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OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

RACISM & ETHNICITY $16.95

Paul Spoonley

Turbulent social and economic changes have marked the decades of the 1970s and 1980s. One central change has been the evolving relationship between Maori and Pakeha. The myth that New Zealand race relations are good by world standards has been strongly challenged as the issues of biculturalism, bilingualism and the implications of the Treaty of Waitangi have been debated.

In this book, Paul Spoonley provides an introduction to these debates. He describes the growing emphasis on cultural identity and looks at state policies from assimilation through to devolution. He ends by discussing the strategies of anti-racism.

Published in May 1988

This is the first book to be published in a series entitled "Critical Issues in New Zealand Society".

The General Editors are Steve Maharey & Paul Spoonley.

Social science faced with New Zealand's quiet revolution: some reflections based on a Brazilian experience.

Tom Dwyer, Department of Social Sciences, State University of Campinas, Sao Paulo, Brazil.[1]

Brazilian Society and Politics - an introduction.

Social research is grounded in relationships with defined socio-political contexts. In Brazil this context is set in the following way:

A huge part of the population is excluded from social and economic participation. This exclusion of perhaps 70% of the nation occurs because elites, in alliance with governments have, through history, turned the State into a tool to serve their own private interests.

On a periodic basis pressures build up from the excluded that force political change. A common form of response is populism. Leaders offer the excluded participation in the society in exchange for electoral support. Once elected, they bypass political parties and organised representative political institutions in implementing programmes. Left-wing populists concentrate on income redistribution, which stimulates demand-led economic expansion but, because it ignores questions of investment, sows the economic seeds of its own destruction. Their right-wing counterparts give social guarantees in return for the right to some control over popular political institutions (e.g. unions, community movements) and the repression of non-conforming elements. The distinction between these wings is frequently difficult. Two-time president Vargas was a neo-fascist in his period as a dictator (1937-45) and a left-winger as elected president (1950-54).

Solid political parties have never been able to form in Brazil. The élites have made sure of that. Elites try to counteract left populism with other forms of politics, including right populism. When democratic processes do not work in their favour they resort to strategies of sowing economic panic and allying with the military to gain control. The 1961-64 period in Brazil was a left-wing populist one, and the post April 1964 period a military-élite one.

To legitimise itself in the eyes of the public the military government embarked on an ambitious programme for economic growth, turning a blind eye to its non-political effects and squashing political opposition. The "Brazilian Miracle" followed, the economic growth rate during the 1970-74 period exceeded 10% per-annum, the urban and industrial proletariat swelled, a large middle-class formed and levels of absolute poverty rose. From the period of the oil-crisis massive foreign debts were run up to guarantee an economic basis for the regime's support.

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From the early 1970's pressures began to build, different to the anti-military movements of the 1960's. These would eventually bring down the regime. Unfavourable election results, together with strikes by the newly formed elements of the industrial working classes and economic chaos brought on by the debt crisis, destroyed the major social bases of the regime's support. Eventually in 1984 the biggest ever social movement in Brazil's history formed: its simple demand was for direct presidential elections. In 1985 the discredited Military left power, handing the reins over to a presidential team chosen in a gerrymandered electoral college.

Events subsequent to the passage to a civilian regime have been analysed in some detail in the only important printed medium in New Zealand that treats social science analyses seriously[2]. These National Business Review articles described the death of the president-elect and the rise to power of his vice-president, Jose Sarney. Sarney was caught between his own conservative political orientations (a pillar of the military regime he had been chosen as vice-presidential candidate in a compromise entered into to ensure that the elected president would emerge from opposition ranks in spite of the way the electoral college had been rigged), and the popular demands for social progress that millions expressed as they followed the president-elect's funeral cortege. During the first year of government Sarney made only one decision: to ban the Goddard film **Je Vous Salue Marie**! In spite of this indecision the economy grew 8%. However, public impatience over the lack of social reforms was clearly shown in November 1985's mayoral elections. The Government's main party was able to win the mayoralty of only one of the nation's five largest cities. The parliamentary base of Sarney's political support was to be threatened as social reformers in his party discussed alliances with the populist-left opposition.

On the economic front another problem was becoming apparent, the inflation rate was doubling (from 200% to 400% per annum) partly as a result of the demand pressures built by fast growth. Sarney pulled an elephant-sized rabbit out of the hat - an anti-inflation plan and, in true populist fashion, appealed for support, over the heads of the political parties he had not even bothered consulting, to the population. The population responded; it sacked restaurants caught raising their prices, closed down supermarkets and mobilised widely to control prices. What followed was a period of political calm, raised real wages, increased spending, and income redistribution. Large segments of those normally excluded from consumer markets were brought into them - toothpaste consumption rose by 100%! A new confidence was felt in Brazil and this combined with stable prices to force up demand for consumer durables. Demand for milk and meat grew as the incomes of the poorest families rose - a direct consequence of labour shortages. Many goods had their prices frozen below costs and production ground to a halt; increased demand lead to supply bottlenecks and desperate customers resorted to black markets to obtain supplies. Agriculturalists stopped killing beef in a political protest against the Government's insipid agrarian reform programme. Instead of making the necessary internal adjustments and using its authority to confront saboteurs, the government embarked on a massive importation splurge. Meat, beer and milk were among the products brought in to boost local supply. Foreign reserves

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2 See National Business Review 24/10/86 pp.20-21 'Brazil: shadows haunt the progress of a giant', and National Business Review 17/7/87 pp.31-32 'Confusing crisis grips troubled Brazil'.

consequently drained away at a rapid rate. But the ailing economic plan produced the desired political effect: the Government's major party obtained an absolute majority in the national congressional elections of November 1986 and won 22 of 23 State governorships.

Before the votes were all counted Sarney's finance minister declared an end to the price freeze by raising many Government fixed prices: petrol by 60%, cars by 80% to give two examples. A protest in Brasilia turned into a severe warning for the government, as many police cars were burnt. Instead of proceeding with the price-thaw the government decided not to allow the private sector to increase prices. Unions became allies of employers in seeking readjustments. Sarney called the president of the Sao Paulo Employers' Federation a 'Bukharin' for suggesting that his members might resort to civil disobedience to guarantee price readjustments. When the rises came they did so in a series of ever increasing stages; wages, interest rates, rents, and prices all rose in a spiral that was reaching 1% per working day by June 1987 - about 1300% per year! This new economic crisis lead to a rapid decomposition in all forms of support for Sarney, the most serious of which was political.

Normally a loss of parliamentary support does not constitute a major problem in presidential regimes of the Brazilian type, but the Congress elected in 1986 was charged with rewriting the constitution. Vested with these powers the congress can cut short the presidential mandate. The economic problems outlined created the climate for this to occur. With the opinion polls showing that over 70% of the population want immediate presidential elections Sarney's only way to stay in power is to ally with his former parliamentary colleagues from the military period and to use patronage politics to muster further support. Thus, opponents are given bread and water, supporters are buttered up with supplies of government jobs to be distributed to friends, preferential treatment of demands, and other bribes. What was once united as the political opposition to the dictatorship, and had become the major force capable of guaranteeing a transition to a genuine democracy and a regime serving principles of social justice, had collapsed.

The public has watched with disillusion as its hopes of a politically modern and democratic Brazil are dashed to pieces by the capture of the ship of State by the forces of the past allied with those of blind self-interest. In the country where hope in a better future has been a major dimension in the lives of all, there is now hopelessness.

The social sciences have been deeply affected by the disarticulation of the relationship between State and society. Work now proceeds under the sobering clouds of dashed hopes, and tries to make research respond to the realities of the new situation and the needs so cruelly identified in the old. The situation is complicated by the fact that several prominent social scientists, identified with social and political reform, hold positions of power and yet have been little able to effect change.

Brazil is a society where clear images are available about what needs to be done to eliminate a whole series of major social problems. It lacks the political actors with the will and the social actors with the strength to turn the images into programmes. It is difficult to imagine how the pieces of this society-in-disintegration can be put back together.

Brazilian Social Sciences
Brazilian social research has, in a manner similar to French sociology analysed by Lemert (1981), been sensitive to major social questions, and subject to the influences

of the cycles that so affect political life. The military regime did not, especially after 1968, take kindly to social research. Work on poverty, economic dependency and élite power rendered transparent the forces that dominated the society and exposed the grave consequences of such domination. Such work frequently indicated that another path was possible in a Brazil subject to revolutionary or democratic transformations.

The military dismissed many from university positions, sent some to prison and subsequently exiled most. Among the best known figures internationally were Fernando Henrique Cardoso, Darcy Ribeiro, Florestan Fernandes and Celso Furtado.[3] Others spent time in the torture chambers of the regime and a small number slipped through the net to apply their theories in what they saw as a practical manner; becoming political leaders and even urban or rural guerrillas.

Today a situation exists where an ex-guerrilla, involved in kidnapping the US ambassador, was the third most voted candidate for State Governor in Rio de Janeiro: and in second place came Ribeiro. Furtado is Minister of Culture, Cardoso a senator elected with the second highest number of votes in Brazil's history, and Fernandes was elected a member of Congress for the Worker's Party. What we see is a large number of prominent social scientists who have abandoned academic and research careers seeing a participation in political life as the best means of guaranteeing the changes they have so often thought and theorised about. (It is another question as to what visions motivate leading New Zealand intellectuals such as Palmer and Basset who join social scientist colleagues Cullen, Shields, Goff and Smith in seeking and exercising Cabinet power).

But can we understand the transition from exile and torture to respectability and power as part of the Brazilian political cycle I have discussed? The cycle is built by real people who organise, make projects, come together and move apart. The current state of Brazilian society is rendered understandable, in part at least, because of the penetration of social science perspectives into the society through the media and public debates. This gives some hope that the consequences of societal decisions will be better understood, and future social and political actions based, to some extent, on such understanding. This hope for the future can only be judged at a later date. However, what I would like to suggest is that the redemocratisation of Brazil has not been without links to the reintegration of the social sciences and their being seen as relevant to that society.

Relevance is, I believe, a largely technical and political matter - that of identifying large and important problems and working on them. If problems are seen as important, as key issues by strategic actors in civil society, the researchers will have social support. They will be questioned on television, quoted in the press and interviewed on radio. Reintegration is essentially a political notion that relates to the building of an institutional space in which social science can be produced (it is the opposite to the "disintegration" of Brazilian social sciences that occurred when the Military sharply reduced the spaces).

To summarise: after the expulsion from Brazil of many prominent social scientists something happened to permit a "reopening of the spaces". Research centres were

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3 Many of their works are readily available in New Zealand University libraries.

organised with independent money (much of it from overseas, which the military made strenuous efforts to prevent coming into the country). Issues such as poverty and dependency were worked upon by the social scientists who were hassled by the police, imprisoned and always obliged to have a passport on the ready to flee any crackdown. Their work was able to make wide-felt impacts on the society, and provoked reactions from the right - including the firebombing of a research centre. Through the work of these people social science knowledge came to be seen as relevant to any transition from military rule.

Alain Touraine (1977,164-5) reflected on the Sao Paulo sociologists in the following terms in 1975:

> How great it is to live in a "school"! This does not mean to say a chapel where everyone follows the thought of a master, but, on the contrary, a limited field of questions to which a variety of replies are formulated and which, in turn, raise new problems...the essential is always present: the responsibility of the intellectual who knows and feels oneself situated by the problems of a society: dependency with respect to foreign capitalism, the authoritarian State, cultural elitism, the enormity of national territory or the wealth surrounded by poverty...these sociologists are the written and spoken word of a repressed country, deprived of trade unions, of political parties, and half gagged by censorship. Lucky intellectuals who do not doubt, in the most terrible moments, the importance of their work, of their *raison d'etre* and of the passion with which each one of their debates, each one of their studies is followed.

The capacity of these social scientists to work was, of course, partly dependent on funding being available, and this had to be money to which there were no strings attached, i.e. that the military couldn't control. Foreign monies and the reconquering of spaces in the universities were fundamental in this process. But the finding of monies to which no strings were attached could easily have resulted in a plethora of research projects examining non-central processes, so as to avoid the political persecution that haunted those who dared examine sensitive or central questions. The idea that social science has to be relevant and that social scientists have a responsibility to the society became fundamental. No "master research programme" was drawn up; it just happened that three major axes of research were concentrated upon:

(1) economic dependency;
(2) democracy; and
(3) inequality.

It is of course extremely difficult to attempt to give a balance of all the work done. In the area of reflection on political change the key development has been that the word "revolution" has all but disappeared to be replaced by the word "democracy". With this the marxist paradigm has fallen into discredit as an intellectual model through which to build political solutions to societal problems. Two parallel phenomena bear an important responsibility for this:

(A) the experiences of dictatorial regimes, whether "left" (as in cases such as Peru, Portugal, or Cambodia) or "Right" (such as Brazil or Argentina), which have used varying degrees of force to impose the "Official Will" on others, has stimulated a general awareness about the limitations inherent in revolutionary or dictatorial forms of government of whatever persuasion;

(B) research and reflection by writers such as the Italian democrat and socialist Noberto Bobbio (1980, 1986) and by the Brazilian Workers' Party leader

Franscisco Weffort (1984) that has persuaded the intelligentsia that democracy, for all its faults, is the best form of government.

The work on dependency extended a powerful critique of international markets and their functioning, that had previously served as a justification for the protected import substitution policy so fundamental to Brazilian economic development. Economic thinking on how Brazil might make a "jump" in its development is traversed by big and important debates. In a manner quite different to New Zealand, sociologists and others participate, both publicly and in academic circles. The roles of multi-national corporations, the social effects of certain economic decisions, worker reactions to different forms of investment and the structures of labour markets are just some of the subjects analysed. In most recent times a considerable amount of reflection is being focused on the post-industrial economy and the conditions for Brazilian development and independence. In this field a central axis of reflection is built around an attempt to understand the means by which Brazil can avoid falling into informational dependency.

Finally the inequality question is treated in a variety of ways. Anthropologists look at popular culture and document the mechanisms by which people struggle for survival and the non-economic mechanisms by which they are oppressed. The mechanisms for building collective identities and consciousness are studied in various projects and feed into programmes on education, health, housing and community organisation among others. Work on inequality is frequently linked into major political and economic issues. How is democracy possible when a half of the population is illiterate and 70% lives in poverty? What effects do different models of economic growth have on the poor? What are the preconditions for transforming the victims of one of the most inegalitarian systems in the world into fully fledged social actors, i.e. citizens.

The Organisation of Social Research

At a national level research is coordinated by ANPOCS, the National Association for Post-graduate work and Research in Social Sciences. There are some 30 work groups within the association and they treat subject areas ranging from theory and methods through to Indians, social movements, political parties and feminism. These groups meet regionally and have an integrated national structure of newsletters and meetings. They draw their membership from over fifty research centres which are affiliated to ANPOCS. These centres may be in the University or applied sectors and some of them, with staffs reaching above 50 of which more than half trained to PhD level, are big enough to be able to harbour pretensions of autonomy. However it is recognised that there are simply not enough resources in the majority of research centres to develop high quality research in most areas; this must be developed through national cooperation. Resources are earmarked to ensure this happens.

The commitment to the development of a nationally integrated social science community, one that embraces not only sociology, anthropology and political science but also certain branches of economics, history and geography, exists at all levels. Different to New Zealand, professors and senior students are active in the same association, in which the commitment to dialogue and cooperation are foundation stones. It is worth adding that little respect is accorded to those colleagues, whether integrated or not into this national structure, who drag the chain and abuse privileged positions by not producing knowledge.

Thus scarce resources are pooled, people are flown around the country to lecture or act as consultants in those cases where a local centre judges itself to be lacking in

particular expertise. Where such expertise is judged lacking in Brazil long term solutions are sought by sending people overseas to study, and short term solutions by bringing people in from overseas. Overseas visitors are such a frequent input that they lose their "star" status, coming to be seen as a regular part of the scene. Frequently they will travel widely in response to invitations from different research centres.

All this effort to organise and coordinate the development of social science knowledge is based on one idea: if Brazil is going to develop as a nation it has to have the input of the social sciences. For this input to be of any value, investment must take place to ensure that those few resources that exist on the ground are not wasted through disorganization, provincialism or xenophobia.

Lessons for New Zealand

New Zealand can probably teach Brazil a lot in areas where it is strongest: the exportation of dairy farming techniques is a notable example. In the social sciences, I think that Brazil can teach New Zealand something. A first example follows from the preceding discussion: if New Zealand social science invites few (appropriate) foreign visitors, does not share them around and continues to pay them terribly it is going to remain underdeveloped. Furthermore, if it continues to be locked into its absurd provincialism it will remain weak in all of its centres.

This provincialism has been characterised by Nick Perry as having origins in the particular mode of insertion (and changes therein) of each research centre he examined into its institutional environment and its articulation with the wider community, both national and international. He concludes, 'It makes more sense to talk about Massey sociology or Canterbury sociology or Auckland sociology than it does to talk about New Zealand sociology'. (Perry, 1987:18) The problem with this argument is that nothing in it explains the low level of commitment to overcoming the weaknesses of each centre by calling for appropriate reinforcements from another. Perry's idea is that 'empirical traces point to the absence of the social and institutional preconditions for a distinctively national sociology and that such preconditions cannot be ushered in by acts of will'. (ibid:17) I do not know if he would have made the same argument had he been writing fifty years ago about New Zealand literature, or twenty years ago about pottery. Crothers (1987:30) has made an observation that seems pertinent, '...commitment to a nationally shared social research community (remains) weak'. An explanation must be found for such a state of affairs.

Like good economic determinists social scientists frequently explain away provincialism by alleging that resources necessary to ensure national integration are unavailable. This appears a strange allegation when heard from the mouths of those who vote expenditures of thousands of dollars on micro-computers (that they will use mainly for word-processing), on photocopying monies (for articles often read but once), or on trips to overseas conferences (the results of which they may never communicate back to colleagues at a national level). Sociologists represent a discipline that teaches one to analyse problems in terms of the social relations that produce them, and to conceive of solutions as consequences of modifications in these relations. For some reason they have come to imagine that, by giving first priority to essentially technical expenditures, they might strengthen the social science enterprise. I think that it can be quite safely said that the explanation for provincialism does not lie in the area of resources. Whatever the reasons for it (and we each have our own ideas), all would probably agree that it is not a lack of resources that is impeding the development of social science in New Zealand.

The Brazilian example teaches us that priority must be given to the investment of resources in order to modify the social relations upon the basis of which the research enterprise is organised. Thus the weaknesses of one centre can be compensated by the strengths of another, cooperation can thus replace opposition, debate replace silence. Brazil also teaches the importance of constructing social relations in such a way as to ensure both an insulation of social science from political pressures and that priority be given to "relevant" research.

The adoption of a code of ethics may serve as a barrier to political pressures that emerge as a consequence of the social relations that are a part of the normal employment game to which most active social researchers in New Zealand are committed. But a code of ethics is of little use unless it is backed up by, what may be called, a "professional body". This does not mean a body like the Medical Association that defends its members against all forms of outside attack.

This would need to be a politically oriented body engaged in the defence of the freedom to execute and publish quality research free of political pressures. In other words, its role would be one of defending the production of social science knowledge as an essential component of modern democracy. In so doing it would defend the right of (say) Professor van Moeseke to conclude, on the basis of his research in the 1970's, that the "Think Big" projects of the Muldoon era were non-viable. It would respond to the politically motivated attacks to which such work and the person might be subjected. Those disagreeing with controversial results would be challenged to produce scientific critiques and further analyses. The adoption of such a role requires a good dose of courage, yet it can be perceived as an essential condition for the survival of meaningful social science.

An enforceable code of ethics appears as a necessary but not a sufficient condition for the survival of the social science enterprise in a democratic nation. The Brazilian case highlights the importance of relevant research, for both survival and development. For example, funding cuts in Thatcher's Britain have been analysed in the following terms: 'Any view of recent events must start with the realisation that sociology, perhaps more than other subjects was ill prepared to defend itself...It was neither well-established, organised nor valued... the relative isolation, if not insulation of sociologists in academic institutions...is seen as being detrimental in current times'. (Reid, 1984:179-180). The insulation of New Zealand social science appears as an invitation to any mad, cost-cutting axeman.

The concentration on relevant research should help ensure that social science will have a constituency of long-term political support. By this I refer not only to funders but also to some notion of a wider community. This latter group is important for an obvious reason; if the funders pull the plug (as did the Military in Brazil and Thatcher in Britain), or threaten to do so, then there will be sources of support available to act so as to ensure that the social science enterprise does not go down the sink. I believe that Thatcher's actions in Britain raised hardly a whimper because the social sciences (and especially sociology) were seen as irrelevant by the wider community. In Brazil, on the other hand, such was the relevance - particularly of sociology - to a wider community, that the regime, seeing itself threatened, resorted to exile and torture in order to achieve silence.

I see the building of a criterion of relevance as an essential mechanism for guaranteeing the continuation of the social science enterprise in New Zealand.

The New Zealand Response to Crisis

I recently asked a prominent member of an academic sociology department the rather blunt question: 'How come you people are not writing anything?' The equally blunt reply came back: 'What would you expect us to write about?' This can only be considered an astounding reply for a country being quietly ripped from top to bottom by "revolutionary" changes.

In the space of a few years:

- New Zealand has gone from a closed to an open economy;
- Manufacturers and unions have lost, along with farmers, their power to financiers and the Business Roundtable;
- institutions founded along with the nation (Railways, Post Office and the Ministry of Works) have been corporatised and reorganised;
- the politically hegemonic pro-welfare values of the Kirk and Muldoon eras have been replaced by equally hegemonic pro-market values;
- the common consensus around the ANZUS-based defence policy has been replaced by a hegemonic nuclear-free policy;
- British cultural values, for so long the only ones accorded centrality in the society, are under challenge as bi-culturalism assumes centre-stage;
- the sports heroes of yesterday have been replaced by business heroes in their Rolls and BMWs;
- there appears to have been an historic realignment of voting patterns;
- all appears quiet in spite of these changes, there appears to be little coherent and politically strong opposition to what has been appropriately called 'the quiet revolution'. (James, 1986)

I would like to suggest that New Zealand social sciences redirect and accelerate their research into such crucial issues. It is significant that the only good overview work available on the changes has been produced, not by social scientists, but by journalists.[4] As a guideline, the major axes of research described in Brazil suggest themselves. In this manner, an examination of the consequences for economic development of the Government's policies would orient one part of a research programme. What are the social and political bases to these policies? How, when they cause obvious hurt to so many vested interests were they able to be implemented with so little opposition? What do the answers to such questions teach us about changing class relations in New Zealand? What are their implications for New Zealand's future as a developed and sovereign nation, and is it any longer possible for small and developed nations to retain sovereignty?

