historians. Sociological jargon, the cry

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111   Harris (1977).
112   Fairburn (1975).
113   M.R. Stenson, *NZJH*, 12, 1 (1978), p84.
114   There are, of course, other areas of sociology which bear little fruit in New Zealand social history. Ethnicity, aside from the papers by Howe *(NZJH*, 11, 1) and King *(NZJH*, 12, 1), is the most obviously deficient area.
115   B. MacDonald, *NZJH*, 16, 2 (1982), p182.

goes, is unreadable and obscure. At best, it dresses up the obvious in tedious pretensions. At worst, the categories implied by the jargon...distort the meaning of the past.'[116]

In his review of the sociologist Pitt's book on social class, he comments further:

'What unites (the authors in Pitt's book) is that all use sociological ideas and jargon that will succeed in confirming the worst prejudices traditional historians have towards sociology. Who can warm to such distateful prose as this?

'The implications of a set of lifestyles associated with different socio-economic groups who are spatially segregated is a differentiated urban structure.'[117]

No doubt, at its worst, sociology is guilty of boring people, of obfuscating simple things, and of being pretentious. But it shares with (almost) every scholarly discipline the need to establish a technical language and a set of theories with which to approach its subject. This broad approach is a way of avoiding a form of naive empiricism which Fairburn seems to suggest is preferred by historians. Poulantzas comments:

'facts can only be rigorously...comprehended if they are explicitly analysed with the aid of a theoretical apparatus constantly employed through the text. This presupposes, as Durkheim has already pointed out in his time, that one resolutely eschews the demagogy of the 'palpitating fact' of 'common sense' and the 'illusion of the evident'. Failing this, one can pile up as many concrete analyses as one likes, they will prove nothing whatsoever.'[118]

The question of empiricism leads to a second issue on which historians oppose sociology, the question of method itself. There is little or no mention of method in New Zealand social history, while sociology is almost overwhelmed with discussion of epistemology and method. Fairburn again:

'Where the sociologist *supposedly* has the edge over the historian is that he is far more self-aware about the assumptions behind his interpretation.'[119]

In an English text, Cannon makes a comment wholly apposite to the present argument:

'There are very distinguished historians who are impatient with any discussion of historical method...They remind one of trapeze artists who can perform only provided they never look down.'[120]

Thirdly, there is the matter of politics. Sociologists have *views*, and these views tend to be political and accordingly 'biased and unreliable' by implication. Thus, Sinclair in an attack on the sociologist Bedggood's work:

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116 Fairburn, *NZJH*, 11, 2 (1977), p196.
117 ibid.
118 In "Reply to Laclau and Miliband", in *New Left Review*, no. 95, January-February, 1976, p65.
119 Fairburn (1977).
120 John Cannon (ed), *The Historian at Work*, London, p5.

'All we have here is New Zealand as seen through red-tinted glasses; he sees what he expects to see.'[121]

Hugh Jackson, reviewing *Class Structure in Australian History* by R.W. Connell and T.H. Irving, sees their account as somewhat tainted by politics, and thus feels compelled to add:

'This may make the book sound little more than a political tract, so I wish to emphasise that Connell and Irving are to be taken seriously.'[122]

Some sociologists might well want to turn the conclusion on its head, and take the book seriously because it takes a political position, preferring Bedggood's red-tinted glasses over Sinclair's faintly pink pair.[123] The point is not to side with one political position over another, though this too is important, but to establish clear political and methodological positions, rather than implying an implausible neutrality in the text. As M.R. Stenson comments elsewhere about two Bedggood-inspired publications:

'one of the main virtues of the two series is that they provide the initial foundation for an alternative interpretation to the liberal welfarist orthodoxy that has dominated academic writing on New Zealand history.'[124]

As Stenson comments elsewhere:

'...the Marxist and non-Marxist interpretations derive from fundamentally different views of society: the Marxist interpretation emphasising the determining influence of relations of production, the liberal or non-Marxist interpretation emphasising the variety of independent factors that influence social evolution and State behaviour.'[125]

Which leads to the conclusion that the only impossible position to take is to take no position at all.

Finally, historians get the feeling that sociological theories are all too grand for the paucity of evidence available. Thus Jackson makes the point:

'(Connell and Irving) operate at such a high level of generality that it will be possible for them to brush aside or re-interpret little pieces of evidence that seem at odds with their grand design.'[126]

Dunstall, in reviewing sociologist David Pearson's book, *Johnsonville*, simply comments:

'his theorising outruns his evidence.'[127]

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121 *NZJH*, 15, 2 (1981), p188.
122 *NZJH*, 15, 1 (1981), p87.
123 See Rob Steven, "A Glorious Country for a Labouring Man", *Race, Gender, Class*, 1, 1 (1985), pp38-56, especially footnote 1.
124 *NZJH*, 12, 1 (1978), p84.
125 M.R. Stenson, "The Economic Interpretation of Imperialism", *NZJH*, 10, 2 (1976), p186.
126 Jackson (1981).
127 G. Dunstall, *NZJH*, 15, 2 (1981), p180.

Of course, it may well be the case that generalisations are made on flimsy evidence, but sociologists at least have recourse to a series of logics and procedures which connect evidence to theory, providing both forms of justification and sources of criticism.

Aside from antipathy towards the language, methods, and political 'bias' of sociology, several other reasons can be suggested to explain New Zealand historians' reluctance or inability to utilise social theory in their work. Firstly, there are problems internal to the discipline itself. The social organisation and small numbers of staff in History Departments are not conducive to the intense and sustained debate which a commitment to 'theory' frequently engenders.[128] The close relationship between literary culture and historical writing in New Zealand has arguably produced a liberal orientation: what significance is there in the fact that Oliver and Sinclair, two of the dominant figures in contemporary writing on the history of New Zealand, are also prominent poets? Social history has only recently received greater attention here, and perhaps there is something of a time-lag at work? These conjectures must remain undeveloped here, but merit further attention. Certainly, an additional factor at work may be the very difficulty of producing anything resembling 'historical' or 'theoretically-informed history'. Attempts at such work presuppose both a sound grasp of one's theoretical apparatus, and a reasonable acquaintance with the available evidence, while bringing the two into some sort of 'dialogue' is no easy task. Which leads us to ask whether these gaps which appear between the disciplines mean no dialogue, save the dialogue of the deaf, is possible. Yet on two occasions, historians have referred to the following quote from Giddens:

> 'It has been said before that 'there are no logical or even methodological distinctions between the social sciences and history - appropriately conceived.'[129]

If the dialogue of the deaf is to be broken it might therefore be useful to consider the no-doubt modest advantages which would accrue to history by taking sociology seriously, and the already obvious and no doubt considerable advantages which an historically-informed sociology would have in explaining the emergence of modern New Zealand.

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[128] Compared with the sometimes vitriolic debate in English historiography (see footnote 21), debates here are very polite; see Oliver, *NZJH*, 8, 2 (1974), p183.

[129] S. Britton, *NZJH*, 16, 1 (1982), p79, and G. Davison, *NZJH*, 16, 1 (1982), p10.

CIVIL AND CIVIC: ENGINEERING A NATIONAL RELIGIOUS CONSENSUS

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The origin of the concept of civil religion is usually attributed to Durkheim. More accurately, it can be traced back to the European enlightenment and to such writers as Rousseau (Rousseau, 1973:268-277), Hume and Gibbon (Hill, 1973:22-5). In its most recent version the pedigree might best be recorded as Bellah by Parsons out of Durkheim. It is important to make a distinction between the original Durkheim and his functionalist interpreters, because Durkheim himself was highly dubious about the potential of modern societies to engage in ritual reaffirmation (Thompson, 1986:41); indeed, his clearest prediction was the emergence of a variegated and individualised form of religion which he labelled 'the cult of man'. (Westley, 1983)

In the following article we will briefly examine the concept of civil religion, principally in the work of Bellah. Having examined its application in United States society, we will draw a contrast with the Canadian situation. We then focus on the attempted translation of the civil religion concept to New Zealand, with some reference to Australia. The article ends on a sceptical note: civil religion, if such a phenomenon can be said to exist, is particular to the United States where its resilience is underpinned by a millennial-utopian ideology. Attempts to engineer a similar consensus in other societies (and, it has been claimed, in the United States as well) are principally the preserve of the New Christian Right, which has attempted to hijack the notion of civil religion in support of its own sectional goals.

CIVIL RELIGION: THE CAREER OF A CONCEPT

Civil religion's latest incarnation is twenty years old. In a 1967 *Daedalus* article Robert Bellah breathed new life into this product of the French enlightenment - almost a bicentennial in itself, since *Le Contrat Social* first appeared in 1762 - with his suggestion that civil religion in the United States could be systematically studied through an analysis of the rhetoric of Presidential Inaugurals. References to God in the latter, he claimed, were not merely vestigial attributes of a vote-winning political discourse, but revealed important functions of religion in American society. His definition is thoroughly Durkheimian:

> ...civil religion at its best is a genuine apprehension of universal and transcendent reality as seen in or, one could almost say, as revealed through the experience of the American people. (Bellah, 1968:14)

In this functionalist framework, civil religion articulates in religious language and ritual what is meant by being an American citizen. It is the ritual manifestation of the American 'conscience collective' transcending the denominational pluralism which is guaranteed by the Constitution. *E Pluribus Unum.*

Bellah was not the first to propose the notion of American religion as social cement: 'The functionalist interpretation of the American social system being integrated as an ideological community by an over-all American religion seemed most plausible in the 1950s and early 1960s.' (Thompson, 1986:41) Herberg, quoting President Eisenhower, had spoken of religion as being an essential component of 'the American way of Life' (Herberg, 1960), and Marty had coined the phrase 'American Shinto' (Johnstone, 1975:335) to highlight its function. What Bellah claimed was that his concept of civil religion was more analytic and that he had offered a methodology for identifying its content. It has been pointed out that Bellah's formulation is not without ambiguity, since he speaks of civil religion in two senses. On the one hand, he sees it as a separate and differentiated religion which can be discerned in contrast with other denominations in the society: on the other hand civil religion is conceived as a dimension of the society as a whole (Wilson, J.F., 1979:144-5).

Critics were quick to seize on the methodological inadequacies of Bellah's civil religion thesis. A content analysis of Presidential Inaugurals and historical declamations is not necessarily the most appropriate tool for monitoring widely-held and deeply anchored religious and public sentiments. More fundamentally, it has been argued that Bellah's thesis involves a tautology - religion cannot "cause" cohesion because religion *is* cohesion:

> Bellah has extended and refined the Durkheimian thesis to read as follows: a sacred dimension being considered an inherent part of all social life, the integrative function of religion can be detected even where formal religious unity is absent. This is done simply by locating the source of commonly held feelings of ultimacy and unity. Anything about which people feel a sense of ultimacy is thereby religion. This, of course, makes it very difficult to see any relationship between 'religion' and 'society', or to see them as separable at all. (Wilson, J., 1978:179)

Apart from the methodological and definitional problems, the civil religion concept has been criticized on the grounds that the plausibility of the political rhetoric to which it refers has been substantially undermined in contemporary American society, so that '...the propositions about America contained in the [Oath of Allegiance] have come to sound hollow in many ears.' (Berger, 1977:160)

While the notion of civil religion as an operative ideology in contemporary American society is problematic, the historical referents to which it points are of great significance. As an indication of this, Bellah's subsequent elaboration of his earlier thesis begins with a treatment of myths of origin, which he sees as a strategic point of departure. He notes: 'Unlike most historic peoples, America as a nation began on a definite date, July fourth, 1776.' (Bellah, 1975:3) Not only does America have an agreed date of origin around which public ritual has been institutionalised, the symbolism it engenders is focussed on the themes of 'the chosen nation; the covenant with God; the millennial manifest destiny.' (McLoughlin, 1978:103) It is this millennial-utopian ideology in the conception of American nationhood, rather than some Durkheimian civil religion, which has constantly resurfaced at different periods in American history. Millennialism has been manifested in programmes of social reform, in moral crusades and in American foreign policy (Nisbet, 1985).

At this point a strong contrast can be drawn between the United States and Canada in the way that the nation has been constituted as an 'imagined political community' (Thompson, 1986:49). While the concept of the nation in the United States embodies the unifying myth of national destiny, the self-conception in the case of Canada is basically colonial and bicultural:

Unlike the United States, Canada cannot be understood as an attempt to embody a theory of society, but only as an effort to achieve working agreements among diverse parties with conflicting theories of society...the absence of a national ideology permits [Canada] greater freedom to adapt to changing conditions, it also deprives the country of an institutionalised myth for binding its parts together. (Westhues, 1978:258)

As a result religion, far from being diffused throughout many sectors of society in the way that civil religion proponents maintain, remains substantially attached to the larger churches and is thus institutionally differentiated.

Attempts have been made to identify elements of a Canadian civil mythology of a more contemporary nature. Mol suggests that the adoption of the Maple Leaf as Canada's offical flag in 1965 paved the way for sentiments of national unity by omitting all reference to Britain and thus being comprehensive enough to please French Canadians (Mol, 1985:259). Sport, Mol claims, is another element of mythology, especially as represented by the national ice-hockey team, and attitudes to the land play their part in moulding a Canadian identity. Compared with the myth of origin which is so centrally a part of the United States national ideology, however, these Canadian evidences appear to us to be tenuous and synthetic.

The possibility that 'civil religion' in societies other than the United States may be little more than a combination of engineered symbols and political rhetoric - which is suggested by the Canadian example - is one which we will now explore in somewhat greater detail in the case of New Zealand. Australia, though discussed more briefly, provides us with a useful comparative perspective.

'CIVIL RELIGION' IN NEW ZEALAND: CONSENSUS OR CONFLICT?
The foremost proponent of the civil religion thesis for New Zealand is once again Hans Mol (Mol, 1982). He concludes a discussion of religion and Pakeha identity with an attempt to locate areas in life which are 'sacred' but which lie outside the denominational framework of religion.

Sport, argues Mol, is a good example of such an area and can validly be labelled a national 'religion'. On the individual level it dramatises basic issues of existence, replaying the routine contexts of the work environment and thus mythologising conflict. At the group level rugby engenders a team consciousness and it '...ritualises the hug and the champagne dousing of victory.' (Mol, 1982:92) Furthermore, the game represents the solidarity of the community or tribe against other such groups, and there is always, in common with more traditional religions, 'emotional commitment, the strict ritual of time and rule, the legends of the past, and the stable, orderly context, the antidote of chaos.' (Mol, 1982:92) In short, Mol contends that both organised religion and sport play similar functions in New Zealand.

The use of analogy in establishing alternatives to or surrogates for religion is very much dependent on a 'functional' definition of religion (Luckmann, 1979). The latter makes the assumption that there *are* in any society core values and associated processes of ritual reinforcement and that if these are no longer effectively serviced by traditional religious institutions they must be transposed into other sectors of social life. This assumption of consensus is the most debatable component of the civil religion thesis. Nevertheless, in arguing for an alternation of function between religion and rugby Mol also highlights a significant focus of conflict between the two (to which we subsequently refer). A pioneer nation, he suggests,

always maintains a self-image of male physical superiority - an image which in the case of New Zealand, was amplified by British accounts of rugby prowess and military daring (Phillips, 1984). In contrast, the virtues associated with religious participation can be seen as a love of peace and, thinks Mol, effeminacy. The conflict between these two sets of values is nowhere better illustrated than in the events accompanying the Springbok Tour of 1981, when rugby and religion confronted each other directly.

Mol then turns to the emergence of civil religion in former Anglo-Saxon colonies in which a state religion has been absent. Civil religions, he argues, transcend religious institutions because they are '...too important to be left to organisational partiality of the denominations, however much these denominations represent and sum up the meaning system on which civil religion is based.' (Mol, 1982:93) Anzac and Armistice Day, with their marches, prayers and hymns, are claimed to have a more awe inspiring and solemn ritual then the average Church service: 'It is the nation as a whole which mourns its dead.' (Mol, 1982:93) Further evidence for civil religion is to be found in saluting the flag, hymn-singing and prayers at the start of the school day; and in the prayers which open Parliament. Their origin may be Christian, he thinks, but their efficacy rests on their being national symbols.

