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New Zealand feature films: their state and status.

Chris Watson, Education Department
Massey University

John Mortimer, author and playwright, in his autobiography, Clinging to the Wreckage, says that a film industry is a vital part of any nation's culture. (1982:188) It is a little surprising that an Anglo-Saxon should make such a comment because in general film does not carry the "cultural capital" in our society that it does for countries like France where it is regarded as the "sixth art"; where state support is extensive and where people in general can achieve status and prestige from the films they have seen and are able to discuss. Furthermore it is often implied that only large nations can have a film "culture" with all its overtones of depth and excellence; small countries may have a film "industry" with its connotations of commercialism and manufacturing.

Smaller countries which lie in the shadow of a larger producer tend especially to be patronized in this way; Canada by the U.S.A., Scotland by England and New Zealand by Australia.[1] Worse still the inhabitants of the smaller may well develop feelings of inferiority in the matter. But, there is no reason why they should. All art is coloured by the society in which it is created; and that society will always be a varied and interesting thing. Furthermore, the disparate elements that lead the filmically prolific nations to claim a "culture" may be found in smaller societies too. Whereas an "industry" is purely a matter of commerce - a " film culture" encompasses all the infrastructure of criticism, education, literature and understanding. Much more than mere production is involved but this infrastructure can be found in most, perhaps all, film producing nations.

Jan Dawson, in Cinema Papers, the Australian film magazine, said that:-

> What is generally meant by a "film culture" is, in the broadest terms, a nation's proud sense of its film history and achievements, coupled with an informed critical awareness of developments in cinema throughout the world, and an ability to locate and evaluate the national achievements in the wider, international context. It implies an ability to view films other than as isolated and unrelated events, and is generally taken to flourish in proportion as film is seen/presented in the context of an era, a genre, a director's work, a particular studio style, a school of film-making or - ideally - all these at once. (1977:307)

Perhaps one more criterion is missing and that is the extent to which a country's films reflect aspects of the indigenous culture and concerns in preference to mere attempts to

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1   An example is the way that Australia is claiming Vincent Ward's latest success, **The Navigator** (1988) as their own because at the last moment they helped finance it. It won six major awards at the Australian Film Institute's 1988 ceremony.

follow a foreign formula without modification. This article attempts to consider the extent to which New Zealand's national cinema meets these criteria for defining the country's film industry as being part of a wider "film culture" and in doing so sets out headings which can be applied by other nations to see if they too can justify at least an awareness amongst their own people that the films which they see constitute something more than a formula for pleasant escapism. In so doing they will be giving their people a pride in one more aspect of their national identity.

A "Film Culture" denotes a "proud history" of substantial film achievements.

New Zealand's recent prominence on the world cinema scene is viewed by many out of context. It is assumed that an industry has developed fully-fledged in the last ten years. If knowledge of this modern industry is somewhat superficial, that of the industry's origins is often non-existent to many outside New Zealand. In fact the first film screening took place at the Opera House, Auckland, on the 13 October 1896 when professors Hausman and Gow, of Otago University's engineering department, introduced Edison's Kinematograph as an item in the programme of Godfrey's Vaudeville Company (a familiar combination of science and showmanship that exemplifies the earliest origins of the cinema!). (Sowry 1977:3)

However, the first film shot in New Zealand was **The Opening of the Auckland Exhibition** by A. H. Whitehouse on 1 December 1898. Then, during the first decade of this century the "Limelight" department of the Salvation Army was active in New Zealand as it was in Australia. The first feature film to be made in New Zealand was **Hinemoa** by George Tarr, in 1914. Thence followed a period of prolific production. More commercial feature-length films were made in the years between 1914 and 1926 than in any other period until the last decade. Some were "epics" seeking pakeha (European) roots; for example **The Birth of New Zealand** (1922), was inspired by the success of D. W. Griffith's **Birth of a Nation.** Many espoused Maori themes. The concern with things Maori is a noteworthy thread that runs through New Zealand's film production. Indeed there is something distinctly colonial about New Zealand's early film history. Although the film-makers were generally liberal pakehas they were not above using white actors in black-face. (Sklar 1971:150)

The Maori myths which they portrayed were often romanticized and even adapted to match the classic European stories. For example Alexander Markey, a colourful American film-maker who worked in the South Pacific during the twenties and thirties, made a film called **Hei Tiki** (1935) in which he worked over a classic Maori story. Geoff Steven, in an interesting documentary, interviewed surviving players and exposed much of the exploitation and cultural superiority that was part of Markey's *modus operandi.* (Steven:1984)

Other early features treated the traumatic period of the Maori-pakeha land-wars only a few decades after their conclusion. Robert Sklar the American film historian, noted that **Rewi's Last Stand** (1925) and the **Te Kooti Trail** (1927) differed from many other colonial portrayals of a native race in that the Maori was portrayed as a chivalrous and skillful fighter. (1971:168) The portrayal of a proud and powerful race was somewhat at odds with the reality of the first half of the twentieth century when the despair of defeat made desperate by the confiscation of their lands and compounded by the scourge of alcohol and tuberculosis were combining to decimate the indigenous population.

European fascination with "dusky beauties" can be seen in many of the early romances as can a preoccupation with cross-cultural marriage. There is quite a measure of

ambivalence in the topic combining elements of European disapproval of miscegenation with an awareness that inter-marriage might be the way to create a new and integrated nation. The dream and reality were apparently closing as the century progressed.

The film-maker with the longest association with the industry in New Zealand was Rudall Hayward. Born in England, Hayward came to New Zealand in 1905, at the age of five, with his parents, who made up part of a large family of touring entertainers. Hayward senior soon owned a modest chain of cinemas throughout the country. Rudall worked in the Auckland ones as a projectionist until in 1920 he joined an Australian film company, headed by Beaumont Smith, which was making a film, called **The Betrayer**, at Rotorua. (Sklar 1971:148) From this period on he struggled to make films until his death in 1974, two years after completing his last film, **To Love a Maori**. Hayward, with more than 50 years in the cinema to his credit is considered the doyen of New Zealand film. He illustrates the thematic concern with the Maori wars and with inter-racial relationships already mentioned. Robert Sklar, wrote that the contrast between Hayward's depiction of the Maori and the Hollywood myth of the American West was 'most striking'. He added:-

> The dominant visual planes of the last half of Mr. Hayward's film (**Rewi's Last Stand**) are vertical, conveying a sense of the land. Yet it is a familiar land, a benign and even loved land, to be lived with, in contrast to the Western's horizontal planes depicting a scenic but also awesome land, to be seized or traversed. Even more significant is the theme of racial conflict. Until recently the American Indians were pictured in films as ruthless and treacherous antagonists, a people fighting against white encroachment but hardly ever shown as representing a life or culture of their own. In Rudall Hayward's handling of New Zealand conflict the Maoris are treated with dignity and indeed their sense of the land precedes and even shapes that of the Europeans. (Sklar:148)

In fact much of the landscape of Maori-Pakeha conflict does not consist of the open vistas of the Western but rather the jungle-green of the New Zealand forest. Military historians have observed that it was the forest canopy that protected the New Zealand Maori from the annihilation that befell his counterpart in the open grasslands of America and Australia.

His contribution to Pakeha culture included an unusual Roadshow whereby Hayward took a standard script about the country - shot it in twenty-two country towns (and some cities) using local actors, actresses and settings - proceeded to develop and edit the two-reel film thus obtained and a matter of only days later exhibited it to a packed "World Premiere". (Sowry 1977:5) Only two of these films with appealing, if sexist titles like **Patsy from Palmerston** or **A Takapuna Scandal**, still survive[2]. This material was very lightweight; primarily entertaining theatre-goers with images of themselves. The films had none of the "bite" of his indigenous epic films.

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2   The only surviving examples of Hayward's short comedies are **A Daughter from Christchurch** (1928) and **A Takapuna Scandal** (which Hayward shortened to fifteen minutes in a re-edited version made in the 1950's. (Sklar 1971:149)

However, Hayward never made more than a bare living from his films. Only a short documentary about a dolphin which visited a North Island harbour and entranced the locals was ever taken up for world distribution and a profitable fee. Neither is he given much popular recognition for the artistic quality of his work the received wisdom being that he was a "good technician". The fact that he constructed his own sound system rather than pay the exorbitant world price at the time is often quoted - and much admired by the current crop of New Zealand film makers whose ability to "make do" is likewise seen as a virtue! (Sowry 1977:11)

In the period 1940 to 1970 only three New Zealand feature films were produced. All were made by Pacific Films Ltd., a company formed by Roger Mirams who was later joined by John O'Shea. Together, they made **Broken Barrier** (1952), another film with a race relations theme. Subsequently O'Shea produced **Runaway** (1964) followed by **Don't Let it Get You** (1966). Neither returned its costs so Pacific Films shelved further plans for features and concentrated on documentaries and, following the introduction of television to New Zealand in 1960, on commercials.

It can be seen that whilst there is a history of feature film production the period of expensive sound production saw no regular work in this field. The only continuity of film production was in the making of short films - scenics and industrials, beauty contests and screen tests and local news films made by exhibitors . Those who made such films kept alive dreams of full length movies and in the fields of documentaries and experimental film developed formidable skills. The two art schools offered courses in film making as an adjunct to their Fine Art offerings and, in October 1972, a group in Auckland formed a co-operative under the name "Alternative Cinema". It was from these roots that the feature film renaissance of the 1970s stemmed.

The first major production from the Alternative Cinema group was **Test Pictures** (1973). **Test Pictures** was important for many reasons. It enthused a whole new generation of young people for the possibilities of film making. It used finance from the Arts Council thus demonstrating the importance of "seeding" by the public purse. It attracted the attention of conservative morals groups - in the ubiquitous persona of Patricia Bartlett. In addition the film demonstrated a mood and direction which stemmed from its makers' interest in film and in art and which was different from the customary narrative approach adopted by earlier New Zealand film makers. This film emphasized mood, landscape and visual structure as it traced a summer spent at a bush-surrounded beach in West Auckland, by a young couple (Lee Feltham and Denis Taylor).

Two other developments were significant at this time. On television a series of plays called **Winners and Losers** followed the initial success of a pilot production based on a short story by Katherine Mansfield called **Woman at the Store** (1974). These plays began to habituate the New Zealand public to the sound of its own voice. Roger Horrocks has reported that as a child he remembered audiences laughing in discomfort when they first heard a New Zealand accent on the screen. (Horrocks 1983:1) Television offered the opportunity to correct this embarrassment. This series of six plays was a considerable success and was sold to the U.S.A. and to many European countries. It gave the first boost of renewed pride in indigenous film and a vision that more might be attempted and could reasonably be expected to succeed.

In terms of Maori film and Maori pride another series of six documentaries about Maori life were produced at much the same time. Called **Tangata Whenua** (1974), the director was Barry Barclay, himself part Maori. The producer was O'Shea of Pacific

Films, for whom Barclay had worked and the script writer and "presenter" was Michael King, a pakeha with a deep understanding of things Maori. Although subsequent works have been more wholly the productions of Maori people this series was as seminal as was the Winners and Losers series in sensitising New Zealanders to themselves on screen and pointing to the way that things might develop.

Following **Test Pictures** and these healthy developments in "Films for Television" came two more important films:- **Wild Man** (1977), which saw Geoff Murphy's debut as a director, and **Off the Edge** (1975), a beautiful and very successful full-length documentary directed by Michael Firth. The publicity and relative success of these films resulted in finance being found for the first 35 mm feature film to be made since **Don't Let it Get You**, a decade earlier. The film was **Sleeping Dogs**, made for $450,000.

Sleeping Dogs (1977), based on a novel by Carl Stead, dealt with a future New Zealand ruled by a dictator who was opposed by a group of guerrillas reluctantly joined by an "ordinary man". It looked like a "real" film. It looked "big". It looked expensive. The air-force was spectacularly involved (Tom Scott - a political satirist - observed that they used up their entire year's supply of kerosene without realizing that they had been cast as the "baddies". (Scott, 1977:24) It had a big-name foreign star in Warren Oates as the American "assistant" to the totalitarian government. Above all the film had "quality" - the images were clear and brilliantly photographed. The audience gasped as the helicopters rose from the Coramandel forest; they responded to places they knew being used as tangible settings for a political drama. Last but not least this professional looking film did not lose money but showed every sign of a potential profit through world-wide distribution.

This was enough to create the break-through that had been so eagerly sought. In each of the four years 1979 - 1982 between three and five feature films were finished. All were competent and many were more than that achieving local and international acclaim. Finally, in 1983 and 1984, under a particularly benevolent tax regime a total of twenty-nine were completed. If one was willing to accept that a film culture did depend solely on the creation of "product" in a copious diversity then New Zealand had achieved both quantity and variety by 1985.

A national "Film Culture" has films that reflect perceived national concerns.
If it is accepted that a history of film production and a substantial volume of film material is a prerequisite for a film culture then the next most significant feature is an identification of that product with the culture which has produced it. It must speak to the people about the people, and they, the audience, must understand what is being said and respond to that message. In 1983 Roger Horrocks, a senior lecturer in English at Auckland University, presented a paper at the New Zealand Sociology Conference in Palmerston North in which he considered the 'Social Problems and Stereotypes in New Zealand Films'. (Horrocks August 1983) He stressed the point that as there were many sub-cultures in New Zealand so there were many different stereotypes in New Zealand's films. In other words it was clear that the country was not the homogeneous mass that outsiders, and some of its own citizens, believed it to be.

The first diversity that Roger Horrocks pointed to was that of age. He noted that the majority of the new people involved in film-making were of the same generation i.e. born in the forties, educated and politicized in the sixties; and that the major audience was even younger having been born in the sixties. As a result the film-makers were

prepared to work within the parameters of the sixties' free-speech and sexual liberation movements and the youthful audience was prepared to accept this. However, the establishment was not. Patricia Bartlett continually objected to the content of many films and protested the use of government money to produce them. The then Prime Minister, Sir Robert Muldoon, in a speech at the opening of a Christian youth headquarters also took the opportunity to deplore the fact that:-

> Our television and cinema screens offer a wide variety of films depicting almost the whole gamut of violence, unrestrained sexual freedom and even hints, or worse of perversion. (Horrocks, 1983:2)

The films that they were objecting to included;- **Angelmine** (1978) which was written, produced and directed by a very young David Blyth. The film was a feature-length drama examining the relationships of a suburban couple. It cost very little to make but part of the money came from the Arts Council and the newly created Film Commission and so was open to pressure from objectors to the surreal and relatively explicit sex scenes. That the film owed its inspiration in part to **Chien Andalou** by Blyth's early heroes Bunuel and Dali, and was an energetic mix of "black comedy" and satire escaped the audience and many of the critics alike. In 1988 a film in somewhat similar style, **Bad Taste**, largely avoided such opprobrium and did pull in large audiences. Indeed, in Palmerston North it was the most successful of the annual Film Festival screenings!