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4 The best statements are Collins, S. 1987 **Rogernomics: is there a better way?**, New Zealand, Pitman; James, C. 1986. *op. cit.; Jesson, B. 1987* **Behind the Mirror Glass**. Auckland, Penguin.

At a political level an interesting starting point would be to critically examine the commitment to, and conception of, democracy held by the lobbies for, and makers of, important Government economic decisions. The silence of major social movements and interest groups faced with such changes, seems to be another area worthy of immediate investigation. How can it be understood, in its production and in its consequences, and what implications does this silence bear for the future of pressure group politics? What are the social and intellectual bases of future oppositions to the "revolution", both from the left and the right? In debating this last question, the value of traditional (left and right) categories is likely to come under focus.

The changing nature of inequality in New Zealand will require a new series of investigations that will focus on its social, political and economic dimensions. Bi-culturalism's hegemony in what is, in fact, a multi-cultural society excludes non-Maori and non-English cultures from participation. The transfer of political and economic power to a younger generation and the rise of values previously alien to kiwi society, (naked materialism, cosmopolitanism, anti-nuclear pacifism/nationalism, competitive capitalism), lead to an historic redefinition of the cultural bases of "inclusion" and "outcasting" in relation to the centre. In this way previously central actors and values become marginal and a part of what was marginal becomes a core part of a new centre. What would an investigation of the political consequences of this new relationship between the "in" and the "out' tell us about New Zealand? What are the social bases of any attempts the excluded may make to organise themselves, both against the "tyranny of the majority", and in favour of their reincorporation into the society? (Brazilian experience warns of possible consequences for democracy of the exclusion of significant parts of the population from social participation, and that such exclusion may produce political forces capable of undermining those forces responsible for such exclusion).

The drift North aggravates regional inequalities, and the current failures of the health, penal and educational systems aggravate others. To what extent can the accumulated knowledge built up in the social sciences contribute to a reasoned public reflection on solutions to such problems? Solutions that go beyond the ideological defence of a tinkered-with status-quo, or the advocacy of anti-sociological models based on simplistic assumptions about market forces?

Are the social sciences relevant to the future of New Zealand? If one replies in the negative, then one should simply resign to ensure that one's limited space becomes available to another. An affirmative response would meet with this author's suggestion that questions raised in Brazil serve as a guideline for New Zealand. The smaller number of social scientists in the field means that research agendas will need to be better written than in Brazil, and resources used in a more directed fashion.

Who is to write the research agendas? Until now these have been predominantly written by academics eyeing overseas markets and debates, and by the powerful cabinet ministers, departmental heads and top bureaucrats. The key question becomes, can the social science community counter this tradition and organise and execute its own agenda?

New Zealand is at a crucial turning point in its history and the question is how can the social sciences shed light on this? At present there is some vigorous and important research and publishing taking place in New Zealand. The pages of this new journal, *Sites* and *Race Class and Gender*, as well as the participation of some of the nation's

most able sociologists in health and social security policy reassessments are just a few signs of activity. What concerns me is that this activity is often irrelevant to the major issues of the present or future and, where related to such issues, connections with the work of other researchers is lacking. I would suggest that should the community not face up to this challenge, social science will continue to be seen as irrelevant to the vast majority of New Zealanders. In such a case one only has look to Great Britain to get some foretaste of an impending fate.

The writing of an agenda will be a painful process for many. The research community will have to re-equilibrate the balance between its strengths in peripheral areas and its weaknesses in new core areas. An important strain will occur between some "scientists", committed to research that they recognise as marginal to the agenda, but important in another context, and eager "nationalists", who propagate a distorted view by arguing that the programmed study of New Zealand is the only valid focus for the social sciences. Some will try to slot their current work into a new agenda, others will try to hijack the agenda for their own ends, and yet others may confirm their own irrelevance and refuse any dialogue with those colleagues who strive to make the social science enterprise relevant to the society that funds it.

Once the difficult task of writing an agenda has been completed, research should be able to proceed in a directed fashion. However, the political space will not be available to undertake many necessary projects in the most dynamic sector of social science research, the applied sector. Resources will be unavailable to collect necessary and important data within the university sector. Cooperation between applied and university sectors was highlighted in 1981 as one imperative for strengthening research. (Tait *et al.*, 1981) In line with suggestions made earlier, exchanges between centres and, where necessary, the importation of skills are further important building blocks to success.

Should social sciences be able to write and execute an agenda that addresses central questions, they may come to be seen, as in Brazil, as of the utmost importance in clarifying debates about the new society. Once key issues are raised and publicly understood, democratic politicians are obliged to become more accountable, private and bureaucratic interests will be less able to hide themselves behind the supposed impartiality of "technical" decisions, social movements will have a greater capacity to develop a collective comprehension of change processes (thereby permitting them to abandon knee-jerk reactions that often endanger their cause), and the society will be forced to become more responsible for its own choices.

The current lack of social research into central questions in New Zealand is, in my view, a peril for the society - a danger for its prospects of economic development, for its political democracy, and for those elements of its social structure and culture that the "general will" would wish to have preserved but which some usurpers seek to reduce to market-determined costs[5].

Conclusion

The social science community must in part accept responsibility for the lack of public understanding of the changing environment in which the society is immersed. In

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5 To clear up any doubts, the Rousseauian reference is intended in this terminology.

assuming such responsibility it will take bold new directions and develop a spirit of collective work it has never previously exercised. Courage and perseverance will be required. The results will, as they currently are for Brazilian social scientists, often be disappointing, but this is a part of the battle - to produce and transmit knowledge about societies in such a way that it helps the public make its own choices. Only in authoritarian regimes can social scientists, acting as Comteian high-priests, expect to have their knowledge immediately become public policy. Experience the world over shows that social sciences are only tolerated in authoritarian regimes to the extent that they reproduce official ideology or are considered irrelevant. Once they start doing their job of unmasking the social relations that lies behind decisions and of revealing the effects of these, problems often start. Simultaneously, demonstrations of public support emerge.

Currently New Zealand social science experiences few difficulties because it predominantly walks the tightrope between reproducing official ideology and conducting irrelevant research. Such relevant work that exists is often confined to oblivion. Other social sciences in the world, when faced with such choices, have taken a difficult path, to address major societal questions. Often they have suffered terribly for this choice.

Faced with "the quiet revolution", the silence and provincialism that envelopes the work of New Zealand social scientists appears like the passive acceptance of a death sentence. The restoration of the scientist's sense of responsibility to the society, through a spirit of enquiry, of seriousness and of relevance appear as necessary elements for any reprieve. The reorganisation of the research enterprise and the execution of a major research agenda appear as the bases of a revival.

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Marxian methodology and feminist theory: towards a materialist conception of herstory.

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Introduction

The attempt to formulate a social-feminist "synthesis" of selected aspects of marxist and feminist thought in order to provide a unified theoretical analysis of the relationship between women's oppression and class structure has proved notoriously difficult. However, those who share a political commitment to the revolutionary transformation of patriarchal-capitalist society are powerfully motivated to develop precisely such an analysis. In the context of this wider theoretical discussion and political orientation, I will argue that some aspects of the marxian method of rational abstraction can be usefully employed in order to resolve some of the basic problems of feminist theory.[1]

More specifically, it will be argued that the marxian distinction between transhistorical and historically specific categories can potentially facilitate a methodological reconciliation of the apparently contradictory theoretical objectives of Radical and socialist feminism. In this way, radical-feminist conceptions of patriarchy as constituting a transhistorical universal may be reconciled with the socialist-feminist emphasis on the historical and cultural specificity of major aspects of women's oppression. Finally, without suggesting an entanglement with the literature surrounding the articulation of modes of production,[2] it must be stressed that the formulation of transhistorical categories is a necessary element in the development of a unified theoretical analysis of class, gender and ethnicity.[3]

Rational abstraction: transhistorical and historically specific categories

The marxian materialist conception of history is primarily composed of transhistorical categories which are theoretically applicable to at least two or more modes of production. Human needs, forces and relations of production, contradiction, and class are paradigmatic examples of this kind of category. Conversely, surplus-value, the organic composition of capital, the rate of exploitation, and the rate of profit exemplify the employment of historically specific categories. These latter categories are historically specific in this sense because they are restricted in their application to societies which are dominated by capitalist social relations of production.

Given the fact that Marx spent the greater portion of his working life engaged in developing his critical analysis of the capitalist mode of production (CACMP) the question arises: what was the role of these transhistorical categories within the overall

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1 I am indebted to Rosemary Novitz, Louise Harvey, and Brian Haig for commenting on earlier versions of this paper.

2 For an introduction to this literature see Wolpe (1980), Callinicos (1976). Original statements of the Althusserian position include: Althusser (1971), Balibar (1970) and the Introduction to Poulantzas (1973).

3 Earlier and more extensive versions of this argument are contained in Roper (1986a; 1986b)

structure of Marx's thought? Derek Sayer (1983:110-111) provides an illuminating answer to this question:

> Transhistorical categories, and the analysis of production in general in which they are grounded, are basic to the identification of the social forms which constitute Marx's explananda. For it is only this analysis which enables him first to isolate, in any given empirical context, some set of phenomena as pertaining to production at all, and second, to distinguish, within these phenomena are manifestations. This is, obviously, an important function; for without this double identification, Marx's critique could not get off the ground at all. More generally, some such initial criterion of relevance would appear to be necessary to any empirical enterprise, since without one all phenomenal starting-points would be equally privileged and none would enjoy a secure rationale.

It was, therefore, no accident that the formulation of transhistorical categories in the marxian materialist conception of history (MCH) preceded the historically specific critical analysis of the capitalist mode of production (CACMP). By contrast, this was a necessary starting point for Marx precisely because he had to select, from the potentially infinite range of possible empirical candidates, those phenomena which had to be explained (i.e. the explananda). The identification of these phenomena then facilitated the retroductive identification and analysis of the underlying causal mechanisms, 'the hidden innermost secret'. of capitalist development. (ibid:115-117)

This distinction between transhistorical and historically specific categories, and the role of transhistorical categories in marxian analysis, can be clearly illustrated with respect to the contrast between Marx's transhistorical conception of class and his historically specific conception of capitalism.

The famous proclamation that: 'The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles' (Marx and Engels, 1975:32), clearly illustrates the usage of class as a transhistorical category. A transhistorical conception of class is also embodied in the marxian proposition that: 'The specific economic form in which unpaid surplus-labour is pumped out of direct producers, determines the relationship of rulers and ruled, as it grows directly out of production itself and, in turn, reacts upon it as a determining element'. (Marx, 1967:791) This transhistorical conception of class is necessary because, apart from relatively simple societies based on subsistence production all human societies are characterised by class divisions and these divisions are based on the social relations which govern the production, appropriation, and distribution of surplus product.[4]

By contrast, capitalism, as a particular societal form, constitutes an instantiation of this proposition, and the classes of which it is composed, principally the proletariat and bourgeoisie, are always analysed by Marx in terms of the dynamics and structures which are specific to capitalism. Capital, Wage Labour, and Surplus-Value are categories which help us to define the specific social form of capitalist production and hence distinguish it from the qualitatively different social forms of material production

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4 c.f., E. Mandel, (1977) chapters 1 & 2; and for an excellent recent discussion, Coontz and Henderson (1986).

which precede it. In this way we see 'that the capitalist process of production is a historically determined form of the social process of production in general'. (Marx, 1967:818)

The problem here is that a great deal of the methodological sophistication of the marxian analysis of class and capitalism has been lost in contemporary discussions of the concepts of gender and patriarchy. For example, radical-feminist discussions of patriarchy tend to treat women's oppression as a transhistorical and cross-cultural universal[5], in the same way that Marx and Engels treat class in the passages cited, without recognising that: firstly, transhistorical categories (or concepts) are extremely limited in their explanatory capacity; second the kind of explanations which they can provide are extremely preliminary and tentative in nature; and third that the methodological adequacy of such explanations is predicated on their ability to facilitate further empirically based research. By contrast, socialist-feminism has moved in the opposite direction to the universalistic emphasis of radical-feminist theory and has tended to reject the employment of transhistorical categories in favour of historically specific studies of concrete aspects of women's oppression. (Beechy ,1979; Rowbotham, 1981:364-369)

In this context, it is important to recognise that an adequate theory of women's oppression must be able to provide a preliminary explanation of the persistence of women's subordination to men for such extensive periods of history while simultaneously facilitating an explanation of the historically specific social form of women's subordination to men in patriarchal-capitalist society. In turn, the only way that such a theoretical manoeuvre can be completed is through the employment of aspects of marxian methodology, and in particular, the distinction between transhistorical and historically specific categories.

The upshot of all this is that it is important to distinguish the concepts of gender and patriarchy in a way which is analogous to the marxian treatment of class and capitalism. However, this at first appears to be, if not impossible, then problematic. As Connell (1983:59) demonstrates, the gender categories "women" and "men" are not equivalent to class categories precisely because the history of women's oppression illustrates that, in contra-distinction to class exploitation, domination, and struggle, there is an intimate relation between gender as a social construction and the biological differentiation of the sexes. A fundamental tension arises in feminist theory between the need, on the one hand, to recognise the significance of human reproductive biology as it becomes socially interwoven into the fabric of women's oppression, and on the other, to challenge the ideological legitimization of this form of oppression in terms of "the natural".

In the context of the argument advanced here, it is crucial to recognise that, 'precisely because the biological logic...cannot sustain the gender categories' (ibid:76) the intimacy of the relation of the biological and the social in the historical construction of gender dominance and exploitation does not undermine the necessity to systematically distinguish the transhistorical dimension of women's subordination to men from the

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5 c.f. Firestone (1971: 8-10); Millett, (1970:32-33); O'Brien, (1981: 33,139,19); and for an excellent general discussion of radical-feminist theory in this regard, Eisenstein (1984).

historically and culturally specific social forms of that subordination. On the contrary, the significance of biological differentiation between the sexes means that it is even more important to define gender and patriarchy in a way which is analogous to class and capitalism because the alternatives are to either embrace a form of biological determinism or to set up a false dualism of biology and history. Marxian ontology enables us to avoid both of these latter problems, and it is surprising that Connell apparently fails to recognise this. (Eipper ,1984:152-4; Lucas, 1978; Soper, 1979:55-106; Timpanaro, 1975; Roper, 1986a:369-376)

In her discussion of the centrality of patriarchy in social analysis, Diane Court presents a fundamental objection to the kind of argument which I am expounding here. She claims that '...using a methodology means that the questions are framed in its terms'[6], and on this basis rejects a methodological fusion of feminist and marxist theory. Such a position can only be substantiated if it is demonstrated that firstly marxian methodology is inherently and unalterably andro-centric, and second that dialectical, historical, and materialist methodology cannot facilitate the theoretical explanation of women's oppression. While there are undoubtedly many arguments to be advanced on both these points, the successful employment of marxian methodology (understood in its most general sense) in a number of feminist studies leads me to conclude that Court's position is not sustainable on this point.[7] Thus it is far from clear that the sort of methodological framework which I am promulgating here necessarily frames and shapes questions in a way which precludes the generation of an adequate theoretical explanation of women's oppression.

The theoretical problematic of a materialist conception of herstory.

The development of a unified socialist-feminist theory of gender and class thus entails a "two pronged attack" - both theoretical and methodological. The following relation needs to be retained as a central element in the theoretical problematic of marxist and socialist-feminism: the differential involvement of women and men in human reproduction (understood to encompass minimally: sexuality, fertility, pregnancy, birth, and childcare) and the structuration of social relations which immediately govern this process; the gender differentiation of the totality of social production; and the cultural, ideological, and political dimension of women's oppression (insofar as this can be clearly differentiated from the processes just cited).[8] However, the potential

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6 Court (1983:165). Catherine MacKinnon (1982) constructs a similar argument on this point: Method shapes each theory's vision of social reality. It identifies its central problem, group and process, and creates as a consequence its distinctive conception of politics as such. While it is obviously true that methodology and theory are intimated inter-related, it is far from clear that a dialectical, historical, and materialist methodology necessarily shapes social theory in ways which preclude theoretical analyses of women's oppression nor, a fortiori, that marxian methodology embodies a perspective that contributes to the sexual objectification of women (as MacKennon claims).

7 An excellent empirically based study (Trainor 1984) using the realist interpretation of Marx's method advocated here is unfortunately unpublished. For published studies which may be said (very loosely) to have employed aspects of marxian methodology, see Cavendish, (1982); Cockburn (1983); Pollert (1984) and Westwood (1984).

8 In relation to the proposition that human reproduction is of fundamental significance in determining the gender differentiation of social production, and by extension, women's transhistorical and historical subordination to men, the following are key references: Beechy (1979); Brenner and Ramas (1984); Bridenthal (1982); Bryceson (1980); Coontz and Henderson

fruitfulness of this theoretical problematic is largely dependent upon the adoption of a methodological framework which effectively counters the problems of biological determinism, idealism, and universalism that characterise a considerable portion of radical feminist thought. In my view, a realist interpretation of dialectical and historical materialism (however unfashionable) still offers the best means of avoiding these problems. (Callinicos, 1983:ch.5; Bhaskar, 1983; Keat and Urry, 1973:chs 2 & 3; Rubin, 1979:ch.3; Sayer, 1983)

Given the extensive body of literature which directly pertains to these issues, I will not attempt to expound this line of theoretical argumentation in any detail here. Nonetheless, it is necessary to at least indicate the nature and parameters of the theoretical problematic advocated because it is presupposed in the critical discussion of radical and socialist feminist theory which follows.

A "materialist conception of herstory" is, in the first instance, a transhistorical theoretical framework. Its central categories are formulated at a transhistorical level of abstraction, and they can be applied transhistorically in order to account for the generality of certain forms of social subordination, e.g. the subordination of women to men, classes of producers to classes of non-producers, and so forth.

This conception of herstory rests on the fundamental proposition that the material basis of women's transhistorical subordination to men is constituted by the primary involvement of women in the bearing and rearing of children and the impact which this has upon the gender differentiation of social production as a whole. Generally men can avoid work in this so-called "reproductive" sphere and this enhances their capacity to organise significant areas of social production in ways which are beneficial to them (within as well as across class boundaries). It is in this sense that Brenner and Ramas (1984:49) have argued that: 'The assignment of women to reproduction and their marginalisation in wage work is prior to, rather than as effect of, protective legislation or trade union policy'. Ultimately, the cultural, ideological, and political processes which are of over-riding significance in the reproduction of women's subordination to men are limited and constrained (though not directly determined) by the gender differentiation of the totality of social production.

Thus central theoretical issues relate to the need to adequately conceptualise: the structuration of the social relations which govern the process of human reproduction; the degree of development of human control over ostensibly "natural" processes; the labour-process in which human life is produced; the gender specific nature of the labour-power which is expended in this process; and the gender division of labour in this sphere. This is necessary because, as Rosalind Petchesky (1980:672) notes:

(1986); Edholm et al (1977); Firestone (1971); Jagger and McBride (1985); McDonough and Harrison (1978); Meillassoux (1985); Mitchell (1971:ch.5); O'Brien (1981); Petchesky (1980); Saville-Smith (1982); Steven (1980); Trainor (1984); Women's Study Group (1978); Vogel (1983). Closely related writings which I will not cite here are clustered around: i, the discussion of generational reproduction in the domestic labour debate; ii, the discussion and critique of Engels' Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State; iii, the rapidly expanding literature on the new reproductive technology; and iv, social theories of human sexuality.

> A women does not simply "get pregnant" and "give birth" like the flowing of tides and seasons. She does so under the constraint of definite material conditions that set limits on "natural" reproductive processes - for example, existing birth control methods and technology and access to them; class divisions and the distribution/financing of health care; nutrition; employment, particularly of women; and the state of the economy generally. And she does so within a specific network of social relations and social arrangements involving herself, her sexual partner(s), her children and kin, neighbours, doctors, family planners, birth control providers and manufacturers, employers, the church, and the state.

As the employment of concepts such as relations and forces of human reproduction indicates, this approach necessitates an engagement with, and re-working of, the major transhistorical categories of the marxian materialist conception of history.

If this theoretical project is to succeed then it needs to be based on a sound theorisation of human reproduction and, so far, this has generally involved the adoption of a labour-process model of analysis. In this way Mary O'Brien (1981:47) identifies a number of basic moments in the reproductive process; menstruation, ovulation, copulation, alienation, conception, gestation, labour, birth, appropriation, nurture. This kind of theoretical analysis can, if properly employed, facilitate an examination of the ways in which the process of producing human beings interacts concretely with social production, and ultimately, with the cultural, ideological, and political dimension of women's subordination. At the same time it is necessary to clearly distinguish between, on the one hand, conceptions of human reproduction in terms of material properties which are common to all societies and, on the other, analyses of the historically specific social form of this process as it is concretely organised in particular societies. This suggests that further historical and empirically based research, as well as fuller theoretical discussion, is a necessary pre-requisite to the resolution of the complex issues which inhere in this theoretical problematic.

Transhistorical categories and the limitations of radical-feminist theory

For the sake of brevity I will concentrate on three key problems which characterise radical-feminist theory: biological determinism, universalism, and idealism. Rather than considering radical-feminist theory as a whole I will focus on Mary O'Brien's work because it embodies all these problems in a sophisticated dialectical analysis of the relationship between human reproduction and women's transhistorical oppression.