The catalogue of evidence for civil religion is further extended by Veitch, who qualfies his treatment of the secularisation process in New Zealand as follows:

> What has been preserved to a surprising degree is the practice of civil religion - prayers said at the commencement of the daily session of Parliament, declarations made on oath, the ANZAC day commemoration, the annual Waitangi celebration, the National song (as well as the National Anthem), and political party annual gatherings which take time out to attend 'unofficially' a church service - all these allow a space for the religious element. (Veitch, 1980:141)

Other evidence for religion's moral influence in an otherwise secular setting is to be found in the scout and guide movement, he adds. It is specifically in the moral residue of *Christianity* that Veitch locates New Zealand's civil religion, so that the potential conflict noted by Mol is left unexamined.

There are more sceptical accounts of civil religion in New Zealand. Geering, for instance, in his analysis of religion in the Secular Age, portrays a religious form which is plastic and amorphous, consisting of 'trends which are on the move and in the process of continuous change. For this reason it hardly even justifies such a general title as 'The Invisible Religion', as suggested by Thomas Luckmann, or 'The Civil Religion' as suggested by Robert Bellah.' (Geering, 1980:255) This rejection of the civil religion scenario seems to be based on an understanding of Bellah's institutional definition of civil religion, which can appropriately be contrasted with the individualistic autonomy of the contemporary religion which Geering describes. (The latter *does*, however, sound very much like Luckmann's subjective and privatised invisible product *and* Durkheim's individualistic personality-centred 'cult of man': perhaps Geering is conflating 'The Invisible Religion' with some notion of concrete organisational structure).

Brown, another sceptic on the possibility of identifying a New Zealand civil religion, also adopts Bellah's institutional definition, but seeks evidence for its emergence in the ecumenical movement. He is not hopeful. If one examines the rhetoric of and public reaction to such a major civic event as the funeral of Norman Kirk, it appears that 'the Christian belief[s]' of quite a few New Zealanders range from the non-existent to the tenuous and vacuous.' (Brown, 1985:92) Nor is there evidence, thinks Brown, that the kinds of ecumenical mergers which are

periodically negotiated might result in the national religous consensus or 'Church of New Zealand' which some have predicted. Whether the different denominations could contribute to the creation of a 'civil religion' and if so, whether this could do anything to diminish the polarisation of New Zealand society is highly problematic. Indeed, Brown concludes, some 'may want to ask the further question as to whether a society must have a 'civil religion' as its highest unifying factor...' (Brown, 1985:93)

It is precisely this question which is raised by Colless and Donovan when they assess the current state of the 'civil religion' thesis:

> In present scholarly opinion, 'civil religion' is regarded more as an exploratory idea than a proven reality. (Colless and Donovan, 1985:11)

Several New Zealand examples are introduced to illustrate the idea of civil religion, including parliamentary prayers and the commemoration of Anzac Day, but attention is also drawn to the absence of significant components of American civil religion such as the office of President from which high-priestly pronouncements are made and

> [New Zealand's]...myths of origin (the Pakeha ones at least) are more mundane than those of the American settlers. Waitangi Day does not, for most, approach the significance of the Fourth of July, and there is nothing at all in our customs to match the family ceremony of Thanksgiving. (Colless and Donovan, 1985:11)

Despite these doubts, Colless and Donovan still think there may be sufficient sanctity in the forms and practices of civic life to engender a religious quality, perhaps even in abstractions like Democracy or the Welfare State, to which political parties make ritual if opportunistic appeals. On balance, however, these writers are less convinced by the arguments in favour of civil religion than by the search for evidence of folk religion, as an amorphous collection of beliefs and practices which underlie everyday social interaction.

To summarise these different accounts, it seems that there is at the most equivocal support for the idea of New Zealand civil religion. We would argue that the historical evidence permits a more decisive rejection of the notion and that attempts to engineer a national religious consensus can be shown to be synthetic, often pragmatic, frequently incorporating rhetorical or purely vestigial religious usage. Far from laying the basis for a consensual core of public values, various attempts to synthesise a New Zealand civic religion have typically exposed areas of potentially deep conflict. An examination of three supposed 'sites' of civil religion - Speakers Prayers, Waitangi Day and Anzac Day - clearly supports this interpretation.

Speakers Prayers

The institution of prayers at the start of each day's sitting of the House of Representatives appears on the civil religion checklist and has occasionally been seen as a symbolic religious focus of New Zealand's democratic heritage: it is nothing of the sort. If we examine the origin and subsequent interpretation of Parliamentary prayers we find clear evidence of pragmatic compromise and incipient conflict but little concern with civic symbolism. Indeed, the first gathering of Parliamentarians at Auckland in May 1854 simultaneously asserted its demand for the introduction of responsible government and denied the Church of England the status of State religion (Wood, 1975:257-8). The issue of parliamentary prayers provided the opportunity to assert the latter principle.

As soon as the gathering had convened, a Dunedin Presbyterian, Mr Macandrew, proposed that there be 'an acknowledgement of dependence on the Divine Being' (New Zealand Parliamentary Debates (NZPD), 1854:4) and offered to fetch the nearest clergyman - who happened to be the parish minister, an Anglican - to say prayers. Immediately this had been put as a motion, an amendment was proposed by Dr Lee 'That the House of Representatives be not converted into a conventicle, and that prayers be not offered up.' (NZPD, 1854:4) The debate that followed centred on the diversity of religious views and the need to avoid a State religion: noted one participant, 'Hebrew gentlemen might be elected...' (NZPD, 1854:5) The amendment was lost, the motion passed, the Rev. F.J. Lloyd said prayers and withdrew. On the following day an attempt to institutionalise the saying of prayers by a Minister of the Church of England was defeated and it was agreed that prayers be said by the Speaker. Ten days later a Committee of the House was appointed to write the prayer. The matter was subsequently settled in a low-key pluralist compromise.

The only occasion on which public attention has been drawn to the existence of these prayers occurred in the context of intense social conflict at the time of the Springbok Tour of 1981: then, apparently, the dessicated was desecrated. On September 9, as the House sat at 7.30 pm a group of about 80 academics, clergy, public servants and writers stood up and intoned the Speakers Prayer in unison with the Speaker - 'What a cheek' retorted a Government MP (*Evening Post*, 10.9.81:8). This act attracted little public attention (We can find no report of it, for example, in the following day's *Dominion*) but it provoked Churchillian flights of political rhetoric when the question of raising the incident with the Privileges Committee was debated. On the one hand the Labour Opposition insisted on the essentially trivial nature of the incident, Mr Lange arguing that, 'The point is that the House is asked by the motion to refer to the Privileges Committee an indeterminate number of people of absolutely unidentified origin so that a punishment can be levelled against them.' (NZPD, 1981:3302) On the other hand the National Government, led by Prime Minister Muldoon, based its argument on the sacred and symbolic nature of the prayer, Mr Muldoon saying of a clergyman protester, 'I doubt if he would think it funny if a group of parliamentarians went into his church on a Sunday morning and did exactly the same thing. He would call it sacrilege...' (NZPD, 1981:3305) - to which the leader of the opposition, Mr Rowling, replied that most of the protesters in the gallery would be only too pleased to see more members of Parliament in church and praying. The debate escalated into a soaring defence of parliamentary liberties in the hands of Mr Templeton, who noted darkly, 'History has not forgotten that Cromwell walked into Westminster and removed the mace and an army took over in England.' (NZPD, 1981:3307)

Disguised in the political rhetoric there was an important debate over symbolism, though it was less about the consensual focus of parliamentary prayers than about the conflict between spokespeople of the main churches, who were deeply critical of the Springbok Tour, and the National Government which was equally determined to see the tour continue. In this particular stigma contest it was important for the Government that the churches should be firmly identified with the protesters and that the latter, for their part, should deny legitimacy to the Government on the grounds that it was responsible for public disruption. This the protest leader did in a press statement which said, 'We have humbly prayed together for the public welfare, peace and tranquillity of New Zealand - in God's name honour that prayer and the duty to which you were elected by the people.' (*Evening Post*, 10.9.81:8) What this incident reveals is the way in which a practice which had pragmatic origins and vestigal continuity could become a disputed source of leverage in a political stigma contest (Schur, 1980:Chap. 1) - something rather remote from the conventional treatment of 'civil religion'.

Waitangi Day

> This year's Waitangi Day saw an outpouring of black American evangelical-type fervour, politicians extracting familiar political mileage, and protest groups intent on highlighting injustices and Pakeha failure to honour the Treaty of Waitangi. (*Dominion*, 7.2. 1987:2)

As a celebration of New Zealand's myth of origin, Waitangi Day hardly seems to engender the core consensual sentiments which Bellah identifies in American civil religion (Bellah, 1975). The above quotation is representative of many recent accounts of the ceremonies surrounding this public event, and one writer has noted the irony contained in the English meaning of Waitangi, which translates as 'noisy or weeping waters' (McLaughlan, 1984:582). Furthermore, this national day has none of the sanctity of immemorial tradition which surrounds such occasions as Thanksgiving and the Fourth of July in the United States: it is an occasion which has only recently been synthesised.

When the Waitangi Day Bill was first introduced to Parliament in 1960, its provisions were of a relatively minor nature. It made *permissible* the declaration of the sixth of February as a public holiday in any locality but only on condition that it was exchanged for some other holiday, such as an Anniversary Day. In fact, by the mid 1960's it was only being observed in this way in Northland (McLintock, 1966). From the speech of the Prime Minister, Mr Nash, it appears that the commemoration of Waitangi Day as a national day had been a recently introduced practice of New Zealand ambassadors and high commissioners overseas (perhaps reciprocating the hospitality of American diplomats?) and was now being introduced to New Zealand. The debate which ensued immediately identified areas of potential conflict - the implications for race relations being prominent among them - and the suggestion was made that the Bill was merely opportunistic, 'a step to try to pacify the angry Maori Labour Party supporters.' (NZPD, 1960:2952) Civil religion seems to have been the last thing on the minds of some MPs, who questioned the cost of up to half a million pounds which the introduction of Waitangi Day might entail. Much of the remainder of the debate was taken up by a point of order, with only the Maori members emphasising the Day's symbolic enhancement of the Treaty it sought to celebrate.

The pragmatic and adjustable nature of this national occasion is further evidenced by the legislation introduced in 1973 to change its name from Waitangi Day to New Zealand Day (NZPD, 1973:2886). The solemnity of the introduction of the New Zealand Day Bill was undermined by queries of an instrumental and pecuniary kind. Its introducer, the Minister of Internal Affairs, while admitting that there was conflict over the way in which the national day should be observed, made clear that the reasons were administrative rather than profoundly symbolic:

> Although everyone is agreed that the day should be   observed as a holiday, some people have asked that it be an extra holdiay, while others who have opposed it have suggested that it should be introduced in substitution for provincial anniversary holidays. (NZPD, 1973:2886)

Though the concept of nationhood was emphasised by proponents of the legislation, the debate constantly returned to such questions as cost - now an estimated 20 million dollars.

When the stated goals and initiatives of participants in the debates are examined, one must conclude that the reverence and depth of feeling appropriate to the civil religion scenario are considerably less plausible than are the pragmatic concerns and 'secondary virtues' (MacIntyre, 1967:24) of the political arena. The institutionalisation of Waitangi Day as a fabricated symbol of national identity and an attempt to celebrate biculturalism has not delivered the sought-for

state of consensus. Quite the reverse: while American society has been ideologically integrated around the public rituals celebrated on Thanksgiving and Fourth of July, New Zealand's attempt has become the occasion for an annual mobilisation of ethnic protest. We might well echo the comment of the opposition MP at the introduction of the Waitangi Day Bill:

> This Bill has got off to a very poor start indeed. (NZPD, 1960:2975)

Anzac Day

As a commemoration of New Zealand's first traumatic entry into a global conflict, Anzac Day is another suggested 'site' of civil religion. A closer examination of its history and symbolism reveals that while on the one hand it has provided an occasion for the expression of national sentiments, on the other it has certainly not been without its tension and conflict. Indeed, Anzac Day can in important ways be seen as competing with prevailing Christian beliefs and takes us to the core of the civil religion debate by reminding us that Gibbon saw Christianity as inimical to the development of civic virtue (Gibbon, 1960). In particular, the pacifist strain within Christianity - which was strongly represented in some New Zealand denominations - came into conflict with the military ethos which Anzac Day represented, so that:

> The strands of New Zealand nationalism, of pride in a military achievement, interwoven with those
> of mourning, prevented Anzac Day from being associated totally with the Christian God of peace.
> Although some Ministers attempted to preach of peace on the day, it could not shed completely its
> war associations. Nor did many people wish for the deeds of the Anzacs to be entirely supplanted
> by pacifist propoganda. Thus the day became the centre of controversy in the 1930s. (Sharpe,
> 1981:109)

One result of this tension was the common practice of constructing Anzac memorials using a pagan rather than Christian set of symbols, thus suggesting that 'the warrior code of the ancient world was more appropriate to the Anzac story than Christian values' (Sharpe, 1981:109) - a judgement with which Gibbon would completely concur.

Furthermore, at the height of its observance in the 1920s, Anzac Day came to supercede some of the major Christian festivals, which had succumbed to the process of secularisation and could not therefore provide the required level of dignity:

> For the decade following the First World War, Anzac Day was the most solemn and most widely
> attended day of commemoration in New Zealand. Indeed, in comparison, both Good Friday and
> Sunday were desecrated as mere holidays. (Sharpe, 1981:97)

For the generation whose close kin had been involved in the war such a level of solemnity was sustainable - there was even a suggestion that Anzac Day might become New Zealand Day - but it is evident that by the late 1930s the occasion had become the narrower military preserve of the RSA.

The Anzac Day observance always contained elements of unresolved tension, some of them noted by Australian commentators on the parallel ceremony in that country. As a celebration of nationhood, let alone as a focus for civil religion, there are obvious inconsistencies. The Gallipoli campaign was fought on behalf of an imperial power in a remote part of the world, and resulted in defeat. While it might appropriately generate a mythology of mateship and the prowess of the New Zealand male (Phillips, 1984:103) its links with the RSA have prevented it from becoming a ceremony of broader civic resonance. Furthermore, its construction has always been to some extent synthetic and the New Zealand ceremony has, for instance, has

borrowed from its Australian counterpart: the central ritual of a Dawn Service was probably modelled on a similar one attended by New Zealand soldiers in Sydney in 1938 (Sharpe 1981:113).

In any consideration of civil religion, Australia offers valuable continuities and contrasts to the New Zealand situation. There are some direct parallels: one of the first questions discussed in both the New South Wales and the Victorian Legislative Councils, for instance, was the question of whether to begin each day's session with a prayer, with very similar expressions of opinion to those found in New Zealand (Gregory, 1973:44). Other continuities can be found in the somewhat awkward relationship between the Christian churches and Anzac Day. But in Australia, much more than in New Zealand, the State's role in the observance of the latter has entailed the construction of a civic ritual with its own national shrine (Inglis, 1985) to the extent that Anzac Day has become sacred to the Civil State in a different way from its being sacred to the Christian churches. Perhaps it is in the Australian celebration of Anzac Day that we come closest to the secularised version of civil religion, as the following quotation shows:

> How successful has the Australian Civil State been in putting a religious gloss on Anzac Day? Will it manage to preserve the Day as a sacred Civil event as the Churches increasingly celebrate it differently? Surprisingly, the Civil State has quite a tradition - indeed, an Australian tradition - to draw on. The secular religionists have been at work since the original Anzac Day. They have remoulded, or sometimes recast, religious values, secularising them and putting them at the service of the Civil State in place of traditional Christianity. Anzac Day is their show-piece. (Australian Studies Centre, 1986:8)

THE HIJACK OF CIVIL RELIGION BY THE NEW CHRISTIAN RIGHT

Our review of the evidence on civil religion in New Zealand, with brief asides on the situation in Canada and Australia, has cast doubt on the wider applicability of the concept. We would argue, however, that the notion of civil religion has been promoted on a narrower, more sectional basis and that it is an integral part of the ideology of the New Christian Right (NCR), as well as of right-wing sectarian groups such as the Unification Church (Robbins, et al, 1976). What has been labelled the 'civil religion complex' of the NCR in the United States 'is quite explicitly and self-consciously attempting to call upon, identify with and shape America's civil religion.' (Hill and Owen, 1982:101) This 'civil religion complex' features national self-worship, reverence for the ideas of the founding fathers and an image of America as God's chosen nation - overlaid by a utopian-millennial world-view. The temporal orientation of the NCR is of the 'Janus-faced'(Worsley, 1968:lvi) variety characteristic of millennial movements which combine the myth of a golden past with the goal of its restoration in the imminent future.