Until **Footrot Flats - A Dog's Tale** in 1987, **Goodbye Pork Pie** (1980) was commercially the most successful New Zealand film. A "road movie" tracing the adventures of two men and a woman who steal a car and travel the length of the country, it attracted very large audiences of mostly young people. However, Geoff Murphy, the director and co-writer, has remarked:-

> The film had a tremendously polarizing effect on people - Among people under thirty there was an almost universal reaction - they loved it. People between thirty and forty were mixed, but people over that all hated it. Some even wanted to know if they could stop it being made. This made it hard to finance because that is the age group with all the money. (Horrocks 1983:2)

The third film which caused problems was another of David Blyth's; a horror film called **Death Warmed Up** (1984). Directed in an extreme B-movie style it was rejected by the small adult New Zealand audience who actually saw it (and by most of the critics) as having no relevance to New Zealand and none of its roots here. Not that everyone missed the point. Bill Gosden, the director of the Wellington Film Festival, presented it as his choice to the London Film Festival where it was extremely well received. (Shelton, 1984:3) Similarly it did very well in France where it was given a 40 print release and won the prestigious Grand Prix at the 1984 International Festival of Fantasy and Science Fiction Films in Paris.

That these films point to a previously unacknowledged diversity in New Zealand's Youth Society was noted by Roger Horrocks who pointed out that the young audience for Blyth's films is quite different from that for **Goodbye Pork Pie**. He makes the comparison with the music scene where the audiences for "Top 20", "Rock", " New Wave" etc., are all quite discrete. (Horrocks, 1983:4) The censor almost grasped it too when he added a rider to the certificate for **Angel Mine**: 'contains punk material'.

Some New Zealand films did take the risk of dealing with themes that might appeal to the more mature audience that had been lost to the cinema. For example **Middle Age Spread** (1979), based on a stage play by Roger Hall that had done extremely good business in the theatre (in London as well as in New Zealand) proved to be equally successful as a film. Modestly made, in 16mm, it succeeded in attracting almost 80,000 admissions from amongst its target audience and sold readily as a television programme in Europe. As with many of Roger Hall's works the script echoed the language and problems of the mature urban liberal.

Much more common is a setting that pays homage to New Zealand's rural past. **Beyond Reasonable Doubt** (1980), which attracted much the same audience as **Middle Age Spread**, is set in rural Pukekawa, south of Auckland. The misty-wet photography captures the feel of the area as well as serving to suggest the foggy entrapment of its protagonist - a man wrongfully accused of murder. The theme dealt with another of New Zealand's preoccupations i.e. "The Man Alone" who is up against the State, or Nature, and must cope with a power that appears out to crush him.

Vincent Ward's much acclaimed **Vigil** (1984) (the first New Zealand film to be accepted for the competition section at Cannes) picks up this misty rural isolation and makes it the main theme of the film. The brilliant camera work by Alun Bollinger creates an incredible sense of awe - the images have an ethereal aspect and feel as though they come from some distant medieval past or alien planet. Yet New Zealanders recognize them as a truer portrayal of their landscape than all the sunny scenes presented in their tourist documentaries.

The "Small Town" is another favoured setting in the cinema. In fact only 10% of New Zealand's population lives in towns of 1000 - 20,000 people but such a place is invariably the choice location and the setting for the New Zealand rural myth. Geoff Steven likes to build a story around a particular location. (Horrocks, 1984 (b):2) For example he set **Skin Deep** (1978) in Raetahi (renamed "Carlton") a town of about 1000 in the central North Island almost completely off the beaten track. The story tells of the response of the small town's inhabitants to the attempts of a city girl to establish a massage parlour there. The fact that the film was so well received by people who now lived in large (for New Zealand) cities testifies to the resonance of small-town imagery. Indeed, the ideology of the small town is a significant component of New Zealand's group psychology. An important setting from this tradition is the "Country Dance", repeated in **Bad Blood** (1981), **Smash Palace** (1982) and **Came a Hot Friday** (1984). It is almost ubiquitous as a source of amusement at rural *gaucherie* and as a setting for potential conflict.

Conflict is very much a part of the cinema's repertoire. After all conflict is the source of tension which is the source of drama. But, there is something peculiarly New Zealand about the type of conflict that occurs in her films. For one thing the hero is often inarticulate, like Stanley Graham in **Bad Blood**, or Al in **Smash Palace**. It is, in fact, quite common for the conflict to be over some aspect of sexuality. A surprising number of New Zealand films show violence against women and even more noteworthy a number deal with incest. Sometimes it is implied, as in **Constance** (1984) and possibly in **The Scarecrow** (1982), but in both **Trespasses** (1983) and **Heart of the Stag** (1983) it is the centre of the story line. Of the latter, Variety said that 'the best New Zealand films all seem to deal with violent family relationships' and Sandra Coney, in Broadsheet wrote that 'Sexual violence has run like a dark stain through most recent New Zealand movies.' (Coney, 1985:13)

If a true "film culture" requires that the cinema reflects the 'reality of the people who create it', is there evidence that in society at large such behaviour is common? Miriam Saphira would say that it is. Her research points to a startling 20% of all New Zealand women having been molested in some way before they were sixteen. (Saphira, 1983:45)

In recent years several women have also directed and produced feature films. They have tended not to address such "hard" areas of sexual conflict. **Trial Run** (1983) is a feature length film about Rosemary, a runner and photographer who whilst living alone in an isolated beach cottage finds herself more and more threatened by something indefinable. Melanie Read, the writer and director, said, when challenged, that the feminist message is muted in this film:-

> I didn't make **Trial Run** as a radical lesbian film because it wasn't made from that view, it was made from the feminist part of me. What I am aiming towards eventually are films that deal with the homosexual and lesbian issues as well... I'm aware that an outspoken lesbian will be quickly and eagerly silenced, so I'm taking it slowly. I have to establish a track record before I'm allowed to make those sorts of films. If you're into mainstream cinema, as I am, there are unfortunately, certain rules you have to obey. (Horrocks, 1985 (a):3)

On the other hand a male critic, Nicholas Reid said that the film was:-

> frankly polemical about women, men and marriage. In fact, seen as a whole, the plot of resisted threats is only one element in its questioning of accepted sex roles. (1986:103)

There is also something "Gothic"[3] about the threat from the house in **Trial Run** and in a way there is also in Gayleen Preston's first feature, **Mr. Wrong** (1984). It too dealt with a woman under threat, this time by the ghostly presence of a woman who had previously been murdered in a car which she had bought. Ms. Preston pointed out that her film is:-

> basically about fear and the victim/predator relationship... the fears which women have to juggle with every day - walking in the street at night or being alone in the house. (Preston, 1985:7)

An additional message highlights 'the ludicrousness of the search for the "man of your dreams"'. (Ibid:4) The prime marketing appeal of the film, however, is as a thriller/mystery. The premiere releases at the Auckland and Wellington Film Festivals in 1985 were enormously successful but the film was not taken up by either of New Zealand's cinema chains both of which claimed that it was not likely to be a commercial success.

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3   Tania Modleski has emphasized the significance of the house in which women feel trapped as central to many stories in the "Gothic" subset of women's romantic fiction. Similarly the house is used in many a horror film. (1982:35ff)

Another film-maker who had trouble in securing a release for her major production was Merata Mita with her full length documentary of the protests against the 1981 Springbok rugby tour of New Zealand. Her film, **Patu** (1983), was rejected by both chains. As it too was an immense success in the independent theatres, on campuses and at Film Society screenings, Merata Mita came to be convinced that the refusal to give it a commercial release indicated political opposition on the part of the businessmen concerned. Indeed, in the bitter political climate of the time she found many examples of possible interference from those who would rather the film had not been made but her film was well received overseas and won various awards including the International Students' Prize at the Leipzig Festival and the MRAP prize at Amiens.

Merata Mita has also made several very persuasive and articulate documentaries. They are usually seen as radically political but she says that the politics come from the nature of the material and not from any polemic intent:-

> You make a film about a social issue and that causes a political stir, so it's more
> truthful to say that I'm not a political film maker but that my films make politics. As
> far as being radical, I only appear to be so because of the country's attitudes towards
> women and Maoris. (Horrocks, 1984 (a):4)

Her latest film is her first feature film entitled **Mauri** (1988). In this story she melds aspects of disaffected urban Maori with romantic referral to the cultural roots of those who live in rural, coastal Eastland. Eva Rickard has magnificent charisma as the rock to whom the troubled turn.

Predictably the Pakeha critics have commented negatively on the quality of acting but given grudging admiration to the technical skill of photography, especially to the superb aerial shots that conclude the film. It has also been generally agreed that there is something unique in seeing a Maori perspective of themes extensively treated by the Pakeha in the past. For example the marriage of Steve and Raupati is treated quite differently from the way O'Shea and Hayward dealt with the topic. There is also a sympathetic and heroic portrayal of characters such as the urban gang leader, Willi, with which Pakeha society finds it hard to empathize. This film is set in the 1960's. In the 1980's the, largely Maori gang culture evokes in the Paheka primordial fears of the native. Geoff Murphy had achieved a similar disquiet with the scene in **Utu** where the rebels (or freedom fighters) of the 19th century sacked the settler's house and threw the grand piano from the upper storey! To the pakeha audience he had dressed his men in a style uncomfortably close to that adopted by the 20th century gangs.

In fairness it must be said that the above could be a simplistic reading of the film. Bourdieu has pointed out that ethnic differences are easily "named" and may mask quite marked objective differences. (Bourdieu 1985:730) In the case of both **Mauri** and **Utu** the theme that is really being treated might well be the contrast between the individualism of the Pakeha world *vis a vis* the communal of the Maori.

Before beginning **Mauri**, in 1985, Merata Mita worked on the script of **The Quiet Earth** which is a future story based on a novel by Craig Harrison. This story tells of three survivors (the only three it transpires) of a cataclysm and their struggle to find each other and negate the force. As with other of Craig Harrison's writings this one is working in an area of possibility for New Zealand which is well aware of its placement as the only likely survivor of some future holocaust. Of course , it is also working in

the New Zealand tradition of "Man Alone", isolated and male-centred as well as reflecting the new "country alone" anti-nuclear stance of New Zealand in the South Pacific.

Others reflecting this kind of concern include **Sleeping Dogs, Death Warmed Up** and Geoff Steven's **Strata** (1982). In each case the State is responsible for covert manipulation of people - something of a preoccupation with New Zealand's writers and commentators - and quite rightly so in a country of only three million people where an oligarchy could easily hold control.

These then are some of the themes covered in New Zealand's films that reflect the debates and tensions within society as a whole:- between young and old, between male and female, between city and country, between Maori and Pakeha, between Authority and the Rebel.

A "Film Culture" will reflect and utilize aspects of a national art scene.
There is another aspect in which a film culture can reflect a significant aspect of the national psyche and that is the extent to which it reflects the work done by a country's artists. Firstly, it should be considered whether or not there is an "art" film produced in New Zealand. Such films would reflect the art movements in painting and photography; probably be abstruse and most likely only loosely tied to narrative. This consideration is also one of audience. Pierre Bourdieu, in his book **Distinction - A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste** has used choice of films as a way of classifying people according to 'cultural capital'. (1984:27) Those who select the esoteric being "rich" in prestige (if not in money). This raises consideration of "High" versus "Low" culture and its significance. Certainly the arguments of some against state support for various projects has been based on considerations of cultural (un)worthiness.

Perhaps the most striking example of the art film in New Zealand stems from the work of Vincent Ward who attended art school in Christchurch. He first came to prominence for the direction of a short feature film (52 mins.) called **A State of Siege** (1978). Based on a novel by Janet Frame it won the Golden Hugo award for best student film at the Chicago Film Festival and the Gold Medal Jury Prize at the Miami Festival. Two years later he completed a remarkable documentary about an 82 year old Maori woman who lived alone in a remote forest caring for her middle-aged and handicapped son. The haunting images of loving care amidst a poor but verdant rural landscape in **In Spring One Plants Alone** made a deep impression on New Zealand audiences working once again on resonances related to race and to a remote rural heartland.

This film also received much overseas acclaim. Thus when he came to work on his first feature film the result was awaited with much anticipation. Indeed Pierre-Henri Deleau came from France to view the work whilst it was being edited and was sufficiently impressed to recommend its selection for Competition at the Cannes Film Festival. Whilst reception there was mixed the consensus was that something very impressive had been produced very far from France and at the Prades Festival a little later in the year **Vigil** was acclaimed as the best film of the festival by popular vote! (Horrocks, 1985 (b):4)

The film, above all, demonstrates an absolute felicity with imagery via light and shade beautifully realized by Alun Bollinger, his cameraman on the project. The misty-wet scenes of Taranaki have an eerie timelessness and the dream sequences a surrealistic

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overtone. The theme itself once again includes scenes of inarticulate sexuality and a love-making episode that is close to rape. This world is viewed through the eyes of a young girl which accounts for the tension stemming from her attempts to make sense of what she sees in this isolated valley.

More recently Ward has had similar success with **The Navigator** (1988) which was "invited" for screening in the prestigious "directors' section" of the Cannes Festival in 1988. It too went on to win a string of prizes including six at the Australian Film Institute's annual award ceremony.