Michelle Walker, in a recent review article (1986), has used O'Brien's important contribution in order to provide a critique of the so-called economism of marxist-feminism (as exemplified by Lise Vogel, 1983). While agreeing with Walker that it is fundamentally problematic to employ marxian economic categories in order to explain women's subordination to men in capitalist society, I will offer an alternative and more critical reading of O'Brien's theorisation of human reproduction.

Biological Determinism

Mary O'Brien's consideration of 'male stream thought' at certain points unrepentantly assumes postures which involve a fairly strong form of biological determinism. Thus, for example, she claims that: 'For men, physiology is fate, and the greatest among them have known this very well. For women, anatomy is creativity...'. (1983:36) This echoes Firestone's earlier pronouncement that: '...unlike economic class, sex class sprang directly from a biological reality: men and women were created different and not equally privileged'. (1971:8)

There have been numerous criticisms of this kind of biological determinism and I will not rehearse these here. Some of the problems with the "biologism" of radical-feminist theory which have been identified include: the attempt to explain complex social and cultural phenomena by reference to biological differences between the sexes; the presupposition of ideological assumptions concerning the inevitability of the unequal division of labour between women and men in child care; the maintenance of a conception of human reproduction as a static, universal, and ahistorical feature of reality; and the potentially reactionary political implications of accepting and glorifying social arrangements, such as women's capacity for nurturing children, which are currently associated with women's childbearing capacity. (Barrett, 1980:11-13, 159-199; Beechy, 1979:68-71; Eisenstein, 1984; Hartmann, 1981:12-13; Eisenstein, 1979:18-19; Mitchell, 1971:87-90)

At this stage it is important to recognise that it is nonetheless possible to develop a transhistorical theoretical framework, i.e., a materialist conception of herstory, which incorporates the crucial theoretical insight that human reproduction is a central aspect of the historical determination of women's oppression, without necessarily involving this kind of biological determinism. This is because transhistorical categories establish (or at least reflect) the general ontological orientation which guides subsequent empirical and/or historiographic research. If a marxian ontological position is adopted which conceives of the relation of human beings to nature as being mediated through labour, then it is possible to argue that human reproduction is constitutive of the material basis of women's transhistorical oppression without consequently supporting the idea that women's oppression is biologically determined. Further, the adoption of a dialectical, historical, and materialist ontology counters another major problem of radical-feminist theory, ie. idealism.

Idealism

In common with a great deal of radical and cultural-feminist theory, Mary O'Brien's account of women's transhistorical oppression is thoroughly idealist. More particularly, it is idealist in the sense that male reproductive consciousness constitutes the explanans of women's oppression in her analysis while the real social relations which govern the reproduction process are considered part of the explanandum, ie. in a sense, these relations are considered "superstructural". (O'Brien, 1981:57)

To attribute historicity to the process of human reproduction on the grounds that it is "mediated by consciousness", and to conceive of this consciousness in terms of a potency principle which is universal to all male dominant societies, is to effectively deny that the process of human reproduction is an *essentially historical* phenomenon. For O'Brien, the historicity of this process merely reflects the actions of men in their seemingly tireless attempts to overcome their alienation from genetic continuity by establishing social and historical principles of continuity, and to overcome their uncertainty of paternity by controlling the procreative capacity of women. Thus the central theoretical problematic, according to O'Brien, must be: '...men's need for principles of continuity, ideologies of continuity, and why they translate these principles into social realities which are shot through with the oppression of men by men and rest foursquarely on the greater and "naturally" justified oppression of women.'[9] Further, her examination of male stream thought assumes that these

9 I should acknowledge that, as a male with no desire for parenthood, I find O'Brien's conception of the 'potency principle' intuitively implausible. In my opinion men's psychological desire for

principles of continuity remain essentially the same, from the discovery of physiological paternity to the recent development of modern contraceptive technology.

MARY O'BRIEN'S PERIODISATION OF HISTORY

HERSTORY:	Prehistory	History of Male Supremacy (Patriarchy)	Age of Contraception
WORLD HISTORIC EVENT:	Discovery of Physiological Paternity		Development of Contraceptive Technology

This conception of women's transhistorical subordination to men is, in my view, untenable. In order to substantiate the major theoretical propositions of her analysis O'Brien needed to draw upon historical and anthropological evidence, not just an extended discussion of Western philosophy and political theory. However, such a consideration is ruled out of her analysis by the adoption of transhistorical concepts which locate the explanans of women's oppression in human consciousness. In fact, the significance attributed to meta-theory by O'Brien, and meta-ethics by Mary Daly, reflects the adoption of an idealist ontology which is common in radical feminist theory and politics. Although I cannot defend materialist ontology here, it is abundantly clear that this kind of idealist ontology is fundamentally problematic; philosophically, theoretically, and politically.[10] It is equally clear that the adoption of a materialist ontology in no way precludes an adequate theorisation of women's oppression in this, or any other, society.

Universalism

The universalism of radical-feminist theory rests on three inter-related assumptions: that women have always been oppressed by men (both transhistorically and cross-culturally); that gender subordination is the primary form of social inequality in all societies; and that all women are oppressed as women irrespective of their class position, ethnicity, or sexual orientation. While there is a strong element of truth in each of these assumptions, they do not provide an adequate conceptual basis for the theorisation of women's oppression. Women's subordination to men has persisted throughout human history but the nature and degree of this subordination has been highly variable - both historically and culturally. (Rosaldo, 1980) It is far from clear that gender is always the primary form of social structuration in every society or that other forms of inequality, such as race or class, can be adequately explained as arising

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biological offspring is socially, culturally, and historically variable.

10 For discussions which highlight the problematic nature of idealist ontology and epistemology in feminist theory and politics, c.f., M. Barrett 1980: 29-36; Cockburn (1983: 10-11); Delphy (1984); Eisenstein (1984: 125-145); Marx and Engels (1976: pt.1); Rowbotham (1973: 116-126); Saville-Smith (1982: ch.1); Trainor (1984: ch.1); Westwood (1984: 3-11, 235-238).

from a primary "patriarchal" structuration of social relations. Finally, there are countless examples of women's oppression being mediated in fundamental ways by ethnicity and/or class. Consider for example the experiences of Jewish women in Nazi Germany, women of colour under slavery, and working class women who are systematically denied access to the cultural, economic, and educational resources enjoyed by their bourgeois and middle class sisters.

These problems can once again be illustrated by reference to O'Brien's meta-theoretical account of women's oppression. Central to this account is O'Brien's conception of a "potency principle" as constituting the basis of male supremacy. (1981:191) As noted above, O'Brien bases this conception on assumptions concerning the relationship between genetic continuity on the one hand, and the differences between male and female reproductive consciousness on the other. She argues that 'biological reproduction necessarily sets up an opposition between those who labour reproductively (women) and those who do not (men)...*the alienation of the male seed* does in fact set up a series of real opposition in social terms'. (ibid:32, emphasis added) These are:

1. the man and child, who may or may not be his;
2. the women who labours to bring forth her child and the man who does not labour;
3. the man who is separated from biological continuity, and the woman whose integration with natural process and genetic time is affirmed in reproductive labour;
4. following from 1, individual man and all other possible potencies, men in general. (ibid)

What O'Brien loses sight of in this analysis is the fact that these oppositions may be culturally and historically specific to the patterns of patrilineal descent of ancient Greece, Rome, and Western Europe.

The conception of time, and of the continuity of the generations through time which she describes is not the universal it is claimed to be. (Thompson, 1967) Donna Awatere (1983:14) describes the conflict between European and Maori conceptions of time and genetic continuity:

> The dimensions of time have been collapsed into space. This occurred when time began to be measured and quantified. It was not longer tied to the cyclic rhythm of nature and to the ancestor's rhythm of life and death. Precise, mechanical time replaced cyclic and whakapapa time. Thus the present was put into a mechanical relationship with the past and future. Nature and genealogy were put aside.

Maori and Pakeha conceptions of birth, life and death, continuity and time, are thus quite different - and these different conceptions are embedded on two opposed cultures. Further, kinship patterns and genealogy, childbirth and responsibility for child care, sexuality and contraception, all reveal significant differences between European derived Pakeha culture and Maori culture. This is but one limited example but it does illustrate the vulnerability of O'Brien's analysis to counter-example by reference to cross-cultural or anthropological material. It also suggests a certain degree of ethnocentrism in her account of women's transhistorical oppression.

Precisely because O'Brien's focus of analysis is consistently restricted to consciousness and ideology, rather than actual material activities and relations, this

analysis fails to generate transhistorical categories consistent with a materialist analysis of women's subordination. Transhistorical categories must ultimately be empirically open-ended, and able to accommodate cultural and historical variations in social organisation of human reproduction and social production. Ultimately, O'Brien's analysis fails to provide these categories.

Most surprising, in light of her experience as a mid-wife and some of her explicit statements on the sociality of the reproductive process, is the extent to which the reproductive process itself is conceived of as largely ahistorical, biologistic, and universalistic. O'Brien consistently considers the physical activities of copulation, pregnancy, and childbirth to be essentially natural and biological. The socialist-feminist theorisations of human reproduction, by contrast, attribute sociality and historicity to that process because it physically entails sets of social relations.[11] It is only within the context of these social relations that the physical processes of human reproduction take place. By contrast, for O'Brien, the social relations which concretely govern the different moments of the reproductive process are effectively deemed "superstructural" - the "base" being constituted by the fundamentally distinct nature of male and female reproductive consciousness.

In summation then, I have argued (very schematically) that the formulation of transhistorical categories consistent with a dialectical, historical, and materialist ontology effectively counters the problems of biological determinism and idealism in radical-feminist theory. Further, because the transhistorical categories of a materialist conception of herstory are concerned with the general preconditions of women's transhistorical subordination to men it must be acknowledged that they are confined in their application to abstract moments with which no real historical stage of women's subordination can be grasped. (Marx, 1973:88) In this way, the distinction between transhistorical and historically specific categories is a built-in safe-guard against the false generalisation of historically and culturally specific aspects of women's oppression.

On the positive side, it must be recognised that radical-feminists such as Firestone and O'Brien have provided important, although problematic, contributions to the task of formulating a transhistorical theoretical framework which provides a preliminary explanation of the persistence of woman's oppression throughout so much of known human history. The crux of my argument is that socialist-feminists (and marxists seriously concerned with theorising women's oppression) can and should adopt the theoretical insights afforded by O'Brien's work, while at the same time avoiding the pitfalls which stem from the neo-hegelian methodology which she employs.

Historical categories and the limitations of socialist feminist theory

The theoretical problematic and methodological framework advocated here throws light, not only on the perennial problems of radical-feminist theory, but also on a

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11 c.f. Saville-Smith (1982: ch.2). I presuppose the philosophical explication of the notion of physical necessity by D.H. Ruben (1979) who argues that: (1) physical necessity relates to individuals; (2) such necessity is tendential; (3) tendencies arise from the "nature" of the thing in question; (4) explanation is by way of relating tendencies to natures, rather than through deriving tendencies from generalisations.

number of key theoretical issues within socialist-feminism. These include: the employment of materialist and/or economic analysis which many reject as being incapable of grasping crucial (psychological and ideological) aspects of women's oppression; a trend towards historical studies which attempt to recover the "hidden history" of women's past - but which tend to neglect the crucial role which theory must play in socialist feminist historiography; and the apparent *impasse* of socialist-feminism in transcending the theoretical dualism of the capitalist-patriarchy dichotomy. While the case cannot be fully argued here, these problems are linked by a common thread: insufficient attention has been paid to the problem of theorising the relationship between the differential involvement of women and men in human reproduction; the gender differentiation of the totality of social production; and the cultural, ideological, and political dimension of women's oppression. Further discussion of these issues, albeit brief and very condensed, is necessary in order to substantiate this key point.

Economic Analysis

An extensive critique of economism has emerged within contemporary marxism. (Femia, 1983; Mouffe, 1979) While there are very few socialist-feminist theoretical contributions which I think could be labelled in a straight-forward way as "economistic", it is currently fashionable to maintain that economic analysis (particularly of the marxist variety) is largely irrelevant to the task of theorising gender. (Connell, 1983:33-49) Thus, for example, it is commonly held that economic categories are irrelevant to understanding the psychological processes of "socialisation" through which gender identity and heterosexuality is reproduced in its current forms. Obviously, categories developed in order to analyse the production, appropriation, realisation, and distribution of surplus-value tell us very little about the reality of being gay or lesbian in a heterosexist society, or of the social processes which empower men to rape women, sexually abuse children, and batter "their" wives.

Clearly I do not have the space to discuss these issues here, but in my view it is completely erroneous (if understandable) to leap from the premise that there are significant areas of social life which cannot be analysed with economic categories to the conclusion that ipso facto economic analysis is irrelevant to the development of a theoretical explanation of women's oppression today. In any case, in the context of the current "long depressive wave" in the economic development of world capitalism (Mandel, 1975; 1978) it would be extremely unwise to abandon economic analysis in toto since the contemporary situation of women is obviously determined in a whole series of ways by the economic structure and tendencies of development of the capitalist mode of production. (See also Anon, 1985) Nonetheless, subject to this crucial qualification, it is just as evident that the attempts by marxist and socialist feminists to employ the (historically specific) economic categories of the marxian CACMP in order to attempt to explain the characteristic nature of gender relations in capitalist society, have proved to be highly problematic.

The latter approach to the problem of theorising women's oppression falls under the rubric of the "domestic labour debate".[12] This debate rests on the assumption that it is

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12 Full reference here would involve dozens of citations. The unintiated may like to begin with Fox (1980); Barrett (1980:172-183); Molyneux (1979); Kaluzynska (1980); Vogel (1983:17-25, 136-175).

the unpaid labour which women perform in the family-household that constitutes the material basis of women's oppression in capitalist society. Women's oppression is considered to be explicable in terms of the functional requirements of capitalist accumulation and reproduction (both of labour-power and capitalist relations of production). The attempt to apply marxist economic categories in this way has proved to be problematic in a whole series of ways. Firstly, such "sex-blind" categories cannot tell us why it is specifically women who are disadvantaged by the reproduction of labour-power, reserve army of labour etc. (Hartman, 1981:10-11) Second, it cannot be established a priori that the unpaid domestic labour which women perform for men in the family-household is 'in the interests of capital'. (Molyneaux, 1979) Third, conversely, marxist economic theory provides no conceptual tools to explain or analyse the ways in which men benefit (materially, culturally, ideologically) from the gender division of reproductive labour. Fourth, in short, marxist economic theory cannot explain why women are oppressed by men within, as well as between, social classes in capitalist society nor recognise the ways in which class is necessarily differentiated by gender. (Saville-Smith, 1982:39)

Less commonly recognised, however, are two related failings which characterise this kind of approach.

1. Subject to qualification by the systematic explication of their methodological function it is possible to apply transhistorical categories to a wide variety of societal forms. On the other hand, it is not possible to apply historically specific categories in this way. Thus the economic categories of the marxian CACMP are completely unable to provide a preliminary explanation of the transhistorical dimensions of women's subordination since those categories are methodologically confined to the analysis of one particular societal type, i.e., capitalism. Undoubtedly, marxists would respond by arguing that it is a waste of time trying to provide a preliminary explanation of women's transhistorical subordination in abstraction from its historically specific social forms - but this response is inconsistent with Marx's repeated employment of a transhistorical definition of "class". (Marx, 1967:791-2)

2. Because the relationship between transhistorical and historical categories in marxian theory has not been considered in the debate there has been a general failure to employ a sufficiently high level of abstraction. Consequently many of the contributors to the domestic labour debate are not sufficiently critical of the naturalistic definition of human reproduction incorporated within the transhistorical categories of the marxian materialist conception of history.[13] Therefore they fail to recognise that the subsequent historically specific marxian analysis of the capitalist mode of production conceptually marginalises precisely that process which constitutes the explanans of the gender differentiation of social production as a whole. Following from this, a key element in the structuration of gender relations is rendered peripheral to theoretical and

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13 For statements by Marx and Engels which reflect this naturalistic conception of human reproduction, see, Marx and Engels (1976: 38, 48-49, 50, 51,53,71); Marx (1967: 170-176, 351,572); Marx, (1973:604-610). For a commentary and critique see McDonough and Harrison (1978: 27-32).

empirical analysis. In other words, it is not just the conclusions of the domestic labour debate which are inadequate, but the complete failure to formulate an adequate starting point for the historically specific analysis of women's oppression in patriarchal-capitalist society.

To summarise: while it is crucial to develop a materialist analysis of women's oppression in patriarchal-capitalist society, and to systematically focus on women's dual involvement in paid and unpaid labour, this analysis requires the employment of transhistorical and historically specific categories which are currently absent from, or peripheral to, marxist economic theory.

The Poverty of Historiography

By employing the phrase, "the poverty of historiography", I am neither claiming that contemporary socialist-feminist historiography is theoretically uninformed nor implying that it is straightforwardly "empiricist". Rather, "the poverty of historiography" signifies the retreat from a consideration of the complex theoretical issues integral to the analysis of the relationship between human reproduction and social production. (Millan, 1984) While more historical evidence is necessary in order to help resolve these issues, it is also necessary to recognise the explanatory power of, and consequently the need for, certain kinds of theoretical concepts. This is exemplified by Sheila Rowbotham's discussion of the radical-feminist transhistorical conception of patriarchy.

While Rowbotham set out an agenda for further theoretical work in **Women, Resistance and Revolution**, in which she argued that an adequate analysis of women's oppression would have to consider the relationship between human reproduction and social production, she later retreated from her earlier position to a considerable degree. In this discussion of the term 'patriarchy' she rejects its use in feminist theory because

> It implies a universal and ahistorical form of oppression which returns us to biology - and thus it obscures the need to recognise not only biological differences, but also the multiplicity of ways in which societies have defined gender. By focussing upon the bearing and rearing of children ("patriarchy" = power of the father) it suggests there is a single determining cause of women's subordination. (1981:367)

Rowbotham's discussion of "patriarchy", while very short, nonetheless clearly illustrates that a number of socialist and marxist feminists tend to conceive of human reproduction as an essentially biological process. [14] In reality, of course, Rowbotham is not denying the enormous significance of the impact of women's specific involvement in human reproduction on their lives. But she does appear to reject the formalisation of this insight in a theory of women's oppression. In other words, while historiography may document women's involvement in paid employment, sexuality, conception, pregnancy, child-birth, child-care, housework, and so on, she explicitly rejects the attempt to theorise the complex relationship between the bearing and rearing of children, and between the division of work in this "reproductive sphere", and the gender differentiation of the totality of social production.

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14 For example, Barrett's repeated use of the term 'biological reproduction'. (1980)

Thus the major problem with Rowbotham's discussion of the concept of patriarchy is that it implies that we can never locate the material basis of women's subordination theoretically, but only observe the concrete manifestations of that subordination through feminist historiography. In their response to Rowbotham's argument against the term "patriarchy" Sally Alexander and Barbara Taylor (1981) provide a useful critique in this respect:

> As feminist historians, we share Sheila's desire for more research into women's lives and experience. But this is no substitute for a theory of women's oppression. History only provides answers to questions which are put to it; without a framework for these questions we shall founder in a welter of disassociated and contradictory "facts".

Sallie Westwood (1984:3) also provides an insightful comment on this point:

> The drama of everyday life is richly textured, multifaceted and dense and we cannot hope to make sense of our world and, more, interpret it, without a coherent theoretical understanding. We need theories to explain the world in which we struggle, to inform our practice and out politics...

While it is essential to counter the androcentrism of conventional and marxist historiography, to recover centuries of women's lost experience, hidden struggles and stories of resistance, we must recognise the crucial role which theory, including 'the "anti-structure" of political economy', (Thompson, 1978:69) must play in this process. Further, it must be recognised that this is not a cumulative or linear process. As Perry Anderson (1980:13) notes in his critique of Thompson's **Poverty of Theory**, such an approach can give rise to the view: 'that history is the record of everything that has happened - a notoriously vacant conclusion to which virtually every previous thinker on the subject has given a *fin de non recevoir.*'

In an ironic twist of intellectual history it appears that those who have been influenced by E.P. Thompson's approach to class, and his argument that Marx had become entrapped within his critique of political economy, seem to be equally entrapped within their own critique of althusserian structuralism. Thus Rowbotham, R. W. Connell, and Diane Court are all, it appears, indebted to E.P. Thompson's much needed critique of althusserian structuralism - but the absence of a critical appraisal of Thompson's contribution is disturbing, especially given Perry Anderson's observation that: 'Thompson's definition of the object of history is casual and circular; his prescription for historical concepts, in a traditional emphasis on the approximate character of the discipline, is finally uncompelling'.(ibid:15)

Theoretical Dualism

An uneasy tension pervades the fondly caressed notion that women's oppression and the class system are inextricably and causally inter-linked. Feminists have been reluctant to concede that capitalism systematically divides women of different classes from each other and reinforces men's domination over women in countless ways. Socialists have been equally reluctant to accept the second half of that essential slogan: 'No women's liberation without socialist revolution and no socialist revolution without women's liberation'. (Weir and Wilson, 1984) In this fiercely polemical context it appears that dual systems theorists have, by attempting to please everyone, pleased no-one. The task of theorising the complex unity of gender and class within a methodological framework that is in some sense simultaneously dialectical, historical and materialist is becoming increasingly unfashionable as a result of the growing

influence of post-structuralism and discourse theory. (Anderson, 1983:32-57; Barrett, 1980:32-36, 87-89, 94-96; Weir and Wilson, 1984:82-85) In this context, the term "capitalist-patriarchy" is in danger of disappearing without trace.