A similar orientation can be identified in New Zealand's NCR. As a result of the secularisation process (Hill and Bowman, 1985), traditional Christian values have been increasingly marginalised and detached from the public sphere. In response to this process and to the economic pressure that many of its supporters have experienced in the past decade, the NCR has attempted to reassert traditional values based on the model of a Christian New Zealand with a firm moral consensus. The search for state legitimation for a traditional value-system has led the NCR to hijack the notion of civil religion and to claim that it alone is the repository of basic New Zealand values. This was nowhere better illustrated than in the presentation of the petition against the Homosexual Law Reform Bill, which combined patriotic, familial and apocalyptic themes in an attempt to assert the centrality of increasingly peripheral values:

> The steps of Parliament are decked for a patriotic rally this Tuesday noon. The five verses of the
> New Zealand national anthem are passed around, printed on the backs of petition forms, for the

petition against the Homosexual Law Reform Bill is to be presented today. Young people dressed in dark blue with red sashes saying *For God, for Family, for Country*, stand ready to unfurl their New Zealand flags beneath giant flags and banners. (Ansley, 1985:16)

At various points in this article we have shown how the supposed components of civil religion in New Zealand have originated in pragmatic compromise and have constantly served as foci of conflict. The claim of the NCR to be articulating broadly based public values in the homosexuality debate resulted in yet another instance of deepseated conflict over core values rather than in a ritual reaffirmation of consensus. Lacking the cultural support which is accorded organised religion in the United States and disowned by many of their mainstream Christian co-religionists, the protagonists of the NCR were isolated as a minority group attempting to engineer consensus around a brittle and essentially sectional collection of symbols. While civil religion may have a certain resilience in the United States, where a millennial self-conception is a strong component of national mythology, its plausibility in societies such as Canada, Australia and New Zealand is highly questionable. Whether inside parliament or on the steps outside, prayers are not a resonant feature of contemporary political rhetoric.

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TAKING CRIME SERIOUSLY:
SOCIAL WORK STRATEGIES FOR LAW
AND ORDER CLIMATES

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There is a two-fold purpose to this paper. First it takes the form of an analysis of contemporary law and order politics in New Zealand society, with reference to the strategies and policies that have been advocated by the proponents of these policies (i.e. the Police and National Party in the main) - and the response to them of the Labour Government and its supporters. And what I intend, in fact, is not to provide another critique of these politics but on this occasion to speak to its *strengths*.[1] I will thus be arguing that there are indeed very real dimensions to the law and order bandwagon that has been rolling in New Zealand during the last year or so - which at the same time are likely to have a popular resonance and attract support *because they have a kernel of truth to them.*

In addition, there seems little doubt that these politics will make a considerable impact on the future direction of penal policy and the distribution of resources in the whole justice area. We can see this in the latest proposals from the National Party on law and order which include, *inter alia*, a promise to "meet any reasonable requests from the Police for personnel equipment and legal powers to allow them to maintain law and order" (*The Dominion* 19 February 1987); and in the way in which the Labour Government has been forced on the defensive and retreated from some of its policies when it came to office (such as the projected increase in prison building expenditure, the extension rather than abolition of the sentence of preventive detention under the terms of the Criminal Justice Act 1985, and the axing of contract work schemes for the gangs). In these respects, those on the Left, particularly those in social work professions working with offenders, would be unwise to try and sit on the sidelines, hoping that the issue will 'Go Away'. It will not. It is bound to affect the size of the share of the public expenditure budget that is given to social service organisations and it is bound to affect the lives and wellbeing of the clients and communities they claim to represent. Indeed, the submission of the Justice Department to the Royal Commission on Violence claims that the *existing* laws and criminal justice process deal more harshly with Maoris than Pakehas (Justice Department, 1986).

In effect, what I will be arguing for is a 'Left Realist' approach which recognises that crime *is*

> "a real problem. There is a lot if it and it harms the working class community. Working-Class crime is directed against working class people. Vandalism, rape, mugging, burglary etc. constitute just one more factor in the burdens that working class people have to suffer". (Lea and Young 1984 p 259)

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1   For a more general exposition of New Zealand law and order politics, see Pratt (1987a).

The second part of my analysis will be concerned with how those in the social work professions, particularly the probation service, might begin to make such a response to these politics.[2] As I have suggested, such organisations will simply not be allowed to sit on the sidelines, relying on their traditional casework skills as the sure and certain hallmark of professional experience and competence. To some extent, their profession and such capacities have already been overtaken by events extraneous to them as for example, S.46 of the Criminal Justice Act - the supervision order - which provides the formula for a purely regulatory and supervisory rather than treatment-based sanction. At the same time, they have been subject to an internal crisis of confidence and "loss of direction" (Raynor, 1985), for various reasons, which I will discuss later. Suffice to say here that the future development of such organisations as the Probation Service is inextricably and inevitably linked to the law and order climate of the 1980's, just the same way, in earlier periods the penal climate of the time shaped the service's subsequent programmes and practices as in the liberal era of the 1950's and 1960's which encouraged 'treatment' (see Radzinowitz 1958).

My purpose, then, is to make some suggestions and to put forward a few ideas for discussion which might adequately respond to this internal crisis of social work with offenders and the political climate of the 1980's in which such organisations must exist.

LAW AND ORDER POLITICS IN 1986

The way in which this campaign has accelerated and gathered momentum in the last year or so has been quite extraordinary, particularly when set against similar campaigns in other western societies (in relation to the UK, see Taylor, 1981; for a direct comparison between the UK and New Zealand, see Pratt, 1987a)

During this short time there have been two major parliamentary debates on law and order; there has been a Royal Commission on Violence, which sat from June to October and is due to report in March 1987; the Labour Government has introduced a Violent Offenders Bill which makes the carrying of a knife in a public place without reasonable excuse punishable by up to three months imprisonment or a fine of up to $NZ 1,000; there has been a Victims Rights Bill, introduced by the opposition National Party, which proposes adding ten percent to court fines for a victims' fund, notifying victims when cases were to be heard and allowing them to make submissions to parole boards before an offender's release; the Government is now proposing amendments to the 1985 Criminal Justice Act which will extend the availability of the preventive detention sentence to repeat violent sexual offenders under the age of 25; one opposition MP has publicised the previous convictions of an offender due to appear in court on the grounds that "he is fed up with a soft line being taken by some judges on violent criminals" (*The Dominion*, 14 November 1986); another opposition MP has suggested that "prisoners who commit more than two offences of the same kind should automatically forfeit the right to parole" (*The Dominion*, 4 November 1986); there has been the growth of populist law and order organisations, one of which attempted to stage an anti-violence rally in the town of Napier,[3] another of which (the Movement for Action against Violent Crime) took out a full page

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2   In contrast to the analysis of Kinsey et al. 1986 which prescribes a role for the police.
3   In fact, although it was hoped around 15,000 people would attend, no more than a few hundred showed up.

advertisement in the *New Zealand Herald*, 24 September 1986;[4] and there have been a number of reports of brutal and horrific sex crimes and attacks on women. Two such incidents have received particular prominence. An offender received a sentence of preventive detention for rape and attempted murder having "subjected [a] women to sexual indecencies and then hanged her by a cord around her neck from a water tank till she lost consciousness" (*The Dominion*, 10 November 1986; the case was also made the subject of the TV programme *Close Up*). And secondly, a woman who was

> "abducted... gang raped and terrorised at a Mongrel Mob convention... Police believe several men were involved in repeated sexual assaults which occurred before an audience and the camera of gang members. The woman, beaten, covered in petrol and urinated on, escaped at daybreak yesterday when gang members tired of chasing her". (*The Dominion* 15 December 1986)

And of course, the very making of statements about 'the law and order problem' has regularly provided good copy for the national and local press (for example, see "Urban terrorism possibility raised", *Evening Post*, 16 September 1986). Meanwhile, the National Party has made law and order a central feature of its 1987 election campaign. In addition to the promises it has made to the police in respect of their demands for more personnel and more powers, National's strategy includes "examining [the] reintroduction of criminal converting laws; giving to Local Authorities powers to enforce town planning laws against gang 'fortresses', and extending High Court warrants to carry out electronic surveillance on gangs (*The Dominion*, 19 February 1987). Other measures include tightening the parole regulations and the remission of penal sentences, and increasing parental liability for the activities of children.

As such, the law and order issue is firmly on the New Zealand political agenda again. Indeed, although the Labour Party prior to the 1984 election claimed that "the fourth Labour Government will act to change the adverse economic and social conditions which have led to increased crime and violence" (Labour Party, 1984) it is clear that the terms of reference of crime-talk have now changed: the issue is no longer posed in terms of proactive responses to its causes but reactive strategies, tactics and punishments in respect of its effects.

And that law and order should become an issue, and be used as part of a critique of government policies by the National opposition would seem to indicate an important break with the consensus of the last two decades or so on crime and penal policy in New Zealand politics. Successive governments, Labour and National, have slowly but steadily incremented police personnel (a rise from 3,796 in 1973 to 5,203 in 1986) and have encouraged penal reform programmes (such as the introduction of community service orders in 1981 and community care orders in 1985) with the purpose of reducing the high level of the New Zealand prison population (see Pratt, 1987b). Indeed, previous attempts by the Commissioner of Police to put law and order on the political agenda (Cameron, 1986) appear to have been a manifest failure. The following comments from his Annual Report in 1978 indicate both the frustrations of the police and their isolation then in respect of this issue:

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4   This called upon readers to sign and send a pro-forma letter to the Minister of Justice which stated that "because of the horrific level of violent crime in Auckland, I insist that immediate action to be taken to impose the most severe penalties on persons convicted of violent crimes and drug abuse".

I have been concerned at some publicly expressed opinions that the police function should be confined to "catching criminals". More recently some sections of the news media have accused me of being repetitive in my references to the development of organised crime and of the emergence of a criminal elite in this country... I want to make it very clear however, that I am prepared to weather accusations of "moralising" or of being repetitive in the much wider interests of promoting public awareness of the state of crime, of its effects, and of its long-term potential for harm. *And notwithstanding police efforts there is still very clear evidence of a public reluctance to accept the seriousness of the law and order issues of 1978.*' (Police Department 1978, p.3, my emphasis)

It would seem, from the frenzy of activity around this area now, that he need no longer have any such concern.

This is likely to be the more so since there is a self-evident truth to these concerns: *the level of recorded crime in New Zealand has increased and shows no sign of abating*. It has risen every year from 1972 when it stood at 200,937 crimes reported to its total of 444,646 in 1985 (Police Department Annual Report 1986), a level of increase of 121 percent. This general level of increase is paralleled by an increase in specific crimes of violence and sexual attacks on women. Indeed in some cases the level of increase of these kinds of crimes has been considerably higher. For example, reported murders have increased from 17 in 1972 to 61 in 1985/6; violent offences have increased from 9420 to 22,104 over the same period - an increase of 135 percent; reported rapes have increased by 100 percent from 210 to 419; and there have been particularly dramatic increases in reported assaults by males on females and children: from a total figure of 232 in 1972 to 1,442 attacks on women and 208 on children in 1985/6, overall, an increase of 611 percent. Equally, domestic affairs breaches (which the police began to record in 1978) have increased from 269 in that year to 584 in 1985/6, an increase of 117 percent.

LEFT RESPONSES

Clearly it is wholly erroneous and completely facile to try and claim, as the National Party seem to be trying to do, that these increases can be attributed to the policies of the Labour Government which came to power in 1984 - or that the Labour Government is doing nothing about 'law and order'. Indeed, I think there are a number of positive features to the Labour's policy in this area.

Nonetheless, this is usually the point when some on the Left, in trying to respond to law and order issues, suddenly become very coy about violence - particularly when it is not perpetrated by 'the state' or the 'the police' - and begin to talk instead about 'the crime of racism' and 'the crime of unemployment'. This is also the case with some members of the social work profession. Having insisted that 'practise' is the centrepoint of their existence they suddenly begin to develop an interest in structuralist sociology, with the effect that real world incidents of violence are only addressed through more general and abstract notions of the 'the state' and 'state power'. While not denying for one moment the causative significance of racism and unemployment[5] on crime and recognizing that these concerns are important in moving attention from individual responsibility for crime to structural factors, there are two problems with this position:

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5   Indeed, on this point see Farrington et al. (1986).

(i) it says *nothing* about how we should actually respond to crime; what should happen for example, to men who are convicted of rape?

(ii) there may be a tendency to assume that without racism, without unemployment, we will have a crime-free society. Again, this is erroneous. There will always be crime since it serves an important function: for Durkheim, it facilitated expressions of the *conscience collective* and thus helped to achieve social solidarity:

> "....crime is present not only in the majority of societies of one particular species but in all societies of all types. There is no society that is not confronted with the problem of criminality ... crime is, then, necessary; it is bound up with the fundemental conditions of all social life, and by that very fact it is useful, because these conditions of which it is a part are themselves indispensable to the normal evolution of morality and law". (Durkheim, 1966: 70)

And for Foucault (1977), crime acts as one site amongst many in constituting dividing practises between one segment of the population and the rest, while at the same time generating the system of bureaucracy and administration whose existence is dependent not upon crime's control and diminution, but its growth and perpetuity.

We only have to examine police reports from the days of full employment to see that 'the crime problem' was just as much alive then as it is today. The Police Department Annual Report (1960) p. 10 states that:

> "...conduct at some popular holiday resorts, especially on the part of young people and during the main holiday season, has come into prominence over the last few years. This year more complaints than ever were received about disorder, rowdyness, hooliganism and general lowering of standards of conduct..." (for more historical detail, see Pratt 1987a; in the British context, Pearson 1983).

Having said this, it must be acknowledged that in the present context, the response of the Labour Government to some features of the current campaign are honourable and courageous, especially given the considerable public pressure that has now been generated 'to do something'.[6] Yet at the same time, I would also argue that there are a number of problems with the general response of Labour which have typically taken the following form:

(i) explaining the perceived increase in crime as merely reflective of a greater willingness to report, as, for example, in the case of rape and the impact that the Women's Movement has made in this respect;

(ii) explaining the rise as the consequence of an increase in police numbers: the 'more police leads to more crime being discovered rather than solved' argument;

(iii) explaining the growth of crime as an inexorable feature of modern New Zealand society, with plenty of international parrallels;

(iv) meanwhile, taking selective measures against specific segments of the offender population, as in the proposals mentioned earlier to make the sentence of preventive

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6   For example, the refusal by Police Minister Ann Hercus to acquiesce to Police demands for more manpower.

detention available for repeat sex or violent offenders between the ages of 21 and 25. Perhaps what is most significant about this bill is the way in which it can be seen as illustrative of the Government needing to make *some* response to the crop of law and order demands emanating from inside and outside of Parliament.

In effect, this constitutes an avoidance, a reduction of the issue of crime and its increase. Each of the first three explanations can be countered by arguments which *do* point to a very real increase in crime. Thus:

(i) increases in reported crime began in the early 1970's; in the case of rape and domestic violence this is prior to any impact the Women's Movement could have made on reporting trends. Organized support groups amongst women have been a very recent phenomenon (see McNaughton and Woodhouse 1986); equally, it attributes an impact to the Movement of which its own members would seemingly be highly sceptical.

(ii) crime, as a rule, is reported *to* the police rather than discovered by them (Kinsey et al. 1986, Hough and Mayhew 1984): some of the largest increases in reported crime have occurred in those aspects of police work that the police themselves are usually keen to avoid (such as domestic violence).