The concept of "awards" for films is an interesting one. The Navigator has not been shown in New Zealand but the media have been full of its success overseas and clips have been shown on Television News when the awards have been mentioned. Lindsay Shelton, Marketing Director for the New Zealand Film Commission, has said that such prizes are an important element in achieving success for New Zealand's films with a New Zealand audience. His argument is a commercial one. However, Bourdieu would see it as the acknowledgement of its worth as cultural capital through the accreditation by qualification - a prize, in fact. This indicates to the public that the film has been verified by the *cognescenti* as worthy of attention so that when it is screened in New Zealand that portion of society which would not regularly go to the cinema as part of a popular culture experience will make the effort to attend as part of an elite cultural experience. It might just be that there will be enough such people for the film to succeed commercially.

The images of Vigil in their browns and muted greys resemble those of Toss Woollaston, one of New Zealand's most noted landscape artists. This is in contrast to the type of hard-edged, brilliantly defined images that are more common in New Zealand and would seem to owe more to artists like Michael Smither and the almost surreal images of Peter Siddell. For example Morrison's **Constance** has a "style" about its images that looks surprisingly like Sidell's paintings of Edwardian homes.

However, despite its success overseas and the long runs in some major cities **Vigil** has not been screened in the provinces (most probably because of commercial perceptions that an "appreciative" audience does not exist there - for reasons outlined above) and it looks as though many New Zealanders will miss the opportunity to appreciate the lambent images on the large screen (it was released on video-tape in early 1986). The difference between the treatment given to this film and to those of producer Larry Parr, such as **Came a Hot Friday** (1984) suggests that there is indeed a dichotomy in New Zealand cinema between the "art" film for the intellectual elite and the "popular" film for the mass. Indeed Bourdieu (1983:311ff) wrote that in Art the more popular a work the less is its status or cultural capital (which is not to say that **Came a Hot Friday** did not have its share of quite brilliant rural settings and humour). Perhaps as the appreciative public grows so the audience for the more sophisticated films will become viable - which will be to the surprise of the commercial sceptics.

A "Film Culture" reflects national imagery through landscape and icons.
New Zealand's archetypal landscape is often said to be one of open spaces (Sklar 1977) but in fact the use of mountains and especially forests is equally common. True, **Utu** (1983) utilized the Taupo plain area and **Strata** and **Wild Horses** (1984) the volcanic Central Plateau but the back-lit green of the bush as used by Ward in **In Spring one Plants Alone** (1980) and Donaldson in **Sleeping Dogs** is equally common. In fact it would be true to say that the mark of the New Zealand landscape is

its variety and that her film-makers make full use of that variety. There may be one exception and that is that the urban landscape is underutilized - not completely, for example **Other Halves** (1985) was set in Auckland and the various Road Movies have at least gone through a city or two. Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that television as well tends to ignore the metropolitan setting.

The recurrent icons include the Stag, which stands for an introduced (like the European) creature of great majesty and strength. In **Heart of the Stag**, as might be expected, the beast makes several significant appearances. A large number of New Zealanders hunt, in their dreams if not in reality. The stag has meaning for these people as do the guns - which tend to be shot-guns more often than hand-guns. The giant shot-gun carried by Williams in **Utu** and the one selected by Al in **Smash Palace** would be typical examples. These weapons tend to be as much part of violence in New Zealand life as are pistols in countries where they are permitted.

Vehicles feature as symbols of movement and the "Open Road". They tend to be old , as indeed are many of the country's cars. They often drive off-road and New Zealand's special effects people are renowned for their skill. **Shaker Run** (1985) is the latest to make the most of the road genre. Another icon is that of the wooden house with the iron roof. To New Zealanders it marks their recent colonial origins and speaks of the simplicity of a life-style that can be built and maintained by the individual.

A "Film Culture" is recognized and fostered by the government.
In the early days of the renaissance of the New Zealand cinema industry money was forth-coming from the Arts Council to assist with production costs. Then, in 1978, the government agreed to set up a Film Commission with its own funds to distribute. The commission was also to assist with marketing. However, the main inducement for private enterprise to take part in film financing was a generous tax write-off. For a while this certainly existed in the form of a provision whereby the costs of film-production and marketing could be deducted in the year that the film was made. Since few films make money in the year that they are shot this meant that investors could expect a book loss to write off against their other forms of investment yet retaining the hope of profits in subsequent years. Such generous provisions are assumed to have brought in some speculators whose interest in the films themselves was minimal. As well there were some joint production deals with overseas companies that were considered neither to be beneficial to New Zealand's film people nor her tax payers. The result was that on Budget night in 1982 the old tax write-off period was replaced by one in which costs could only be deducted over a period of two years, starting after completion of the film - which in effect lengthened the write-off period to three years! The film commission chairman at the time, Bill Sheat, described this move as:-

> akin to first sinking the ship (by abolishing tax concessions) and then machine-gunning the survivors in the water (by enforcing the equivalent of a three-year write-off). (Fisher 1985: 35)

Immediately film-makers began to prophesy the demise of their industry in New Zealand but for nearly two years the worst did not eventuate because the government permitted projects in progress to be completed under the old rules. However by 1986 there were only two new features to take to Cannes. This heavy handed legislation is the most negative action that can be reported in terms of official assistance to an acknowledged "film culture ". The Labour government has increased the money available to the Film Commission but the industry really preferred to work in free

market conditions fearing that sourcing all production from official funds might well stifle criticism and increase pressure for pre-production censorship.

A liberal censorship provision for the films themselves is another way that a government can assist and recognize its own "film culture". Much has changed since the early sixties when New Zealand amused the world by permitting the public to watch **Ulysses** only in sexually segregated audiences. In particular a new Films Act (1983) has permitted the censor to be much more liberal than in the past. One particularly encouraging provision is an "RP + age" classification which permits children below the restricted age to be taken to see a film providing that they are accompanied by parent or guardian. This has been extended to include school-children with a teacher to attend a film that the school thinks could be useful.

To flourish a "Film Culture" needs an informed and educated public.
Such education can be obtained formally, through school curricula and university and polytechnic courses, and informally through informed criticism in newspapers and magazines. In addition Film Societies and Film Festivals assist a people to evaluate their national achievements in a wider international context. The secondary school curriculum had a section on film in the University Entrance prescription but the emphasis tended to be on book to film or film in comparison with a book. For example the questions sent out with the publicity material on **Sons for the Return Home** included the following:-

2. Do the characters in the film differ from the way you had imagined them when reading the novel (by Albert Wendt)?

3. What scenes from the novel have been dropped from the film and what has been added?"

Recent changes in the examination systems will allow the schools to give credit, through an internal assessment system, to exercises such as video making and questions that deal with the relevance of the material to the student's own environment. Questions such as the following:-

1. The director of the film, Paul Maunder, has said that the story "points to the difficulties of the underdeveloped world meeting the developed." How are these difficulties depicted in the film?... and

6. Do you feel that there is a problem of the media creating stereotyped images of social or racial groups, and are there any instances of this in **Sons for the Return Home?** (New Zealand. Film Commission, 1979:16)

Practical training in film production is still rudimentary although as has been suggested the two art school classes in film have been very influential on many of New Zealand's new generation of film makers. However, there is a popular and effective course taught within the English Department at Auckland and in the drama school at Victoria (Wellington). Massey University has one within the English Department and there is a strong component on Film in an Educational Media paper with others offered in Sociology and Anthropology. Most Teachers Colleges also offer courses, sometimes with a practical video element and one polytechnic, in Auckland, offers a unit on film-making. It would be fair to say that there is room for a lot more work in this area. New Zealand has nothing like the Film and Television School of Australia or the film schools to be found in most European countries.

An informal education of the public on filmic matters is undertaken by film critics in most newspapers and magazines. Some such as the Listener, Metro and More offer in depth critiques of a high standard. Even some of the provincial newspapers go beyond merely printing the publicity material distributed by the studios. There is a strong Film Society movement in the country. It grew out of the first urban societies formed in 1945 (Wellington) and 1946 (Auckland), which eventually (1947) combined into the Federation of New Zealand Film Societies. Membership grew to a peak of 7500 with several thousand in the largest, Wellington. The movement also directly assists with the major national film festivals which not only run in the four main cities but in a couple of the provincial ones as well. This International Film Festival is on the main world circuit and screens the films used in New York, London and Sydney festivals as well as allowing a premiere exposure to selected local offerings. Attendances at the festivals increase every year and many screenings are sold out even though the chosen theatres are the largest in each city.

The audience for film festivals is huge and could be a useful subject for research. Whilst some cinephiles attend every film many are selective and the audience appears to be segmented. The French films seem to be popular with the cultural elite; the Japanese and German with the intellectual elite; the Third World and New Zealand's Maori films with the politically aware (although in the latter case many Maori people attend in order to see themselves - an important function of film for people who are often ignored by the media). The audiences are greater in Wellington than in Auckland. For example, in 1988, there were 44,000 admissions from a population of 300,000 whereas in Auckland the figure was 54,000 from 800,000 people. What is more there are good audiences in Wellington for all films whereas in Auckland the high attendances tend to be from the block-busters which have received most publicity (Gosden, 1988), which is what one would expect in terms of a population of public servants and administrators for whom cultural capital may well be more significant than the economic capital favoured by Aucklanders.

If one listens to the conversation of film-goers as they leave a Festival screening another of Bourdieu's contentions will be born out as they talk of esoteric matters rather than the quality of the star. In **Distinction** Bourdieu said:-

> The.. propensity and capacity to accumulate "gratuitous" knowledge, such as the names of film directors, is... closely and exclusively linked to educational capital.

whereas:-

> Knowledge of actors varies mainly... with the number of films seen. The least educated cinema-goers know as many actors' names as the most highly educated.
> (Bourdieu, 1984:27)

Conclusion
All the main ingredients are there to make a reasonable assertion that there is a "film culture" in New Zealand - modest compared with larger countries but nonetheless real, lively and sustained. Currently it is the envy of many larger and more sophisticated societies. The most important problems to overcome in order for the industry and the culture to flourish are those of financial incentives and the provision of a distribution system that is sensitive and supportive of the product. Pierre Bourdieu used the term "field" to define an area within the broader spectrum of culture as a whole. As Harker, Mahar and Wilkes observe:

> The concept of field which Bourdieu uses is not to be considered as a field with a fence around it, but rather as a "field of forces" because it is required to see this field as dynamic, a field in which various potentialities exist. (in press)

Accepting that New Zealand's film culture is a "field" within the broader spectrum of social space designated as "Art" in this country the practitioners in the industry take up various "positions" within the field; there is tension between them and their relative power is ever-changing. Bourdieu describes these fields (Bourdieu, 1983:311-356) as they relate to French culture. A similar analysis can be undertaken using our film industry as an example.

As far as producers are concerned there are those who are prolific and whose films receive popular, if not always critical acclaim (like Larry Parr) and conversely those whose works take longer to find finance and then receive critical but not always popular acclaim (like Vincent Ward). Each obtains a form of capital from their endeavours. Ward gains (and bestows) prestige and status (cultural capital) whilst Parr makes money (economic capital).

As far as raising economic capital to make a film is concerned the chief players were for a long time the Ministers of Arts and of Finance. Presumably there was a tension between them as the first was asked to preserve the advantages bestowed on the industry by the pre 1985 tax regime and the latter struggled to shut what he regarded as loopholes exploited by greedy businessmen. Now that that avenue has been closed the most important position is that held by the Chairman of the New Zealand Film Commission, a Wellington lawyer, David Gascoigne who, along with his Board, has the only Government largesse to distribute to would-be producers. In 1988 these funds have totalled nearly $9 million being made up of the government grant of $3.6 million supplemented by the Lotteries Board distribution of $2.5 million and income from film sales of $2.8 million. Linked to the producers' struggle to obtain finance is the competition between would-be directors to obtain commissions. Various Maori spokespersons have pointed out that in this struggle they are unevenly treated. Zac Wallace made the point strongly when **Mauri** was eventually nominated for the New Zealand Film and Television Awards in 1988.

Once the film is made there are various "positions" within the distribution network. In commercial terms there is the Pacer-Kerridge organisation which controls the majority of New Zealand's cinemas and secondly the Moodabe family who run the Amalgamated chain. As has already been noted the prime drive behind both is the acquisition of economic rather than cultural capital. This leaves Bill Gosden, who programmes the major International Film Festivals in a very powerful and pivotal position. Success, such as that of **Mauri** in the 1988 festivals can result in the commercial chains re-thinking their positions on a general release. In addition Gosden can direct some films into the Film Society circuit where cultural capital somewhat exceeds economic - but for some film-makers is an acceptable alternative. Experimental and short film makers often feel that exposure is all that they want. Many such films are scarcely watched.

As has been noted, overseas acclaim may well precede screening in New Zealand. In this part of the field Lindsay Shelton, Marketing Director, of the New Zealand Film Commission is very important. The securing of overseas sales and the publicity and public relations work required to create the hype which is so much part of the film market is his responsibility. He has been singularly successful in these endeavours.

Finally, if the big-chains won't take a film it might well be that the growing number of independent cinemas in the main centres might be prepared to do so. In this connection Charley Gray's in Auckland and The Academy in Christchurch have played a pioneering role. As have entrepreneurs like Richard Weatherly who pioneered private film festivals and now programmes one of Kerridge's new "art" cinemas, the Vogue, in Auckland.

Inevitably this paper is an attempt at "naming", at delineating, in Bourdieu's terms, the New Zealand film culture so that it can be assimilated by readers of the New Zealand Journal of Sociology and become part of those readers "cultural capital". Thus they will be able to classify those who attend New Zealand cinema according to the films that they choose to watch and place this country's film culture on a level with the acknowledged cultures (such as that of the French) which have already been clearly defined for:-

> Distinctions...are the product of the application of schemes of construction.. and the most absolute recognition of legitimacy is nothing other than the apprehension of the everyday world... (Bourdieu 1985:731)

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Appendix: New Zealand's feature films.