The dual systems perspective is based on the idea that power in contemporary society is organised by two distinct but mutually interdependent systems: a patriarchal system of gender domination and exploitation; and a capitalist system of class domination and exploitation. This type of approach has been criticised: for involving a functionalist form of explanation in which central aspects of women's oppression are explained in terms of the requirements of the capitalist economic system; because the conceptualisation of two systems of domination is considered inadequate in view of the multiplicity of concrete interconnections and interpenetrations of gender and class; for maintaining a conception of patriarchy as resting in psychological or ideological processes (in the case of psycho-analytic versions of this perspective); and because it fails to provide the basis for a critique of the failure of marxism to adequately account for the gender differentiation of social production. These points have all been discussed elsewhere and so I will not labour them here. (Barrett, 1980:124-138; Vogel, 1983:127-135; Saville-Smith, 1982:26-33; Westwood, 1984:3-7)

Iris Young, in an excellent discussion of these issues, identifies a number of preconditions for the development of a unified theory of gender and class. A unified theory would: 'take gender differentiation as its basic starting point', 'explore the hypothesis that class domination arises from and/or is intimately tied to patriarchal domination'; be materialist in the sense that 'it considers phenomena of "consciousness" e.g., intellectual productions, broad social attitudes and beliefs, cultural myths, symbols, images, etc., - as rooted in real social relations'; and be based upon the historically specific investigation of women's oppression. (Young, n.d.:173)

The theoretical problematic and methodological framework advocated here satisfies this criterion and provides one possible avenue through which it may be possible to transcend the limitations of the dual systems approach. It does this because, as argued forcefully by Brenner and Ramas (1984) in their critique of Barrett's **Women's Oppression Today**, the relationship between the differential involvement of women and men in human reproduction and the gender differentiation of capitalist production can only be properly understood through a unified theoretical analysis of the ways in which patriarchal reproduction and capitalist production impact upon each other. In this way they argue that

> a materialist account of women's oppression simply must consider the way in which the class-structured capitalist system of production can incorporate the biological facts of reproduction, and the extent to which biological differences, considered in such a context, condition women's participation in economic and political life, their capacity for self-organisation in defence of their interests and needs, and so forth. (ibid:47-48).

Women are simultaneously oppressed by men and the capitalist system, and the key to understanding this process is not a post-structuralist analysis of patriarchal modes of discourse but rather a materialist analysis of the structuration of the social relations which govern each moment of the reproductive process: sexuality; fertility; pregnancy; child-birth; and child-care. On this basis it will be possible to develop a more adequate theoretical and historical explanation of the gender differentiation of capitalist production - unequal wages, the vertical and horizontal gender division of labour, the dual labour market, the preponderance of women in the reserve army of labour, the

absence of child-care facilities on or near work sites, the predominance of men in trade union leadership positions, the gender composition of the ruling class, and so forth. Form here it is possible to go on and consider the ways in which patriarchal reproduction and the gender differentiation of capitalist production propel and structure the totality of patriarchal-capitalist society.

> ...once the material basis for women's oppression has been located, it becomes possible to construct a framework for analysing the respective roles of the state and ideology that grants both relative autonomy while recognising their ultimate connection to material relations. (ibid:48-49)

Conclusion

Given the persistence of women's subordination to men for such extensive periods of history, it is abundantly clear that an adequate theory of women's oppression in patriarchal-capitalist society must be able to account for the transhistorical and cross-cultural dimension of women's subordination as well as providing an historically specific explanation of women's oppression today. In order to achieve this, without becoming susceptible to the main problems of radical feminist theory, it is absolutely crucial to rigorously distinguish those concepts which can be applied transhistorically from those which can not. This can best be achieved through the employment of selected aspects of marxian methodology.

Once this methodological distinction is drawn it then becomes possible to generate transhistorical categories which provide a preliminary explanation of the transhistorical and cross-cultural dimension of women's oppression while simultaneously facilitating, rather than ruling out, further anthropological, historical, and empirical research into women's oppression and struggles for liberation. Further, I have suggested (without having the space to fully argue my case) that the complex and contradictory relationship between the differential involvement of women and men in the process of human reproduction, the gender differentiation of the totality of social production, and the cultural, ideological, and political dimension of women's oppression, should be the primary focus of this theoretical project. In this way this paper should be seen as a defence of the socialist-feminist research programme which is extremely rich in terms of both its heuristic potential and its political relevance.

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Class analysis and class resources: a discussion for the sociology of education.

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Social class and SES in the sociology of education

The sociology of education is fundamentally concerned with questions of access to education and how that access, conceived in its most broad sense, is more readily obtained by some social groups than others. All empirical research into these questions, whether carried out within the theoretical framework of marxian class theory or neo-weberian theories of socio-economic status, continues to reveal considerable differences in the assessed attainments of working class (or low SES) children and middle class (or high SES) students. Differences are apparent at the earliest levels of education and continue to widen at each successive level. Moreover, at every allocation point to alternative tracks or courses, working class children tend to "choose" the lower status route even when their assessed level of educational performance suggests that the higher status route would have been more appropriate. These primary and secondary effects of social stratification, as Boudon (1973) designates them, are not necessarily effects of the same causal social processes but they are certainly both properly regarded as effects of social stratification.

Recent theories of class reproduction have been influential in providing the sociology of education with a general theoretical orientation and a conceptual vocabulary. Investigators as diverse as Bowles and Gintis (1975) and Bourdieu (1977) construct their work within a social reproductive framework in that the theoretical object of their attention is the continual process of regeneration, particularly through the agency of the school and the family, of social, economic and cultural structures. It would be an error to overestimate the impact of this work on the major tradition of empirical educational research into the social determinants of educational attainment. Its theoretical and conceptual re-thinking might appear revolutionary within the sociology of education and it has influenced, to some degree at least, what might be called mainstream empiricism in the sociology of education (Halsey, Heath and Ridge (1980) and Grey, McPherson and Raffe (1983)), but the determinedly atheoretical and establishment oriented "educational disadvantage" tradition (Mortimer and Blackstone (1982) and Essen and Wedge (1982)) has remained unaffected and indifferent.

Social theories, of course, are theories with a quite different status from the abstract and predictive theories of the physical sciences. There is a reasonable sense in which we can be said to possess an explanation of the movements of the heavenly bodies if we understand Newton's theory of gravitation, even though the nature of gravitational attraction and how it "works" remains a complete mystery. A theory of the regeneration of social structures, however, cannot provide an analogous level of explanation: if we do not understand how the social processes "work", if we do not know, what, in the words of Connell *et al* (1982) 'makes the difference', then we don't have a satisfactory explanation at all. Social theories can identify and clarify the nature of the problem, specify the object of scientific enquiry, and elaborate the concepts with which the particular social processes which are the subject of investigation may be grasped. It follows that social theories are inescapably political in that the objects of enquiry and the constructs which specify them are always open to politically motivated determination and refutation. Given this dual character of social theories it is relatively easy to disregard their analyses and to construct parallel theories

of an acceptable form. A great deal of time can be spent in contesting competing theories. But no matter how much effort goes into such work the nagging, "practical", "bottom line", question remains: what *does* make the difference? What is it about class or SES that matters?

Although working in quite distinct traditions of social enquiry Meade (1977) and Bourdieu (1977) have proposed a threefold categorisation of the family resources available and effective in the strategic pursuit of family interests: families possess (i) capital assets; (ii) knowledge and credential assets; and (iii) social assets. Capital assets embrace all forms of financial wealth, including real and productive property and earned and investment income; knowledge and credential assets embrace all forms of socially useful skills and information; and social assets embrace all the social networks of kin, locality and occupation, within which a family is embedded. It is argued that these resources are largely and fundamentally derived from the structural class position which a family occupies and this paper seeks to explore the implications of that suggestion for a realist sociology. It is necessary to investigate the process by which families come to possess such resources, what accounts for their very uneven social distribution, and how they are utilised in the strategic processes of family reproduction, and particularly in those processes which involve the educational system. These are the questions at the heart of the matter and they will, at some stage, be confronted.

The paper will, however, approach these questions at a considerable tangent - a tangent formed by the intersection of social theory and the nature of lived social processes. These terms "class" and "SES" are the conceptual currency of our trade - we mouth them every day we teach and need offer little excuse for any serious attempt to make their meaning clearer. It is not an infatuation with theory for theory's sake that motivates us to confront these questions. The paper will examine the concept of class and SES drawing directly on Marx and Weber and on contemporary class analysis. The discussion will be situated within the context of a concern to construct a realist account of the social processes and mechanisms which generate socially differentiated access to education. Class analysis has a double objective: first, it is concerned with the structuring of political consciousness; and second, it is concerned with access to goods.

(1) Political Consciousness: the task is to identify classes in order that their political interests as social collectives might be identified and their likely course of political action assessed.

(2) Access to Goods: the task is to show that the distribution of social goods, "what makes the difference", are class relations, that is productive relations, rather than any other properties of collectives.

Both objectives require an adequately theorised concept of class but an especially crucial problem is posed by the requirements of empirical survey work for which some clear and objective system of classification must be constructed (the casual term "operational definition" begs the very questions that need to be addressed).

Class and marxism

The discussion has made it clear that the fundamental object of marxist class theory is to delineate, objectively, the classes constituted by the economic relations of the modes

of production within a social formation in order to make possible the "scientific" analysis of the given economic and political interests of those classes and thus their potential for revolutionary class struggle. The object is stated plainly by Gramsci (1971: 180-1):

> The level of development of the material forces of production provides a basis for the emergence of the various social classes, each one of which represents a function and has a specific position within production itself. ... By studying these fundamental data it is possible to discover whether in a particular society there exist the necessary and sufficient conditions for its transformation...

More than one attempt has been made within this perspective by sociologists of education seeking to determine the structural class location of the teaching profession in order to deduce the objective class position and the theoretically determined political class consciousness appropriate to its members. At the level of "determination" (a more indeterminate term than it has any right to be) there are weak and strong versions of this theory. At its weakest the social formation merely "determines", in the sense of "constrains", by setting certain limits to what is possible. Payne (1966: 185) reports Mao Zedong observing that: 'It would be impossible, for example, to imagine a peasant revolt in modern England, France, the United States, Germany, Italy or Japan being maintained for any length of time.' But, of course, it has been impossible to imagine a *peasant* revolt in England much later than the seventeenth century and it has never been possible to imagine a peasant revolt in the United States. If this is all class force analysis comes down to, the theory is unexceptionable. Yet if this *is* all class analysis can offer then its utility as a political theory is drastically restricted. Not surprisingly the stronger position formulated by Gramsci is much closer to the traditional project of marxism. There is a growing recognition, however, that this entire project and its scientism is hopelessly flawed. It will, no doubt, always be necessary to study actual social groups as forces, including those constituted by the relations to the means of production, and to attempt to assess their potential for political alliances and action at any political moment or conjuncture, but that is a great deal less than to establish the "necessary and sufficient conditions" of social transformation from a study of the "fundamental data" of economic production classes as "classes in themselves".

It is an often lamented fact that Marx never produced a formal theory of class (although the ambiguous fragment which Engels placed at the end of the third volume of **Capital** had been left in its unfinished state for years) and that there is consequently no alternative but to reconstruct the elements of Marx's class theory from various substantive passages in his works. If there is any agreement between the numerous commentators who have attempted to do this it is that Marx's position is, to say the least, characterised by certain inconsistencies and ambiguities. The necessary references for contemporary marxist class analysis are the early writings, the conjunctural political and historical pieces, and **Capital**.

Marxist scholars generally acknowledge that Marx early came to believe, on essentially historicist, philosophical grounds, in the revolutionary destiny of the proletariat and spent the remainder of his days in a not wholly successful attempt to provide that theory with a more sound economic and sociological foundation. The characteristic passages from the early **Critique of the Philosophy of Right** (Marx, 1975) and the **1844 Manuscripts** (*ibid*) have been quoted interminably. They speak of the nature of the proletariat, of its *being*, and so on, in what is correctly now regarded

as an excessively idealist and Hegelian mode of thought. Whether Marx himself broke with this early conception or not is still a debated point, (in any reading of **Capital** less "symptomatic" than Althusser and Balibar's (1979), class essentialism certainly survives in Marx's later texts and can be detected even in passages which offer other formulations) but it is beyond dispute that marxism did not. Scientific socialism, largely the creation of Engels's polemical tracts **Anti-Dühring** (Engels, 1959) and **Feuerbach**, (Engels, 1962) is about little else but the science of dialectics and the historic mission of the proletariat. Yet Marx's interpretation of the fundamental historical events; that the rapid development of industrial, machine-production in privately owned factories made the classes of those who owned these means of production and those who owned only their labour power the two fundamental and opposed social forces within modern social formations, is not seriously disputed. It scarcely seems possible that the problems involved in the theoretical delineation of the classes of capitalist social formations should be so tortuous. They have become so largely because the proletariat, defined economically as the class of all exploited workers, has been only fitfully able to constitute itself as an organised political force in pursuit of its marxian class interests of socialised production. It is this apparent slippage between the economic and the political that forced Marx into those ambiguities of 'class in itself' and 'false consciousness' that contemporary marxist class analysis has attempted, not for the first time, to resolve.

The ambiguities of Marx's texts have become notorious. It has been noted, for example, that in analysing the organised political social forces active in France at the time of Louis Napoleon's coup, Marx (1973 : 157) states that the republican fraction of the bourgeoisie was *not* 'bound together by great common interests and demarcated from the rest by conditions of production peculiar to it' and yet he also states that the two Royalist fractions were separated by no 'so-called principles' but rather by 'their material conditions of existence, two distinct sorts of property' (173) which had given rise to a 'whole superstructure of different and specifically formed feelings, illusions, modes of thought and views of life'. Here are apparently two sorts of political forces, those that are *not* based on specific conditions of production (as against general conditions of production without which the Royalists could not be identified as a bourgeois class fraction at all) and those that *are* based on specific production relations. As a political theory with some predictive value for revolutionary activists this is somewhat unsatisfactory, for how is it to be known in advance whether social forces will organise on their objective base in the economic relations of production and coalesce in pursuit of their marxian economic interests, or whether other social forces will organise on some other basis (race, occupational group, sex, age, religion) in pursuit of some non-economic interest? All this theory seems able to tell us is that active political forces may be grounded in the relations of production and have as their object economic related interests, and that they may not - which is surely an unremarkable achievement.

Contemporary marxist class analysis

The project of contemporary marxist class analysis has an essentially political object. It is necessary to determine the structural class position and political interests of the new middle class, which does not own the means of production but which, nevertheless, manages corporate capital and administers the state apparatus in developed capitalist and non-capitalist states alike. The analysis starts with the understanding that modes of production (conceived as broadly distinguishable systems of economic production) constitute an objective grid of class locations structured by material relations of production. Any occupants of those places possess the potential

to organise in the pursuit of interests connected with the nature of those relations. There is an entire branch of marxist scholastics devoted to the problem of delineating theoretically, within the discourse of marxism, and practically, in their number and boundary points, the structural locations materially generated by capitalist relations of production, and as the solution to this problem grows more evidently impossible so the tendency for the theoretical work to become increasingly abstract also grows. In fact, the question that I have posed as central to the explanatory project of the sociology of education, from which, somewhat naively no doubt, I approach these theoretical texts in search of illumination, has little to do with these marxist questions of political consciousness and action. Once we have understood that resources confer power and once the character of class resources has been theoretically determined, the question of what social collectives with such resources are thus empowered to do can be investigated with little more ado and the entire problematic of this literature is thus bypassed.

Many thinkers have reached this position of effective resource control by one route or another. Some former marxists (see Hunt, 1978 and Hindess, 1986), indeed, have apparently become so exasperated with the impossibility of being able to establish a theoretically coherent connection between economic position and political activity (or with the notion that "objective", structurally defined, classes can be political actors) that they have declared the principle of "necessary non-correspondence". If theoretical coherence is their concern (and that classes as categories are not actors seems an unexceptional semantic point) then their response seems an over-reaction, for direct relationships between the policies of politically active groups and interests connected with their structural economic position *are* often transparent, but it perhaps indicates the level of frustration that has been reached in this discussion. However, the central interest of this paper is in the question of access to social goods and not with political consciousness as such and it is necessary at this point to turn to a discussion of class analysis paying particular attention to the problems of empirical demarcation.

The considerable body of work on class analysis by Carchedi (1977 and 1983) and Wright (1978 and 1985) takes its direction from Poulantzas (1975). Poulantzas' writings are particularly abstract and dense (and thus open to endlessly contested interpretation and re-interpretation) but the general theme is stated clearly enough in this statement: 'social classes are defined not simply by their relation to the economic, but also by their relation to the political and ideological level.' (1975: 70) (The word 'level' need cause no worries here - the sentence simply means that political and ideological relations of production, in addition to the purely economic, are included in the structural determination of social class.) The structurally determining relations of class in capitalist economies were, Poulantzas argued, economically, those of productive and non-productive labour (based on a labour sector analysis of industries which do or do not contribute marxian surplus value) and, politically and ideologically, those of direction and supervision of labour power.

In Carchedi's original formulations (1977:5) 'the capitalist class is defined as the owner/exploiter/ non-producer/non-labourer, while the working class is defined as the non-owner/exploited/ producer/labourer. Carchedi's more recent work offers some modifications to this scheme but retains these essential distinctions. Wright's somewhat more influential work is based on a direct critique of Poulantzas' theories. In place of the sectoral distinction between productive and non-productive labour (which cannot be operationalised at the individual level) Wright introduces ownership and non-ownership and separates more sharply the ideological and the political which

tend to be collapsed in Poulantzas. This set of criteria produce a classical bourgeoisie and a proletariat but leaves other classes, notably managers and semi-autonomous employees, in so-called contradictory locations since the productive relations of ownership and the control of labour power are not conjoined as the classical theory demands. In such cases, Wright argues, political and ideological relations determine structural class location. Wright's work is subject to a seemingly continual process of internal revision and his present position departs fundamentally (although in an inadequately acknowledged fashion) from that reached earlier.

The project is to determine classes from objective relations of production and the relations of ownership, control and supervision which characterise the abstract economic structure of an economy may meaningfully be understood as relations of production. However, influenced by Roemer (1982), Wright (1985:283) suggests that:

> Classes in capitalist society ... should be seen as rooted in the complex intersection of three forms of exploitation: exploitation based on the ownership of capital assets, the control of organisation assets and the possession of skill or credential assets.

This text is the site of a major slippage. The game theory derived concept of exploitation Wright has introduced into his theory of class (he actually refers to his typology as "exploitation-centred" - a designation supported neither by its operationalisation nor by any empirical findings) is entirely normative and does not refer to the classical marxist concept of "exploitation" (Wright has abandoned the concept of surplus value). Perhaps less obvious, but of even greater importance, is the complete reconstruction of the concept of class which Wright here introduces. Class in this formulation no longer refers to the structural relations of production but to *collections of productively useful assets held by individuals*. All complex systems of production require financial, administrative and technical control and those organisational relations may always therefore be abstracted and analysed, but this has not, of course, been how the marxian concept of relations of production has been understood. The entire logic of the class determination project collapses with this redefinition and it is necessary to be quite clear about what has happened.

In marxian theory the class determining relations of capitalist production are (i) the ownership (or non-ownership) of the physical means of production and (ii) the purchase (sale) of labour power and the class positions thus generated determine or structure political interests. As George Cohen (1978:73) expresses these ideas, 'the proletarian is the subordinate producer who must sell his labour power in order to obtain his means of life' and 'class position strongly conditions consciousness, culture, and politics.' It is quite impossible to think of such structural divisions as productive and unproductive sectors of labour, as *individual assets*, but it is easy to see how shifting the focus to individuals has brought about the profound change in conceptual meaning which has occurred. If classes are defined in terms of some collection of productive assets held by individuals by virtue of their location in the organisational structures of production then the marxist theoretical framework has been abandoned. Wright's inclusion of technical control (skill and credential assets) as one of that set of productive resources makes the results of this slippage particularly apparent.

One notable difficulty with Wright's position is that it makes the distinction between the productive assets people "possess" in virtue of being positioned in the productive system (their "class") and the personal and familial assets they come to acquire as a result of their "class" position difficult to conceptualise. I have suggested that family

assets of capital, knowledge and social networks are acquired largely as a result of class position, but if family capital and the educational qualifications of the family's economically active members are regarded as defining characteristics of class position, then it is no longer possible to argue that these assets have been acquired *as a result* of being positioned in the productive system. If we are to think in the way I want to uphold, then it is the class relation itself, the relation with capital, that has direct effects in as much that it is a relationship with an objective element of the structure of production. In the same way, we can say that relations of command and subordination are elements of the structure of production and are class relations which also endow people with certain resources and thus have direct effects. The educational qualifications of individuals are, however, clearly individual assets and not an objective structure of the mode of production to which one can stand in a certain relation. It might be possible to maintain this of positions in the objectively structured division of labour, but that is conceptually (although Wright has blurred the distinction for his own purposes) a very different matter. These comments will be further elaborated in the final paragraph.

Wright's particular achievement has been to match the performance of good, neo-weberian, socio-economic scales on regression tests of income determination (Wright and Perrone, 1977) to show that questions that might be thought to indicate class consciousness (56 percent of US proletarians agree that corporations benefit owners at the expense of workers and employers, etc.) are strongly associated with structural class location. No doubt this is of some interest to specialists in this area. However, although the criteria employed in the construction of his operational definitions (essentially level of capital ownership defines the capitalist classes and levels of education and managerial control empirically distinguish the middle classes and the working classes), are presented as structurally generated, Wright's empirical categories are not, in fact, generated in this way. Wright's criteria are arbitrarily bounded and not truly dichotomous in operation (or in theory) and, while they do produce a taxonomy more intuitively reflective of the position of the "new" middle classes so problematic to marxist theory, they are in no sense strictly derived from marxist categories of the relations of production. Wright's belief that his operationalisation can be used as an indication of the conceptual integrity of his theories of structural class locations is just bizarre since it is clear that the empirical content of the coded categories employed in these studies (income, qualifications, occupational title, etc.) would be, indeed, are, found in any competent SES scale. Nor is the theory of class consciousness at all adequate. In fact, it is extremely doubtful that his political project can be realised since even in the most recent formulations a class interest essentialism remains bearing the implicit assumption (although Wright's dissatisfaction with that implication is plainly evident) that any individual or collective divergence between theoretically determined structural class position and actual political allegiance must be explained in terms of ideological domination and false consciousness. Since the classes derived are not, in fact, structurally determined the entire circus seems pointless as far as the resolution of these key issues of marxist class theory are concerned.