(iii) the 'inexorable growth of crime' argument does not account for the fact that (a) in some countries such as the USA and Canada reported crime has begun to *decrease* (See Taylor, 1987), (b) there are big differences in the increase of particular crimes; in New Zealand, while reported crime overall has increased by 121 percent from 1972, assaults by males on women and children have increased by 611 percent; (c) the different levels of reported crime as between different countries; for example, even allowing for statistical anomalies or reporting differences, it seems that the incidence of reported rape is much higher in New Zealand than England and Wales. Here, in 1984 there were 381 reported rapes from a total female population of 1.66 million. In England and Wales there were 1,482 from an estimated total female population of 25.6 million.[7] If New Zealand's population had been the same as that of England and Wales, there would have been 5,867 reported rapes in this country. Equally there were 5.5 reported rapes per 100,000 females in England and Wales in 1983 (Blair, 1985, p.14); in New Zealand in 1985 the figure was 25.2. And research on rape also indicates important qualititative differences between the two countries: in New Zealand, a much higher number of women knew their assailant; there was a higher incidence of the crime committed in the woman's home and so on - all factors which may be reflective of a particularly high degree of violence and coercion that permeates and underscores personal relationships between men and women in this country.[8]

What I am saying then is that crime *is* likely to have increased, particularly crimes against women and children, and that a response is needed from social work professionals and others on the Left with an interest in this area which does speak to the reality of these developments. If this is likely to mean a change of emphasis in the role and outlook of such organisations as the

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7   It must be emphasised that this figure is an *estimate*, taken from United Kingdom population levels given in Social Trends (1986).

8   For a more detailed examination of this evidence, see Pratt (1987a).

probation service, then it may be that this is timely, especially in view of what now constitutes an internal crisis of confidence (Raynor's (1985) "loss of direction") in social work with offenders.[9] This has been brought about by:

- (i) the collapse of the rehabilitative ideal and a loss of faith in casework (Allen 1959). Positivistic research has shown 'treatment' (in whatever form it has taken) to be no more effective in subsequent recidivism terms than most other sentences (see Brody 1976); and interactionist studies have shown how commonsense rather than expert knowledge informs social workers decision making (See Cicourel 1968).

- (ii) the impact of labelling theory - a belief that social work intervention may actually be harmful rather than beneficial. Raynor (1985) p.21 comments that:

  "many apparent diagnoses in social work (eg 'inadequate recidivist') are in reality no more than shorthand descriptions of behaviour ('he has had difficulty in copying with life and has often committed offences'). But when they pose simultaneously an explanation of behaviour ('he continues to offend *because* he is an inadequate recidivist') they create an illusion of understanding and sometimes a self-confirming impression of predictability... (Raynor, 1985: 21)

(iii) the lack of success of the probation service and other social work organisations in implementing policy, particularly in respect of alternatives to custody and diversion programmes. Such opportunities to reduce the prison population have been around for nearly two decades in most western based criminal justice systems, and almost universally they have been shown not to work. A recent report on New Zealand community service orders (Leibich et al., 1986) is the latest in a long line of such findings. But, to some extent at least, research from the UK (see particularly Thorpe et al., 1980) indicates that social workers and probation officers are as much responsible for this as the judiciary: for example, recommending custody on the assumption that this is what an offender *might* have received; by seeing custody as some kind of therapeutic institution and recommending it on this basis (hence references in social enquiry reports to "structured living environments" and so on); by making recommendations on the basis of 'perceived need' (irrespective of the likelihood of custody) rather than offence and offending record).

- (iv) the apparent inability of the social work professions and organisations to do anything to significantly offset the deteriorating personal and material circumstances of so many of their clients. Indeed, rather than achieve any amelioration of the effects of an unfair social structure "it is suggested that social workers serve the interests of the powerful, rather than the powerless who constitute their clientele. They provide only palliatives for their clients' problems, moderating their discontent and providing what is fundamentally a token form of 'welfare'" (Raynor 1985: 24).

- (v) a fear and suspicion of technology. That is, a belief that agencies working in the criminal justice arena will become involved in the administration of some of the surveillance procedures that technology initiates now and for which the prototypes are already in existence in the USA (see Cohen 1985). For example, the implanting of

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9   The following section draw's on Raynors work, but attempts to extend it in points (iii) and (iv).

electronic bleepers in offenders, or the wearing of irremovable necklaces that give a radio signal, which will (theoretically) enable the hi-tech probation officers and parole officers of the future to constantly monitor the whereabouts of their clients.

In effect, then, it may be an appropriate time for such organisations as the probation service to re-examine and redirect their aims and objectives. In this respect, an intervention in the current law and order debate may prove to be a catalyst for them. But at the same time, it has to be recognised that in terms of dialogue or discussion with the police, this will almost inevitably be conducted on very unequal terms. Not only do the police have far greater resources, they have dictated the terms and established the parameters of New Zealand law and order discourse - but as with their counterparts in the United Kingdom, they give the appearance of being very skillful and accomplished at public relations. That is to say, it is not by accident or by nature that the police have come to have such a prominent role in public policy. Indeed, in the run up to the highly significant 1969 Children and Young Persons Act in England and Wales, the police was the only criminal justice organisation which was *not* consulted (see Bottoms, 1974). To move from this to their current leading role in the space of a decade provides an object lesson in how to achieve power and influence. Again, this is a matter that social work organisations, liberals and many on the left do not seem to have devoted much time to in the past, perhaps in the belief that the seemingly self-evident righteousness of their cause is all that is needed. Unfortunately the results of this and the general ideological climate of welfare in the 1980s (Mishra, 1984) does not seem to bear this out.

THE WAY FORWARD

Notwithstanding such problems and difficulties, I think that there are ways forward for such organisations at the present time. What now follows are some suggestions and ideas - nothing more ambitious that this, and certainly no fine-detail blueprint or magic wand. These ideas are based on five presuppositions:

(i) *taking crime seriously*: recognising that particular aspects of the crime problem are indeed serious - particularly *violent crime* - and that the public are right to be concerned. Such crime might need prioritising - not just by the police but by social work organisations as well. Now clearly, by violent crime I am *not* referring to any small scale encounter that takes place on the street, in schools and so on, which may have the legal requisites to be classified as a technical assault but which in reality is nothing more than a trivial incident. What I do have in mind are crimes of violence against women and children, of which there has been such a large recorded increase in recent years. I do not think we can afford to be equivocal on such matters: such offenders should go to prison and should be *contained* (a word used deliberately for reasons that will be set out later) for as long as is appropriate. This raises two points. First, it is recognised that the pursuit of such crimes is likely to necessitate a different style of policing than exists at present and a much greater willingness to intervene when called out to domestic difficulties, similar in fact to the kind of initiative recently undertaken by the police in Hamilton (see Ford 1987). Clearly, social work organisations who are themselves not above criticism about their attitude to 'domestics' (see Faragher, 1985) should support such initiatives while at the same time coordinating and liasing with the police to ensure that emergency facilities, accommodation and so on might be available when needed. Perhaps *part* of the reason for the police reluctance to get involved in the past has been the lack of backup facilities and resources from social workers.

And secondly, to argue, as National are now doing, that maximum prison sentences should simply be lengthened for particularly serious crimes of violence such as rape (from 14 at present to 20) ignores the fact that provision for long sentences already exists and that preventive

detention sentences are available for repeat offenders. Nor is there any indication about what such lengthy prison sentences are designed to achieve. What is really needed is clear thought about the aims and objectives of punishment.

So, my thinking here is broadly in line with the thrust and direction of the 1985 Criminal Justice Act, in the distinction that this makes in respect of the appropriateness of prison for some categories of violent offenders and non-appropriateness of prison for 'the rest' of the offender population. Thus S.5 of the Act introduces the principle that "violent offenders are to be imprisoned except in special circumstances" while S.6 states that "offenders against property are not to be detained except in special circumstances." In that respect, the Act has very positive and progressive features. It is certainly not ideal, in as much as these principals may be undermined by introducing 'special circumstances' options for the judiciary. But nonetheless it is certainly not correct, as National are now trying to assert, that penal policy has become soft on violent offending.

Under the terms of this Act, Labour has tried to effect a qualitative shift in the prison population (something which New Zealand Governments for the last two decades have been trying to do (see Pratt, 1987b). At the same time, the Government have gone much further than most other Western based criminal justice systems in trying to build into legislation a mechanism for the bifurcation of the offender population.

But in what other ways might it be possible for the probation service to prioritise other aspects of violence and violent crime? Some preventive strategies for potential offenders are already in existence, such as men's groups against violence and violence 'hotlines'. It might also be possible to give further encouragement to support groups for the victims of violence and at the same time establish a support service for those in fear of violence, usually the most disadvantaged members of society and those who are least able to protect themselves. Almost inevitably these will be women, Maoris and Pacific Islanders (see Jackson 1987) the elderly, and those living in working class communities. It may well be that for a good many of the populace the fear of crime, particularly of violence, is actually distorted (if the British Crime Survey is to be believed, Hough and Mayhew, 1984). But for these groups as Kinsey et al. (1986) have pointed out in the UK context, such fears are likely to have a very real existence. What I am suggesting then is that there is a need to respond to such anxieties by establishing support groups and referrals on to other community based organisations that may be able to assist. At the same time, it is a radically different form of intervention from mediation and reparation projects between victims and offenders which in some criminal justice circles have become the new 'flavour of the month' but which Vass (1986) p. 404 has argued against:

> "I would guess that not all but many of those victims would rather forget and be forgotten (but, perhaps not forgive) than be made by new and well meaning ideologies to feel as though they are the true reincarnation of "the saviour" who had found it possible to forgive and ask for mercy on his captors even in the direst of circumstances..."

In other words, victims and potential victims want to be allowed, as far as they are able, to get on with their lives: they do not wish, quite understandably and justifiably, to become 'quasi social workers' and develop an 'understanding' of the circumstances of their assailants. At the same time, it may be possible for social workers and probation officers, with their important links with local communities to become involved in more general crime prevention activities, (as opposed to traditional work with individual offenders) in the form currently undertaken in the UK by the National Association for the care and resettlement of offenders, (see N.A.C.R.O. 1984).

(ii)*a reassessment of the purpose of punishment, particularly the purpose of imprisonment.* Amazingly, we still seem to find that the success or failure of penal sanctions is addressed in terms of how they measure in respect of reconviction rates. On this basis, all the evidence suggests that nothing at all 'works', certainly not any probation-oriented sanction, hence the disenchantment with the rehabilitative ideal which I referred to. But even less successful than this are sentences of imprisonment (for a review on the effectiveness of penal treatments, see Brody, 1976; Rutter and Giller, 1984). But at the same time, it is not unnatural that the probation service feels vulnerable at present because of this kind of evaluation. S.93 of the Criminal Justice Act allows for parole under certain circumstances halfway through prison sentences. This additional remission period is to be supervised by the probation service when, on what appears to be remarkably little evidence, the alleged activities of repeat offenders have become an important feature of law and order politics.[10]

In other words, there is a feeling that the probation service might have been 'set up to fail', because it is unable to prevent such reoffending. But first, in the case of parole, it is clear that it is the after-effect of imprisonment rather than probation supervision that should be examined; and second, and more significantly, it must be acknowledged that as a general rule there is no reason at all to suppose that the probation service should be any more successful in preventing recidivism than any other penal saction. But, I would want to argue, this should not be how such intervention should be assessed (notwithstanding the fact that probation still compares favourably with prison). *There is no magical wand that can be waved to prevent recidivism* - we must break from this legacy of 19th. century positivism - but there are other ways of evaluating the usefulness of sentences and all of which are critical of the continued use of imprisonment for the majority of the population. For example, if imprisonment is to be used as part of a general strategy of deterrence (which, again, it appears as though it will be a feature of National's law and order programme) then the indications are that this simply will not work either on an individual or general level, as the recent U.K. research on the deterrent effect of "short, sharp, shock" detention centres very capably demonstrates (see Hough and Mayhew 1984). Similarly there is the *cost effectiveness* argument. On this point, some of the most recent Australian research suggests that:

> "the cost of keeping a person in prison is estimated to be $25 to $28,000 a year, and the cost of building new prisons about $100,000 per cell. .." (Chan and Zdenkowski 1986 p.67)

No doubt the same kind of costs are involved in the New Zealand prison system when *theoretically at least,*[11] the costs of community based sentencing can seem to be so much more attractive.

Where do such arguments now leave imprisonment? The only justification for such a sentence would be seen to be that of containment/incapacitation for that small group of mainly violent offenders for whom this sanction is needed. And I think it essential to recognise that there are some people (as in the case referred to earlier which featured as a television programme) who can live in and cope with penal institutions. Their problems begin when they are released. I do

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10   Hence the comments by a National MP, noted in the introduction, to the effect that repeat offenders should
      forfeit all rights to parole.
11   Although Lerman (1975) illustrates that the position in reality is unlikely to be as clear cut as this.

not believe that any amount of 'treatment' will remedy such difficulties. We have to recognise that this group of offenders should be incarcerated for as long as is thought appropriate. But at the same time, conditions within penal institutions should be re-organised along the lines of King and Morgan's (1980) principles of *humane containment*. That is, there should be an enforceable code of minimum *rights* for offenders guaranteeing such matters as due process at disciplinary hearings, unfettered access to lawyers and so on, to prevent abuse of administrative power.

It is hoped that such policies will accelerate a re-distribution of the prison population - although it is acknowledged that this may well be a slow process. The male prison population contained 13.37 percent violent offenders in 1977; in 1984 the figure had risen to 13.77 percent (Justice Department Statistics 1984). Nonetheless a recent report from the Justice Department on the first six months of 1985 legilsation reports slightly more encouraging trends, notwithstanding some ambivalences:

> "There has been a decrease in the likelihood of a custodial sentence for all types of offence. This decrease is most marked for offences against justice (a 6 percent drop in custodial sentences) and for offences agains property (a drop of 4.2 percent in custodial sentences). The drop in the percentage of offenders against the person receiving a custodial sentence was only 1.5 percent. In spite of the drop in the percentage of property offenders receiving custodial sentences, a large proportion (38.4 percent) of the cases resulting in custody involved property offences. Cases arising from the offences against the person constitutes the second largest group; 25.5 percent of cases receiving custody were for offences against the person". (Justice Department 1986 p.3)

Overall, it is hoped that consideration of this second principle may go some way towards reducing the prison population while at the same time maintaining a 'realist' position on violent offending. Equally, it maintains an argument for non-custodial sentences for most offenders that bypasses the usual parameters of debate set up by the reconviction issue

(iii) working towards a policy of *least restrictive intervention* in clients' lives which would offset some of the anxieties referred to earlier about the harmful effects of social work. There are three aspects to this. First, ensuring that the right clients get the right sentences. That is ensuring that alternatives to custody programmes are being used for those who would otherwise have received custody. If not, offenders will be accelerated up the sentencing tariff and custody will be brought that much closer. But to ensure that this does not happen it is essential that local policies are co-ordinated and monitored both within particular organisations and with others, such as the Department of Maori Affairs. And to accomplish this, it may be that social workers in this area may need to involve themselves in small-scale local research tasks, or identify issues for research that might be undertaken in association with Universities. For example what kind of offences lead to custody? What sentences are being recommended in social enquiry reports and on what kind of offender? In effect, such information gathering with a view to influencing local policy is a positive use of technology and is an example of the kind of initiative now being undertaken by social workers in the UK (see, for example Thorpe, 1981; Redman-Pyle, 1982).

At the same time, report writing becomes an important task, both in terms of using information to convince and inform the judiciary about the viability of non-custody while ensuring that the report addresses the specificity of the offence. In effect, it is a demand that report styles change from being concerned with providing biographies of the supposed failures and pathologies of individual clients to a far greater emphasis on offence and offending record.

Second, it is recognised that the suggestions I have made so far are likely to involve new tasks for probation officers and social workers. But it may be that the requirements of the supervision order set out in S.48 of the 1985 Act will actually provide some free time for these tasks. Again, the positive features of this provision should be recognised. For some clients, this may actually mean nothing more than regular reporting. And if it operates as a purely regulatory measure for some, then I do not see anything intrinsically wrong with this in principle. This is not to say that there will no longer be scope for traditional counselling (or indeed referral on to other programmes and community supports): but what it does mean is that this role must co-exist alongside those other tasks more relevant to the political context of the 1980's.

Third, the task of ensuring that appropriate funds, facilities, referral procedures and the requisite administration is provided to develop alternative to custody programmes, such as the new community care order (S.53 Criminal Justice Act 1985) and the Maatua Whangai initiative. On this count, it is imperative that there is no further enlargement of the prison estate (*contra* the intention of the present Government, see Justice Department 1984, 1985). To do so is a certain recipe for enlarging the prison population as has been demonstrated in other jurisdictions (see Rutherford, 1984).