Silent

1914 HINEMOA George Tarr
1916 THE TEST Rawdon Blandford
1922 THE BIRTH OF NEW ZEALAND Harrington Reynolds
MY LADY OF THE CAVE Rudall Hayward
1924 VENUS OF THE SOUTH SEAS James Sullivan
1925 REWI'S LAST STAND Rudall Hayward
1927 CARBINE'S HERITAGE Edwin Coubray
THE TE KOOTI TRAIL Rudall Hayward
1928 BUSH CINDERELLA Rudall Hayward

Sound

1935 DOWN ON THE FARM Lee Hill, Stewart Pitt
HEI TIKI Alexander Markey
1936 PHAR LAP'S SON? A L Lewis
THE WAGON AND THE STAR J.J W Pollard
1940 REWI'S LAST STAND Rudall Hayward
1952 BROKEN BARRIER Roger Mirams, John O'Shea
1954 THE SEEKERS Ken Annakin
1964 RUNAWAY John O'Shea
1966 DON'T LET IT GET YOU John O'Shea
1972 TO LOVE A MAORI Rudall Hayward
1973 RANGI'S CATCH Michael Forlong
1975 TEST PICTURES Hinge Pictures
LANDFALL Paul Maunder
1976 GOD BOY Murray Reece (TV Movie)
OFF THE EDGE Michael Firth
1977 WILD MAN Geoff Murphy
SOLO Tony Williams
SLEEPING DOGS Roger Donaldson
1979 ANGEL MINE David Blythe
SKIN DEEP Geoff Steven
MIDDLE AGE SPREAD John Reid
SONS FOR THE RETURN HOME Paul Maunder
1980 SQUEEZE Richard Turner
BEYOND REASONABLE DOUBT John Laing

1981
GOODBYE PORK PIE Geoff Murphy
PICTURES Michael Black
SMASH PALACE Roger Donaldson
RACE FOR THE YANKEE ZEPHYR
    David Hemmings*
DEAD KIDS Michael Laughlin*

1982
PRISONER Peter Werner*
THE SCARECROW Sam Pillsbury
BATTLETRUCK Harley Cokliss
CARRY ME BACK John Reid
UTU Geoff Murphy

1983
MERRY CHRISTMAS MR
    LAWRENCE Nagisa Oshima*
STRATA Geoff Steven
SAVAGE ISLANDS Ferdinand
    Fairfax*
THE LOST TRIBE John Laing
WILD HORSES Derek Morton
PATU Merata Mita
CONSTANCE Bruce Morrison
AMONG THE CINDERS Rolf
    Haedrich
IRIS Tony Isaac
HEART OF THE STAG Michael Firth
TRESPASSES Peter Sharp
SECOND TIME LUCKY Michael
    Anderson

1984
VIGIL Vincent Ward
THE SILENT ONE Yvonne Mackay
DEATH WARMED UP David Blyth
TRIAL RUN Melanie Read
CAME A HOT FRIDAY Ian Mune
MR WRONG Gaylene Preston
THE QUIET EARTH Geoff Murphy
LEAVE ALL FAIR John Reid
PALLET ON THE FLOOR Lynton
    Butler
OTHER HALVES John Laing
KINGPIN Mike Walker
SHAKER RUN Bruce Morrison
SYLVIA Michael Firth
LIE OF THE LAND Grahame McLean
SHOULD I BE GOOD Grahame
    McLean
HOT TARGETS Dennis Lewiston*
MESMERIZED Michael Laughlin*

1985
BRIDGE TO NOWHERE Ian Mune
ARRIVING TUESDAY Richard
    Riddiford
QUEEN CITY ROCKER Bruce
    Morrison
MONICA Richard Riddiford
DANGEROUS ORPHANS John Laing

1986
FOOTROT FLATS - THE DOG'S
    TALE Murray Ball
NGATI Barry Barclay

1987
STARLIGHT HOTEL Sam Pillsbury
ILLUSTRIOUS ENERGY Leon Narby
THE NAVIGATOR Vincent Ward
MAURI Merata Mita
BAD TASTE Peter Jackson
MARK II John Anderson (TV Movie)
THE LEADING EDGE Michael Firth
WILLOW Ron Howard
THE RESCUE Ferdinand Fairfax*

1988
SEND A GORILLA Melanie Read
NEVER SAY DIE Geoff Murphy
ZILCH Richard Riddiford
A SOLDIER'S TALE Larry Parr
THE GRASSCUTTER Ian Mune
THE CHILL FACTOR David
    McKenzie

* Films made in New Zealand by
    foreign companies.

School Certificate and the class logic of educational decision-making: selection or control?

David Hughes and Hugh Lauder
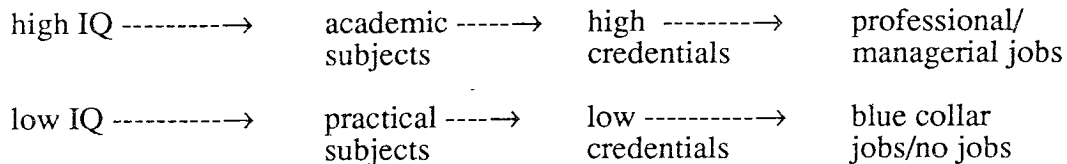*Education Department, University of Canterbury*

Abstract

In recent years it has been argued by sociologists of education that questions of educational assessment are fundamentally related to issues of power and social control. In this paper we use the New Zealand School Certificate examination system as a case study to show how when the mechanisms which determine pass and failure rates for particular subjects are combined with the logic of class decision-making massive differences in the pass and failure rates of working class students relative to students from professional backgrounds are observed. It is argued that these differences should be seen as systematic inequalities.

Introduction

Questions about educational assessment and certification have typically been taken to be merely technical matters in which the prime aim is to link intellectual ability to jobs. More specifically, it has been assumed by the dominant Technological-Meritocratic paradigm[1] that there is a linkage between intelligence, subject choice, academic credentials and suitability for particular occupations. We can represent this model as follows:

Technological-Meritocratic Model

high IQ ---------→   academic -----→   high --------→   professional/
                      subjects   credentials   managerial jobs

low IQ ----------→   practical ----→   low ----------→   blue collar
                      subjects   credentials   jobs/no jobs

Here it is assumed that 'intelligent' people will choose or be directed into taking subjects such as the physical sciences, mathematics and foreign languages which are deemed to be 'difficult' and 'demanding'. The less 'intelligent' people will take the less demanding subjects such as home economics, typing and woodwork. It is further assumed that proficiency in the 'difficult' subjects reflects a more general ability to engage successfully in professional and managerial work so that restricting entry to the prestigious and highly paid jobs to those with high credentials is a rational process. Underlying this model is a belief that we live in or are moving toward a near meritocracy where credentials are the major criteria by which individuals are chosen for professional and managerial work. The problem of assessment is one of perfecting the instruments by which credentials are awarded so that they accurately and fairly reflect ability.

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1 In the sociological literature the Technological-Meritocratic model is frequently called the Technological-Functionalist model. Collins' classic (1971) paper provided the first major refutation of some of the central tenets of this theory.

However, more recently this view has come under sustained critique. It has been shown that even when IQ scores have been taken into account social origins play a significant part in social destinations. (Bowles & Gintis, 1976; Jencks, Bartlett, Corcoran, Crouse, Eaglesfield, Jackson, McClelland, Mueser, Olneck, Schwartz, Ward & Williams, 1979; Halsey, Heath and Ridge, 1980; Lauder, Hughes & Taberner, 1985; Hughes & Lauder, 1988)[2] As a consequence of this finding many researchers in the sociology of education have turned to theories concerning the nature of capitalist work and class culture to explain why students from blue collar backgrounds remain 'disadvantaged', with respect to destinations, relative to their counterparts from professional and managerial backgrounds[3]. (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977; Kohn, 1977, 1983; Willis, 1977; Connell, Ashenden, Kessler & Dowsett, 1982; Brown, 1987; Walker, 1988) While there are clearly difficulties with some kinds of class cultural explanation for blue collar disadvantage, which we shall discuss later, the problematic provides a potentially powerful analysis of the systematic distribution of advantage and disadvantage in our society. However, we need to register two caveats. Firstly, the explanation for disadvantage in class cultural terms is a plausible inference from the observation that social background plays a significant role in destinations even when IQ is taken into account but to our knowledge there have been until now no studies of the class context of educational and career decision-making that have used IQ as a variable in the research design. In other words, it has not been directly **shown** that observed class differences in educational decision-making are causally related to educational and career outcomes, although, given the strength of the circumstantial evidence we consider this possibility most likely. Indeed, to support class cultural explanations for educational and subsequent disadvantage we shall report on evidence from our Christchurch School Leavers Study which takes IQ into account.

Secondly, the causal sense in which class culture may be said to 'explain' disadvantage needs to be clarified. In our view the term should not be used in a Humean causal sense; rather class cultural explanations should be seen as determining the limits and possibilities to educational and career decision-making. This is because our own research suggests that those blue collar students with high IQs are most likely to achieve clerical and office destinations while their counterparts with lower IQs are likely to end up in blue collar work. IQ does make a difference to educational and career decision-making and subsequent destinations but a class cultural explanation would hypothesise that the decision-making of working class youths is quite different to that of youths from the professional and managerial classes with similar IQs.

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2   It is worth noting that, "Contrary to what Jencks *et al.* argued in Inequality (1972), background characteristics seem to exert appreciable effects both on occupational status and earnings even among men with the same test scores and education". (Jencks *et al.,* 1979, p.10). We make this point because without this finding by Jencks the evidence for the point we are making here would have been less certain: Halsey *et al's* (1980) view that social background makes a difference to destinations even when IQ is taken into account is based on an estimate of the role of IQ, while Bowles and Gintis' (1976) analysis has been called into question because their calculations were made by cobbling together different samples. See note 6 for an insight into a class-logic explanation for Jencks *et al's.* (1972) inference that because brothers could end up in quite different destinations social background has little effect on destinations.

3   We place 'disadvantage' in quotation marks to emphasise that disadvantage rather than difference needs to be established. We attempt to do this in the last section of the paper.

If this is the case and we shall argue that it is, then the Technological-Meritocratic model needs to be reconsidered because far from reflecting purely rational and technical interests it may obscure the logic by which systematic advantages and disadvantages are distributed precisely because it fails to take into account the influence of class conflict and the struggle it engenders over educational production and the resources it creates[4].

These considerations give credence to the possibility that instead of examinations and assessment playing a significant role in an essentially rational process of selection and differentiation they are in fact used to regulate social conflict and legitimise the power and advantage of some groups over others (Broadfoot, 1984). In this paper we want to explore the possibility that this latter conflict view of examinations and assessment provides the best way of understanding the nature of the New Zealand examination system. In particular we shall argue that when the means by which pass and failure rates are determined in the examination system are combined with the class determined nature of educational decision-making the examination system serves to disadvantage students from blue collar backgrounds. In order to develop our case we shall draw on both quantitative and qualitative data from the 1982 Christchurch School Leavers Study.

Background to the Christchurch School Leavers Study
The data for this paper came from Phases 1 and 2 of the Christchurch School Leavers Study (Lauder and Hughes, 1989). In Phase 1 data were gathered on those pupils who left school from 20 Christchurch secondary schools in 1982. Amongst other things information was collected on family SES and pupil performance in the secondary examinations, such as School Certificate (SC) and Sixth Form Certificate (SFC). SES was measured using the Elley/Irving and Irving/Elley scales (Elley and Irving, 1976; Irving and Elley, 1977). As a working definition we have chosen to call categories 4-6 working class.

In Phase 2 of the research a stratified sub-sample of the 1982 school leavers population is being interviewed in depth in an effort to illuminate the Phase 1 data. More specifically, we have been concerned to identify the nature of educational and career decision-making in relation to SES and IQ which has led to the general quantitative patterns of inequality identified from the Phase 1 sample.

The official Department of Education statistics do not include information on examination success broken down by SES background. However, using the Phase 1 data we are able to show that the examination system operates against working class students by disproportionately awarding them low school qualifications. Then using the Phase 2 data we are able to illuminate the class differences in examination success by showing some of the processes through which educational decision-making occurs.

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4   There are further reasons for doubting the plausibility of the Technological-Meritocratic model -
     these concern the connection between credentials and jobs. See Moore (1986, 1988) who rejects
     the implicit rationality attributed to the connection by Neo-Marxist Correspondence theorists and
     Technological-Meritocratic theorists and their counterparts in economics Neo-Classical Human
     Capital theorists.

The Overall Examination Performance of Working Class Pupils

In an effort to place secondary school examination success on a continuum from no formal qualifications attempted to University Scholarship a 17 point scale was devised. The end points were defined as 1 'did not attempt any examinations' and 17 'attained a University Scholarship'. The middle range of the scale includes students who have various qualifications such as School Certificate and Sixth Form Certificate etc. The full scale is: 1 "did not attempt any examinations"; 2 "no examination passes"; 3-11 "1-9 SC or SC and SFC passes"; 12 "UE by sitting"; 13 "UE by accrediting"; 14 "HSC"; 15 "B Bursary"; 16 "A Bursary"; 17 "Scholarship".

Table 1 which presents the achievement distribution of the 2627 pupils from Phase 1 by pupil SES reveals marked differences. For example, while 82 per cent of those in SES category 1 have UE or better only 17 per cent of those in SES category 6 have reached UE level. At the other end of the achievement scale 51 per cent of the SES category 6 pupils compared with only 3 per cent of SES category 1 pupils leave school without qualifications.

Table 1

School Achievement by SES (Percentages)

Achievement	SES					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
17	4.2	1.4	1.2	0.3	0.4	0.0
16	20.8	9.7	5.0	3.1	3.0	1.4
15	20.8	12.7	8.5	5.6	1.9	3.2
14	15.9	8.1	8.8	3.5	3.0	1.9
13	17.8	21.4	20.1	17.4	14.6	9.3
12	2.7	5.2	5.4	4.0	2.6	0.9
11	1.5	1.9	4.1	3.4	2.2	1.9
10	5.7	4.4	4.1	3.2	4.1	2.3
9	0.8	3.1	2.9	2.8	3.4	2.3
8	0.0	2.3	2.3	2.7	1.1	2.3
7	2.7	3.5	4.4	4.3	3.4	3.7
6	1.1	2.3	·4.4	5.2	5.6	6.9
5	1.1	3.9	3.5	5.7	5.6	4.6
4	1.5	2.1	4.2	5.9	2.6	3.7
3	0.8	2.9	4.1	5.9	7.9	5.1
2	0.8	8.7	9.5	10.0	12.7	13.4
1	1.9	6.4	7.5	17.1	25.8	37.0
N	264	518	683	679	267	216

The School Certificate Examination

In an effort to better understand the overall performance of working class pupils in the examination system we shall now look in some detail at the School Certificate examination. SC is a major hurdle for working class children with 34 per cent of the Phase 1 sample being completely unsuccessful at it. And, within the working class 50 per cent of those from unskilled homes leave school without qualifications. SC has been officially scaled since 1975 and to understand SC it is necessary to understand the scaling procedures.