Leaving aside these theoretical issues for marxism, it may be recognised that questions of access to goods and the resources effective in obtaining them are actually rather more likely to be answered by this transparently "revisionist" turn. The point is that if class is defined by some collection of productive resources (assets, endowments, "capitals", or whatever,) then we can investigate how these various assets are acquired, how they may be "converted", and what can be acquired with them. The demarcation

problem can always be more or less summarily dealt with via the exigencies of empirical research. A great deal of marxist scholastics is consequently avoided since the issue of what assets people possess has nothing in itself to do with whether a society is capitalist or socialist (or post-capitalist or state-socialist...) but can be objectively investigated. As Roemer (1982:14) states: 'competitive markets and the differential ownership of the means of production are the culprits - rather than the key locus at point of production as labour directly expropriated.' The concept of "ownership" is interpreted widely to mean effective control, so that '..the clearest type of inequality which continues to exist after the socialist transformation is differential remuneration to inalienable assets or skills.' (ibid:240) In this way Roemer introduces the concept of "status exploitation" (i.e. the benefits that accrue to individuals by virtue of their status within an economic and social system) and so takes the analysis of class beyond purely capitalist relations of production and the terrain of marxism.

Weber and "weberianism"

Weber wrote almost as little as Marx on the theory of class and what he did write is no more precise or theoretically coherent. These theorists attended to rather different questions and their thought certainly took different directions, but the convention in sociology, perhaps for reasons of political identity and pedagogic convenience, is to over accentuate the differences between Marx and Weber on this and other issues. There is a real danger of ending up with two straw men. A particularly clear illustration of this is afforded by Therborn (1978:140-1):

> For Weber the class to which A belongs is decided by the question: *How much does he have?* (i.e., how great are his market resources?); whereas for Marx the crucial factor is: *What does he do?* What is his position in the process of production? Weber's interrogation is in turn the answer to his primary problem of class: *How much is he likely to obtain?* (i.e., how great is his likelihood of "positional goods", "gaining a position in life", and "finding inner satisfactions?") But Marx poses the issue in a different manner: *What is he likely to do?* Will he essentially maintain or change the existing society?

These clear distinctions are all well and good and if this *was* a fair summary of the respective positions of Marx and Weber it would be a brilliant analysis. Such, however, must be considered but doubtfully the case. When Weber's (1978:54) work is examined, the situation appears somewhat more complex. One might say, therefore (with a certain amount of oversimplification), that "classes" are formed in accordance with relations of production and the acquisition of wealth, while "status groups" are formed according to the principles governing their consumption of goods in the context of specific "life-styles". An occupational status group; furthermore, is still a "status group": normally, that is, it successfully lays claim to social "status" by virtue first of all of its specific life-style, which in some cases is determined by the occupations it pursues. It has already been shown that Wright, at least, is not at all uninterested in the "weberian" question of what classes get - or what personal benefits accrue to individuals from their structural class position, and Roemer explicitly introduces the concept of status in exactly the weberian sense. It is undeniable that Weber, unlike Marx, formally admits occupational groups as a basis for social cohesion and action within his theory of society and makes a more or less clear conceptual distinction between class and status, but that might be considered to indicate a more complex and more adequate theory. The basis of Therborn's Marx/Weber distinction seems to be that for Marx class is tied to production and for Weber status is tied to consumption. Yet it is notable in this extract that class is given

textual primacy (at least) and recognised as 'formed in accordance with relations of production and the acquisition of wealth', which appears so close to the marxist position as to make any difference hard to detect by an unmotivated reader. Marx has no concept of occupational group or status group but in conjectural analyses of political action he often does refer to occupational groups (Lancashire cotton weavers, etc.) and specifically admits social groups associated by status linkages as political actors. Weber would have nothing to do with theories of "objective class interest" and recognised that neither production classes nor consumption classes could be social actors in themselves but must be organised as collective actors, that is as parties, and once again, contemporary marxism has worked its way round to recognising the conceptual soundness of this view. We might think, only a little crudely, of class as belonging to the economic order, status to the order of civil society, and parties to the realm of the political. Some of these themes find more explicit expression in these comments:

> Classes are not "communities" in the sense we have adopted but merely possible (and frequent) bases of communal action. The term "class" will be used when (i) a large number of men have in common a specific causal factor influencing their chances in life, insofar as (ii) this factor has to do with the possession of economic goods and the interests involved in earning a living, and furthermore (iii) in the conditions of the market in commodities or labour. That is what we shall call "class situation". (Weber 1978:43-44).

This definition of "class situation" is, to my analytical capacities at least, indistinguishable from the productive resources based account of class position given by Wright. If there has been any advance I suggest it resides in the fact that Wright has specified the particular resources that constitute the 'specific causal factor(s)' as capital assets, organisational assets and political assets. Weber, however, offers an analysis that Wright neglects and it is fundamental. What power accrues to those who possess and control these various assets? What can be done with capital assets? Those who possess them, Weber argues, are able to monopolise the market for high priced goods as buyers and sellers, to enjoy greater chances to save for investment, and to have greater access to the privileges of education. The nature of organisational and political assets and the power that accrues to those who control them is perhaps the central theme of Weber's very considerable substantive sociology. Above all Weber is the theorist of bureaucracy. It is exactly this kind of analysis, I suggest, that is so urgently required in the sociology of education.

Where do we stand now?

The essentialism implicit in the political thought of Poulantzas and Wright has been extensively criticised by some particularly learned commentators, notably Jean Cohen (1983) and Adam Przeworski (1986). Perhaps most social and political theorists are now convinced, however reluctantly, that the political project of classical "scientific" marxism cannot be achieved. But, for all that this may be so, marxian class analysis retains considerable interest, if not the same significance, as a particularly rigorous examination of the boundary problem. For the purposes of class access research it is necessary to monitor the extent to which class located individuals are able to gain access to social goods including education. The basic programme of the sociology of education, that is to monitor the ability of the educational system to provide functional equality of performance, requires research which must utilise criterion referenced indices of class or socio-economic status. In this area we may have made a little progress as a result of these recent debates - at least our perception of what is possible and what is not is somewhat more clear.

I suggest that the marxian concept of class as a relationship to economic production has considerable explanatory power, does get at matters of real importance, and ought to be retained. Whatever ambiguities we may detect as sharp-eyed readers of Marx's texts we are aware that Marx was, at least, sure that class is a production relation, that capitalist relations of production are inherently antagonistic (because the extraction of surplus value is an inherently antagonistic relationship) and that this relation is fundamental to the study of history and politics. For Marx not only are economic resources necessary to physical survival but, essentially, the transformation of the material world by labour is the defining characteristic of our species being. Capitalism exploits workers of their production and alienates workers from their nature. It is not at all difficult to grasp this full concept, even if we are sceptical about its grounding in a necessarily speculative philosophical anthropology. What we must do, however, is reject the attempt to "support" this complex theoretical concept by an empiricist project which, as many critics have argued, was always doomed to failure.

As to Weber and the "weberians" we know that an occupation is not a status, but is *one* of the bases on which social status *may* be accorded. If occupations are ordered by income, or by some empirically determined estimate of popular prestige, then each occupational position occupies a certain standing in that hierarchy and that may very well reflect whatever degree of status is, in fact, afforded on the basis of income and occupation by a society. But how such statuses can possibly find their way into causal explanations of social processes is hard to comprehend. Obviously, a status *level*, cannot be a causal entity. But if "status level" is understood as shorthand for "market position", which in turn is shorthand for "possessing economic resources" then any explanation in such terms only provokes the question of how the social distribution of economic resources is produced. Suppose it were shown, for example, as it well might be, that those who held socio-economic status positions 5 and 6, on a scale of occupations ranked by mean income and educational level, were more likely to be Labour Party activists than those who held status positions 1 and 2, (a depressingly unlikely finding in contemporary New Zealand) what would it then mean to say that socio-economic status was a *cause* of Labour Party activism or in some way explained or made sense of the observed relationship? Immediately, we confront *the reason why* the market positions of these groups are so different - that positions 1 and 2 are predominantly professional and administrative occupations which (in some sense that can be comprehended if not rigorously defined), control capital and labour-power whereas positions 5 and 6 are predominantly manual occupations which are controlled. It is not needless to observe that these are relationships with economic production rather than relationships with the market. Naturally, no one is so stupid as to lack a shrewd understanding of what is really happening, of what it is about the social positions people occupy, that make a finding of this sort "reasonable" or otherwise. But as soon as any attempt is made to move beyond the surface level of this sort of positivism to the level of actually effective social processes and mechanisms we encounter a dead ball area of social enquiry. Such "weberianism" has nothing to do with Weber.

"Status" is not, of course, to be banned as a dirty word necessarily belonging to an alien epistemology. The status that I have called "ordinary respectability" was (and I believe still is) a status accorded within working class communities to those of its members who lived according to a definite (but geographically and historically variable) code. (Nash, 1987) And if status, social standing, is accorded to people on the basis of their class position, as it often is, then I cannot see any sound objection to the term "class-status". The impetus in marxist sociology is to reduce causal accounts

of social processes which rely on the concept of status used in this sense to more "material" explanations, but this is a needless activity. How class relations structure the creation of such cultural statuses by a community is one question; the effects of those statuses (that is ways of life, forms of practice) on occupational mobility, political allegiance, and so on, is another. Whenever an explanation is given for some social process in terms of status (when it is not a synonym for economic resources) I think it could be shown that the effective mechanism is, in fact, due to actions motivated by some specific set of cultural or sub-cultural values, which are often precisely those which confer status. We can always avoid circular arguments with abstract concepts by presenting the explanations of social phenomena in terms of effective mechanisms.

Many contemporary marxists have arrived at weberian positions by a tortuous route - but that it seems is where they are. Cottrell (1984:212) provides a particularly representative example of this tendency. According to this writer:

> "class" as a cultural phenomenon in British society, as a form of broad and loose social collectivity, is not only quite distinct from the classical marxist conception in which classes are defined on the basis of property relations - neither is it reducible to the sociological conception of "occupational class."

It is self-evidently true that if the term "class" is used, as it is, to denote a 'broad and loose social collectivity', then such collectivities can hardly be defined by any rigorous criteria, whether those of production relations or of market relations, but this understanding of class strips the concept of any explanatory potential by obscuring rather than clarifying the operative mechanisms and makes empirical work impossible. Social classes as we recognise them may be 'broad and loose social collectivities' but for certain purposes it is essential to define the concept with sufficient precision to carry out empirical studies. In Cottrell's conception of class (which is offered as marxian!) are specifically included such attributes as parentage, education, home-ownership, and income; a collection of attributes which provokes the thought that one might as well settle for the Hall-Jones or the Elley-Irving scales.

Elster (1985:330-1), has reached broadly similar conclusions and proposes

> a general definition of class, in terms of endowments and behaviour. The endowments include tangible property, intangible skills and more subtle cultural traits. The behaviours include working vs not working, selling vs buying labour-power, lending vs borrowing capital, renting vs hiring land, giving vs receiving commands in the management of corporate property. These endowments are intended as exhaustive. *A class is a group of people who by virtue of what they possess are compelled to engage in the same activities if they want to make the best use of their endowments.*

There is no discussion of the centrality or of the necessary or sufficient character of these characteristics and Elster is straightforward enough to concede that this definition is 'weak on the methods side' and that any operationalisation will therefore be a compromise which will fail to comprehend the entire concept. It is ironic that so many sociologists, whether identifying themselves as marxists or not, having relinquished a recognisable marxian concept of class, at least in part, because of the impossibility of deriving an empirically useful objective grid of determination, are apparently no closer to their empirical goal, in their neo-weberian or post-marxist homes.

It seems, then, that an empirically useful, sociological, model of classes as class forces must be constructed, from criteria unambiguously derived from the actual relations of production (conditions which Wright's does not entirely meet) for if that is not done there is no possibility of being able to test the hypotheses that those relations statistically account for income, political behaviour, social reproductive success, or anything else. An historical and political concept of class must, obviously, also include economic, organisational and political criteria. It is not a matter of classes being *either* defined by some objective criteria *or* being constituted in struggle and so existing only where organisations of the class are engaged in political struggle. For empirical historical studies (Tilly and Tilly (1981) are excellent in this respect) a sensible procedure may be to specify the most appropriate operational definition compatible with the global concept. Of course, all this is merely to state the criteria by which working class structural locations can be identified, and in historical and cultural analyses these economic and political determinations are unlikely to be operationally definitive. Historians have a bad habit, in fact, of constructing their class demarcation lines after the fact to accommodate known collective actors. Much the same is true in contemporary cultural studies since it is clear that working class communities and working class lived culture must include within the working class such groups as small proprietors and especially shopkeepers and those in self-employed trades.

The conclusion here is that collectives, which we are justified in conceiving as class collectives, with a real existence as organised social or political cultures, cannot be read off from attempts to determine structural class locations from the social relations of capitalist production within any social formation. And it follows that much of the effort expended by marxist sociologists of education, for example, Ozga and Lawn (1981) and Harris (1982), on the analysis of this or that occupational group, such as teachers, in the hope of being more accurately able to identify their objective class location and thereby determine their potential for political and ideological allegiance, is misplaced. Marxist class analysis, whether by historians, social and political theorists or empirical sociologists, *can* produce invaluable reflections of the real political forces active in particular struggles. But it is empirically wrong to suppose that economic classes are the only active political forces and it is empirically wrong (and mystifying) to suppose that all active political agents can somehow be theoretically reduced to class forces. Currently fashionable post-marxist "discourse" theorists have been moved by such insights to embrace political policies of an ambiguously socialist character but the political implications of this thesis are, while certainly incompatible with the revolutionary theory of the **Communist Manifesto**, nevertheless indeterminate. In Proudhon's (see Edwards 1969: 173) words:

> Having political capacity means being *conscious* of oneself as a member of a collectivity. It means affirming the resulting *idea* and working towards its *realisation*. Any person who fulfills these conditions is politically capable.

There is no reason why the collective should be a class collective and everyone (outside theory) has surely always known this. In fact, national collectives, and consciousness of the idea of nationhood, has been more powerful in the last century or so than the class collective and its idea - marxism. The idea of nationalism is not all irrelevant in contemporary New Zealand.

Operational definitions are a separate problem. While it is, of course, no more necessary to *define* an exploited class in order to recognise one than it is necessary to define a horse in order to know horses, definitions are necessary to the construction of

a scientific concept and methodological individualism, in particular, requires operational definitions that can be used to sort individuals into discrete categories. But the problems which arise when the attempt is made to capture a concept like "exploitation" in some categorical manner are insurmountable. Of course, once the labour theory of value account of economic exploitation is abandoned "exploitation" has, in any case, no more than its normative dictionary meaning.

These broad conclusions are now widely accepted within contemporary marxism, but as there is no obvious way to introduce political forces other than economic and social classes into its framework of explanation and no way of operationalising the concept without making marxist sociology indistinguishable in practice from weberian sociology, there is an uncomfortable sense of having reached a dead end and this, as much as the lure of careerism, should really be understood as the reasons for the rise of so-called post-marxist forms of thought. The problem with weberian sociology is rather different. "Weberianism" is often no more than an excuse for intellectual laziness since, unlike marxists, many "weberians" reveal but slight evidence of close familiarity with the body of scholarship to which they declare nominal allegiance (Jones and Davis, 1986).

In that they stand in a certain relation to the means of economic production people are thereby empowered by the specific class resources inherent in that relation. The owner of a small capital sufficient to support an independent business is empowered in specific respects by that relation of ownership. One who manages, with others, a large corporate capital, is also empowered by that relation. It is incorrect to maintain that the owner or manager of capital derives class power from that relation and it is still less correct to maintain that class position can be conceived as a certain bundle of personal assets precariously, if at all, linked to productive economic capacity. That people possess assets is not denied, on the contrary, it is stated that a relation to the means of production *is* a resource. Rather, what is being emphasised here is the important need to examine carefully the nature of the effective resources people actually possess and are able to command. Capital is a class resource. So-called symbolic capital, however, has a different conceptual character. Indeed, only if this point is grasped is it possible to study the class distribution of cultural capital. Symbolic capital in its normative Bourdieuian sense, is not, in fact, as a mode of perception and thought, a constitutive class relation to the means of production, but must be seen as a resource associated with, or at most derived from, class relations, arguably derived from them, but not itself an inherent power of the definitive and constitutive relation of class. Resources inherent in the class relation itself and resources in some sense consequential upon it must be carefully distinguished at this level of conceptualisation. The relations in which one stands to capital as owner/non-owner, effective possessor/non-possessor, director/directed, and the relation in which one stands to the disposition of labour-power as purchaser/seller and director/directed, are the constitutive relations of class position and in themselves are class resources.

It may be acknowledged that this conceptualisation will not permit the derivation of an empirically useful structural grid of determination. But, in any case, such structural devices do not eliminate the necessity to impose arbitrary solutions to the boundary problem (what *degree* of direction of labour-power, etc.) and hence can never provide more than the illusion of formalist purity. The empirical task will always be "messy" since the actual collection of resources actually effective in the strategic mechanisms of social reproduction will invariably be an inextricably complex combination of constitutive class resources and resources acquired as a result of that relation. It seems

to follow that theoretical objections to the use of so-called weberian socio-economic scales (which we have seen to be implicit in marxist scales) cannot be sustained on grounds more secure than epistemological prejudice. A degree of strictness in the conceptualisation of the constitutive relations of class, however, is by no means irrelevant. It would contribute greatly to the solution of the problems I identified in an earlier paper (Nash, 1987) on class culture: class cultures are produced by those who stand in a certain relation to production, and while it will almost certainly be possible to show how the various elements of that culture are related to and perhaps derived from the constitutive relation of class, its particular character is in principle unpredictable in the lines of its determination.

For the sociology of education this discussion concludes with a plea for careful attention to the real processes and mechanisms which generate social differences in access to education and to the actual resources which are effective in those processes and mechanisms. The trickiest practical-theoretical problem is to decide what resources are inherent in the class relation itself and what resources are acquired as a result of class location. If the question is whether people possess resources of a particular kind because they occupy a class position defined in terms of personal resources ("endowments") or whether they are located in an objective structure of relations to the means of production and in virtue of that relationship come into possession of certain resources then the answer is clear. Only the latter position can seriously be maintained. It seems less than strictly logical to say that an individual possesses capital, informational and social assets as a result of class location when class location is actually defined in terms of those individually possessed resources. Where, however, income, information and social networks are generated as a result of positioning in the objective structures of class and are utilised in the strategic ends of familial social reproduction then we may properly speak of class (class location) as the generating mechanism of class (social and cultural) resources. If we wish to know what goods are given by class position then we cannot define class position in terms of goods which we then have no way of knowing are given by class position or not. The ownership of productive property is a relation, a class relation, and it is this relation of class which *is* the class power of property. I have suggested that the relations of production which determine class location are those of the control of capital and labour-power. The task for research is then to examine the function of those powers in the processes of inter-generational reproduction and to explore the ways in which these constitutive class resources generate other effective resources which are also used for this purpose. The question of 'what makes the difference' is I believe, actually capable of being answered by sufficiently rigorous theoretical and empirical work.

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REVIEW ESSAY

Land and history in New Caledonia: The politics of academic writing

Jean-Pierre Doumenge, Eliane Métais and Alain Saussol, *Nouvelle-Calédonie. Occupation de l'espace et peuplement* (Bordeaux 1986, CRET, "Iles et Archipels," 123 pp., tables, figs., plates). Unless otherwise indicated, all page references and quotation in the text are to this book.

Review by Loic J.D. Wacquant
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In light of the recent political upheavals and of the significance assumed by the land situation in the dramatic upsurge of Kanak nationalism,[2] a book on **Settlement and the Occupation of Space in New Caledonia** by three established scholars of this Pacific Island is due to attract considerable attention and to invite debate and controversy, not only academic but political as well. Jean-Pierre Doumenge is a geographer well-known for his work on agricultural activities in the archipelago, as well as for his voluminous writings on the urbanization of its autochthonal population. Métais is an anthropologist who has been involved with Kanak culture for nearly four decades and whose publications on magic and sorcery among the Melanesians are reputed. Saussol is thee author of the now classic **L'héritage** on the land colonization of the island and of numerous other articles which have made him the foremost authority on this thorny question. **Nouvelle-Calédonie: occupation de l'espace et peuplement**, then, clearly deserves to be seriously discussed and evaluated owing to the prominence of its subject-matter and its authors. But it also calls for thorough reviewing because of its severe weaknesses and of the misconstrued ideas it conveys and entrenches. The purpose of this paper is to provide such a critical assessment by showing how the themes and theses put forward by Doumenge and Métais are nothing more than a scholarly rendering of the *dominant social representations* of the New Caledonian situation, that is, of the colonialist viewpoint.[3]

This short book is not, as its title would suggest, a collaborative work by Doumenge, Métais and Saussol, but a collection of three separate articles, each written by one of these authors, which previously appeared together in the journal **Cahiers d'Outre-**

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1 Loic Wacquant visited the University of Auckland in 1986

2 Cf. Claude Gabriel and Vincent Kermel, **Nouvelle-Calédonie. La révolte kanake** (Paris 1985, Editions la Bréche) and Loic J.D. Wacquant, 'Review of Gabriel and Kermel', **Journal of the Polynesian Society**, 96-4 (December);503-504 Marc Coulon, **L'Irruption kanak. De Calédonie à Kanaky** (Paris 1985, Editions Sociales); Alban Bensa, "Evolution de la situation en Nouvelle-Calédonie depuis mai 1981," **The Journal of Pacific History**, 19-2 (April 1984), 113-116; Alan W. Ward, **Land and Politics in New Caledonia** (Canberra 1982, Research School of Pacific Studies, Social and Political Change Monograph 2).

3 Numerous other books on New Caledonia have appeared in the wake of the November 1984 uprising, most of them hastily written by journalists, and I shall not review them here except to mention them when their arguments bear a striking parallel with those presented in Doumenge, Métais and Saussol's.

Mer (vol. 39, July 1986). Despite their common theme - the relationship of land, population and culture in the New Caledonian historical process - these essays fail to build on one another and to form a coherent picture. Indeed, they are not only very uneven in the quality of their scholarship and in their analytical value, they also frequently contradict one another. All of this makes the reader wonder about the motives behind their hasty reprinting in book form without any substantive or editorial revising (and with the original journal pagination and typos, but without an index or bibliography).