(iv) the principle of selective intervention. It is true that social workers can only make an entry into the law and order debate on terms that have already been set down in advance. But at the same time, it is imperative that an entry is made which represents the professional opinion of social work organisations and which can put forward alternative points of view to those now emanating from the political right. This involves a right to be heard when opinion is sought. Just as there is a kernel of truth to law and order politics, there are also myths and distortion that require challenge. However it is also necessary to make constructive intervention when appropriate, for example, support for the police initiative in Hamilton which treated domestic violence as an arrestable offence. At the same time it is necessary to recognise the realities of police work. The police *do* need more resources if they are to tackle the enormously complex problem of corporate crime. Perhaps then, if the police are to continue to press for more resources (an increase of another 1000 personnel, representing a 20 percent increase in manpower now seems to be the going rate) a response might be that this would be justified *provided that* it was deployed against the crime problems that they now seem to be unable to take action against such as corporate crime and, by their own admission, burglaries and serious property crime.

(v) recognising that the politics of penal reform are likely to remain 'unfinished', to use Mathiesen's (1974) term. This entails a recognition that the agenda for reform and the modes of intervention that might now be available are themselves likely to become outmoded, overtaken by events and sometimes bypassed altogether. Above all else, great care needs to be taken by social workers in the New Zealand criminal justice arena to avoid the dangers of co-optation, involvment in and support for some of the quite extraordinarily coercive and intrusive programmes that are now provided for offenders in the USA and UK. The justification for their existence is that they are supposed to divert offenders from custody, hence their appeal to liberal and radical social workers - and yet their *effect* is to reproduce custody in the community. By contrast to some of the initiatives detailed below, the requirements of the supervision order and community care order in New Zealand seem mild indeed. For example, a scheme for young offenders in England:

"involves very intense surveillance of the young people, who would have to contact the project six to eight times a day. The service would be run on a twenty-four hour basis, seven days a week -

there will be a centre with beds on the premises for residential stays. A contract will be entered into with the family and the young person...the youngster will have to telephone the 'tracker' several times a day to report on his or her whereabouts and what they are intending to do with their time. The project worker will have to agree to their activities during the day...if the young person fails to comply with the rules laid down by the project, sanctions may be applied. This could involve compulsory recall to the unit on a residential basis. Thus, children on the scheme will be at school or at work, and the project will attempt to find them jobs if they are unemployed. A special employment programme set up through the MSC is being considered, to help the youngsters to get into employment when they leave school. If this fails, some form of community service could be organised (I.T. Mailing, 8 May 1981).

For adult offenders, there is the example of the Kent Probation Control Unit:

"The probation Control Unit provides an average of twelve hours supervision per day monday to saturday. The Unit programme is designed in a manner that allows probationers to pursue full time employment in their normal environment. Any probationer not thus engaged is required to attend the Day Training Centre between the hours of 9.00 am and 5.00 pm Monday to Friday. Trainees are released from the Unit at 10.00 pm and are subject to a curfew. On Saturdays and during leave periods probationers are supervised by Unit staff in a similar manner. Supervision is not provided on Sundays but the Medway Centre is open seven days a week and Unit Officers are available in an emergency. Probationers subject to a condition of attendance are required to attend the Probation Control Unit for a maximum of six months. Thereafter ex-unit supervision for the balance of the Probation Order is maintained at a very high level" (Kent Probation and After Care Service 1980 p.2).

Ironically, it has been the social work professions that have developed these initiatives, not the police, judiciary or civil service. Indeed, the Control Unit was eventually closed by court order on the grounds that the probation officers concerned had exceeded their powers (Cullen and Rogers 1982, House of Lords).

The point, then, is that although social workers and the Left in general need to make an effective response to law and order issues, these examples illustrate how liberals, reformers and radicals have in themselves made highly significant contributions to the coercive developments that law and order politics demand and generate. And just as there is no easy answer or solution to the issue of law and order, just as we need to make real responses to it rather than trite ones, we also need to avoid being co-opted into the world of hyper-coercion and control that has become central to social work with offenders in the UK and USA - and which social work organisations themselves have in large part been responsible for developing.

No doubt these suggestions will provoke criticism, and no doubt a whole range of flaws may be discovered in them. But at the same time I hope that they will be understood as an attempt to make an intervention in the law and order debate. Without such intervention its precepts and parameters are likely to continue unchallenged.

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PRODUCING REPRODUCTION:
RETHINKING FEMINIST MATERIALISM

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Both radical and socialist-feminisms assert that social life is primarily, though in the case of the latter, not entirely, conditioned by continuous struggle between the sexes.[1] Feminist theory's inability to transform this basic presupposition into useful or theoretical tools has contributed to its failure to make sense of women's lives, its marginalization within sociology and consequent de-radicalization. While the relationship between feminist theory and sociology is not my major concern, the nature of that relationship does provide an insight into the inadequacies of feminist theory. The resolution of these defects, I suggest, requires more than simply extracting and revising concepts in feminist theory which are already acknowledged as problematic. Rather a fundamental re-orientation in our approach to theorizing is required. By considering the basic premises of materialist analysis one can construct an albeit tentative set of theoretical abstractions which provide a more useful method of examining sex inequalities than the reductionist and dualist analyses of radical feminism and socialist-feminism respectively.

Feminist theory is revolutionary. Not simply in the sense that it is tied to a social movement part of which is dedicated to dismantling society as we know it, but because it defies traditional social theory. Feminist claims that sex struggle is central to social life is profoundly challenging for sociology. It demands not only a recognition of women as a significant social set, but embodies a new ontology in which an understanding of women's social position is proclaimed as necessary and fundamental to any comprehension of societal development as a whole. In reality, however, the impact of feminism on sociology has been largely confined to ensuring that the category 'women' is considered a valid subject for research. In short while feminism offers a *theoretical* challenge to sociology, the response has been predominantly *empirical* (Stanley & Wise, 1983:17-20).

In part this reflects a continued inclination within sociology towards empiricism and the rejection of what Mills scathingly refers to as Grand Theory (Mills, 1980:30-86). The effect of these tendencies is further compounded by the multi-paradigmatic state of contemporary sociology which, while allowing a multitude of perspectives to flourish, has provided an intellectual climate in which engagement between perspectives can be almost entirely avoided. Of course the effects of androcentrism in a discipline numerically dominated by men can not be entirely ignored either. But these are at best only partial explanations which frequently serve to disguise the degree to which feminist theory's own under-development has contributed to its ghettoization and co-optation. If sociology has responded to feminism mainly by more

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[1] This is most explicitly stated by Firestone (1972:11-22). but it is implicit in all materialist feminist analysis, whether radical feminist or socialist feminist. In the latter, social formations are seen as deriving from both sex and class struggles which are formulated as two interlocked but separate totalities; patriarchy and modes of production respectively (Barrett, 1980:10-19; Rowbotham, 1981:364-365)

frequently noting the social existence of women, surely this is partly due to feminist research saying little that is new or substantial about anything but the social category 'women'.

This is not to suggest that feminist research has made no significant advances by demonstrating that institutions within the social totality are *sites* of struggle between the sexes. But these are hardly fundamental challenges to existing social theory. Establishing that the state, for instance, is engaged in the maintenance and reproduction of male hegemony merely adds a sphere of social relations in which the state is *seen* to operate. This certainly requires an extension of previous understandings of the extent and direction of state activity, but it does not necessarily require a reappraisal of the institutional development of the state as such. Describing the way in which the state or any other institution reproduces sex inequalities is a qualitatively different undertaking from demonstrating that the development of that institution is determined, even in an attenuated fashion, by the dynamic of sex struggle. Indeed the recognition and analysis of sex inequalities is not itself a departure from existing social theory.

Neo-weberians, classical marxists and even parsonian structure-functionalists provide an analysis, admittedly rather implicit in the latter case, of sex inequalities (Beechey, 1978 :155-197). What makes feminist theory different, and so disconcerting, is its insistence on the centrality of sex struggle to the structuring of all components of and processes within the social formation.

Feminist theory is radical not because it demands that women be recognized as contributing numerically more or less half the participants involved in social relations, but because the construction of women's social position is identified as a continuing and key problematic in the organization of social life. It is this ontology which needs to be placed in some sort of viable analytic framework. If it is not, feminist theory will remain vulnerable to allegations that it merely embodies a set of ideological assertions rather than real insights into the nature of social existence. As long as the feminist ontology is outside an analytic framework feminist research is too easily transformed into a 'topic area' of mainstream sociology, in which the social category 'women' is acknowledged but feminist theory is reduced from a political practice to an exercise in empiricism.

If feminist research is to escape this fate it must be concerned with and capable of analyzing all aspects of social reality and all those who participate in the construction of social life (Stanley & Wise, 1983:17-20). What is required is a theory of societal development in which women are key actors and sex struggle a key dynamic. At the same moment we require a theory not limited in its application either to the *apparent* social position of women or to those features of institutional practice which *appear* to be pertinent to women's subordination as a sex.

At present such a task is beyond feminism. The theoretical abstractions embedded in feminist materialism impede both an analysis of societal development and a convincing explanation of the subordinations experienced by women. This is not mere coincidence. The abstractions which inhibit the former are precisely the same abstractions which make the latter so unsatisfactory.

Radical feminism's assertion,[2] for instance, that the material base of all socio-political structures, struggle and inequality lies in women's reproductive physiology (Firestone, 1972:11-

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2   I am concerned entirely with that strand of radical feminism which is materialist. There is another idealist strand which derives from both psycho-analytic thought and de Beauvoir's existentialism and is manifest in

22; Steven, 1980) inherently obstructs a radical feminist theory of social change or development. As Middleton (1974:192-193) properly notes, "the primacy of the sexual as 'the great moving power of all historical events and divisions' [must] remain no more than an assertion," as long as the 'sexual' refers to static and hither-to immutable biological traits. At the same moment the assertion that women's subordination directly derives from the exigencies of child-bearing prevents any analytic recognition of the historical and cultural diversity of women's structural positions and life experiences.

The theoretical abstractions of Socialist-feminism are similarly inappropriate to the task of analysing social formations, and the diversity of women's positions and subordinations within them. Socialist-feminists may proclaim that class and sex struggle mutually determine social existence but, because the 'sexual' is defined in terms of women's reproductive physiology, the dynamics of that existence can only be explained by the dialectic within the social relations of production which underlie class struggle (Rowbotham, 1981:364-369; McDonough and Harrison, 1978; Barrett, 1980:10-19; Hamilton, 1979:76-105).

Reference to women's reproductive physiology may account for the continuities of female experience but it can not account for the differences between women within the same society, let alone historically or cross-culturally (Edholm, Harris and Young, 1977). At present these differences can only be attributed to the way in which sex inequalities are shaped according to the existing relations of production and the divisions created by them.[3] Consequently, despite its intentions, socialist-feminism is ultimately forced to accept sex inequalities as a universal and ahistorical feature of human societies which are more immediately conditioned by the relations of production and class struggles.

This collapse into marxism is inevitable because the material infrastructure of class struggle is a dynamic conceptualization of production while the infrastructure of sex struggle is a static conception of reproduction. The static must be absorbed by the dynamic and socialist-feminist analysis consequently retreats into an examination of women's lives at the junctures at which patriarchy and capitalism *appear* to interlock. Analysis of a social formation as a holistic set of dialectical structures, processes and practices is beyond its capacity.

The ontology of feminist materialism implies a theory which concurrently and, indeed, inherently accounts for the subordinations of women and the development of social formations as a whole. The fact that contemporary feminist theory fails to do *either* of these tasks does not in itself establish the validity of the feminist ontology. It does, however, suggest that the problem lies in the manner in which feminist materialism's basic propositions are transformed into analytic categories. Resolving this problem demands more than a revision of the abstractions presently incorporated in feminist theory. It requires re-orientation of the way in which the task of theorizing has been approached.

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the burgeoning of Cultural Feminism. The existentialist and psychological explanation of sex antagonism depends on the concept of a male super-ego; men's conscious desire to control women either to gain immortality or to produce reflections of their own egos and personalities which can be maintained against the uncertainties of freedom (See Figes, 1972; de Beauvoir, 1975; Daly, 1979).

3   For examples of the tendency to define patriarchy as functional to the dominant mode of production see Acker (1980:31) Rowbotham (1974:522-57), Eisenstein (1979:17-34) Hartmann, (1979:11)

It is my belief that our approach has been over-determined by the feminist movement. Rightly, feminist theory gains its impetus from the feminist movement. It is inextricably bound to an agenda of changing the structural context of women's lives. Just as marxist theory is tied to the working class and attempts to provide an analysis of social dynamics necessary to achieve social change, so too feminist theory constitutes more than an academic pursuit. Thus the philosophical relationship between women and feminist theory is analogous to the relationship between marxist theory and the working class. Marx's approach to theorizing, however, is in almost complete opposition to the approach embodied in feminist materialism.

Marx's analysis does not proceed from an exploration of the proletariat. His theoretical tools do not derive out of abstracting what *appears* to be the character or nature of the working class. No social category or group can provide the starting point for analysis, he argues, because all groups "pre-suppose a specific society, economic structure, etc., of which the groups form a necessary part". (Swingewood, 1975:45). In other words, an understanding of the position of the proletariat and the opportunities for working class action can not be gained from devising a theory of the proletariat but from devising a theory of the society in which that class emerges. The same may be said about women.

The attempt to explore the subordinations of women by reference to observations as to the nature of 'being a women' underlies both the theoretical inadequacies of feminist materialism and the sectarian-like conflicts which have plagued the feminist movement both here and overseas for so many years. The problem with such an approach lies in the assumption that women are some supra-historical, homogenous category. But whatever 'being a women' means is historically and culturally situated; *women are not beyond but part of society.* One cannot generalize into theoretical principles or abstractions from what *apparently* is 'women' and expect to provide a theory which adequately expresses and comprehends the nature of all women's lives.

The critique of radical feminism embodied in socialist-feminism and the subsequent critiques of both these perspectives particularly by black feminists is inevitable given that the abstractions embedded in them are merely generalizations from the lives of particular groups of women. To claim that these generalizations encompass the fundamental imperatives of all women's lives is to ignore that what we are *prepared to recognize* as fundamental is largely defined by our particular social positions. Consequently feminist theory is more immediately an expression of the constituent groups within the feminist movement and a reflection of the extent to which certain discourses have gained prominence, than a theory of women.

In this sense, then, feminist theory is profoundly ideological. It expresses differential interests among women but provides no means by which those interests, and the conditions which give rise to them, may be understood. In these circumstances recognizing and dealing with divisions becomes a moral imperative and, because the dynamics of inequalities among women can not be explored, political practice becomes not merely problematic but, at times, almost impossible. The alternative to generalizing from the indefinable category 'women' is to start with society in general. To accept Marx's dictum, that in "the theoretical method... the subject, society, must always be kept in mind as the presupposition" (Swingewood, 1975:45).

Given that marxist theory not only denies the centrality of sex struggle to societal relations but has also virtually ignored women as a social category one might question the appropriateness of adopting Marx's methodological approach. The marxist failure to deal with sex inequalities adequately reflects not some problem in the initial and most general abstractions of marxist

materialism but marxists' neglect of a major component within their own methodological prescription.

According to that prescription all societies are confronted with two fundamental imperatives, production and reproduction;

> "...the determining factor in history is, in the final instance, the production and reproduction of immediate life. This is again of a two-fold character: on the one hand, the production of the means of existence, of food, of clothing and shelter and the tools necessary for that production; on the other, the production of human beings themselves, the propagation of the species." (Engels, 1976:125-26)

Only socialist-feminism attempts to concretize both reproduction and production within an analytic framework. Marxism and radical feminism, while admitting both imperatives, actually employ only one at the infrastructural level; production by the former and reproduction by the latter. They thus distort specific social totalities and the social groups which make up those totalities by envisaging 'society in general' in only partial terms.

Marxist analysis focuses on the production of the means of existence, the mode of production, to the exclusion of "the production of human beings themselves." Their analytic point of departive is "individuals producing in society- hence socially determined production" (Marx, 1973:83). Such an approach immediately subordinates sex struggle to class struggle.

According to classical marxism, expounded in most detail by Engels, social formations are conditioned by the relations surrounding the production of surplus value, its accumulation, appropriation and subsequent transformation into private property. Women's oppression derives from these processes and are attributed not to women's sex but to their alienation as producers from the products of their labour (Engels, 1976: 68,163). While a variety of criticisms have been aimed at this analysis (Aaby, 1977; Hartmann, 1979:1-2, Alexander, 1976:60; Bland, Brunsdon et al., 1978; Hamilton, 1979:76-105) the most significant problem is the way in which the implications of the sexual division of labour is ignored.