The Background to the Current School Certificate System

School Certificate Prior to 1968: Up to and including 1967 the SC examination was attempted in English and at least three but not more than four other subjects. The candidates passed if their aggregates in English and their best three other subjects were 200 or more with the proviso that marks below 30 in any subject could not be included in the aggregate. Little attention was given to the question of subject difficulty. English was compulsory and there were restrictions on the choice of subjects which prevented candidates picking out a set of 'easy' options. No need was felt for formal scaling of the subjects although there were no doubt some differences in the means for the various subjects.

School Certificate from 1968 to 1985: In 1968 SC was changed to a single subject pass system with candidates able to enter from one to six subjects. At the same time control of SC passed to the newly created School Certificate Examination Board (SCEB) an **ad hoc** body under the wing of the Department of Education. Subject difficulty now became of great concern to the running of the examinations. The SCEB believed that it would be unfair if one pupil passed a couple of 'easy' options while an equally able pupil failed 'difficult' options. Between 1968 and 1974 an informal hierarchy of subjects developed as may be seen in Table 2, although there was no official scaling. At the top in 1974 was Latin with a pass rate of 64.6% and typewriting was bottom with a pass rate of 44.9%.

In 1975 formal scaling of SC was introduced in complete secrecy to formalise and extend the hierarchy of subjects. Schools were not informed of this change in procedure until the SCEB's Newsletter No.4, of May 1977. The way that scaling has operated since this time has been described elsewhere (Snook & St George, 1986; St George, 1985, 1987) and only a brief outline will be given here.

The scripts in the various subjects are sent out to markers in batches of 300 per marker, which means there will be many markers in subjects with a large number of candidates. To take into account (i) differences in marker toughness and (ii) the difficulty of the examination from year to year each batch of scripts from a single marker is scaled to a mean of 52 and a standard deviation of 17. We would argue vigorously that these values, which are entirely based on historical precedent lead to unsatisfactorily high failure rates in some subjects. However, if we take the norm-referenced aspect of SC as given we would not want to criticise the general procedure because differences in marker toughness and paper difficulty undoubtedly exist and are serious problems. However, scaling does not stop here. We now have an additional step in the procedure which attempts to take into account (iii) differences in the difficulty of the various SC subjects.

To accomplish the third kind of scaling all the candidates in their third year at high school and taking English and at least three other subjects are selected out and used to

scale each subject against all others. This group is known as the NZY3E3 cohort. If as a group the NZY3E3 candidates taking a particular subject, for example, chemistry, do well in the other subjects they take their chemistry marks are scaled up. Conversely, if as a group, the NZY3E3 candidates in another subject, for example woodwork, do relatively poorly in their other subjects, then their woodwork marks are scaled down.

Initially, in an effort to stop the marks in some subjects dropping through the floor, the minimum median was set at 47 and subjects falling below this were scaled back up to it. Since 1984 the minimum median has been raised to 50 for subjects attracting at least 1% of the NZY3E3 cohort. But when the non NZY3E3 candidates are slotted back into the distribution as the final step in the scaling process the median in a particular subject can drop back below 50. This will happen if the subject attracts a significant number of non NZY3E3 candidates who are typically in the lower half of the distribution. So, for example, home economics had a pass rate of only 44% in 1985.

A look at Table 2 shows the results of these procedures. Over the period 1974-1985 the foreign languages and physical sciences hold pride of place. In 1985 their pass rates were all above 80%. Bringing up the rear with pass rates below 50% are typewriting, biological science, agriculture, engineering, clothing and textiles, woodwork and home economics[5]. However, it is not just a matter of pass rates; the low pass rate subjects also miss out on high grades. For example, fewer than 1 per cent of candidates got A grades in clothing and textiles, home economics, typing and engineering in 1985 while over 10 per cent of those taking Latin, physical science, French and other foreign languages got A grades.

School Certificate Since 1985: In 1986 SC changed from a pass/fail system to a straight 7-grade letter system, with grades from A1 (high) through A2,B1,B2,C1 and C2 to D (low). Under this system it is no longer possible to talk of pass rates in the different subjects but the system has not been fundamentally altered. We still have the scaling procedures described above and consequently we still have an unequal distribution of grades.

Differences in SC Participation Rates and Success Rates by SES
Table 3 shows the School Certificate participation rates and pass rates for third year pupils from the Phase 1 sample by SES. It can be seen that the lower SES pupils attempt SC less frequently then their higher SES peers, take fewer subjects when they do sit and pass fewer of those papers they attempt. While 98.1% of SES category 1 pupils sit SC only 62.5% of those from category 6 sit. The pupils from SES category 1 who sit SC take an average of 5.36 papers and pass 90.1% of them giving them a mean of 4.83 passes. On average the pupils from category 6 who sit SC pass only 57.4% of the 4.70 papers attempted giving them a mean of 2.70 passes.

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5   While relatively few people take Maori its mean has been pegged to the English mean since 1984 in response to the outrage felt by the Maori community when it became public knowledge that Maori had one of the lowest pass rates of all the subject groupings in Table 2 with fewer than 40% passing in some years. Given that 75% of the candidates taking Maori are Maori this outrage is hardly surprising. This change lead to a massive increase in the Maori pass rate between 1983 when it was 37.3% and 1984 when it jumped to 53.1%. Other large changes in Table 2 such as the drop in clothing and textiles between 1980-1981 are also the result of alterations to the scaling rules.

Table 2
SC Pass Rates by Subject Grouping 1974-1985 *

Subject Grouping	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985
Latin	64.6	70.2	73.8	81.4	84.0	87.1	87.0	85.7	86.9	87.6	87.5	86.6
Other Foreign Lang.	58.4	62.3	68.5	77.0	72.2	74.5	75.7	79.0	81.1	80.4	80.5	80.3
Physical Science	57.2	61.0	66.6	68.8	72.8	70.4	75.7	79.0	80.0	81.6	83.1	80.2
French	56.4	64.0	66.9	75.9	75.8	77.4	77.6	79.2	81.6	83.4	82.9	83.0
History	55.6	56.3	56.3	57.4	57.5	58.3	57.2	59.0	62.9	60.0	62.8	65.0
English	55.2	55.8	52.8	51.2	50.8	51.0	51.1	50.8	50.6	50.8	52.4	52.7
Music	55.1	62.3	66.0	63.3	65.9	65.9	66.9	70.9	69.5	71.3	73.9	68.3
Art	53.5	57.1	53.4	55.9	53.6	54.6	49.5	51.5	50.1	53.8	54.4	58.9
Geography	53.3	53.8	55.8	50.8	49.9	50.3	50.2	52.6	52.1	52.1	53.4	55.2
Mathematics	52.5	54.3	55.7	55.3	54.8	53.4	52.5	57.0	57.5	56.2	57.9	59.6
Science	51.5	47.2	51.1	52.4	53.4	53.0	51.4	58.2	58.8	58.2	59.2	59.0
Shorthand/Typing	50.9	49.9	53.6	61.8	61.1	65.9	64.9	61.5	64.8	63.7	67.0	66.1
Maori	49.4	47.0	43.6	44.5	43.4	43.9	39.1	39.9	41.9	37.3	53.1	54.4
Biological Science	48.6	52.1	50.5	48.7	45.8	47.0	45.6	44.5	45.4	44.2	49.0	49.3
Bookkeeping/Accounting	48.4	48.8	50.2	60.4	59.4	60.5	62.2	60.5	62.5	64.5	67.1	68.0
Woodwork	47.9	47.6	47.1	47.9	45.4	44.1	41.1	39.1	38.9	37.8	43.8	45.2
Cothing & Textiles	47.7	50.3	49.3	52.2	52.3	51.5	48.9	38.5	37.2	38.5	45.4	44.4
Technical Drawing	47.6	48.2	48.1	49.5	48.9	49.3	49.7	54.0	55.9	54.6	58.0	59.9
Engineering	47.1	45.5	46.4	46.8	45.5	46.4	42.7	41.5	42.4	41.5	47.5	48.0
Agriculture	46.3	46.4	45.2	48.5	42.8	43.3	47.9	44.1	45.4	44.0	47.0	48.8
Economics	46.0	46.4	46.8	49.2	49.2	48.9	49.2	53.5	55.1	55.3	57.7	57.7
Home Economics	45.8	46.4	43.5	45.1	46.8	44.3	39.7	38.6	37.8	37.7	44.9	34.0
Typewriting	44.9	43.8	44.2	44.9	45.7	44.6	43.7	43.6	43.5	45.5	48.8	49.1
Total Pass Rate	52.3	52.8	53.1	52.9	52.6	52.3	51.7	53.9	54.3	54.0	56.4	57.2
	64.6	70.2	73.8	81.4	84.0	87.1	87.0	85.7	86.9	87.6	87.5	86.6
	to	to	to	to	to	to	to	to	to	to	to	to
	44.9	43.8	43.5	44.5	42.8	43.3	39.1	38.5	37.2	37.3	43.8	44.0

* Adapted from Hughes (1983). For a number of reasons it was necessary to group some subjects together. So ,for example, "Physical Science" includes chemistry,physics,physics (PSSC), electricity, applied mechanics and science physical. For full details of the subject groupings and an explanation of why grouping was necessary see Hughes (1983).
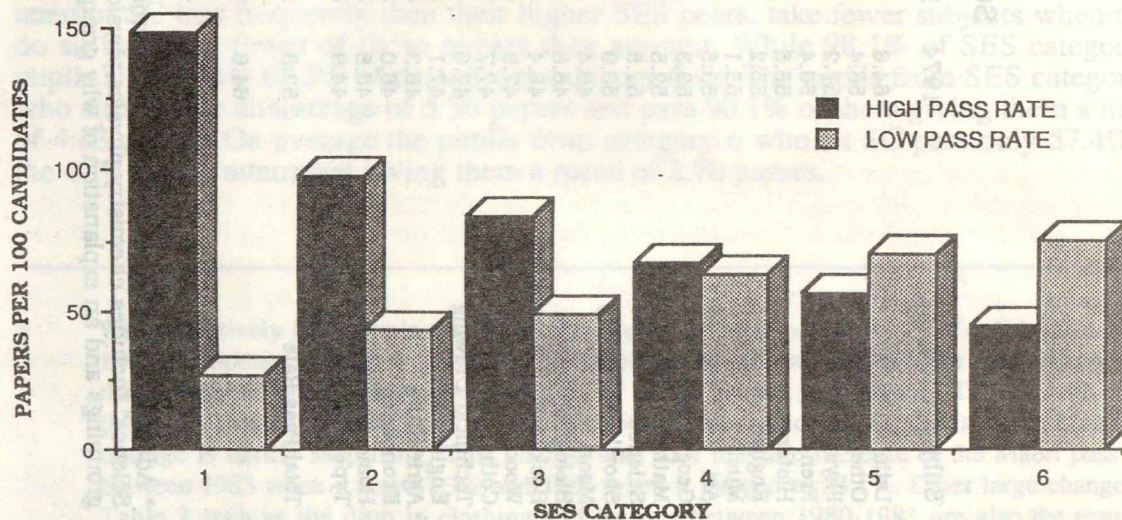
Table 3

SC Participation Rates and Pass Rates by Pupil SES

	SES					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Number	264	518	683	679	267	216
2. N Sitting SC	259	482	625	551	195	135
3. 2/1 x 100/1	98.1	93.1	91.5	81.1	73.0	62.5
4. Mean Papers Sat	5.36	5.03	5.06	4.91	4.71	4.70
5. Mean Papers Passed	4.83	3.83	3.54	3.15	2.71	2.70
6. 5/4 x 100/1	90.1	76.1	70.0	64.2	57.5	57.4

Figure 1 shows the number of high and low pass rate subjects sat per 100 candidates in the six SES categories. The eight subject groupings from Table 2 with 1985 pass rates of 65 and above have been combined to form a high pass rate group and the seven subject groupings with pass rates below 50 have been combined to form a low pass rate group. It can be seen that high SES pupils take high pass rate subjects much more often than the low SES pupils - this is especially so with foreign languages and the physical sciences. The low SES pupils take the low pass rate subjects more often than the high SES pupils.

Figure 1
Percentage of Pupils Taking High and Low Pass-rate Subjects for SC by SES

If the pupils from each SES category took the same number of subjects for SC the patterns in Figure 1 could be taken at face value but they do not. As we noted in Table 3 the SES category 1 pupils sit a mean of 5.36 papers while those in SES category 6 sit, on average, 4.70. This means that we would expect the high SES pupils to sit more papers in **all** categories if there was no differential selection of subjects according to SES. If we divide the high pass rate values by the low pass rate values in Figure 1, we get a figure which controls for the absolute number of papers taken by each SES group. It can be seen that for every low pass rate paper taken by pupils from SES category 1, 5.57 high pass rate papers are taken. There is a steady progression down to SES category 6 pupils who take only 0.59 papers from the high pass rate subjects for every low pass-rate paper they sit.

Competing Explanations for Differences in School Certificate Passes
In the preceding section we have shown that the differences in pass rates in SC between high and low SES pupils is a function of the differential number of pupils who attempt the examination, the differential number of papers attempted and the different success rates in the papers sat. An adequate theory would need to explain each of these differences. On the Technological-Meritocratic model it would be claimed that working class pupils who lack ability act rationally by not attempting papers they know they are going to fail and they fail a larger proportion of the subjects they attempt because they disproportionately sit subjects which end up with high failure rates when scaling is applied. Because the scaling procedures are seen as necessary in the interests of fairness the higher working class failure rate is also seen as just.

However, we believe that the evidence for such a view is weak and that the case against the Technological-Meritocratic model, from which it derives, is strong. We would therefore now like to argue the case against the Technological-Meritocratic model as it applies to SC in detail. In our view there are two elements which suggest that the differences shown are best considered as inequalities rather than merely differences as the Technological-Meritocratic model would have us believe. These concern the notion of justice which underlies the scaling procedures and the class context of educational decision-making.