Perhaps the introduction by the editors of the **Cahiers d'Outre-Mer**, which serves as a preface to the volume, gives the answer. When they postulate *ex nihilo* the existence of a New Caledonian 'pluriethnic society' transcending the historic divide between the colonisers and the colonised, when they summarily dismiss the Kanak demand for independence as 'more sentimental than economic', when they call for 'a better understanding among the inhabitants of this French Overseas Territory', (217-19), they reveal the political aim of this republication: to provide a denegation (*Verneinung*), a euphemization, cloaked in the technical jargon of geography and ethnology, of the *colonial reality* of the archipelago; and to contribute to a "scientific" formulation of a new colonial project in accordance with the changing balance of power on the island and beyond.[4]

Such is clearly Doumenge's intent. He starts by positing the existence of a collective entity, 'New Caledonia, in search of her economic equilibrium and social unity' (this is the title of his chapter), and proceeds to argue that 'egoism and misunderstanding' have created an opposition between the Kanaks and immigrant groups where there really need not be one.[5] His recapitulation of the process of settlement and of the development of a "deep socio-cultural duality" in New Caledonia rests on a fictitious typology which supersedes, in its sociological vacuousness, even the crudest versions of the now long-discredited modernisation theory.[6] According to Doumenge's model, there is, on the side of tradition, the 'multi-secular agrarian civilisation' of the Kanaks, based on kinship, communalism and myth, and at the other end of the evolutionary

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4 This is most evident in the bibliographic essay by Cristian Huetz de Lemps, appended at the end of the book (pp. 326-34), which surveys, in an extremely conservative light, the recent literature on New Caledonia. Publications which extol the French **oeuvre civilisatrice** in the Pacific are presented in great detail as scientific works of objective, unquestionable value, while those articles and books which do not advocate continued French rule over New Caledonia are systematically deprecated and deemed **engagés**, "political" and untrustworthy. The following comment gives a flavour of the reviewer's bias: 'These "fighting books" (**livres 'de combat'**), aimed at a political audience [?] that is fond of polemics, give interpretations that are radically opposed, and views of the New Caledonian realities that are often partial and partisan'. [sic](p.331) Rather than exposing these interpretations which do not agree with this colonialist perspective, Huetz de Lemps is content with dismissing them outright.

5 This is a view that Doumenge shares with Jacqueline Sénès who seeks, in her pseudo-historical study **La vie quotidienne en Nouvelle-Calédonie de 1859 a nos jours** (Paris 1985, Hachette), to breathe life into the sociological fiction of a "Caledonian people".

6 Doumenge commits almost all the fallacies listed by Gusfield ('Tradition and Modernity: Misplaced Polarities in the Study of Social Change', **American Journal of Sociology**, 72-4, 1967, 351-362) and several original ones in supplement.

continuum, the 'pluri-ethnic technicist civilisation' brought to the Pacific by France. The latter is intrinsically superior to and has deeply affected the former, and it represents its objective future. However, Doumenge explains, the 'Melanesians have long been afraid to "rub against" an urban and industrial world whose techniques of organisation and civilisational goals they do not master'. (241) As their repeated, if reluctant, attempts at embracing modernity have aborted, they have grown 'irritated' [sic] with 'the urban industrial world.' Eventually, their frustrated 'attraction turned into a revolt' (228, 240) which has taken the appearance of a nationalist sentiment. This psychologistic and technicist interpretation allows Doumenge to dissolve the colonial conflict, and its contradictions based deep in an underlying structure of material and symbolic relations of class and racial domination,[7] into a mere opposition between town and country, and thus to pass an historically produced and reproduced system of inequalities and subordination off as a transitional set of given "dualities" and "distributions." Of the origins and making of these "dualities", the author says precious little: the spoliation of the natives' land by settlers (see below), which is the historic infrastructure of the colonial society, is treated in a half-paragraph (227). Not a word is spoken on the relocation and containment of the Kanaks in reserves, of the imposition upon them of a system of forced labour, of a head-tax, or on their political disenfranchisement and their *de facto* exclusion from public secondary schools (both until 1957), or on any of the mechanisms of social apartheid that continue to operate throughout the colonial society to this day. There are inequalities, to be sure, but they seem to be given, a raw *datum* with no identifiable causes other than ecological and technical constraints.[8]

What Doumenge seeks to do here is to *naturalise* colonial domination. It is not surprising, then, that he should outline, in the final section of his paper, a blueprint for the *recolonisation* of the island on a more secure basis, complete with the artificial creation of an industrial pole on the Northwest coast, a free-trade zone, a new transportation system and a political reshuffling of regions. Since he completely misunderstands the nature of the sociopolitical struggle waged by the Kanaks - or is it because he understands it too well? - and does not see that the present political crisis is not a mere conjunctural difficulty but represents a *structural breakdown* of the colonial

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7 Cf. Loic J.D. Wacquant, 'Communautés canaques et société coloniale: Notes complémentaires sur la "question canaque".' **Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales**, 61 (March 1986), 56-64, and Alban Bensa and Pierre Bourdieu, 'Quand les Canaques prennent la parole." *Ibid*, 56 (March 1985), 69-83.

8 One example: the hyperconcentration, in and around Nouméa, of all economic functions, and the corresponding underdevelopment of the hinterland are 'not surprising, since the cost of infrastructure being generally high, it is more efficient financially to regroup in one place most productive and service activities'. (p. 239) Doumenge confuses the consequence and the causes of uneven development, in open contradiction with some of his earlier work, which had led him to conclude that it is 'the public authority and the large corporations of the island [which have] favoured turning the entire archipelago into a desert.' See Jean-Pierre Doumenge, **Du terroir a la ville. Les Mélanesiens et leurs espaces en Nouvelle-Calédonie**, Talence 1979, CEGET-CNRS, p. 26. On the radical contrast between the hyperdeveloped urban region of Nouméa and the underdeveloped mainland, and its relationship to the land question, cf. Loic J.D. Wacquant, 'Extreme concentration des pouvoirs: Nouméa, une place forte et son désert.' **Le Monde diplomatique**, 379 (October 1985), and the special feature in **Kanaky**, 7 (March 1987).

system, he can recommend that the capitalist penetration of the local economy be accelerated and rationally expanded, that immigration be renewed in a manner reminiscent of the early 1970s, when central authorities in Paris deliberately tried, with the consent and support of the local bourgeoisie, to "drown" the question of independence by outnumbering the Melanesian population in waves of state-organised immigration.[9] In the end, the French state cannot accept a weakening of 'the universalistic, and therefore pluri-ethnic, ideology specific to French civilisation'. (247). Doumenge's conclusion unveils the rock-bottom premise of his analysis: New Caledonia *is* and must remain French. That such inane arguments as he puts forth to buttress this political opinion should posture as scientific discourse boggles the mind.

The second part of this volume deals with "The Kanak Clan of Today and Yesterday". In it, Eliane Métais presents an *exposé* on the social organisation of the Kanak communities of the La Foa region where she has conducted ethnographic research for several decades. The Kanak clan is defined concurrently by several elements. The first is the name, which is by definition immortal, and expresses at once the substance and the identity of past and present members of the clan. The clan name is also considered a magical force; it is the principle of honour and of land ownership, and serves as a guarantee of citizenship in the future independent state of *Kanaky*. The second element is the hierarchical nexi between patrilineal lineages which give Melanesian communities their polysegmentary shape and make for their reproduction. The third is the chief (*l'Aîné des aînés*, literally: the eldest of the elders); the power is largely symbolic and rests on consensus; his duties are many, his privileges few. The fourth constituent of the clan is the large round hut which represents it and serves as its religious and political centre. such huts are currently built by the Kanaks on the land they claim from white settlers as the visible manifestation that this land belongs to them alone. There are also the ancestors and totems who regulate relations with the invisible world and provide assistance in the taming of natural and social forces. Finally, the native land provides a material basis for the clan, as well as a rich fount of symbolic values. Each clan is in turn part of a hierarchical network of matrimonial alliances which form a "place" (*pays*), characterised by a specific geographic domain,

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9 It is instructive here to quote the famous 1972 letter written by then-Prime Minister Pierre Messmer to his Secretary of State for Overseas Dominions and Territories, in which it is proposed that 'this ultimate opportunity to create yet another French-speaking country be seized (...) In the short run, the massive immigration of French citizens from the Metropole and from overseas departments (such as the Reunion island) should allow us to avoid this danger [of the nationalist claim of the autochthonal populations], by maintaining and improving the numerical ratio of the communities. In the long run, the autochthonal nationalist demand will be shunted if the non-Pacific islanders form a majority of the demographic mass. It goes without saying that such a long-term demographic effect will not be obtained without the systematic immigration of women and children.' For this, Messmer instructs that, in a covert fashion, 'the Administration can see to it that (...) employment in the private sector is reserved to women'. (Quoted in Gabriel and Kermel, **op. cit.**, p. 51) At about the same time, the Mayor of Nouméa, Roger Laroque, expressed the aim of this policy in his characteristically blunt fashion when he admitted publicly that its goal was 'to whiten' the island ("**faire du Blanc**"). What Doumenge proposes is to resume this type of policy in a more palatable form.

a relative linguistic and cultural unity, and a largely self-contained economy.[10]

Métais offers valuable data which contrast sharply with - and provide a much-needed corrective to - Doumenge's distorted painting of "traditional" Melanesian society, based as it is on a highly selective and radically presentist reading of those trends that fit his preconceived thesis. However, her analyses suffer greatly from a total lack of historical grounding. To compare "yesterday" and "today" is much too vague. Is the clan she depicts that of precolonial, early colonial, or late colonial times? Are the features she describes specific to this particular *pays* or can they be generalised across New Caledonia?[11] Of the five elements she lists in the constitution of the clan, which ones are "defining characteristics" and which are merely "accompanying characteristics," and what have their concrete articulations over time been? Finally, what are, or were, the structural dynamics of this social form independent of the intrusion of colonial forces?[12] None of these questions, which Métais' paper immediately raises, are settled in it. Further, the author appears to contradict herself when she contends at the same time that contemporary Melanesian society has 'retained its traditions' and that 'various causes have more or less deeply destroyed its traditional structure.' On the one hand she states that 'the basis of the social organisation [of Kanak society] was and remains the clan'; on the other, she maintains that today 'the clan is no longer a reality'. (250-51, 268) What are we to believe? Again the spectre of the modern/traditional dichotomy haunts the argument. Sweeping generalisations, not to say platitudes, about the "modernising" impact of roads, cars, telephones, electric appliances and formal schooling shed little light on the contemporary reality of Kanak social relations. Similar commonplaces on the growing influence of "modern" conceptions of the individual and household give no indication of concrete transformations in Melanesian communities. Métais writes: 'Over against this tradition, modern notions of the individual, of the patrilineal or restricted family, of the couple, but also of housing, of consumer goods and inheritance are elaborated. New groups emerge, religious (Catholic, Protestant), scholastic (primary schools, high schools, university students), political (numerous parties), which articulate uneasily with the ancient culture'. (272) Nothing is learned from such a vague statement, which would be true of nearly all colonial situations - and of most situations of modern societal change more generally. What is needed here is a precise discussion of the historically specific ways in which local social and symbolic structures have been penetrated, reproduced or dissolved, by colonial forms, which is nowhere provided.

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10 On the very important role of the notion of *pays* in Kanak social organisation, see the involved exposition of Alban Bensa and Jean-Claude Rivierre in **Les chemins de l'alliance. L'organisation sociale et ses représentations en Nouvell-Calédonie** (Paris 1982, SELAF, part I). Also relevant here is Jean Guiart, 'Clans autochtones: situation pré-coloniale', in Sautter (ed.), **Atlas de la Nouvelle-Calédonie et Dépendances** (Paris 1982, ORSTOM).

11 A much regrettable shortcoming of Métais's work is that she does not confront her results with similar ethnographies conducted in other rural regions of New Caledonia. For an instructive comparison with the Loyalty Islands, valuable material can be found in Marie-Joseph Dubois, **Gens de Maré. Ethnologie de l'ile Maré. Iles Loyauté. Nouvelle-Calédonie.** (Paris 1984, Anthropos).

12 See Bronwen Douglas, '"Written on the Ground": Spatial Symbolism, Cultural Categories and Historical Process in New Caledonia'. **Journal of the Polynesian Society**, 91-3 (September 1982), 383-415.

Métais approaches her topic with a culturalist and assimilationist framework which not only leads her to reify "traditional" Kanak culture in a frozen, abstract "yesterday"; it also hides the very object she is supposed to construct. And because she cannot see the clan as an *historical* system of relations, resulting on the one hand from the (internal) strategies of reproduction and subversion of hierarchies that constantly animate the Kanak social field, and, on the other hand, from the (external) articulation of Kanak social systems of the evolving colonial structure, she ends up misrepresenting the Kanak quest for nationhood as a somewhat childish yearning for an imaginary past.(273)[13] But here, as in Doumenge, psychological causation and self-delusion are in the mind of the scholar, not in those of the Kanaks. In both cases, the principle of the researchers' relation to the object has been projected into the object, so that these two papers tell us more about Métais and Doumenge's *rapport* to the Melanesians than they do about the latter: they expose, that is, the colonialist *praenotiones* guiding their analyses, rather than the historical mutations of the colonial society of New Caledonia.

The third and last article by geographer Saussol, entitled 'From Pioneer Occupation to Land Reform: Colonisation and Land Tenure Conflict in New Caledonia (1853-1985).' is easily and by far the most competent and informative. It is a detailed and accurate narrative of the process of land spoliation since the early days of colonial rule, which furnishes crucial background information for understanding the rise of Kanak nationalism and the ongoing sociopolitical struggle. In contrast to Doumenge and Métais, Saussol sets up a rigorous problematic that gives due weight to the spatial and temporal linkages between events and groups. Drawing on the rich archival and observational data amassed over the years for his recently completed *Thèse de doctorate d'Etat*,[14] Saussol distinguishes four phases in the constitution of the land patrimony of the settlers (these are graphically illustrated by the figure on p. 278). The first twenty-five years following the establishment of French rule over the island (1853-1880) were characterised by the massive plundering of the natives' land, and a pastoral pioneer front rapidly engulfed the savanna of the West coast, where stockbreeders seized over 570,000 acres. This resulted in recurrent and escalating clashes with Melanesian villages, eventually culminating in the brutally-repressed uprising of 1879.[15] A phase of consolidation ensued, from 1880 on to the Second World War. This slowing of the settlement process was due to the drying up of

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13 In this respect, Métais's vision converges with that offered by right-wing journalist Thierry Desjardins in his racist pamphlet **Nouvelle-Calédonie: Ils veulent rester Francais** (Paris 1985, Editions Plon). For a critique of this view, see Alban Bensa, 'Culture et politique: la société canaque face a l'indépendance'. **Les Temps Modernes**, 464 (March 1985), 1726-1736.

14 Alain Saussol, **Colonisation rurale et probléme foncier en Nouvelle-Calédonie** (Bordeaux 1975, Thése de Doctorat d'Etat, University of Bordeaux, 3 vols.). Also by the same author,**L'héritage, Essai sur le probléme foncier mélanésien en Nouvelle-Calédonie** (Paris 1979, Publicationd de la Société des Océanistes), and 'La terre et la confrontation des hommes.' **Les temps modernes**, 464 (March 1985), 1012-1022.

15 On this historical episode, see Rosalène Dousset-Leenhardt, **Colonialisme et contraditions: Nouvelle-Calédonie 1878-1978** (Paris 1978, Editions l'Harmattan). A second general uprising took place in 1917. A roster of the major incidents involving land conflict since then can be found in Association pour la Fondation d'un Institut Kanak d'Histoire Moderne, **L'histore du pays kanak** (Nouméa 1983, Editions IKS).

immigration and to the lack of readily available land. This was a time, first for small penal and free colonies, later for the concentration of small and medium-size properties into large estates.

The 'grabbing process', as Doumenge calls it, resumed after 1945, and for another thirty years the Europeans extended their monopoly by means of free land grants and the buying of public concessions from the colonial administration. By 1976, less than 2,700 white property holders controlled about 900,000 acres on the mainland, as against 500,000 acres for 30,000 Melanesians. But Kanak pressure for redistribution grew steadily over this same period and from 1975 on, open land conflicts multiplied, fueling the retraction of the European domain. The hasty land reform initiated in 1978 did too little and came too late to prevent the movement from clanic claim upon ancestral land to a global demand, by the Melanesian community as a whole, for political sovereignty over the entire territory of new Caledonia.[16]

Saussol's historical overview of the land question, combining the delineation of long-term trends with the focused examination of local cases, brings into full light the organic link between the emerging nationalist consciousness of the Kanaks and the 'land and cultural claim which underpins it'. (301) It also shows that if land feuds were at the historic root of the present sociopolitical crisis, they do not constitute its core: 'Today the land problem in New Caledonia has become *one of the components* of the political problem, *a means* of asserting and strengthening a [demand for] power'. (318, emphasis added) In short, Saussol's analyses thoroughly refute Doumenge's and nullify the policy implications that the latter draws from his grossly distorted reconstruction of the historical settlement of New Caledonia.

In conclusion, **Nouvelle-Calédonie: occupation de l'espace et peuplement** is a rich document on the politics of writing and publishing on a politically and academically sensitive issue. It clearly constitutes a *euphemized political intervention*, an attempt to use the rhetoric of social science and historical scholarship to provide an apparently neutral and rational justification for the neocolonial policies implemented by France's conservative parties since their return to power in March of 1986. To do this, Doumenge and Métais have produced one of these "scientific mythologies" which can exert a real political efficacy because they are based 'on two interwoven principles of coherence, a proclaimed, allegedly scientific coherence, which asserts itself by multiplying external signs of scientificity, and a hidden coherence founded upon a mythical principle.'[17] The myth they appeal to is that of "modernisation", i.e., the twentieth-century, scholarly version of what was called "civilisation" in the nineteenth. Beyond that, this book demonstrates in exemplary form - New Caledonia is only paradigm in that respect - the need to read *through* texts to the functions that these may fulfil in extra-scholarly arenas of struggle: the need, that is, to connect the field of scholarly standpoints to the field of political positions.

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16 The shift from the reactive and largely cultural "refusal" of French rule to the proactive demand for political sovereignty is discussed in L. J.D. Wacquant, 'Communautés canaques et société coloniale.' *op.cit.*; useful background material may be found in Alan Ward, *op.cit.*

17 Pierre Bourdieu, **Ce que parler veut dire** (Paris 1982, Fayard, p. 228) and **Language and Symbolic Power** (Cambridge 1988)

John E. Martin. **Tatau Tatau: One Big Union Altogether.** Wellington, New Zealand Workers' Union, 1987. 70 pp. $7.50

Reviewed by Herbert Roth, Auckland

Little is heard nowadays of the New Zealand Workers' Union, which covers rural workers in a variety of industries, from farm labourers and shearers to kiwifruit pickers. Fifty years ago however the NZWU, with its monopoly of public works employees, was a giant among New Zealand unions with more than 30,000 members and a powerful voice in Labour Party politics. An account of the rise and decline of the NZWU would be a most useful contribution to New Zealand social and industrial history, but in this small volume Dr. Martin, a lecturer in sociology at the University of Canterbury who has specialised in research on rural labour, concentrates on what may be termed the prehistory of the NZWU. The union had its origin in attempts to organise shearers in the southern half of the South Island, and Martin traces this early history from an advertisement in the **Oamaru Times** in August 1870 to the formation of the NZWU in 1919 and slightly beyond.

The earliest New Zealand unions were formed by skilled urban workers: carpenters, printers, engineers, painters, tailors and the like. The founders had served apprenticeships in Britain and some of them had been members of unions there, and they brought this experience to New Zealand. In some trades, such as carpenters and engineers, the New Zealand unions functioned as branches of large British organisations. The impetus for organising workers below the skilled level on the other hand came mainly from Australia, for there was then a common market for this type of labour (in particular shearers and seamen) on both sides of the Tasman. Employers were able to bring in strike-breakers as required, from Victoria to Otago (Martin gives an example of 1876), or vice versa from New Zealand to New South Wales, as happened in the early 1890s. For self-protection therefore the Australian Amalgamated Shearers Union sent organisers to New Zealand to establish a strong branch in this country.

Organising itinerant and seasonal rural workers was much more difficult than organising settled urban tradesmen. Nevertheless the Australians succeeded in establishing a New Zealand branch in 1887. Considering the strong racist bias of the ASU and its support for White Australia policies, it is noteworthy that the New Zealand union not only admitted but actively recruited Maori shearers, mainly from the Hawkes Bay and East Coast areas. The rules of the ASU and of its New Zealand branch were translated into Maori in 1887 - the earliest union document in the language - and by 1914 the shearers' union estimated that Maori made up a quarter of its 4000+ membership. Until the urbanisation of Maori workers during the second world war, their main contact with trade unionism was through the NZWU, which adopted the motto *Tatau Tatau* (All Together) which forms the title of Martin's volume.

Another significant contribution of the Shearers' Union was the establishment of a labour journal **The Maoriland Worker** in 1910, which was soon taken over by the "Red" Federation of Labour and remained the central organ of the New Zealand labour movement (though under a succession of titles) for almost half a century. There were

no women members in the early shearers' unions, but one of the key figures in the establishment of **The Maoriland Worker** and its first editor was a remarkable woman, Ettie Rout, an early feminist whose biography is due to be published later this year.

Martin's volume here links up with major preoccupations of our time, racism and feminism. Through its excellent reproductions of old photos, leaflets, press cuttings and other documents it successfully recreates the flavour of early unionism and it is enhanced by valuable appendices giving biographical details of union leaders, membership figures, and lists of officials. A tribute is also due to the designer, Max Hailstone, and the printer, the Griffin Press of Christchurch, who have produced a most attractive looking volume and to the NZWU for sponsoring this publication which turns the spotlight on a little known but seminal period of union history.