Novitz (1979:11) points out that without assuming a sexual division of labour

> "the development of private property in terms of the traditional Marxist theory, as propounded by Engels' *Origin of the Family, Property and the State*, could not have led to the oppression of women as a sex."

This sexual division of labour, which has such a central but covert role in Marxist analysis, is based unequivocally on the notion that women's reproductive function determines the extent of their engagement in productive labour. Moreover Engels (1976:149) characterizes this alleged ahistorical restriction of women to the home as "a pure and simple outgrowth of nature." Because the sexual division of labour is alleged to be natural, it is also characterised as non-antagonistic and consequently having no direct impact in the social development of sex inequalities. Inevitably, then, women are marginalised in marxist analysis and sex struggle is presented as an almost accidental effect of the class struggle.

In an effort to centralise both women and sex struggle radical feminists focus entirely on that feature which apparently separates women from men; their reproductive physiology. This physiology is argued to make women vulnerable to male coercion and it is this which provides the base of the socio-political structures on which partriarchy arise (Firestone, 1972:16-17;

Steven, 1980). Male social power is extended and maintained through the use of violence Moreover

> "the non-reproductive worker [men] has this ability because the job of protecting the foetus during the stage of its formation requires the *labourer [women] to avoid engaging in any form of violent struggle herself.* She has only one method of dealing with violence or threatened violence, namely *submission to it and to its wielder.*" (Steven, 1980:8-9).

According to radical feminists, then, as long as the societal imperative for reproduction is fulfilled *through* women patriarchy will be maintained.

Although marxism and radical feminism are frequently presented as diametrically opposed they have strong similarities. Both include only one of the two abstract imperatives of social existence, production and reproduction, within their analytic frameworks. More importantly both define the latter of these imperatives, reproduction, in terms of the single biological fact that women bear children.

A static infrastructure such as this is an absurdity. Marxists are able to avoid the critical implications of conceiving of reproduction in this way simply because their political concerns are not tied to women. Radical feminism, however, must remains committed to it because political relationship with the women's movement. For the same reasons socialist-feminists have largely accepted a conceptualisation of reproduction which refers solely to women's physiological ability to bear children. It is this abstraction which has prevented an integration of the abstractions of production and reproduction into any useful theoretical framework.[4]

The rest of this paper is given over to a discussion of an abstract model in which women are made central to and key actors in the development and maintenance of social orders. Its starting point is neither production in general nor reproduction in general but both: Individuals producing in society and individuals reproducing in society. These together mutually condition the nature of social existence. Because the mode of production and its constituent parts have already been well documented in marxist literature this discussion is centred on specifying reproduction in general. This consists of defining the abstract components which together make up the mode of reproduction.

Marx identifies production as a 'sensible' abstraction because it embraces the essence of human societies. He argues that social relations arise out of the organisation of production which is in

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4   When socialist-feminist theory attempts to expand the concept of reproduction it does so by confusing social and labour reproductions with physiological reproduction. (e.g.: Hartmann, 1979; Edholm, Harris & Young, 1977; Barrett, 1980:19-20; Beechey, 1978) The debate regarding the relationship between human, labour and social reproduction has been lengthy and I do not intend to outline it in detail. Suffice to say, that empirically there has been a tendency for women to be engaged in socialisation and, in capitalist societies, in the reproduction of labour power through unpaid domestic labour. But this tendency is by no means universal nor are women, even in capitalist societies, the only indiviuals engaged in social reproduction and the reproduction of labour power. Therefore, the connection between these forms of reproduction can not be assumed or set up as an a priori premise on which further anaylsis is developed. Particularly as the concepts of social and labour reproduction are designed not to explain in general terms the basic premises of social life, but to clarify the processes by which established social formations are maintained.

turn a response to the basic human need for food and shelter (Marx, 1973:83-108). This is of course ultimately a biological need, but its satisfaction involves a set of social relations which tie individuals together through production itself, and the distribution, exchange and circulation of goods. Individual biological needs are transformed into social interactions:

> "Individuals producing in society - hence socially determined production - is, of course, the point of departure... Production by an isolated individual outside society... is as much an absurdity as is the development of language without individuals living together and talking to each other." (Marx, 1973:83-84)

Human reproduction may be seen similarly. Like production it is a general abstraction of a social imperative. The problem is to conceptualise reproduction in a dynamic rather than a static manner, and to release reproduction from simply referring to the fact that women bear children. Human reproduction is not simply a natural, inevitable biological event but a set of relations which are socially conditioned. If production by an isolated individual outside society is absurd reproduction under such conditions would be even more absurd.

Human reproduction may be a biological phenomenon but it is more significantly a set of practices socially created and performed within a social context and therefore, like production, socially determined. It is more than the unelaborated fact that women bear children (although this is significant). It is a practice undertaken within a context of changing physiological, social, technological and ideological structures.

Even a cursory review of the social restrictions, customs and controls with surrounding sexual alliances forces one to recognise that reproduction is of prime importance not simply in the maintenance, but the construction of social order. Any theoretical construction of reproduction must then be able to cope with the complexity and variability of these relations.

Just as Marx specified the mode of production through a dynamic whole embracing different aspects of production, it is convenient to specify reproduction in a similar fashion. The mode of reproduction may be seen as being composed of three major elements; the means, forces and relations of reproduction.

The greatest contribution of radical feminist theory is to expose the struggles which surround childbearing. The problem for women is that they are protagonists in that struggle and at the same moment the object of that struggle. Women are the *means of reproduction* and one of the groups contesting the control of that means. This is not to suggest that men are not involved in human reproduction. Rather that women, because of the period of gestation following procreative sexual relations, are tied to infants in a way in which men are not.

At this point in the development of the technological forces of reproduction, the *product* of procreation can not be appropriated from women until after birth. The control of that product, and children are frequently extremely valuable commodities[5] (Goody & Tambiah, 1973), necessitates establishing control over women. Women's consistent historical position as the means of reproduction explains both the apparent universality of their subordination and the differing nature of those subordinators. These phenomena are manifestations of a struggle, in

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5 I do not restrict the words 'valuable' and 'commodities' to purely economic definitions.

which women are active participants, not passive objects, to control the means of reproduction and to appropriate the product of reproductive labour. This struggle continues with ever increasing virulence as the technological forces of reproduction have removed men further and further from the site of reproductive labour.

Childbearing in our society has until recently been associated with heterosexual coitus even though the rationale for sexual intercourse itself has become increasingly perceived as erotic rather than reproductive. With the advent of reproductive technologies the power of the state and its legal system are increasingly activated in the struggle to assert control over women who have conceived and to exclude women not inacceptable (monogamous, and heterosexual) relations from access to reproductive technologies.

The commodification of the womb in the form of surrogate mothering is in a sense simply one extension of the development of artificial insemination which effectively broke the material and symbolic link between biological reproduction and parenting. Women, while still the means of reproduction, now exist in a social context in which the boundaries between their reproductive physiology and social being is increasingly clear. Women's physiology is able to be objectified and exploited by women themselves. The campaign to control surrogacy, which is presented as an attempt to protect women from exploitation, is in fact closer to being an attempt to ensure that women do not gain sole control over a function which clearly has a huge market value.

The means of reproduction must then be conceptualised separately from women. Women and other actors struggle over the control of the means of the reproduction which is expressed in the relations of reproduction and in the social formation as a whole. The means of reproduction is but one component of the mode of reproduction. The other components (the forces and relations of reproduction) have always been in a state of flux. It is the exact configuration of these components which, in part, specify the quality of women's subordination. Changes in that configuration may derive from internal pressures or external impacts from the mode of production. Clearly, then, we must turn to a discussion of these other components, starting with the forces of reproduction.

The forces of production essentially define the reproductive potential of both individuals and societies, and include physiological, structural and technological aspects. There is frequently a belief that women's, and indeed mens's physiological ability to procreate is constant. In fact the physiological limits of conception and reproduction (fecundity) have shown wide variation cross-culturally and historically. Unfortunately data regarding fluctuations in male fecundity are sparse, but we know that changes in the age at which women reach menarche and menopause, and the regularity or irregularity of their menstrual cycles all affect women's reproductive potential (Polgar, 1972:203-211; Post, 1971; Branca, 1978:85-86). Thus while women may be the means of reproduction by virtue of their physiology, their physiological capacity is contingent on a variety of other factors and variations (Branca, 1978:77-86; Saville-Smith, 1982:75-108).

Apart from the reproductive capacity of individuals, the life expectancies, age and sex ratios within populations may be seen as structural forces of reproduction (Parkes, 1976). The former determine whether women and men survive their reproductive life cycles and, consequently, whether they have the opportunity, physically as opposed to socially, to fulfil their potential fecundity. Sex and age ratios largely delimit the numbers of female adults available to enter procreative sexual relations.

Finally the forces of reproduction include technological givens such as the state of contraceptive, abortion and artificial insemination technologies, all of which have long histories (McLaren, 1984). As noted previously we are presently in the midst of rapid technological change and this is likely to presage a profound re-organisation of the mode of reproduction and, by extension, social organisation as a whole.

The forces of reproduction are analogous to Marx's conception of the forces of production in which he included both raw or natural resources and the technological constraints on the exploitation of those resources. Like the forces of production (Marx, 1974:50fn; cited by Freedman, 1968:126) the forces of reproduction are developed through historical processes of human interaction. These take place within the context of existing relations of reproduction as well as placing constraints on those relations. The implications, for instance, of a particular state of reproductive technology under conditions of low fecundity will differ from the implications of that same technology in the context of high fecundity. Likewise, the development of reproductive technologies may be stimulated, or constrained by existing states of the structural and physiological forces of reproduction as well as the relations of reproduction.

Marx (1974:29) describes the relations of production as those

> "social relations into which producers enter with one another, the conditions under which they exchange their activities once participate in the whole act of production...In order to produce, they enter into definite connections and relations with one another and only within these social connections and relations does their action on nature, does production, take place."

The relations of production define who has access, and under what conditions, to raw resources and technological systems and the means of production in any historical epoch. These are relations of struggle, of domination and exploitation. The nature of the protagonists is defined not only by the specific relations of social groups to the means of production but also by the social formation. Similarly, the relations of reproduction define and regulate sexual access, access to contraceptive and fertility stimulating technology. They also, through the mediation of the civil society, define rights of control over children, and most importantly the protagonists which contest control over the means of reproduction.

Human societies, social formations, are complex totalities expressing struggles over the means of production and reproduction. These struggles not only reflect an internal dialectic within the mode of production and the mode of reproduction respectively, but their mediation by civil society and a direct but dialectical relationship between these two modes. The position of women, then, is not simply a derivative of junctures at which class and patriarchal systems interlock. Neither class nor partriarchial systems are created separately but arise out of a mutual conditioning by the dialectical union of the mode of production and the mode of reproduction.

At this level of abstraction, at the point of generalised relations between production and reproduction, the continuous attempts to control women are explicable. It is not simply that women are the means of reproduction but that they have, at the same moment, productive potential, a value as labour power. Those who can control the movements, activities and attitudes of women largely control the reproductive and productive potential of human societies. It is by the virtue of this position that women's lives become the site in which these contradictions and complementaries between the modes of reproduction and production are most intimately played out.

Because women's lives provide the context in which the struggles within and between production and reproduction are expressed most immediately, examining the construction of those lives supplies the key to comprehending societal developments in general. Conversely attempts to understand the experiences of women in particular social formations at specific moments must be subject to an appreciation of the processes by which concrete social formations as a whole are generated. This demands not merely a commitment to diachronic as well as synchronic analysis but also a determination to avoid transforming the theoretical abstractions into crude methodological formulae and reductionist explanations.

Throughout this discussion I have resisted defining in more concrete terms the components and dynamics within the mode of reproduction. Equally I have been somewhat vague regarding the relationship between the modes of production and reproduction. This reflects a concern that these concepts should not be mistaken for anything more than generalised, albeit 'sensible', abstractions. They are constructs which can not be nor should be mechanically applied. Attempts to do so will at best reduce societies, and women's positions within them, to sets of categories tied into some indistinguisable nexus. At worst such am attempt will, because such an approach portrays societies as passive aggregations, lead to the theoretical abstractions themselves being used as explanations of concrete social situations and becoming a substitute for research. Nowhere is there a better example of the problems associated with using theoretical constructs mechanistically than the distortion of marxist theory.

It is the confusion between Marx's abstract and concrete analyses which have left his theory vulnerable to accusations of economism, reductionism and predictive failure. It is this confusion which underlies much of the debate regarding such issues as the relationship between the infrastructure and superstructure (Swingwewood, 1975:33-57; Williams, 1973, Nield, 1980; Toposki, 1980; Godelier, 1978). The conceptualisations outlined here are means by which the ontological presuppositions of feminist theory may be developed. But they are abstractions, and they will remain so until elaborated both through analysis of their historically specific content and the refinement of the abstract connections between them. This demands that we stop being secretly rather thankful that male sociologists are not really very interested in researching 'women' which leaves us a space. It demands that we start pursuing the radical agenda of feminist theory; the construction of a new practice of sociology.

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Reviews

Review Essay: Myths of America

Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life By Robert Bellah, Richard Madsen, William M. Sullivan, Ann Swidler and Steven M. Tipton. Perennial Library, Harper and Row, New York, 1985.

Review by Chris Wilkes

It is rare to hear about a sociological study which makes the best-seller lists, but 'Habits of the Heart' (H. H.) has attained such popularity during the last year in the United States. Written by five social scientists, 'Habits of the Heart' investigates the limits of individualism, a trait deeply in the American national character. The fundamental dilemma which the book seeks to address is how far a national culture, based on a fierce, and some would say, excessive individualism, can go on and still hold together as a social system oriented towards collective action. The idea is fundamental and intriguing, but, as I will argue below, the attempt to resolve this dilemma can be criticised in several important respects.

H. H. sets out in its attack on the individualist/collective dilemma by an exposition of the lives of four individuals - a businessman, a therapist, a director of public relations, and a community organiser. From these vignettes, the authors derive several common themes which each participant reflected upon - freedom, justice and success. These themes are taken to be the major tendencies of American cultural belief, and each is said to be important, in turn, to the three dominant cultural traditions of American life - biblical, republican and modern/individualist. By a review of both historical and interpretive literatures, the authors seek to show how the elements of cultural life which can be derived from the biographies of the four respondents have a close connection with the cultural traits evidenced in society as a whole.

The argument develops in a logical form largely, we are told, as a consequence of Swindler's ministrations in sustaining a consistent argument across several varied contributions. In 'Finding Oneself', the argument is proposed that self-reliance can be established to be a generally-held orientation. This element is taken to be a part of the larger concept of 'self' that Americans hold dear as they make the transition from home to work, as they leave the traditional churches, and as they establish their adult careers. The format the writers use is to intermingle the idiosyncratic with the analytic, joining personal information gathered from informants with synthetic statements about elements of the social structure as a whole. This personal information is sometimes merged with analytic material in what appears to be a tautological fashion. Having asserted the universal pattern of 'leaving home' activity typical of American life, individual cases are then moulded into an inescapable general theme, with variations from the norm taking on the guise of minor alterations to an ineluctible general pattern. Thus, for Brian, Margaret and Joe, leaving home was inevitable. Brian and Margaret left in an orthodox fashion, to be educated and gain careers distinct from their parents. But 'Joe...did not leave home at all' (Is this an exception at last? But no...) 'Yet in significant ways even he had to leave home...He did not follow his father's career...He did not even choose to continue to live in the family enclave.' (H. H., 1985:58) And, in the case of Wayne Bauer, we see an example of full scale cultural rebellion (But)...Still, he differs only in degree from the others described above. (H. H., 1985:61) Thus are the variations in dispositions, temperament and behaviours pureed into a satisfying and homnogenous gruel.