Scaling and Equity: The present scaling system is based on the notion that equal ability and equal effort should result in equal marks irrespective of the subjects taken. The procedures used are designed to ensure that 'bright' pupils are not 'penalised' by taking 'difficult' subjects. Equity results when 'bright' students are successful whatever subjects they sit while 'dull' pupils fail. There are two related arguments against this view of equity. The first is centred on the dubious ability assumptions underlying scaling (Snook and St George, 1986). The second argument concerns the necessity of even considering ability as an ingredient in equity since there are alternative notions of equity which avoid the notion of ability altogether. For example, in 1956 a committee set up to review the post-primary curriculum and School Certificate examination (Department of Education, 1956) discussed the notion of equality as follows:

> First we do **not** mean that all subjects require the same degree of general intelligence and scholastic ability or the same level of intellectual aptitude; nor do we mean that in any absolute sense all are of equal cultural value. We do believe, however, in the equal right of all children to develop best their own capacities, and we consider that those school studies that are best fitted to develop each different pupil are in this sense to be regarded of equal educational worth. Furthermore, we consider that all courses of

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> study should require approximately equal efforts from the different groups of children
> pursuing them, and that the standard of attainment demanded in each subject should be
> a good one, having regard for the abilities and needs of the pupils concerned.

Clearly if SC were operated on these principles pass rate differences between subjects would largely disappear and working class pupils would pass much the same proportion of the papers they sit as other pupils. If working class pupils currently attempt fewer papers than pupils from professional and managerial homes because they know their chances of success are limited they could be expected to attempt more papers once their chance of passing was increased. However, while we believe that changing to such a system is more equitable it would not eradicate class differences completely because differences concerning subject and vocational choices would still exist. To understand why this is we need to look at the class nature of educational and vocational decision-making.

Education and the Class Context of Decision-Making

Previously we suggested that the dominant explanation for educational inequalities espoused by sociologists of education in Britain and Australasia concerns the notion of class culture and the way it imposes limits and possibilities on educational and career decision-making. In particular it is the work of the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, as exemplified by the research of Paul Willis that has laid the foundations for such explanations. However, recently a number of commentators have criticised Willis' **Learning to Labour** for its overly romantic view of working class culture in that he suggests it provides the basis for a socialist transformation of capitalist society (Walker, 1986; Lauder, Freeman-Moir & Scott, 1986; Nash, 1987; Brown, 1988).

The task then remains of providing an account of the class nature of educational decision-making shorn of its romantic and idealist elements. A number of commentators have already started on this project (Gambetta, 1987; Brown, 1987; Moore, 1987, 1988) while in New Zealand Nash (1987) has also sketched out some of the basic principles on which the logic of class decision-making in education might be understood. Nash (1987) describes the basic orientation of this approach as follows:

> It is important to study how people strive to "make the best" of their lives, how they
> try to get what they want with the resources they have. People possess different
> resources, and young people do so largely as a result of their families' location within
> the class system, and all of us necessarily act within what is at any moment a given
> distribution of positions that constitute "opportunities" ... We should accept also that
> in certain areas of life making a choice is perhaps typically a complex and continuing
> process in which options are kept open then let go without much formal rational
> thought. An option may be dropped, making another more or less forced, for reasons
> that may remain unarticulated to oneself. (p.96)

In this passage Nash touches on at least two, possibly three ways, in which class determined 'decision-making' can occur. It is therefore a good place to begin to elaborate our own model of educational decision-making processes. Here we can join with Nash in suggesting that decisions are always context bound. Within a specific context people may consciously weigh up the costs and benefits of particular courses of action and choose the course they think will best advantage them. This is what Nash suggests in his opening sentences and it may be considered the paradigmatically 'rational' form of decision-making. One aspect of it worth noting is that it assumes

that within a given context individuals understand the rules of the social game such that they can predict, to some degree, the outcomes to alternative courses of action. From the qualitative research we have undertaken we consider this to be a comparatively rare form of decision-making and is usually undertaken by those who consider breaking away from the collective knowledge or wisdom of the social group into which they are born. This brings us to the second kind of decision-making, intimated by Nash's final sentences, which is really a kind of non decision-making where individuals simply follow the tacit collective wisdom of their group. To give an example, in our interviews with those from professional and managerial backgrounds, very few gave any thought as to why they were going to university - the decision was 'automatic' and can, in our view only be explained by some notion of collective wisdom that university is both a natural and beneficial move[6]. In contrast, it can be argued that one kind of working class collective wisdom is the instrumental view that the purpose of schooling is to enable entry to good working class jobs (Brown, 1987)[7]. Finally, there is a further kind of non decision-making which is based on coincidence or luck and which is analogous to the progress of a pinball. In this kind of non decision-making the rules of the educational game are poorly understood, even in terms of the interpretation a particular class places on them, and therefore the strategies devised in relation to the educational game are weak because goals are ill defined and possible outcomes not considered.

So far we have been talking about various kinds of decision-making in the abstract. However, the class nature of decision-making is anchored in the development of classed identities which are formed in interaction with the structures and institutions of the family, school and labour markets. In this respect the notion of identity is crucial if we are to develop a sociology of decision-making which explains why some groups value different kinds of work in different ways, and either interpret similar goals differently or prefer different goals to other groups. What the concept of identity does

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6   The process of 'decision-making' for those from professional and managerial backgrounds should be compared to that of those 'able' students from working class backgrounds. For those from working class backgrounds who confront the possibility of going to university and then reject it a complex set of considerations is involved. In interviewing students from this group we have found that they have little knowledge of university and therefore reject it as a possibility for them. Ironically, underlying the rejection is a strong sense that they have to make it on their own and as such they aren't prepared to take the risk of going to university - instead they frequently choose to go to the polytechnic to take trade courses. In one interview the process of decision-making was made more complex by the fact that the interviewee's brother was already at university. In this case the interviewee didn't want to go to university in case he failed and was shown up by his successful brother. Insofar as this complex of reasons can be seen as producing his decision not to go to university we can explain in class logic terms what Jencks (1972) put down to luck, namely why some brothers have quite different destinations from one another. For a discussion of working class caution with respect to educational decision-making see Gambetta (1987). In view of the model of educational decision-making we develop in this paper, we should emphasise the family-school interaction which produced the decision in the above case. Although, as regards the school it was more of a non-interaction in that it didn't provide him with the relevant information as regards university.

7   See our discussion later in this paper as regards working class collective wisdom.

is to ground the process of decision-making historically thereby allowing us to explain why certain educational decisions are made and not others[8].

By viewing the process of decision-making in an historical and social way we are also able to ask to what extent the goals particular groups pursue are conditioned by the unequal exercise of power. In other words, we can lever up observed differences to look beneath the surface to see whether we are dealing with differences or inequalities based on differential access to power. This is a point to which we shall return when we raise the issue of whether the differences in School Certificate pass rates are merely differences or inequalities.
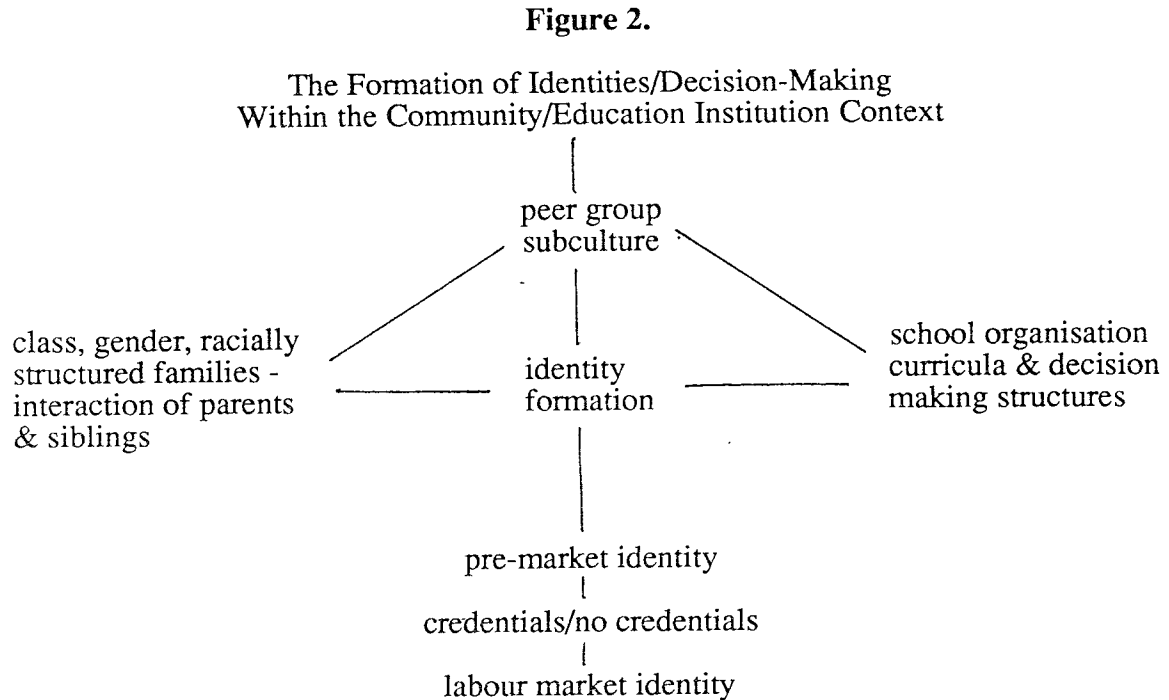
We now want to present an institutional field in which to locate the generation of actors' identities and the class career trajectories open to them, given that it is the

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8 A more parsimonious approach to the question of decision-making which eschews reference to problematic constructs like 'identity' is taken by Boudon (1974). However for reasons given in this paper we think his parsimony is bought at the cost of developing a largely inaccurate model of educational decision-making. Moreover, our qualitative data suggest that the relatively poor performance of SES 2 students, relative to SES 1 students can be explained, in part by the fact that many SES 2 students had parents who were upwardly mobile, although with working class views of education which influenced their children's decision-making. Clearly, this suggests that the determinants of educational decision-making are not solely economic as Boudon suggests. What, in effect, Boudon does is to explain educational decision-making in terms of a-historical Neo-Classical economic man, although he provides a welcome sophistication to that crude construct. Gambetta (1987) is prepared to go somewhat further down the road with Boudon than we would. However, Gambetta's reasoning for doing so is based, in part, on his rejection of Bourdieu and Passeron's (1977) cultural capital model of reproduction. But his grounds for doing so are weak.

What Gambetta shows is that length of stay at school is not strongly related to parents' education. As a result he thinks that if we take parents' education as a proxy for cultural capital then the relationship between parents' cultural capital and children's educational decision-making is weak. But this fails to take into account that collective working class wisdom is not static and that it does respond to changes in education e.g., credential inflation, although the view of schooling as enabling working class students to get good working class jobs remains unaltered. It is significant that he also found that the relationship between parents' education and children's non attendance at university to be stronger. The problem for both Boudon and Gambetta is that they make inferences about educational decision-making from quantitative rather than qualitative data. However, the significance of determining which is more plausible a class-logic model of decision-making or Boudon's version of Neo-Classical economic 'rationality' is crucial for policy purposes. Gambetta points out that Boudon's theory can have consequences quite consistent with what we would consider to be New Right initiatives, especially in terms of income incentives necessary to attract working class students to university. However, from a class-logic perspective financial incentives are likely to have little effect. What is required is policies designed to reduce class inequalities.

Finally it is worth pointing out that while we consider a class-logic form of explanation to provide the most plausible account of educational decision-making we think, at least on some interpretations, Bourdieu's theory of reproduction to be too mechanistic. In this respect our position is much closer to Connell *et al.'s* (1982).

processes of identity formation and reformation which determine why one route rather than another is taken at any given moment. In the diagram below it is assumed that individuals' identities are formed through the process of interaction with the institutions of the family, peer group and school.

Figure 2.

The Formation of Identities/Decision-Making
Within the Community/Education Institution Context

class, gender, racially structured families - interaction of parents & siblings

peer group subculture

identity formation

school organisation curricula & decision making structures

pre-market identity

credentials/no credentials

labour market identity

In Figure 2 it is hypothesised that the interaction between class, gender and racially structured families, youth sub cultures and the content, structure and organisation of the school will interact with perceptions regarding the labour market to produce an individual's identity such that decisions or non-decisions will be made which determine the level of credentials achieved. Entry or failure to enter the labour market will then act so as to confirm or change the individual's identity.

In the above model there are no prior assumptions as to how the institutions interact to produce specific identities and hence decisions. As such, there will be competing theories as to the effects particular relations between institutions have on structuring identity. For example, Hargreaves (1967) and Lacey (1970) have argued that it is the organisation of schooling, and in particular streaming which generates alienation among working class students. In contrast Willis (1977) suggests that it is working class culture which generates alienation, and that school structures have little impact in mediating working class students' responses in school. Now Hammersely (1985) has argued that these different explanations for working class alienation in school should be treated as competing hypotheses and that with further testing it should be possible to decide which is refuted and which corroborated. However, this assumes that the

effects of institutions can be determined independent of context and that in Hammersely's own terms these explanations should be treated as 'universal'[9]. However, Brown (1987) argues on the basis of his ethnographic study of three secondary schools in South Wales that these hypotheses should not be seen as competing. Rather, in order to understand the behaviour of working class youth, we need to develop a model of the interaction of class cultures with school organisations. We would agree with Brown in arguing for an interactive model of the way educational identities and hence decisions and outcomes are produced, although in doing so we would acknowledge that the causal influence of a particular institution may be stronger than others in particular cases. Our reasons for rejecting the idea that individual institutions can have universal effects and for espousing an interactive approach are best expressed in Moore's (1988) discussion of Bourdieu and Passeron (1977):

> educational processes (whether defined through form or content) do not generate automatic effects (e.g., 'cool-out' the working class, 'feminize' girls, produce 'negative self-images' in black pupils). Their effects at any point in time are conditional upon the state of the entire system of relationships within which they are located ... and mediated by both the dispositions acquired within the 'habitus' of the home and expectations held under a prevailing system of 'objective probabilities'. (p.117)

In other words, we are arguing that this view should be used to generate a research heuristic which suggests that the formation of working class students' identities, responses and decisions will be a function of a complex set of relations within which the individual is positioned at any given time and as such we cannot determine why particular educational decisions are made in advance of historical analysis, field work and the generation of sub-theories such as those of Hargreaves, Lacey and Brown.