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Mary Jo Deegan and Michael R. Hill, (eds). **Women and Symbolic Interaction.** Boston: Allen & Unwin, 1987. 458pp. $NZ58.00

Reviewed by Sharon Mast, Wellington

That a symbolic interactionist anthology with a particular substantive focus should appear after a decade of general interactionist collections is in some sense a sign of the perspective's coming of age. That this collection should be about women demonstrates the utility of an interactionist approach to the study of current socio-political issues, for as the editors state in their preface, 'This book speaks to the potential of symbolic interactionism to link the everyday, public actions of people with the hidden rules of social life'. (xi)

Women and Symbolic Interaction consists of twenty-four papers of which, apart from the introductory and concluding pieces, only one - a paper on the social psychology of miscarriage - was written for this volume. However, at least half of the remaining contributions are likely to be new to many New Zealand readers, as they were originally published in **Symbolic Interaction**, **Urban Life**, or **Qualitative Sociology** - journals subscribed to by only one New Zealand university (in the case of the first two), or (in the case of the last-named journal) none.

The papers are grouped under seven main headings, the first of which, *The Emergence of Women from Social Interaction*, contains two papers. 'The Womans Movement and Social Consciousness' by Jesse Taft (a student of George Herbert Mead and W.I. Thomas) is drawn from the writer's 1913 doctoral dissertation. It blends a discussion of basic interactionist concepts - e.g., self, social objects, consciousness and meaning - with the consideration of women's role dilemmas which seem as timely now as they were then. This paper is teamed with the well known article by Goffman on 'The Arrangement between the Sexes', in which he explores the way in which innate sex differences are put forward as 'a warrant for our social arrangements' and, even more importantly, 'the way in which the institutional workings of society ensured that this accounting would seem sound'. (52) With characteristic style, Goffman explores the connections between breastfeeding, selective job placement, courtship and courtesy, arguing that gender is both the 'opiate of the people' and a 'remarkable organizational device' (63) which produces vastly different relations to public life for females and males.

In the section entitled, *Acquiring Gender: Childhood Socialization*, Cahill sets out the implications of interactionist theory for the study of gender development, while Reeves and Boyette ask, 'What Does Children's Art Tell Us about Gender?' In answering that question, the authors reveal children's art to be an 'untapped data source', (100) useful to cultural and cross-cultural analyses of gender and other sociological issues.

The section on *adult socialization* contains four papers, including one by Risman which continues the tradition originated by Garfinkel, in his famous study of Agness, of examining how an analysis of transexualism can contribute to our understanding of the way that all gender identities are socially constructed. The paper by Hammond on women medical students highlights the importance of language to the production of social identity in its study of the way "acceptable" biographies are built from appropriate vocabularies of motive.

Marriage and the home, and then the workplace are viewed as institutional (and interactional) contexts for women's claims to status, but also as contexts which make claims *upon* women's selves. Thus the next three groups of papers deal with women as wives, mothers and workers. Within these sections, Gross considers the problems which commuter marriages pose for marital identity; Shaul, Dowling and Laden discuss the problems of mothers with physical disabilities (which, not surprisingly, consist largely of the stereotypical perceptions of the nondisabled); and Rosabeth Moss Kanter examines the interactional dynamics which result when the proportions of socially and culturally different members of a group are skewed, bringing into existence the type known as "token members".

The section entitled, *Working Hypotheses as Problematic "Solutions"* concerns the process of change, containing papers about anti-discrimination cases fought by women academics, the micropolitics of women's refuges and the differential access of males and females to the media - all sufficiently topical in the local context to attract the reader's interest.

At NZ$58, **Women and Symbolic Interaction** is unlikely to be a suitable textbook for university courses which typically have a wider focus than the area circumscribed by that title. However, for feminist scholars, for students in a variety of courses whose research interests include the sociology of women, and for those who wish to further their acquaintance with the interactionist tradition, this is an invaluable sourcebook which ought to be available in local academic libraries.

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Shelagh Cox. (ed). **Public and Private Worlds: Women in Contemporary New Zealand.** Wellington, Allen and Unwin/Port Nicholson Press. 1987. 235pp.

Jock Phillips. **A Man's Country? The Image of the Pakeha Male - A History.** Auckland, Penguin. 1987. 321pp.

Reviewed by Allanah Ryan,
Sociology Department, Massey University.

The study of gender relations in New Zealand has been tackled in the two recent books reviewed here. One is a history, written by a man, and about the image of the Pakeha male. The other is a collection of essays, written by women, about contemporary

aspects of the public/private division in New Zealand. The two books are not in any sense comparable. However they come at the problem of gender relations in New Zealand from two different "sides" and therefore it is useful to discuss them together in relation to the general questions of masculinity, femininity and gender inequalities.

As an analysis of the structure and process of relations between men and women, each book has much to offer. Jock Phillips' historical examination of the Pakeha male is long overdue and is a valuable introduction to the study of masculinity in this country. Similarly, the book edited by Shelagh Cox is useful in that it has used an innovative approach to examining various aspects of women's experience of social life. The private/public split has featured in feminist theory for a while now, and **Public and Private Worlds** fleshes out some specific sites of the split and how this affects women. However, in my view, the major shortcoming for both texts is that a critical and coherent cultural study of the issues is absent.

The project of a study of gender relations would be greatly enhanced if it was situated in a *cultural studies* problematic. From this perspective culture can be broadly defined as:

> the processes by which sense is made of the world, of consciousness and feeling and the forms in which they are expressed. These processes take place in the context of struggle, conflict and negotiation amongst in particular, classes, genders and ethnic groups. The outcome of these exchanges is taken to be the reproduction or restructuring of relations of domination and subordination. Culture is, then, understood to be inherently political (from Journal Policy of **Sites - A Journal for Radical Perspectives on Culture**).

Neither book addresses culture in as rigorous a fashion as this definition suggests is required.

Jock Phillips has done an impressive job of beginning the study of Pakeha male culture and identity in New Zealand. He does not see his book as a 'comprehensive treatise' but in a more limited way as 'an essay [with]...the hope of sparking debate and further research'. (p.vii) From the early pioneering days of the 'good mate', through to the 'bloke under siege' of the last three decades, we are offered rich and varied material about the historical construction of the Pakeha male image. Drinking, rugby, war and the family are all given detailed examination as sites of the construction of masculinity. While there is much valuable information and commentary here, I believe the book suffers from an under-theorised notion of male *culture* and a simplistic reliance on the problematic concept of the 'stereotype'.

In several places Phillips talks about *male culture* but does not tell us what he means by that term. It is used in a vague, all-encompassing fashion, and tends to assume that New Zealand is a fairly homogeneous culture. The influences of regional differences, ethnicity (not just Maori but also Chinese, Dalmatian and the other non-Anglo settlers), and religion are important factors that undoubtedly have given shape and expression to different masculinities in this country. Perhaps more could have been made of the stigmatised forms of male identity (e.g. the homosexual man, and the 'intellectual'), and a more thorough analysis made of class differences. These would have expanded our knowledge of how male identities were constructed through contestation as well as acceptance of the dominant 'stereotype'.

The concept of the sex-role stereotype has been used by feminists, for nearly two decades now, to describe the phenomenon of fixed and restricted images of what men and women should be. The theoretical value of the concept of 'stereotype' is limited however. As Middleton claims it 'presents an over-simplified and distorted impression of the ways people experience and construct their gender identities' (Middleton, 1984:69) and implies that 'people are the passively conditioned products of the stereotyped expectations'. (ibid:70) In **A Man's Country?** there is an assumption that the male 'stereotype' was accepted by men uncritically and without social or personal conflict. The *production* of masculinities and male identities is altogether more complex than this and Phillips' analysis would have been improved through the use of the concepts of ideology, signification and subjectivity.

Theories of ideology are complex, but they address the *power relations* that are involved in the images that Phillips only briefly refers to. The process of *signification* would have illuminated how different meanings were *produced* in particular conjunctures. And the notion of subjectivity would have made reference to individuality and self-awareness *in relation to particular discourses and practices* (Henriques et al, 1984:3), which are not 'stereotypes', but produced by active subjects.

The edited collection by Shelagh Cox comes at gender relations from the "other side" to Phillips, by examining *women's* position in contemporary New Zealand. The authors of each of the chapters comments in some way on the public and private split that is said to be integral to the social world. Art, literature, work, the state, lesbians, prostitutes, religion and a Maori perspective are all examined in the book. An introductory chapter written by Shelagh Cox and Bev James addresses the 'theoretical background' to the private/public split.

It is much more difficult to review a book of readings than a text with one author, and I can not do justice to the individual chapters here. There are however, some general comments I wish to make about the overall conception of the book. In some senses it does begin the cultural study of women's experience, particularly when the authors explore the process of 'meaning-making' and take account of the struggles that women have undertaken to contest various sites of oppression. Alison Laurie however goes too far in suggesting that 'the greatest threat to patriarchy and to the institutions of sexism is the existence of either public or private lesbian worlds'. (p156) While the sexual sphere is undoubtedly an important one in the maintenance of various relations of domination and subordination, it is stretching both credibility and empirical evidence to assert that female-to-female sexual relations and bonding will eliminate sexism in the workplace, state, health and education sectors and so on.

The major difficulty I have with the book is that I think too much is made of the notion of the two 'worlds'. While the private/public division explains something of the experience of women's lives it is perhaps a better *descriptive* notion rather than an *analytical* one. The theoretical introduction does make some useful points and some of the chapters explore the division in a helpful manner (the most successful in my view being those by Rosemary Novitz, Bev James, Jan Robinson and Kay Saville-Smith). But I was left at the end of the book wondering how all the "bits" fitted together. A more thorough and consistent theoretical framework, running through all the chapters, would have helped immensely.

While there may be some value in producing a collection of essays, I believe it is now time for the more theoretically demanding, but also more valuable, task of producing

an account of the "whole picture" of gender relations in New Zealand. In this respect I look forward to the publication of the book by Bev James and Kay Saville-Smith **Gender, Culture and Power in New Zealand** (Oxford University Press, forthcoming).

Perhaps it is not fair to ask books that were neither conceived, nor written, out of a cultural studies problematic to "tow that line". However I believe if we are to ever have a clear picture of the processes and shape of gender relations in New Zealand - the inequalities involved and the femininities and masculinities produced - then we need analyses that take account of gender in its cultural setting. We need theory that can explain how men's and women's position is re-produced, and how individuals change both themselves and their circumstances. This project is yet to be undertaken.

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Diane Richardson. **Women and the AIDS Crisis**. London: Pandora. 1987. 150pp. $18.95.

Reviewed by Allanah Ryan, Sociology Department, Massey University.

There is something of a minor explosion in books dealing with the AIDS issue. These range from humourous cartoon books poking fun at safe-sex, through the more serious but popularly targeted books, to fully theoretically informed analyses of AIDS and its various social and political ramifications (see in particular Altman, 1985; Watney, 1987; Patton, 1985). Diane Richardson's book is aimed at the "non-professional public" and addresses the issue of AIDS as it affects women. In this respect it is an important text because it should help to deconstruct the notion that AIDS is a "gay disease" that is only of concern to gay men.

As an analysis of the affects of AIDS on women it "covers the field". The first chapter examines what causes AIDS and is a very easily understood summary of what is currently known about AIDS as a syndrome, and the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) that causes it. Other chapters examine the impact of AIDS on different groups of women (e.g. drug users, prostitutes, African women and so on). A separate chapter is devoted to lesbians and AIDS, and that is followed by one on safer sex for heterosexual women. *Living with*, rather than *dying of* AIDS is examined, as is the role of women as caregivers for people with AIDS. Richardson also looks at policies around the prevention of AIDS and finally 'the challenge of AIDS' to ideas about sexuality is addressed.

The book does have a little to recommend it, in that it approaches a difficult topic with caution and sensitivity. It is easy to read and provides some useful information and advice. Where to go, and what to do about particular issues, are incorporated into the text. Its advice on safer sex is also somewhat less moralistic than that found in a number of other relatively cheap and widely available books on the subject (e.g.Rayner, 1987; Philipp, 1987).

Overall however, **Women and the AIDS Crisis** is a poor response to the issue. A comment on the back cover first alerted me to the one of the major difficulties I have with Richardson's book. 'Any reader who does not emerge [from reading this book] with a warmer compassion and understanding of the problems must be a harsh individual indeed' (Janet Green). The comment reflects the overwhelming *rationalist* approach of the book. We are presented with information that it is assumed will lead almost automatically to compassion and understanding about the issue, and changed sexual behaviour. Ideology and power are merely wished away rather than analysed and suggestions given for how they might be dismantled. This rationalistic approach is endemic among books addressing AIDS and safe-sex.

The assumption underlying this approach (and also found on other aspects of public health e.g. STDs and smoking) is that access to knowledge will precipitate change in the desired direction. A non-contradictory, unified subject is the taken-for-granted recipient of prevention education material and programmes. It is assumed that he/she will make decisions on the basis of rational choices. The problem with this approach is that it lacks any understanding of *desire* and *fantasy*.

This absence in social theory is increasingly coming under attack from theories informed by psychoanalysis. For example in an article which addresses the failure of non-sexist children's readers to bring about the changes hoped for, Valerie Walkerdine argues that the role of *fantasy* has been ignored. The assumption of a 'rationalist learner, who will change as a result of receiving the correct information about how things *really* are' (Walkerdine, 1984:164) neglects to examine 'how we come to want what we want'. (ibid) This is a vital issue in the area of sexual relations and one which is largely absent in the discourse on safe sex. If we want to understand how people are produced as sexual subjects and how we might produce alternative practices that will not transmit HIV, then

> we must take account of desire and fantasy. It is no good resorting to a rationalist account which consists simply in changing images and attitudes. If new content in whatever form does not snap on to the crucial issues around desire, then we should not be surprised if it fails as an intervention. (ibid)

What is needed then is an approach to safe-sex which does not only appeal to rationality but also to individuals' sense of sexual identity and their sexual desires. This implies the need for an expanded notion of prevention education that explores pornography and fiction as well as providing information.

The other major absence in the book is any sense of collective or community struggle around the AIDS crisis for women. There are certain political (in the narrow sense of the word) demands made in the book, e.g. for more funds for prevention education and health and social services. However these are isolated both from *who* will do the organising around this, and *how* these demands fit into a broader political strategy for political, cultural and sexual democracy. In contrast, Cindy Patton's book **Sex and Germs: The Politics of AIDS** has a very good chapter on 'AIDS organising'. These issues, which Richardson fails to address, are complex ones, but she *could* have been expected to examine how the feminist, gay and socialist movements could work separately, or together, on a political response to the problem.

The book also suffers from a subtle, but insidious moralism. While she does not actually *attack* promiscuity, bisexuality, anal sex and other stigmatised sexualities, she

nonetheless frames these in such a way that they appear as *lesser* forms of sexual expression. It is suggested that bisexual women are of 'concern' to lesbians because they 'may pass on AIDS to the lesbian community'. (57) There is more than a hint here of *blaming* bisexual women for "contaminating" the "pure" and AIDS-free lesbian community. The only difference between this and the moral right's attack on gay men for unleashing AIDS on "innocent victims" is that Richardson sees *lesbians* as the 'innocent' and bisexual women as the 'carriers' of contagion. Both the moral right and Richardson confuse the beginning point of the epidemic with moral culpability. It is an accident of history that, in the Western world, gay men have been the first to bear the brunt of HIV infection and AIDS. Neither they, nor bisexual women, should be held responsible for the spread of the virus to the so-called "innocent". Are not gay men and bisexual women deserving also of sympathy, dignity and just treatment if they become infected with the virus?

Richardson also manages to condemn lesbian s/m in one sentence without any supporting evidence. We are merely told there is no 'space to do justice to the arguments about why many lesbians object to such practices'. (62) As a form of sexual expression it involves many practices which do not transmit the virus (e.g. bondage, dressing up scenes etc.) and on that basis alone, these practices deserved a more honourable mention than they receive from Richardson.

While Richardson does attempt to be "sex-positive" in her approach, *pleasure* is largely a missing concept from the book. Aside from the text, the semiotics of the overall presentation of the book also provides some interesting insights. There are no cartoons, photos, or visual imagery of any kind in the book. The cover is a stark black-and-white, carrying only the title and author's name. All this suggests that we must take this book "seriously" - it is a serious book about a serious subject. It contrasts markedly with the cover of Simon Watney's book **Policing Desire: Pornography, AIDS and the Media** with its slightly ambiguous and erotic photo of a naked back and buttocks - suggestive of sweat, sex, and pleasure. And the booklet **Making It: A woman's guide to sex in the age of AIDS** features a bright pink cover, and a title which indicates hope, and possible pleasures. Inside there are cartoons that are both informative *and* humourous. In one cartoon four women are sitting around a table discussing the relative risks of various types of sex. One suggests 'Mutual oral sex using a condom and a dental dam, while submerged in a hot tub' - indeed! Diane Richardson completely fails to offer the reader much hope with such bland statements that AIDS is creating 'new meanings of sexuality that are not based on heterosexual intercourse or on men having more control over sexuality than women'. (130)

To conclude, while this book provides some useful information presented in a clear and concise fashion, it ultimately fails to deliver the goods theoretically. There is only a partial analysis of women's relationship to the "AIDS crisis" and an unsatisfactory examination of how women can explore safer sex. I am writing this review at a time when the New Zealand press is picking up on the fact that the proportion of women contracting HIV, and going on to develop AIDS, is increasing in this country. I'm not confident that **Women and the AIDS Crisis** will be able to meet the challenge of illuminating this new and growing problem. The more sophisticated work of Patton and Kelly (1987), Patton (1985) and Watney (1987) offer better possibilities for understanding both what is at stake here, and what women can do about it.

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J.H. Robb. **The Life and Death of Official Social Research in New Zealand, 1936-1940**. Occasional Papers in Sociology and Social Work 7, 1987 ($6.00)

Reviewed by Charles Crothers, University of Auckland

Since the early 1970s, Jim Robb has been tracking down the story of the strange episode of the New Zealand Bureau of Social Research (BSR) in the late 1930s: he has now produce a definitive version of these studies. His work is based particularly on serendipitously discovered files from the Bureau, supplemented by interviews and/or letter inquiries from surviving informants.

As the story he has produced is of high interest, with something of the tension and drama of a who-dunnit, it should be of considerable relevance to all New Zealand social researchers: especially, now that it is available in a convenient format. Keeping a hold on the cast of personnel involved is usefully assisted by the provision of a list and brief biographical notes on those involved (although why people are nearly always short of their first names seems strange to me, although this practice may be appropriately matched to the period under consideration). Unfortunately, no chronological overview is provided to summarise the unfolding of the plot, although this is rather less a problem than it might otherwise be, given the fairly linear flow of the story. (A chronology is provided at the end of this review to aid the reader).

In its short and bumpy existence the Bureau had succeeded in publishing one report and nearly completed another (for which Professor Robb has an almost complete manuscript and which I hope he will publish). The account is a narrowly historical one, that determinedly is not distracted into further issues. Some few quick comments might therefore locate this study in a broader context.

Jim Robb suggests that the rural survey of dairy farmers was conducted against a considerable opposition from the respondents who held strong anti-Government attitudes. But this is surprising given that it runs against the often-held idea of the support dairy farmers gave for the Social Credit monetary policies promised by Labour. A short discussion with Professor Chapman about this point yielded some important insights about the general historical conditions then affecting New Zealand's industry and needed not only to understand reaction to this study but also to understand the results of the study itself (after all, the results of cross-sectional surveys must always be placed in an historical context). Briefly, the dairy industry had been hard-hit

by the Depression, but had begun to climb back by the time the survey was being undertaken: partly as a result of the Guaranteed Prices Scheme implemented by Labour. Support for Labour in dairying areas remained high in the 1938 election (support for Labour in fact increased even although seats were lost due to Conservative interests getting their act together). But as prosperity began to dawn, assisted by financial measures of some unorthodoxy, farmers were perhaps particularly careful about any investigators about to poke into their financial conditions. So the reaction was likely to be anti-government rather than anti-Government.

Another important lesson from this story is its relevance to the sociology of social science. I find it difficult to interpret the experience of the unit outside a resource-mobilisation framework. Like the New Zealand Council for Educational Research (which was also established at this time) the base money and idea of studying living-standards came from America through the international head quarters of the Institute of Pacific Relations (IPR) in New York. For those with curiosity about this, a reading of John Thomas's book **The Institute of Pacific Relations**. (University of Washington Press, 1974) may be useful. Unfortunately this focuses on the later period of IPR activity when its pro-China proclivities brought it to the malign attention of Senator MacCarthy. But this book has some interesting threads, such as the prominent role played by a few New Zealanders in this organisation.

The story of the BSR might also be placed within New Zealand history and especially New Zealand intellectual history. The IPR is one of several small and episodic institutional frameworks within which New Zealand social science has developed, and casual inspection of the University of Auckland library catalogues indicate that it continued into the post-World War II period. It is also interesting how the BSR was drawn into the tight web of key New Zealand social thinkers and policy-makers which seem so significant in the running of many central institutions in New Zealand over this period (notably Sutch and also Beeby). Even Doig's subsequent little pamphlet **Rich and Poor in New Zealand** has been redolent in more recent New Zealand sociology. Thus, in several ways, this insignificant episode is drawn into other, stronger currents of New Zealand history.

Robb draws the lesson that governmental social research is often vulnerable. Rather more fined-tuned lessons might also be drawn:

- there is a *particular* vulnerability when publication approval required reading of texts by ministers;
- clear-cut organisational structures are important;
- keeping in contact with "clients" by performing useful and timely services for them helps establish useful support;
- a link to academic colleagues may be a useful lever in overcoming some difficulties.

Clearly, the unit failed in part because it was itself insensitive to understanding the requirements imposed on it by its environment. That it was at least successful in producing a public report was due in part to luck that its social environment did include an academic link that allowed "blackmailing" (even if this was to be a Phyrrhic victory).

Robb's analysis of the implications of the story are too narrow and too pessimistic. Building social research institutions is difficult, but the social environment surrounding them is not inherently malign, and given appropriate performance and supporting-building through alliances, social research can be successfully developed within constraints. But institutional survival is only possible if participants have a sharper analytical awareness than that used in this study, whose acuteness unfortunately seems dulled by the fatalistic (counter-Whig) light in which it is cast.