The analysis then turns from 'Leaving Home' to 'Leaving Church', and this seems equally puzzling, since for many Americans, as the authors attest in their own figures, there is no obligation to leave the church in the same way that career and circumstance press on individuals to make them leave home so consistently. In part, this inconsistency of analysis is caused by a failure to identify the different time periods involved in two distinct historical events, leaving home referring to a life cycle event typical in the American experience, whereas on the other hand 'leaving church', or the secularisation of religious life occurred over a longer period, widely analysed by sociologists as a long-term trend in industrial societies, in which individuals may or may not play a part during their own life cycle. Indeed, in seeking to draw parallels between 'Leaving Home' and 'Leaving Church', the authors are drawn into the error of suggesting the long-term tendency of secularisation is merely a reflection of individual choice relating to education and work. The section on the church also mentions class, status and ethnicity briefly - all too briefly. There is no explanation of any of these powerful concepts; certainly no explanation is sought for variations in patterns of individualism and commitments in such structural differences between people.

The outcome of the three major sections - 'Leaving Home', 'Leaving the Church' and 'Work' is the discovery of what the authors call the 'lifestyle enclave'. The 'lifestyle enclave', a theoretical 'new discovery' by all accounts, occurs 'At some point in midlife' when 'many Americans turn towards sharing with others in intimacy instead of trying to outrace them.' (H. H., 1985:71) Retirement (life after work) has become possible on a large scale; retirement communities blossom - people constitute themselves according to lifestyle similarities, and thus create these new lifestyle enclaves. But this proposal is far from convincing - the few who *do* retire together in newly-constructed communities could hardly be said to be typical of all retiring people; far less can they be said to be connected with the mass of working people, in spite of the few suggestions the authors propose. The implicit argument, therefore, that new forms of community are being created by large numbers of people, a change which is premissed on a basic change of attitude occurring during mid-life, and that, again implicitly, this new movement is moving en masse into lifestyle enclaves, constitutes a solution to the central dilemma which is poorly founded.

In 'Love and Marriage', authorities are cited to substantiate the proposal that the family, with its traditional function as a site of empathy and security, provides a bulwark against individualism. Here a false contradiction is proposed and then solved. Since the contradiction did not exist in the first place, the solution is not surprising. I am referring to the comment about love:

> Love...creates a dilemma for Americans. In some ways love is the quint-essential expression of individuality and freedom. At the same time, it offers intimacy, mutuality and sharing. (H. H. 93)

But the reader immediately poses the question - Love as individualist, free from people? Surely at its heart, 'love' is a relational concept, founded on feelings between people, unless we are discussing narcissism. How, then, can a conflict exist for American culture, specifically in a field of human life defined at its very core by mutuality, reciprocity and sociality? Therapy is postulated as a mechanism whereby 'Self' can be accepted at any price - the amorality of self-acceptance on whatever basis is proposed as the goal of good therapy. Here we finally get to the nub of the chapter - self-love, championed by the new therapists of the self, has created a climate which authenticates personal fulfillment at the expense of personal commitments.

Indeed the question is a curious one for a sociologist to pose (I understand Swindler wrote this part of the text). It is also strange to suggest, as she does on page 33 that love is an 'expression of spontaneous inner freedom, a deeply personal, but necessarily arbitrary choice' when we know that we tend to be involved with people like ourselves much more than we are involved with those unlike us, for both obvious reasons of location and interaction, as well as more complex reasons to do with the dispositions and tendencies we find appealing in others. Thus, while on the surface, choices of love partners may appear 'arbitrary', structural processes of selection and of personal preference, created by long processes of socialisation, mean that certain individuals are more probable partners than others. The freedom they speak of is thus in part illusory, and surely it is part of the sociological task to expose such incomplete thinking, rather than to reproduce it as an element in a false dichotomy which needs resolution.

In marriage, Christian love is taken to be first and foremost about commitment. To have a binding commitment in marriage means to give oneself to something larger than the self. Here 'feeling and self' are not enough. But for many, the biblical tradition itself is not enough - the therapeutic attitude (another theoretical 'discovery') begins with the self, rather than accepting the obligations of an external authority. Perfection of self is seen as a pre-condition of achieving external relationships in a world where such relationships are difficult. The therapist is an all-accepting friend - anything goes; anything is lovable. The therapeutic client is taught to be independent of anyone else's standards. This explicit de-socialisation of the individual is at the heart of the therapeutic task. Selfishness is central to the therapeutic task. Commitment is replaced with open-ness. Therapeutically liberated individuals are thus hostile to obligations of any kind.

'..most Americans are, in fact caught between ideals of obligation and freedom.' (H. H., 1985:102) The authors make another generalising statement about the ideological pre-occupations of the American people. But through the implementation of an 'expressive individualist' logic, the couples discussed see relationships as situations in which personal needs are met:

> ...both in hard bargaining over a contract and in the spontaneous sharing of therapeutically sophisticated lovers, the principle is in basic ways the same. No binding obligations and no wider social understandings justify a relationship. It exists only as the expression of the choices of the free selves who make it up. And should it no longer meet their needs, it must end. (H. H., 1985:107)

Going beyond the self towards a conception which transcends self and other, is argued to be the source of the major dilemma for respondents. Marriage itself is now seen as only an option: thirty years ago it appeared almost mandatory. Women now appear less satisfied than men with their marriage situation. While attitudes may have become more liberal in relation to the division of labour in the household, actual behaviours have changed very little. Women are still expected to undertake most household chores, irrespective of their position in the paid labour force. The family itself is not part of a larger 'moral ecology' which can tie community with home, church and work. Indeed, the family itself becomes the boundary for altruism, and is itself an isolated element in an alien world.

In Chapter 5, 'Reaching Out', the authors address the general question of therapy as an approach to the broader problem of achieving social contact. Traditionally kinship, the church and association within the civic order were the sites of social connection. The emergent society

created natural dislocations as the settlers moved West. Old connections which could be sustained in small coastal communities could no longer hold together under the new conditions. National systems replaced local systems - root-lessness became a national pattern. In this climate an attempt to recover the old virtues of closeness and reciprocity developed in the form of the therapeutic culture. This emergence of a new cultural therapy was closely associated with the development of the industrial middle class. The professional class, tightly associated with 'careers', oriented themselves to national and international markets, rather than towards any local community.

Psychotherapy was the child of the early 20th. century. When Freud arrived in 1909, Tipton tells us on page 121, some ninety medical articles had been published on the subject already. Psychotherapy, unlike other forms of psychic healing, seeks to separate the individual from society, rather than reconnecting people to their surrounding community. Therapy is a non-relationship, a discussion of the self which expressely excludes the therapist from a close connection with the patient.

Work is considered as a form of therapy, a place where co-workers help each other out and give each other support (is this *really* the same competitive society that we met before?). Therapy enables people to share more of themselves at work. Therapy can be used as a tool to humanise the organisational setting as many 'progressive' companies have found out.

Therapy poses the problem that the rule-governed, bureaucratic society is taking up too much of our personal life. The social services economy takes on the model of personal exchange, and personal life has no place to go. More than this, therapy has no position, no moral code, and no place to stand. Politics is thus a world of confusion for therapists, a field in which frustrations and disappointments are to be expected. The problem is of course embedded in the general attitudes therapy has to the world. If therapy seeks to constitute a world where self is crucial, and relationships between even two people are very difficult to sustain, then relationships among large groups of people are more than can be imagined. For the therapeutic view, personal relationships tend to be self-interested ways of keeping mentally and spiritually healthy, with a clear instrumental intent structured into such activity. The long picture of society and history is missing from the account that therapy can give. Genuine community, an authentic sense of belonging to a group, is not something that can be offered by therapeutic intervention.

In summary, Tipton argues that while therapy may put middle-class Americans in touch with their feelings, it also leads to a conception of the self as both absolutely free and absolutely empty, and, in turn, leads to an empty conception of relationships. Of course, traditional and dogmatic conceptions of right and wrong may indeed be erroneous and limiting. But active traditions which are capable of change *are* useful to social groups, and avoid the difficulty of moral agnosticism which therapy constitutes. Tradition of this kind lives on, perhaps in the need of people for true 'community', and this tradition has not been replaced by the new wave of therapy.

Tipton's chapter is very smoothly written, and the string of convincing arguments that he proposes are intuitively plausible, even if, on occasion, they appear to have little relation to careful empirical work. Certainly we are treated to further details from the biographies of individuals which support some of the general arguments proposed. But, and this is a general question for the work as a whole, the theoretical themes are woven tightly here, and the evidence is far outweighed by a series of generalisations which would be very hard to substantiate, and which are only unevenly documented.

Chapter Six, an all-hands-on-deck affair, tackles 'individualism'. The central argument is again rehearsed - individualism, so much at the heart of American culture, is also at the heart of its problems in attempting to constitute community and society. Mythic individualism, such as is to be found in James Fenimoore Cooper's **The Deerslayer**, **Huckleberry Finn** and **Moby Dick**, is sometimes an indication of the possibilities of individualism, sometimes an example of how such a path can be destructive. The **Cowboy**, the **Detective** are both constituted as autonomous heroes, valuable only *because* of their autonomy. The middle-class, interestingly defined by their 'attitudes, aspirations and expectations towards status mobility, and who shape their actions accordingly' (Page, 148), are said to be closely involved with the ambiguities of individualism. Yet middle-class values are taken also to be 'natural', as the values of *all* classes. The authors comment:

> We have ...stressed the special nature of the middle class, the fact that it is not simply a 'layer' in a 'system of stratification' but rather a group that seeks to embody in its own continuous progress and advancement the very meaning of the American project. To a large extent, it has succeeded in this aspiration. It so dominates our culture that, as Schneider and Smith put it 'middle-class values can be said to encompass both lower - and upper-class values.' (H. H., 1985:151)

Here surely, in their long line of plausible generalisations, the authors have gone over the top a little bit. Relying as they do on Schneider and Smith's subjectivist definition of social class based only on aspirations and values, they now seek to assert both the homogeneity of value patterns across class, and thus, by their own theoretical calculation, they dismiss class boundaries themselves as having no causal or distinguishing importance. Further, since their study is of the 'middle class' it now becomes extended into an analysis of all society, since 'all society' espouses the same middling values in the end. Grand claims indeed! These are contradictory claims, however, because it is immediately acknowledged that while the upper-classes might value the virtues of the middle-classes, they do not go as far as to bother espousing them themselves! Indeed, it seems eminently obvious that the dominant order would value clean and dutiful habits among the lower orders, and would support these activities whole-heartedly, as the middle orders fight like rats to gain some of the advantages that the upper classes so easily and so naturally have! But to say also that the upper classes do not try and impose their *own* values on a middle-class world - again, is this not a little sweeping and unexamined? But more is to come. Ethnicity and ethnic self-consciousness are said merely to be residual beliefs held by certain sectors of the lower-classes - these attitudes are said to fall by the way side when middle-class status is achieved. Rationality (though this can be over-emphasised) is the predominant form of thinking.

But the essential difficulty remains - the need to establish sensible social goals which involve commitment which is sustainable. A sense of history and of connectedness does exist in some individuals, as life history material attests, and the authors conclude that Americans, in spite of their individualist obsessions, still involve themselves considerably in civic and voluntary activities, which generate a network of connectedness.

On now into the downward half of the book as we enter Part Two. Having reviewed Private Life in the first part, Part Two concentrates on Public Life, in the four chapters 'Getting Involved', 'Citizenship', 'Religion', 'The National Society'. 'Getting Involved' tells of the high rates of voluntarism and joining which the United States exhibits. Traditional New England townships were places of joinedness and connection - family, work and community were natural elements in the self-employed world of the early citizens. 'Town Fathers', generally to be found among the leading business illuminati these days, still in many ways

represent these forms of social behaviours. Good business is connected with service club work, and with strong family life. Outsiders, those who do not adhere to a broad and agreable moral code, even though they may now outnumber 'old' residents, can not be considered to be holders of true local citizenship. And in large cities, even these vestigial conceptions of family, community and work are torn apart. Isolation and withdrawal are much more common patterns in the city.

Enclaves are, of course an answer, even if they are not a general answer. Wealthy Southern Californian enclaves who live isolated lives, working hard only for their own communities, are an obvious example the authors draw upon. Such communities are said to be people-centered, rather than profit-centered. City is corrupt and corrupting; 'decent' individuals withdraw to their like-minded enclave. More educated citizens, influenced by the moral agnosticism of their therapy-influenced training, see not corruption, but an alternative system of values at work. Utilitarian individualism is presented as a mechanism for resolving problems, but this clearly has fundamental difficulties in a world dominated by business interests and personal self-interest. Indeed, the solution of technical rationality, strongly advocated by newly-trained professionals, is doomed, according to the authors, to overlook the real conflicts inherent in such situations, and the comparative market powers that such groups who fight public battles may have. Rare indeed are individuals who act in a socially responsible way, and who manage to overcome the tendency towards corruption and self-interest in American public life.

'Citizenship' reflects the imbalance between the enormously-powerful individualist impetus of business and work on the one hand, and the small attempts at 'civic duty' on the other. There is, it is proposed a general unease and a sense of helplessness among people, who understand at heart that community directed towards social causes can never repair the damage to society that an uncontrolled business logic can achieve. Three conceptions of politics seem to emerge; face-to-face discussion leading to consensus; the pursuit of differing interests according to agreed-upon, neutral rules; and politics as statesmanship. Each in turn is labelled with a theoretical category - 'the politics of community'; 'the politics of interest'; 'the politics of the nation'. Individualist conceptions of politics can not deal with the form of political conflict exemplified in the 'politics of interest'. Sources of conflict, founded in the supra-individualist structures of society, cannot be discovered, nor can their implications be followed. The complexity of society is clearly invisible to many of its citizens. New technical specialist professions have developed to run the state and its agencies. But, all too frequently, large government structures have outrun the control of human societies. The authors conclude that perhaps only one alternative exists to the control of society either by business or by experts - the influence of social movements. Elements of the social movements era of the 1960's still work at social transformation with sometimes impressive results. *And* while such activities are frequently local:

> These local initiatives may, however, be the forerunner of social movements that will once again open up spaces for reflection; participation, and the transformation of our institutions. (H. H., 1985:218).

'Religion' is explained as a crucial factor in modern colonial history. Religion *was* public and unified; today it is frequently private and diverse. As its private character developed, religion became a logical pre-cursor to the new therapeutic culture. Churches, whether liberal or conservative, frequently act as 'communities of personal support.' At a national level mainstream Churches are developing connections between themselves, and joining together to speak on issues of public interest. In the same way that the Church played a significant social role in the 1960's with Martin Luther King, the writers see the potential for the synthesis of

collectivism and individualism in the new Church. All these elements are reviewed in the final chapter of Part Two - 'The National Society'. This national culture eternally seems pre-disposed towards personal meanings. Yet a second set of the language of public commitment still exists, and civic life endures. Sometimes, as in the case of the Civil Rights movement, a national 'moral ecology' is sustained. The founders of the American Republic clearly had a sense of the national 'social good'. Yet this moral leadership was swamped is the extremely rapid growth of modern capitalism. This has given rise to a set of ambivalences centred on the concept of the public good, which, the authors argued 'have arisen in the United States in the past hundred years' (H. H., 1985: 257). The first pair - Establishmentism / Populism -evolved in the last period of the nineteenth century until the first World War. The second pair - Neo Capitalism / Welfare Liberalism - pits a revived defence of private property against the policies of the new Neal. The Third contemporary pairing is that of the Administered Society/Economic Democracy dualism.

Certain themes tend to run through each pairing according to the authors. Establishmentism saw the public good in terms of public endowment from the private purse. Populism avowed the egalitarian ethic. Neocapitalism, including Reagan's version of it, proposes a healthy, free-market economy as the basis for the social good. Welfare Liberalism emphasis the need for more-or-less continuous intervention by the state in the service of an equitable public good. The Administered Society vision is premised on the certainty of technical and managerial skills in managing the state, and attending to public needs. The Economic Democracy proposal seeks to empower people, to enable *them* to play a part in a central administration. Yet neither of these strands of thought is adequate in the end to the task in hand. Part Two concludes by commenting:

> The way a free society meets its problems depends not only on its economic and administrative resources but on its political imagination. Political vision thus plays an indispensible role in providing understanding of the present and of the possibilities for change. Is it possible that we could become citizens again, and together seek the common good in the post-industrial, postmodern age? (H. H., 1985: 271).