The above provides a theoretical background to our view of the class context of educational decision-making, we now want to put this model to work by looking briefly at some case studies from our Christchurch School Leavers Qualitative Sample, to illuminate the processes by which class in interaction with education structures working class educational decision-making, including that of subject choice, even when ability is taken into account.

The examples we have chosen below are those of able working class students who have not done as well as we might predict from their scholastic ability scores. While they have made various kinds of responses in their educational decision-making, they often show a lack of understanding of the rules and goals of the 'educational game'. For example, our study shows that many working class pupils do not select subjects with vocations in mind. Others do have an occupation in mind when they make their subject choices but they are restricted in their choice because they are equally restricted in what they consider viable jobs for them. Many of these pupils cannot envisage going to university and entering a profession, even though they consider professional people to be 'somebodies' when the kind of work they think of doing

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9   It should be noted that Hammersley develops his case on quite explicit empiricist grounds.

makes them feel like 'nobodies'. In other words there is a middle and professional class world which, conceptually, is beyond them. It is not surprising, therefore, that the subject choices they make reflect the world they inhabit. Some examples from our interview protocols will illustrate these points.

Jim was an able boy from a very deprived background. Despite the environmental handicaps he suffered he was dux of his working class primary school. Jim's choice of home economics at high school was almost serendipitous. He did it for a "laugh" and "because you could make biscuits to eat on the bus". But he found he liked the subject, got good SC marks in it and decided to become a chef. Despite gaining 4 good SC passes and 120 handwritten letters to potential employers in the catering trade, he failed to get an apprenticeship and is now a storeman.

Shirley had no idea what to take for SC and talked to her mother and sister about what to do. It was clear that her family did not know much about the different options available and her choice was limited to what they could relate to. Her sister had done typing and Shirley was advised to do it too because "it was just one of those subjects girls do". She also did home economics and biology because she liked them. After a sixth form year she went nurse aiding and at the time of the interview was hoping to be accepted for nursing.

Mary-Anne didn't know what she was going to be and stumbled on her present office position when she bumped into a family friend at the races at the end of her sixth form year, during which she got University Entrance with ease. However, she divided subjects up into those which she could see some point in and those she could not. She was very disparaging of anything she couldn't relate to her present job, and heaped scorn on the girls working with her who had to go to polytechnic to learn typing, saying of them "they should have typed at school surely". When it was pointed out that they might not have been interested at that stage she said , "well that's stupid. They should have thought of that...They take French and history and geography - now what sort of job are they going to get with that. I don't understand it."

Dave, was able to choose four optional subjects in the junior school. He chose woodwork, engineering, technical drawing and economic studies because "I knew it would be something that I did with my hands that I was going to be working at." He then carried on in the subjects he did best in and after gaining UE left, as he had predicted, for an apprenticeship in fitting and turning.

Even when schools clearly do have an impact on the subject choice of their pupils in an effort to 'promote' able working class students, the logic of decision-making within this class structure ensures some perverse results. For example, Pam had been directed into foreign language options at high school because she was considered bright. However, she could see little point in taking languages and didn't enjoy them. She would rather have taken options like typing because she could see how it would lead to a job in an office, which is where she wanted to work. When it came to School Certificate she failed her language subjects and left school. She is now working at a check-out in a supermarket.

The students we have described above are examples of what Brown (1987) calls 'ordinary kids' who have made a tenuous accommodation to school. However other students reject the school and become resisters. Geoff, was such a resister and to demonstrate his rejection of the school and its values he staged a walk out, with some

of his friends, during the English SC exam and "did wheelies in the playground" outside the exam room in a borrowed V8. Geoff undertook this protest even though it was he who told us that to be a professional person, a doctor or lawyer, was to be somebody. He is now a car groomer.

We now want to relate these cases of educational and career decision-making to the types of decision-making discussed previously. While the common wisdom of professional and managerial groups is to treat going to university as an automatic step it is considerably more difficult to identify a single common wisdom as regards schooling for the working class. This is because schooling is problematic for the working class and it is therefore not surprising that it elicits a variety of responses from working class students. Our particular concern here is with able working class students who do not transcend their class position. Here it seems that two general possibilities are open to working class students, they can either accommodate in a tenuous way to the demands of schooling or they can resist them. Geoff is a clear example of someone who hated school and derived his identity from a conspicuous form of resistance. However, the other cases in our sample chose to accommodate to schooling. What is clear though is that for these students the kinds of decision-making we discussed in the abstract are ideal-types and that in practice they combined various kinds of decision-making and non decision-making during the course of their educational careers.

For example, Dave is the only case where a consistently instrumental approach to schooling - which has often been taken to comprise **the** wisdom of the working class in relation to education - was taken. Mary-Anne, had a strongly instrumental approach to school subjects but did not connect them to a specific job or career. Jim's choice of school subjects and subsequent job searching activities were determined by chance, rather than with a specific job(s) in mind. Although once determined he did view school as a means to a job he thought he'd like. Similarly Shirley took the school subjects suggested by her sister and her school as being appropriate to her class and gender. Pam provides an interesting case of the interaction of class culture, gender and the organisation of subject choices in her school producing a specific outcome. She had a clear idea of the subjects she wanted to do because she wanted to work in an office but because she was perceived as 'bright' by the school she was directed into a languages stream. Had students at the school been able to take a combination of office related subjects and languages Pam's career might have been quite different to the way it has now turned out.

The above examples of decision-making are, in our view, made within the context of the common wisdom of the working class. All of the above students had the potential to go to university, none of them considered it. Insofar as there is a rationality inherent in their choices then the most unproblematic cases are those where schooling was used instrumentally to get a job. Now Willis (1977) argues that there is also a common working class wisdom inherent in the act of resistance because, in a certain sense, the lads in his study 'knew' that clerical jobs were as routinised and boring as manual labouring jobs. The same kind of reasoning could be applied to Geoff's actions. However, it may well be that acts of resistance are even more 'rational' to-day because the lengthening dole queues 'tell' working class students that now there is not even an instrumental point to schooling because there are no jobs. To make this point is to emphasise the situational nature of rationality: from a working class perspective resistance may be rational, from the perspective of the Minister of Employment it would be irrational. The more general point we would want to make is that working class culture should be seen as a set of resources (Lauder *et al.,* 1986; Brown, 1987)

sufficiently complex to enable working class students to either accommodate to schooling or resist it.

Conclusion

The question remains as to whether these working class responses to schooling should be seen merely as differences or as symptoms of fundamental inequalities in the distribution of power and wealth in our society. For if they are merely the differences one might expect in a pluralist society the case against the New Zealand examination system as promoting forms of inequality and control over working class pupils is lost. Now the case against interpreting class differences as inequalities has recently been put by Murphy (1985) who argues that neither the Fabian nor Neo-Marxist traditions in the sociology of education have shown that well documented disparities in educational outcomes can be considered as inequalities. What would count for Murphy as evidence of inequality rather than differences or disparity?

He advances two criteria; the first, that there is "evidence that those 'excluded' or 'dispossessed' actually wanted what they are excluded from or dispossessed of". The second is that in structural explanations, such as those of Bourdieu and Passeron's (1977), the connection between objective conditions and the subjective expectations to which they give rise is empirically demonstrated.

As regards Murphy's first criterion the fact is that a significant sector of the working class in New Zealand e.g., Maori have focussed their campaign for equality and justice on the twin pillars of land rights and education. In other words, there has been an explicit demand for equality in education. However, such a demand is based on the view that there has been injustice done to Maori in the past, despite the fact that awareness of these injustices has only recently become widespread. In effect there is a Realist presumption operating which suggests that injustice can occur whether or not individuals are aware of it. In our view this is a crucial point because the dominance systems of class, gender and race largely operate effectively because people are unaware of the way unequal relations of power shape their lives. Lukes (1974) makes the point well when he says:

> A may exercise power over B by getting him to do what he does not want to do, but he also exercises power over him by shaping or determining his very wants. Indeed, is it not the supreme exercise of power to get another or others to have the desires you want them to have - that is, to secure their compliance by controlling their thoughts and desires? (p.23)

This brings us to Murphy's second criterion because clearly when objective structures determine subjective attitudes and wants we have a case of the kind described by Lukes. People going about their daily business do not normally reflect on the objective conditions which have determined the context for their aspirations. It is only through a theory of the historical development of objective structures that individuals could become critically reflexive of the way their attitudes and wants have been shaped. What is surprising is Murphy's claim that no evidence of the relationship between objective class structures and subjective aspirations have been developed. E. P. Thompson's **The Making of the English Working Class** (1968) is just such an endeavour while in education the work of Brian Simon (1974) and more recently Gerald Grace (1987, 1988) to name but two, have gone into some detail to show how the objective structures of class in relation to state education have impacted on working class aspirations and attitudes to education.

If it can be shown that working class decision-making in education is a function of the unequal exercise of power and in our view it can, then the differences we have documented are inequalities and they should be addressed.

While it has become a standard point amongst radical sociologists that changes to education will not produce equality of opportunity there are clearly changes to education that are required in order to help promote equity. Elsewhere one of us has argued for a democratic integrated curriculum (Lauder & Khan, 1988) in part to avoid the class tagged subject hierarchies we have documented in this paper. We have also argued for greater efforts to balance the social class intakes of schools because the social mix of schools has a significant impact on school outcomes (Lauder & Hughes, 1989). With respect to changes in assessment space permits us to go no further than endorsing the general thrust of the various committees that have been set up to investigate the question of assessment (Educational Development Conference, 1974; Department of Education, 1976, 1986). In all these cases the general tenor of the recommendations has been towards unmoderated teacher assessment.

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Cultural Studies and Cultural Choice: A Reply to Nash

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In a recent contribution to **New Zealand Sociology**, Roy Nash (1987) offered a critique of the approach of the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies to working class culture, while in an earlier paper he posited an approach to explaining differential educational access and attainment in terms of rational choice theory, utilising the work of Boudon. (Nash, 1986) The two papers are linked in that they are both ultimately concerned with questions of agency and cultural choice. In particular, they focus on the nature and influence of working class culture vis-a-vis access to schooling, educational attainment, and attitudes towards tertiary level study. While both articles contain much of value, I want to argue here (1) that Nash misrepresents the "BCCCS view" and all too readily assumes its dominant influence in New Zealand cultural studies; and (2) that the Nash/Boudon version of rational choice theory overemphasises the agency aspect of the educational choice process. I then briefly consider the issue of educational choice, drawing heavily on a recent seminal contribution by Gambetta (1987). Finally, I want to reassert the value of a Gramscian approach to issues of cultural choice and cultural reproduction.

Birmingham's Working Class Culture

Nash's objections to the work of the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (BCCCS) on working class culture focus on what he considers their 'political romanticism' and 'theoretical idealism'. Nash argues that the BCCCS writers emphasis on the loss of the radical tradition in working class culture and its inability to produce an indigenous leadership, represent an ignoring of the true "structural grammar" of working class culture; and the imposition of 'some ideal concept of working class culture'. (Nash, 1986) To readers unfamiliar with the texts Nash examines, his criticisms of the BCCCS appear to have considerable weight. These criticisms, however, all too frequently demolish targets which bear only limited resemblance to the original work.

For one much given to disclaiming any interest in "perspectives", and, indeed, according that label any analytical value, Nash is extraordinarily ready to identify a common BCCCS perspective on working class culture. In doing so, he fastens only on one volume, **Working Class Culture** (Clarke *et al*, 1979), and concentrates almost exclusively on only three essays therein. This highly selective approach ignores the important historiographical essays on historians and "the people" contained in **Making Histories** (Johnson *et al*, 1982), and the influential though flawed attempt to provide a sustained example of working class reactions to State schooling: **Unpopular Education.** (CCCS, 1981)

Attempting to reduce the complexity of this body of work to a representative 'BCCCS line' on working class culture is fraught with difficulty. It is important to appreciate that:

> There has never been a rigidly imposed unitary theoretical position in the Centre, though there has been a general project - the elaboration of a non-reductionist theory of cultures and social formations ...
>
> (Hall, 1980, 39-40)

This approach is reflected in **Working Class Culture**, where the authors did not attempt to start from a common theoretical framework, but 'from problems and seek to

work through them in different ways and on different materials'. (preface) Indeed, the heterogeneity of the six case studies in **Working Class Culture** almost questions the utility of the concept which is the theme of the book. In part, this reflects the separation of work and leisure into discrete case studies; as shown by Pam Taylor's account of interwar domestic service and Paul Wild's history of recreation in Rochdale. It is also the result of the existence of distinct and very different phases in working class history, as shown by Richard Johnson's essay on radical education in the early 19th century and Michael Blanch's analysis of the pre-1914 imperialist mobilisation of youth. My point here is not to review the book, but to suggest that Nash's presentation of a coherent Birmingham view of working class history is too simplistic. Furthermore, a reading of some of the diverse contributions suggests that far from subscribing to an overly-romanticised view of working class culture, the writers are sensitive to the diverse elements of a single configuration.

It is even more difficult to see in Nash's brief summaries of Critcher and Johnson's contributions to **Working Class Culture**, much resemblance to the complexities of the originals. Reducing both arguments to their bare bones is here more a slaughter house exercise than a considered surgical operation. Critcher's historiological essay on sociological writing on post-war working class culture is reduced to that author's observations on one key contribution, (Coates and Silburn's study of poverty in Nottingham, **Poverty: The Forgotten Englishmen**, 1970). Even worse, Nash's summary of Johnson's *Three problematics: elements of a theory of working class-culture* bears absolutely no relation to that paper! Nash (1987:80-81) identifies these problematics as the socio-historical location of working class communities, their tradition of popular radicalism, and the shop floor generation of working class culture. But Johnson's 'three problematics' in fact are three main approaches to working class culture: orthodox Marxism, with its emphasis on "class" and "class consciousness"; the work of Raymond Williams, E.P. Thompson and others, in which "culture" replaced "consciousness" or necessitated a reexamination of its meaning; and "structuralist" approaches, in which 'the consciousness/class couplet altogether disappears'. (**Working Class Culture**, p.201) Johnson's project is to elaborate and interrogate these dominant traditions, in order to suggest new ways of thinking about working class culture. Even if we accept Nash's version of the three problematics, it is difficult to sustain his view of these as somehow representing a BCCCS view of working class culture, since, as he himself observes (1987:81), these three approaches are elaborated, adopted, and self-consciously criticised by various BCCCS writers.