Chronology

Early 1930s : New Zealand Branch of Institute of Pacific Relations established
December, 1935 : IPR Committee reformulated (Prof. Belshaw prominent)
November, 1936 : Bureau of Social Research established
April, 1937 : Inaugural meeting of General Committee
June, 1937 : Initial site visits in preparation for survey of dairyfarmers
October, 1937 : Pilot survey
November 1937 to February 1938 : Fieldwork for survey of dairyfarmers
June 1938 : Preparation for urban surveys; some early results from rural survey
August, 1938 : Fieldwork for urban surveys
December, 1938 : Drafts for most chapters of rural survey completed
February 1939 : General committee meetings suspended
July 1939 : Difficulties over final draft of rural report
August, 1939 : Outbreak of WW II
November, 1939 : Work on Prices Investigation Tribunal
February 1940 : Research secretary (Doig) resigns
April 1940 : Professor Belshaw "blackmail" letter to Fraser
May 1940 : Urban report published
July 1940 : Unit closed by Public Service Commission

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J. Boston and M. Holland (eds). **The Fourth Labour Government: Radical Politics in New Zealand.** (1987). Auckland, Oxford University Press.

Reviewed by Paul Spoonley, Sociology Department, Massey University

The **Los Angeles Times** (9 August 1987) described recent developments in New Zealand politics in the following way:

> The country junked the old to try something new ... The Kiwis have embraced free trade and discarded self-protection. They elected a Labor [sic] government in 1984 that has outdone the Ronald Reagans and Margaret Thatchers of the world. The party that for 90 years [sic] had been a pioneer of advanced if not radical social legislation said government had become too big and must be trimmed. Then, perhaps even to its own surprise, it did.

The hyperbole and inaccuracies aside, the comments reflect the universal surprise at the opportunistic and radical libertarian stance adopted by the 1984 Labour Government. It has broken with the Keynesian-derived welfarism and its working class links of the past. It has set about a corporate reorganisation in both public and private spheres and encouraged a supply-side capitalism that is exemplified by the

deregulation of the money markets. Like the 1930s, New Zealand has again become something of a social and economic laboratory. Unlike the 1930s, the Labour Government appears bent on discouraging the participation of democratic collectivist organisations in national policy decisions, and on reducing the size of the state and the welfare provisions normally available from it. **The Fourth Labour Government** is part of the growing literature that seeks to explore and record these changes, in this case for the period from 1984 through to late 1986.

The inspiration for the book came from the 1986 Political Studies Conference which had, as the theme, 'New Zealand Under Labour'. It opens with an introduction from David Lange, which reads in part like an election speech. Subsequent chapters are then grouped into broad subject areas : the Labour Government and Opposition; reform of parliament and the public sector; economic reforms; and foreign policy. As with any edited book of this kind, it rather depends on the reader and their interests as to what they will see as being of value. For my part, the chapter by Boston and Holland on Labour's break with its political tradition is a useful introduction to the issues. The material by John Roberts on the relationship between the political executive and the public service is excellent background to the current phase of restructuring. And the chapter by Brian Easton offers some insight (and guesses) on the way in which the Labour Government formulated its economic policies. The appendices, which include chronologies of economic, tax, and foreign policy and defence changes, as well as material on family income measures, constitute useful summaries of events. In all, the book contains a lot that can be recommended but within certain limitations.

The book is a record of a specific period in New Zealand political history and while it offers a freeze frame view of the changes between 1984 and 1986, it suffers at times from having been written so early in the Labour Government's reign. Some chapters lack the wisdom of hindsight while others failed to anticipate the radical changes that have continued apace. Unfortunately the authors do not attempt to counter these shortcomings by offering a more expansive theoretical analysis. There is little by way of theoretical understanding, which is not a criticism in itself, but I was left with the feeling that the material which now dates the book would have been compensated for by the broader and more enduring analysis which accompanies an explicit theoretical discussion. And finally, there is a feeling that some of the authors are puzzled Labourites who are still trying to establish when they lost control of the party to its libertarian factions. There is a sense of bewilderment from those close to the action.

In spite of these critical comments, the book is certainly one of the most competent and complete sources of information on the early period of the Labour Government. Once the book's limitations are accepted, it provides a useful addition to the literature. But it will need a companion volume at the end of Labour's period of office in order for the material to be complete.

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David McLellan. **Marxism and Religion: A Description and Assessment of the Marxist Critique of Christianity**. Macmillan Press, London, 1987.

Reviewed by Wiebe Zwaga, Department of Sociology, Massey University.

David McLellan's latest book is, as he mentions in the Preface to **Marxism and Religion**, written from both an academic and personal perspective. His academic

interest, which to date has brought McLellan numerous publications on Marx and marxism, is combined with a personal interest in religion which was aroused when he became a Roman Catholic while a student at Oxford. **Marxism and Religion** represents these two interests more urgently as it was written with the relatively recent "marxist - christian dialogue" in mind and as such is intended to '...re-examine this dialogue from the point of view of marxism.' (p.2) The book could be divided into two parts. The first five chapters cover the marxist critique of religion, summarizing encyclopaedically the contributions that historically range from Marx himself to Gramsci and the Frankfurt School. The second part which spans chapter six, and to a lesser extent the conclusion, deals with contemporary marxism and christianity and sets out the contours of the dialogue (official and unofficial) in Europe, the U.S.S.R., and Latin America. The conclusion attempts to bring conceptual clarity to the relationship between marxism and religion, McLellan's strongest point is that marxism - as a critique of religion - should not be seen as religion itself, which other commentators have suggested in the past.

The overall strength of the book is that it provides a comprehensive survey of the marxist critique of religion. Marx, Engels, Kautsky, and Gramsci are the more well-known exponents, yet this list is extended to include more "obscure" marxists such as Dietzgen, Cunow, Plekhanov and Bogdanov. This exhaustive review of "scientific atheism" shows that the tradition is diverse and could hardly be called orthodox. McLellan argues convincingly that all marxist commentators were to a large degree informed by the kind of religion that confronted them. Thus, Marx aimed his aphorisms on religion predominantly at Lutheranism; Engels' critique was moulded by his Pietist up-bringings and Lenin's no-compromise attitude to religion is explained by the Russian Orthodox Church's close alignment with the Tsarist regime. However, what these three had in common was that they all had traversed the "brook of fire", indicating the centrality of Feuerbach in the marxist critique of religion. The influence of Feuerbach coincided with that of variants of nineteenth century evolutionary theory. The ideas of Spencer, Tyler and Frazer, acknowledged or not, seem to have been incorporated in the marxist critique. The latter should come as no surprise since marxism perceived world history in (r)evolutionary terms, culminating in the phase where religion would be redundant.

While giving a fair representation, McLellan rates the marxist critique of religion as incomplete, inadequate and empirically unvalidated. An important explanation for this view is that religion became more and more peripheral to the broader marxist analysis of society which saw economic alienation as paramount to religious alienation. Religion was (some would say conveniently) labelled an ideology, the latter which was to become the more prevalent unit of analysis. Therefore, McLellan's critique in what is very much a backseat position is somewhat superfluous. Both marxism and christianity are 'two almost self-contained conceptual systems' (p.151) with a plausibility structure of their own. The depiction that religion is the opiate of the people makes sense to a marxist as would the belief in a celestial life to a christian, even though empirical evidence for both might be difficult to find. Although perhaps unintentionally, McLellan appears to be sitting on a religious seat rather than on the marxist one he had promised us. One cannot escape the impression that McLellan, faced with the marxist critique of religion, somehow takes on the role of an apologist for religion. In what is otherwise a readable and worthwhile contribution to the understanding of the marxist critique of religion, McLellan's assessment of it is for this reason somewhat disappointing.

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Korndorffer, W. (ed) **Transition: Perspectives on School to Work in New Zealand.** Palmerston North: The Dunmore Press, 1987.

Reviewed by Peter Ramsay, Education Department, University of Waikato.

It is well known that in times of economic recession schools come under close scrutiny. Events in the present recession support this rule - the emphasis on "Back to Basics" and the emergence of the New Right are but two examples. And it was no coincidence that education became an issue in the most recent elections; nor should we have been surprised - given the fierceness of the election arguments - by the Prime Minister's assumption of the role of Minister of Education. Education is now perceived as being too crucial to leave to members of cabinet junior to the Prime Minister!

Central to the debate on education is its relationship with employment. This is by no means new; it is just that in times of high and increasing unemployment, the debate hots up. It is very handy to have scapegoats about - teachers become good whipping persons when times get tough. One of the most plausible arguments - in the publics' view at least - is that schools are not doing a good enough job in preparing students for the world of work. Such views are fuelled by recent claims about the literacy levels of people on ACCESS programmes and public criticism of school leavers by any number of employers. *Ergo*, the demand increases for vocational education in schools, polytechnics and elsewhere. Against this background Korndorffer's book is both timely and welcome. It is timely because it gives readers very necessary background information about the current state of transition education. It is welcome because most (regrettably not all) of the contributors come to the task from a critical perspective, well founded in educational and sociological theory.

There are eleven contributions in the book, each followed by excerpts from interviews with people from the Young Person Training Program who had formed the sample for Korndorffer's doctoral study. On first sight I thought the latter to be intrusive and perhaps distracting from the main task. Quite mischievously, I read them first, and would wager that many other readers will do likewise given some of the turgid prose which appears elsewhere in the book. On getting down to the hard graft of studying each chapter, though, I did find the extracts illustrative of some of the points made. Nonetheless it was a pity Korndorffer did not weave them more tightly into the fabric of the discourse.

The contributors themselves consist of six Massey education department academics (five chapters, as one was jointly written), two transition educators working in the Manawatu Polytechnic, two education department academics from the University of Otago, one academic from the University of Auckland, and the then Minister of Education, Russell Marshall. The lacunae and imbalances arising from this range of contributors is obvious and are noted by Korndorffer in her introduction - too many academics and too few practitioners, nothing from the government departments responsible for administering many of the schemes, little from the transitional students, and, most seriously, the Maori people who are grossly affected by the present situation are not head from at all.

The foregoing should not be taken to suggest that Korndorffer failed to cast her net widely. In fact she did. Like all editors she suffered from promisers who did not

produce. I know, as I was one of them! And despite the shortcomings listed above, she has still managed to put together an extraordinarily valuable volume of readings. The works of Nash and Shuker are well known and they scarcely need elaborating here. Suffice it to state that Nash, as always, rigorously analyses the processes involved in education between school and work. He provides the necessary overview of arguments which appear later in the text. With due respect to Korndorffer's concise introduction, and to Marshall's interesting analysis in Chapter 2, I would recommend that readers start with Nash. Points raised by many other contributors, including Shuker, and in particular Gordon and Korndorffer, link with this argument.

Shuker provides useful insights into the schools' reproduction vs transformation debate and suggests that '...it is necessary for the school to become part of a general struggle against structural inequalities in schools.' (p.80). He then goes beyond Nash (although it is a little unfair to say that Nash is totally deterministic) to a discussion on how this may be carried out. However in this area he is curiously myopic, ignoring amongst others the work of Anyon (1981), Giroux (1980) and dare I say it, the Waikato educational sociologists. Again though, the detraction of merit is slight; Shuker's contribution is both clear and lucid and contains ideas fundamental to the overall debate. Above all, for those of us committed to Gramscian views of social change through praxis, it gives a ray of hope.

Gordon and Korndorffer have been for some time pursuing assiduously the more important questions raised in critical theory. Both have published preliminary findings elsewhere (e.g. in Codd, Harker and Nash, 1985). Their ideas have been developed further here. Gordon makes it clear (following Nash) that the problem of transition education is that of the economy rather than the school system - a theme which is taken up throughout the book. She also locates transition education within the context of political decision making; however she does not spell out clearly enough, and nor does anyone else in this text, the implications of the demographic structure of New Zealand. We can expect 40,000-60,000 school leavers per annum in the next decade, which can only exacerbate the present situation. Gordon's contribution is, though, significant. I found her criticism of Scott and Catherwood excellent. Her comment on life skills (first published in Codd, Harker and Nash, 1985) is particularly delicious:

> It is difficult to conceive of what the person with such life skills would be like. Is this the paragon who, in the face of no paid work, continually threatened homelessness, poverty that leads to the neglect of health and dental care (and other modern 'necessities'), no transport and continual alienation from mainstream society, will develop useful hobbies and a keen interest in free cultural activities. (p.122)

Good questions indeed! Korndorffer's contribution is also meritorious. In many respects this book represents the culmination of many years of her research on transition education. She is one of the select group of researchers who has got her hands dirty with field data which becomes all the more pleasing when one notes that the data have been treated with theoretical rigour and have contributed to knowledge in this area. Korndorffer, together with Diorio (as behoves the sole philosophic contribution) make it clear that education differs from training, and goes on to emphasise the dangers of skills-based approaches. More importantly she seeks out the contradictions inherent in the various programmes and suggests ways in which students and teachers can use these contradictions to their advantage.

Jones's work is also becoming well known and is the second example of excellent field work in this volume. The parallels here with Willis's (1977) seminal research on

working class "lads" are considerable, although one can scarcely overlook the added disadvantage of being female in a macho-Kiwi domain. Jones's exposure of problems which are school-based but community-driven are salutary to all involved in the school process.

Johnston and Robinson represent the practitioners' viewpoint. Once again, it is good to note that they have penetrated the veneer of the programmes they teach and are aware of the reproduction tendencies as well as the transformational potential of them. While not being primers for people involved in transition programmes (nor were they intended to be) these two contributions will provoke some fierce debate amongst practitioners. The writers should be prepared for public disavowal but private agreement!

Diorio and McKenzie from the South provide their usual thoughtful accounts of the issues involved. Both write clearly and with confidence. The editor must have been relieved to receive an epilogue of the quality of McKenzie's. I wonder, though, if this was deliberate or occurred by chance? McKenzie introduces ideas not present earlier, and does not take up some of the important themes. His contribution could, indeed, stand alone. It seems to me that an editorial summary, revisiting the major themes, highlighting the many questions raised, and arguing a future scenario would have enhanced the volume. In many respects this has been achieved in Sultana's (1987) excellent review essay based on the present book. If a second edition appears, his summary will afford excellent guidance to the editor.

It is always a coup to persuade a Minister of the Crown to write for an academic text. Marshall's statement is interesting and demonstrates his liberal-meritocratic background, which sits a little uncomfortably with the critical theory-based predominance in this text. Finally, Nolan and Ryba provide an excellent case study of quite specific techniques. Their contribution is also very useful, albeit, as with Marshall, a little out-of-place in this volume.

And now a word for the publishers. I have long admired Dunmore for their willingness to publish New Zealand books written for New Zealanders. I am sure publishing this text, with a relatively small target audience, was something of a financial risk. I hope the risk proves to be justified. As always the print is clear, only a few typographical errors are to be found, and the text is reasonably well indexed.

To conclude - I've already told one of my colleagues that this is a book to be bought and not borrowed. It represents a blending of the work of the older generation of Massey scholars with the new, and adds an outside perspective as well. Overall a most commendable publication, which will initiate much needed debate in one of the most problematic areas of education.

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Waldegrave, C., Coventry, R. **Poor New Zealand**. Wellington: Platform Publishing. 1987.

Reviewed by M. O'Brien, Department of Social Policy and Social Work Massey University.

Occasionally, but only occasionally, poverty becomes the brief focus of attention in public and media debates in this country. One of these times has arrived again with the publication of **Poor New Zealand** (PNZ) by Charles Waldegrave and Rosalind Coventry. PNZ gathers together much of the disparate literature on poverty in New Zealand, particularly literature that describes and discusses the lives and lifestyle of the poor. It is an impressive, depressing and furiously disturbing picture that is painted. The impressiveness arises from the range of material that has been canvassed; the depressiveness and disturbance arises from two sources - the fact that New Zealanders are forced to live in such circumstances and secondly the perpetuation of that situation.

The case studies used to illustrate the more general points are powerful in themselves. One of the strongest messages however is the pervasiveness of the poverty - it extends to all aspects of life. Local and international research have displayed that connection constantly and continuously for a long time now. PNZ serves to remind us, if such a reminder is necessary. There have been some responses to and reviews of the work of Waldegrave and Coventry (PNZ). These responses and reviews have concentrated very heavily on challenging and criticising the figures that are used and arguing for a particular level of income as "the poverty line". Davey, for example, criticises the book as 'simplistic and frequently misleading' in its use of income figures, arguing that:

> anyone who has looked into the facts of income distribution....will soon be made aware of the problems of defining, documenting, measuring and monitoring the adequacy of income and service provision. (Davey, 1987)

The criticism based on so-called "facts of income distribution" was taken further recently by Preston (1987). In his paper to a recent Planning Council seminar on the topic of wealth and incomes, he argued:

> The income support policy now in place in New Zealand appears to provide adequately for most identifiable categories of household if adequacy is defined in relation to established cash benefit levels and Family Support payments. (Preston, 1987:12)

This argument takes the adequacy of the benefit level for granted, without any examination of whether that is so. He also does not discuss the question of equality at all, but concentrates on a minimum. Using the benefit level as a measuring tool, he then goes on to argue that there are few in poverty in New Zealand, a self-fulfilling prophecy. Earlier in the same paper, the ideological basis of his argument is well revealed in the following statement:

(T)he closer income support levels approximate market earning levels in the economy the less incentive many individuals have to provide for their own support and the more likely they are to become benefit dependent in the long term. The adverse consequences for people caught up in a pattern of long term benefit dependence were clearly spelt out in the Maori Economic Summit. (Ibid:3)

Such an argument is built around an assumption that there is such an entity as a "poverty line". Those below the line are in poverty, those above have escaped from its clutches. Measuring the numbers in poverty then becomes a simple matter of counting those below the line. The methodological difficulties in such an approach are well reviewed by Townsend (1970), Rein (1970), Saunders (1980) - to name but three sources. An approach that attempts simply to count the numbers on the basis of some supposed line assumes poverty can be dealt with without the issues of wealth, inequality and income distribution being considered. PNZ could have gone further in making that link because what is missing from most of the discussions of poverty in New Zealand is the link with inequality - the situation of "the poor" is somehow seen to be unrelated to the situation of "the rich". In their discussion of poverty and inequality, Hill and Bramley make the point simply and clearly that an approach to poverty which focuses on resources needs to have as its base a concentration which locates poverty within the wider social inequalities. This concentration on inequalities does not mean that poverty is seen to be synonymous with inequality, but does allow, and indeed demand, that those who are at greatest risk of relative deprivation have their situation viewed in relation to those who have the most. Rather than asking why some have less, perhaps we should be asking why do some have more. They put the argument succinctly. Examination of inequality must:

include issues about the distribution of wealth, including assets in non-cash forms such as houses and possessions. It must include services in kind, both those provided by the state, and those provided by others....Finally it needs to take into account assets in forms which, whilst not necessarily realisable at the time, will eventually contribute to enhancing the well-being of the individual, that is rights to pension, assistance when sick and so on. (Hill and Bramley, 1986:45)

Poverty, as a crucial part of the tail end of inequality, takes centre stage in any consideration of the political and economic structure of society. Such a connection is however often lacking in the New Zealand context. Certainly, the arguments advanced by Davey and by Preston (see references above) do not link the two together. We need to examine why the connection is not made - the Heylen Inquiry in 1984 (Heylen Research Centre 1984) linked the two parts in interesting and important ways, but that connection has seldom been followed up.

One of the factors that support and assist the focus on poverty rather than inequality, and also allow for perpetuation and deepening of poverty is the heavy emphasis of academics, media, politicians, bureaucrats, social workers and others on individuals and individualism. There are very good ideological explanations as to why this is so; that is beyond this review but it is worth drawing attention briefly to some illustrations and examples of that ideology at work.

The ideology that focuses on *individual* achievement allows those at the tail end of inequality to be seen as *individual* failures responsible for their own situation and located there because of *individual* weakness and failure. It is an approach that stresses individual pathology as the cause of poverty - poverty results from individual

weakness and is totally unrelated to the structure and organisation of society. The systematic nature of relative deprivation as revealed by PNZ is ignored by focusing on the *individual* - issues of class, gender and ethnicity are systematically excluded from consideration. Such exclusion could be theoretically and philosophically defended if there was no consistent picture and pattern to the structure of inequality. Such a consistent picture and pattern does however operate. The evidence of this is clear in PNZ; it is shown too in the initial publications from the Royal Commission on Social Policy (Royal Commission, 1987), and in such academic texts as Shannon (1986), Pearson and Thorns (1984); Simpson (1984); Spoonley et al. (1982).

The historical dimensions of this are partially demonstrated by Castles (1985) in his comparative exploration of the development of welfare in New Zealand. As he argues, the continuing emphasis on development of a selective approach to welfare, means that the class features of New Zealand society do not need to be dealt with, and the notions of individual responsibility and the basic fairness of the society remain intact. Poverty, not inequality, remains the focus of attention, and within that the individual and idiosyncratic behaviour of what is presented as the "deviant few" remains as the parameter of attention. As I noted at the beginning, the approach as outlined by Preston gives the official weight to this.

It is this broader approach that PNZ incorporates without pursuing fully and comprehensively. No doubt, the authors' linkage of the two areas helps explain in part why there was so much resistance to its ideas and arguments in the period after it was released. Both Alcock (1987) and George and Lawson (1980) make the point clearly and cogently that there are possibilities of improving the position of the poor within the existing economic and political structures. These possibilities are limited but nonetheless real.

> It is the fear of indirect costs to welfare capitalism that is more real; the fear that such a scheme will undermine work incentives and that it will act as a springboard for demands for further improvements in the guaranteed minimum living standards. In other words, abolition of poverty will lead to increased demands for reductions in income and wealth inequalities. (George and Lawson, 1980:241)

Whether the outcome predicted by the final sentence occurs depends on what is developed as an ideology alongside the abolition of poverty. That remains for a hoped for future. An explanation of poverty in the present only makes sense if it (poverty) is located within the context of a discussion and analysis of inequality in society. There are a host of forces keen to discourage such a context. PNZ should help to support that crucial wider discussion.

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