The Conclusion, Chapter 11 - Transforming American Culture, looks at the systems of ideas which may be useful in assessing the contemporary era. The 'Culture of Separation', exemplified in Science by the separation into disciplines, is typical of high and low culure. Yet between people must exist what amounts to a culture of coherence, if society is to work at all. A 'Social' or 'Moral' ecology is clearly necessary to sustain a viable post-industrial society. Yet clearly this development would need transformation of society at various levels, which would involve, the authors speculate, a new social movement to constitute the new social ecology, perhaps 'the successor and fulfillment of the Civil Rights movement.' The dignity of politics would need to be restored. A common consensus would need to be established. A transformation in the national system of rewards would have to take place. The 'meaning of work' would have to change - automation would have to undertake the drudgery which now besets us. Materialism does not please people, the authors remind us from their research. Connectedness is being attempted in a variety of ways. True affluence is not to be found in national wealth, but in a national vision directed towards the social good.

This is a detailed and complex argument which deserves serious attention from sociologists. But I take it to be, in the last analysis, an innovative work which has great need of empirical substantiation as well as a need to be mindful of a host of theoretical and empirical studies which have already occurred, but of which the authors appear unaware. Thus, this is a very

parochial document, wholly and exclusively concerned with American issues and American analysis and solutions. It is also ambiguously presented as to *scale* - the cover comments:

> Basing their research on a massive five-year study of various American communities... (H. H., 1985: back cover).

> ...yet in the Preface, there is talk of 'a small research team and a limited budget'. (H. H., 1985:viii)

and while the research certainly took time (1979-1984) only 200 people were interviewed. NOW, which is it? - all social scientists bemoan the lack of money for research, but it does not appear this can be authentically characterised as a 'massive five-year study'. Thus it does not behove the authors, having admitted the non-representativeness of their work (rich in detail though it may be, and drawing on other work as they might), to consistently speak of national attitudes, culture, beliefs and behaviour, which, after all, they can only hint at in this study. Issues of method, at least in general terms are discussed in an appendix. The authors have sought 'to renew an older conception of social science, one in which the boundary between social science and philosophy was still open' (H. H., 1985: 298). They argue for holism, and against particularism and specialism. They argue for interpretation and understanding, and against value freedom, if social science is going to act as a public philosophy. They argue that their method - 'active interviewing' actually creates public conversation about the world, an argument which many sociologists will find hard to accept. Yet there are no methodological innovations, nor any clear methodology or method expressed - any careful analysis of their work on this score is hard to find.

Theoretically, they have little time for modern Europe - de Tocqueville looms large as does Hervé Varenne, along with Comte on several occasions. But a vast literature on ideology, largely marxist (Althusser, Larrain, Abercrombie, Turner etc) is missing, though Hegelian and interpretive marxism gets a mention through Gadamer and Habermas. Incidently, I'd have thought Habermas was *central* to their purpose, especially in their intent to establish social science and public philosophy. Finally, no mention is made of Bourdieu's master-work on France, **Distinction**, which takes on, rather more impressively in this writer's view, many of the issues raised by H. H.in the case of America.

Yet this dependence on 'oldness', 'tradition' and orthodox ways of thinking is typical of what I take to be the major quality of the book - its romaniticism. They are content to use de Tocquville, a theorist of (largely) pre-industrial America, to dwell on biblical and christian values, to talk about small-town America, without accepting that industralism and capitalism do not require community when couched in romanticist terms. It is a curious study *only* if this argument is ignored. But its romanticism makes a great deal of sense, not only of the theorists involved and the objects of study, but also the idealist logic that informs the politics of the book, as well as much of its analytic frame. Class is subjectivism here; community is feeling and moral ecology. These post -60's liberals have written a book in darkest Reaganite America, which draws nonetheless on the same romantic myths that Reagan's politics draws on - home, hearth and community. As they make their own counter-claims (a new social movement is needed), the United States consolidates its aggressive policies to friend and foe alike, as New Zealanders have come graphically to understand in the last few years.

We can applaud the innovatory attemps made in the book towards holism, an historical account, a post-positivist methodology and so on. But there is little evidence that social connectedness, community, a more human society or a more equitable world system is on the American political agenda. Nor does it seem, in the logic of the economic and social system that this book so clearly describes, is there any likelihood that the agenda will change.

Srow's Having A Baby. Is It The Right Decision?
S.R.O.W. (1985), Having a Baby: The Experience of
Some Wellington Women. Wellington, SROW.

Review by Kay Saville-Smith

Despite its reputation for caution and conservatism relative to other feminist organisations, much of SROW's research has been inspired by and carried out in the midst of public controversies. These two studies are no exception.

Having a Baby[1] is a study of both the problems with maternity services and the extent of consumer satisfaction among maternity patients. It is an explicit attempt to document the failings in maternity care, (only hinted at in the Salmond Report) in order to influence hospital procedures. Delays associated firstly with negotiating access to maternity patients and then with the closure of St Helen's Hospital and the maternity ward of Wellington Public Hospital in 1980 reflect the extent to which this study has been involved with a serious reconsideration of the nature of maternity care over the last decade.

Indeed one could argue that this study has already had its impact. The data, given that the study was initiated in 1975 and the interviewing undertaken in 1977, is relatively old. It can hardly be expected, then, to have the sort of 'shock-value' which forces us to reflect in any radical way on the structure of our society or our experiences. This probably does not matter too much, at least in the case of *Having a Baby*.

It is clear that the members of SROW (Wellington) involved in this project have made significant contributions to the on-going assessment of and sometimes vociferous debate over our hospital services in general and maternity care in particular. *Having a Baby* now falls largely into the categories of reference, source material for those engaged in more abstracted analyses of women and the health system. It does, however, provide useful documented evidence of women's wishes for those still challenging hierarchical and insensitive maternity arrangements.

In contrast it is unfortunate that the fourth and final report of the longitude unmarried mothers study *The Right Decision...*[2] neither has shock-value nor does it seem to have provided, apart from the actual publication of each stage, a contribution to the too frequently one-sided debate over the 'character' and 'circumstances' of unpartnered mothers.

This is not to suggest that this research report leaves popular taken-for-granteds unscathed. The data challenges for instance a number of significant stereotypes. Firstly that unmarried mothers are an unstable group rapidly entering and leaving long series of relationships. Secondly that keeping a child may prevent young women, and it is implied immature women, from developing stable relationships in the future. According to this data not only had 76% of the unpartnered mothers who kept their children retained the same partnership status over the past

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1   S.R.O.W. (1985), *Having a Baby: The Experience of Some Wellington Women.* Wellington, SROW.
2   SROW (Auckland). 1984. *The Right Decision... Stage 4 Report, Unmarried Mothers Study.* Wellington, SROW.

two to three years compared to 48% of those who had adopted their children out, but the latter were "also more likely to have experienced a partnership break up." (SROW, 1984:18-19).

The third stereotype challenged (yet again by social researchers) is the idea that unpartnered mothers stay on the DPB by choice. The vast majority of respondents recorded a preference for paid employment and the most common reason for terminating employment was simply being made redundant (SROW, 1984:10-11).

These are major points not simply because they tell us of the impact of particular choices on mothers and childrens lives but because they challenge a tradition of discourse. A discourse which has rationalised such seemingly diverse actions as in 1977 lowering the DPB in the first months of take-up to more recent suggestions that certain unmarried women should be allowed neither to keep their babies nor to abort unwanted pregnancies. The latter suggestions appear to have found a real audience in this monetarist age in which there is an unfulfilled demand for 'adoptable' children among married couples.

By way of contrast there are parts of this study which support some unlikely but popularly accepted, indeed politically acceptable, notions. Most significant is the repeated implication that the incomes of unpartnered mothers, especially those on the DPB, are adequate if managed "with care". Even the evidence from this study suggests that this is not so.

The majority of unpartnered mothers were "receiving non-monetary assistance... [which] ranged from occasional gifts... to regular assistance with babysitting, food and clothing..." (SROW, 1984:28-30,42). The fact that not only were women solely dependent on the DPB receiving this additional support from family or friends but also women with other sources of income must be a savage indictment of the state's impoverishment of unpartnered child-bearers. Those respondents relying exclusively on state support in 1979 received an average weekly net income of a mere $92.00, some $24.00 less than the average weekly income of other unpartnered mothers among the respondents.

The fact that only four of the twenty-seven respondents said they had difficulty with surviving on their incomes and none at all admitted to suffering great hardship indicates not so much an adequacy of income but low expectations of existence. The report and study fails here in two ways. Firstly, the available data are inadequately discussed. Secondly, and more importantly, the instrument of measurement is inappropriate.

In a society which emphasises homogeneity and egalitarianism few people are prepared to admit differences. Among a group who have low economic expectations and have frequently been labelled as bludgers and mal-managers it is not surprising that their responses to quantitatively bold questions of self-assessment are designed to minimise their economic difficulties.

This study does not have shock-value; I doubt that it will have much impact on popular notions about either unpartnered mothers or the advantages/disadvantages of keeping a child versus adoption. However, it has much that is important which I have not mentioned. The chapter on foster care is particularly significant in expressing the importance of kinship but also the struggles inside families over children. Indeed this whole chapter raises many issues rarely confronted regarding community and extended family care but it does not come to life. The quantitative, abstracted empiricism which leads the writers to suspect conclusions regarding the adequacy of unpartnered mothers' incomes also undermines the impact of the study and the challenges it embodies. What was needed here was a mixture of methods; interviews, diaries,

observations, group discussions. All of which would bring these women alive both in their struggles and their triumphs.

Do not underestimate the importance of this study, however. Nor, indeed, the magnitude of the venture itself. A longitudinal study by a group of volunteers is a tremendous, perhaps impossible, ambition. SROW (Auckland) must be congratulated for having, against all odds, completed this project which has from inception taken over a decade. Many of its problems derive from its sheer ambition.

SROW has stood the test of time, it is in its twenty-first year of operation. It has always appeared to take risks; researching what others would not, publshing what commercial publishers deem to be unprofitable despite the burgeoning and increasing lucrative women's studies market. It has been constrained by limited resources which, combined with a nation-wide tendancy in the social sciences to engage in abstracted empiricism, has led to an over-emphasis on quantitative methods. Quantitative methods may appear to give more for less, but this is largely illusionary. SROW already shows a movement away from quantitative methods, and I hope that the risk of becoming committed to a more qualitative approach will be taken. Let us buy as many of the forthcoming publications as possible, then, not simply because they are worth it in themselves but because they are an investment for the future.

Inside Centrepoint
L. Oakes (1986), Benton Ross.

Review by Mike O'Brien

The 1970's in New Zealand - as in many Western Countries - was a period of regular experimentation with alternative lifestyles and living patterns. Many of these patterns were built around some form of communal living, whether the ohus established at the time of the last Labour government or by following the route to religious mysticism in India. One of the most controversial of these in this country was the establishment of Centrepoint Community in Auckland. The history of its establishment and of some of the issues associated with that are outlined in Len Oakes' book, 'Inside Centrepoint', published by Benton Ross.

The author is unashamedly and unambiguously on the side of the creators of the community and of its leader, Bert Potter. He sets out to:

> describe the community's development and way of growth, its way of life and its spiritual beliefs. (It) discusses the opposition Centrpoint has attracted and attempts to find reasons for the hostility it continues to arouse. (Back cover).

The book falls into three parts. The first reviews the legal, administrative and organisational battles and difficulties encountered in establishing the community. These events are described in a fairly straightforward, descriptive way, with considerable emphasis on the obstacles put in the way by a range of outside forces such as the Town and Country Planning machinery and local authorities. The second section concentrates on some of the questions that the community has had to face over the years. Thus, there are chapters on children, on religion, on health and on those who leave Centrepoint - to name but four areas. The final part reviews some of the criticisms and complaints that have been made about the community and its members, and includes some discussion of the reasons for these criticisms. All these sections are dominated by three themes.

The first of these, and the dominant one throughout almost every chapter of the book is the God-like qualities ascribed to Bert Potter. He is portrayed on a number of occasions as being Jesus Christ and as being "a modern guru" (p.10). The word "guru" is used a number of times and his dominance of the community is patently evident throughout. A sentence towards the end of the book (p.214) does suggest that he may have some less likeable features too; however, the author is clearly a disciple, and like most disciples finds difficulty in being at all distant from his leader. He criticises the critics of Centrepoint for their lack of objectivity - the same quality characterises his approach to Bert.

The second theme, associated with this is the almost exclusive emphasis on a psychologistic understanding of the world and of human behaviour. Thus, change is seen to be entirely dependent on the individual first knowing her/his own self:

> (C)hange must always begin with the self, and...unless we are prepared to try to change ourselves we have no right to expect others to change (p.211).

Again, critics are generally seen to be motivated by some psychological and personal characteristic, while those who challenged Centrepoint's establishment through the Town and Country Planning mechanisms:

can be seen in a fairly straightforward manner in terms of the psychology of authoritarianism. To the authorities and some locals, Centrepoint is ambiguous. Ambiguity arises in situations characterised by novelty and complexity. Authoritarian personalities find it threatening (p.219).

There is an almost total absence of any link with social and political structures. There is passing reference to criticism and pressure coming from "society's winners" (p.219), but the connections between this, and the political, economic and legal structure of society are conspicuous by their absence. This is not surprising given Bert's rejection of political activity:

> Bert tends to be skeptical of protestors and topical issues (p.138).

Certainly, there is passing reference to the impact of the changing social and political structure (ch.18) but this is in the context of 'the sick society' philosophy where the emphasis is on 'personal growth' and the reawakening of 'appropriate values', as if these 'values' were somehow apart from the society in which people live.

That leads me to the third theme, namely the constant stress on the religious nature of Centrepoint community. 'Religious' is not used here in the usual orthodox sense of the term, but rather in the sense that central to Centrepoint and to the therapeutic activities which it undertook was that community members should get in touch more closely with their spirituality. The religious emphasis is evident in the discussion of the law (p.209), but even more clearly so in ch.8 where the base to the 'spiritual community' is extensively outlined. Not surprisingly, there is a strong connection here between this spirituality and Bert. The fundamental importance of 'the guru' is revealed here more clearly than anywhere else.

> (T)here is no substitute for personal contact with the guru, and there is no substitute for fulfilling his message with action (pp.98-99).

This power held by Bert raises a number of interesting and important issues which the book does not explore at all. The most central of these are the issue of succession - a problematic for all groups so heavily built around the personality of one particular person - and, secondly, the dependence involved. Great stress is placed at different times on the ways in which Bert provides space for community members to live their own lives and make their own decisions in classical liberal fashion. This is not easy to reconcile with the constant examples of his power and its impact on the life of Centrepoint. Is there life after Bert!

There are a number of other comments that could be made. The ethics of some of the so-called therapy if the kind of therapy practised depends on the interests of the therapist (p.102) is of considerable interest, as is the romanticism on which such communities are built and the belief that they are able to separate themselves from the remainder of society and have a major impact on the structure of that society. The one I want to mention is the constant use of sexist language - the book is written almost entirely as if community members were male. This is most dramatically highlightened in the discussion on intimacy when Maragaret's description of the experience of being part of a group is preceded by the comment:

> When someone does let *himself* experience *his* loving. (My emphasis) (p.103).

Further examples could be produced as evidence - see the quote at the beginning of ch.9. There is reference on a couple of occasions to feminist criticisms of Bert - the approach in this book

provides support for those criticisms. The expressions of a commitment to sexual equality (p.206) needs to be put alongside the underlying ideology reflected in the use of language here.

The ultimate question in any book review is whether the reviewer thinks that the book is a 'must' or not. It certainly does not fall into that category in my view, but rather I would describe it as 'mildly interesting'. It contains many of the difficulties of the 'insider's account' - those difficulties represent both its strengths and its weaknesses.

Recently Completed Theses

In late 1986, the New Zealand Departments of Scoiology were requested to supply the Journal with a list of sociological thesis submitted since February 1985, while Departments of Education were requested to supply a list of theses of a "sociological flavour".

The following list is compiled from the returns to this request. We welcome additional input to what we intend to be an on-going reference.

Massey University - Department of Sociology

YEAR	NAME	TITLE OF THESES
1985	Maria I. HERNANDEZ DE ROMERO	Contributions to the Sociology of Law: A Critical Reading of Marx and Weber (MA)
1985	Christine M. CHEYNE	The Politics of Art-Making: A Socialist-Feminist Critique (MA)
1985	Vivienne M. PORZSOLT	Rhetorical Smoke Without Revolutionary Fire: A Study of the Consciousness of the New Zealand Waterside Workers Federation 1915-1937 (MA)
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