Certainly there is a commonality of approach in the attempt to ground the BCCCS studies in the relationship of the working class to capital, reflecting the writers' commitment to a Gramscian view of politics. But to suggest, as Nash does, that this approach tends towards structuralist forms of explanation is a further misrepresentation. The strength of the BCCCS work would appear rather to have been its attempt to work through the two paradigms of structure and culture, to create an integrated perspective drawing strongly from Gramsci. As Hall puts it, as a 'prolonged repudiation of any form of reductionism', Gramsci's work suggests ways in which the opposing camps of structuralism and culturalism may be combined to produce a clearer understanding of the interrelationships between cultural, political and economic forms. (Hall, 1980)   **Unpopular Education**, an analysis of schooling and social democracy in England since 1944, exemplifies this approach, in its attempt 'to combine a concern with structural conditions, and the logic of process or function, with a concern for agency, will and active human agencies'. (CCCS, 1981:19)

In developing such an analysis, **Unpopular Education** avoids the functionalism and reductionism of previous accounts of policy making in education, and restores politics, in the broader sense, to such analyses. Starting from the principle that educational ideologies and practices are always born of contradiction and struggle, **Unpopular Education** emphasises the essential instability of any political settlement. The education system is seen as not simply the effect of policies, but rather a contested site. The Gramscian notion of hegemony is central to this process, involving winning over the active consent of the general population under the legitimating guise of acting 'in the public interest'. Ideologically, the state seeks to tie new citizens to the state through the process of political 'democracy' and an evenly applied system of 'justice', while at the same time maintaining a system of economic and political inequality. The civil and judicial institutions of a society function as agencies of the state, and the cultural hegemony they create is underpinned by the threat (or use) of actual physical coercion by the state. The dominant hegemony is contested by alternative, counter-hegemonic forms, and institutional sites, including schools, become sites of struggle. (Gramsci, 1968; Mouffe, 1979) **Unpopular Education** represents a concrete, historical study of the operation of hegemony, using the term 'education settlement' to refer to the balance of forces in and over schooling: 'Settlements entail ... some more or less enduring set of solutions to capital's educational needs, the putting together of a dominant alliance of forces, and a more widespread recruitment of popular support or inducement of popular indifference'. (p.32) Thus it is possible to understand the history of educational policy in terms of a succession of crises and settlements. While **Unpopular Education's** attempt to realise its theoretical aspirations was strongly critiqued (Silver, 1983:chapter 9), it did suggest a new agenda for the analysis of policy making and a potentially transforming initiative from the educational left. (Even this brief discussion is something of a digression, however, in this context, since Nash does not include **Unpopular Education** in his critique of Birmingham's studies of the working class.)

I do not want to deal in any detail here with Nash's criticisms of other work heavily influenced by the Birmingham Centre. I share some of his misgivings. Paul Willis (**Learning to Labour**) does over-romanticise the resistance of his lads, whose stance can be regarded as not so much resistance to capital, as to the authority of the State. Similarly, both Bea Campbell (**Wigan Pier Revisited**) and Anna Pollert (**Girls, Wives, Factory Lives**) overemphasise the "rough" tradition in working class life and too-readily deride the alternative tradition of "respectability". But, again, to equate these various authors with an uncritical reproduction of 'the central theses of the BCCCS collective' (Nash, 1987:87) is misguided.

Nash reserves his strongest condemnation for Christine Griffin's research on young women leaving school: **Typical Girls** (1985). He claims she 'uncritically adopts the idealist interpretation of culture propounded by the BCCCS'. (Nash, 1987:89) This sees "culture" as referring to 'shared principles of life, characteristics of particular classes, groups or shared social milieux. Cultures are produced as groups make sense of their social existence in the course of their everyday experience'. (Griffin, quoting **Unpopular Education**, p.27) Nash regards this as a 'highly restrictive understanding' of culture (1987:90), seemingly on two grounds: firstly, because of its emphasis on agency and consciousness; and secondly because it is suggestive of a class cultural unity which does not in fact exist. As already suggested, the second of these points is disposed of by any thorough consideration of the BCCCS work. The first assertion, implying that there is a lack of attention to the material conditions of existence, also seems misguided. As Griffin's account shows - indeed, she may theoretically

overprivilege this point - she is very aware of both the material and ideological constraints her girls lived under. Even at a purely semantic level, her definition of culture as something produced 'in the course of ... everyday experience' must surely include some notion of materialism? Consider here Nash's own definition of culture (Nash, 1987:95):

> "Culture" needs to be defined ... in terms of the practices of a social group as it goes about its business of economic production, living its home life, bringing up its children, and managing its relations with other social groups.

This sounds to me very much like a description of "everyday experience".

Of course, such arguments stray into the morass of the agency - structure impasse that bedevils much sociological theorising. Nash is quick to seize upon Griffin's girls as exemplifying a process of "rational choice", rejecting her attempt to emphasise the ideological constraints on this as 'a cultural determinism of a particularly blatant kind'. (*ibid*) This leads us back to Nash's main charges against the BCCCS: that they have both an idealist view of culture and, at the same time, a deterministic view of cultural choice: 'Their theory is, when pressed, clearly idealist and economistic rather than truly materialist'. (Nash, 1987:94) As already suggested, this is to ignore the attempts by the BCCCS to utilise hegemony (a concept which Nash has little time for) to avoid overprivileging either consciousness or the economic. At a theoretical level, definitions of working class culture must avoid seeing it either as generated spontaneously from below, thereby creating an "authentic" people's culture, or as culture imposed from above, with such force and totality that people are deprived of all agency. As I shall argue later, "hegemony" is more than the 'ten bucks each way solution to this dilemma' that Nash (1987:96) equates it with.

New Zealand Cultural Studies

As Nash observes, such considerations of the views of the BCCCS are 'a long way from home'. He has, however, taken on the task of pointing out the error of their ways since 'the BCCCS' approach to cultural studies has not been uninfluential in New Zealand', while 'the reasons for preferring to concentrate on the theoretical fountainhead should be obvious'. (Nash, 1987:96) I appreciate the latter sensitivity; we have only so much energy and to dissipate it in internal dissension is frequently unproductive. However, I think the reluctance to confront local, Birmingham-influenced work, is here too sensitive. Nash's equation of BCCCS with New Zealand cultural studies is too glib. Indeed, it is even arguably premature, since local cultural studies work remains extremely limited in both its extent and impact!

If we take the journal SITES as representing the leading focus for local cultural studies, the connection with Birmingham is of course obvious. The early issues (as the New Zealand Cultural Studies Working Group Newsletter/Journal), saw considerable discussion of the nature of "cultural studies", particularly the contribution of the BCCCS, and included reviews of BCCCS publications, outlines of the development of the Centre, and considerations of the relevance of British cultural studies to the New Zealand context. But, as the editorial collective was at pains to point out, Birmingham represented a starting point, not an orthodoxy to be uncritically adopted. (See, for example, the editorial in Issue 3, Autumn 1982, and the debate with Sharon Mast therein.) The editorial policy, first elaborated in 1982, saw cultural studies as 'a problematic, centrally concerned with the relationship between consciousness and society, and with the processes of signification through which that relationship is

expressed'. This admittedly represented the project in Birmingham-like terms, but, as subsequent elaboration of it noted, sought also to adapt overseas theory to the New Zealand context **and** develop original theoretical work on New Zealand culture. While such goals remain at best only partially realised, neither indicates a slavish following of a BCCCS line. To sustain his views, Nash would need to analyse specific examples of local cultural studies, for example, my own attempt to apply a Gramscian analysis to the history of State schooling in New Zealand, or Jones' ethnographic work. (Shuker, 1987; Jones, 1985) Without such analysis, his argument remains at the level of polemical assertion.

Nash's critique of the BCCCS rests in large part on a distaste for their tendency to hang on to a form of dominant ideology thesis, a theoretical position (dare I say perspective?) clearly at odds with his own argument for logical, resource-bound, cultural choice. (Nash, 1986) Accordingly, let us now look further at the question of choice in educational decision-making.

Cultural Choice
We know that, by and large, people will generally strive to better themselves and their families. Working class people are no exception, and will utilise their personal and family resources as best they can to both maintain and improve the social and economic position of both themselves and their children. We also know, however, that massive differences exist between the educational attainments of various class groupings. (Lauder, 1985) Even when working class children have similar levels of ability/attainment to their middle class peers, they still choose not to go on to university. The questions which then arise include: Why don't working class students succeed academically in similar proportions to middle and upper class groups; why do many academically successful working class students still choose not to go on to university study; and, equally important but often not sufficiently considered, how do we explain the choices of those working class students who **do** gain school academic qualifications and **do** go on to university studies?

The question of differential educational attainment has, of course, been central to the sociology of education. A number of possible explanations for its persistence, and particularly the continued relatively lower educational attainment of working class children, have been offered. Nash (1986) essentially argues that working class students adopt a form of resource-based, strategic-oriented market behaviour in deciding not to pursue further schooling. Nash admits that cultural practices 'have their origin in the fundamental relations of domination and subordination maintained between classes, ethnic groups, and sexes', (1986:136) but wants to disclaim any explanatory power being accorded to what he terms 'such ... couplets as "the constraints of hegemony/ideology"'. (Nash, 1987:95)

While I don't disagree with much of the "summary view" offered by Nash (1986:136), the issue here is rather one of emphasis, with Nash leaning too much towards an 'agency' viewpoint. He argues that students plot 'cultural trajectories' (towards employment, study, etc.) **'considered attainable in the light of the knowledge they possess** ... of the costs and risks of the trajectories possible for people like them'. (*ibid*, my emphasis) This is to acknowledge the notion of a **constrained choice**, but for Nash, influenced by Boudon and game theory, the choice aspect seems heightened at the expense of the constraints involved.

To accept Nash's view of a resource-based, strategic-oriented market behaviour poses interesting political questions. While theory should ultimately be about establishing the

truth or otherwise of particular arguments, this sort of rational choice explanation is as theoretically accessible to those who favour Milton Friedman and the New Zealand Treasury as it is to those who lean towards Marx and Gramsci. Indeed, Nash's views stray dangerously towards the rational choice model of analysis so dear to Treasury in the present debate over the maintenance and delivery of social services in New Zealand. Essentially, a rational choice approach holds that the basic unit of analysis is the individual actor rather than any larger social unit such as class, and believes that action is determined by the preferences and attitudes of freely-choosing individuals rather than being socially constructed. A Treasury Brief on education issues, to the incoming Labour government in 1987, argued:

> In sum, government expenditure is liable to reduce freedom of choice and thereby curtail the sphere of responsibility of its citizens and weaken the self-steering ability inherent in society to reach optimal solutions through the mass of **individual actions pursuing free choice** without any formal consensus.
>
> (Treasury, 1987, p.41; my emphasis)

Nash is not naive enough to carry his own view to what is such an almost anarchic degree, but consider the parallels in his approving summary of Boudon:

> Boudon's social theory is, in fact, informed by a rather simple idea well expressed in the title of his most recently translated work, **The Unintentional Consequences of Social Action.** As individuals and collective institutions - families, firms, nations, and so on - act in pursuit of their best interests, their collective actions often produce unintended, largely unexpected, and typically perverse effects.
>
> Nash, 1986, p.125)

As his discussion subsequent to the above point demonstrates, Nash finds Boudon's form of rational cost-benefit analysis very convincing. Accordingly, with Boudon, he can argue that it is **rational** for working class students to enter courses with a relatively low status destination, even when they have the academic ability/credentials to aim higher, 'Working class students ... stand to gain - even from less prestigious courses of study, general arts, applied technology and so on, and also stand to lose more, in terms of family solidarity and such like considerations, by choosing to enter a higher course'. (Nash, 1986:133)

As well as its clear echoes in some economic theory, this view of people as rational actors has much in common with the classical social psychology approach to individual life choices, which emphasises 'the importance of logical cognitive operations in coming to ideal decisions'. (Sloan, 1987:42) A major contribution to the field presents a model of **ideal** decision making as a seven step process. In this, the decision maker, to the best of their ability and within their information processing capabilities, goes through a comprehensive seven part process, including thoroughly canvassing a wide range of alternative courses of action; carefully weighing the costs and risks consequent to each alternative; and surveying the full range of objectives to be fulfilled and the values implicated by the choice. (Janis and Mann, cited Sloan, 1987)

This is, of course, an idealised situation. It could be argued that:

> rationality and individualism are not in fact universally valid concepts upon which a general, trans-historical theory or approach might be constructed, but, rather, concepts

that arise from, reflect and are strictly determined by the social relations of capitalist production.

(Kieve, 1986:569)

Indeed, rational choice reflects social reality in an inverted form, since what may appear on the surface to be a freely-arrived at, self-interested choice based on cost-benefit considerations will in reality be a heavily-determined, necessary "choice", arising from perceptions based on class location, etc.

To examine in detail the links between certain positions within economics and social psychology, and the work of Boudon and Nash is beyond the scope of this one paper. It seems to be more sensible to instead situate these views within a general discussion of decision making in education.

A recent Italian study by Gambetta, (1987) is particularly helpful here. Though Gambetta's empirical data is Italian, the decision whether to stay on in education or to leave is common to most education systems, while the context of inequality of cultural and economic resources and problems of employment are broadly similar in many Western countries. Gambetta begins by observing that studies of educational behaviour 'have either embraced the idea that reproductive forces are overwhelming and that therefore there is little doubt that people are exclusively **pushed** into given destinations or, on the contrary, the idea that people are rational and **jump** towards the destinations that attract them most'. (Gambetta, 1977:2) This has dichotomised the discussion into 'insuperable ideological oppositions' and stifled rational discussion, and Gambetta's project is to reverse that tendency through an empirically based analysis which embraces both push and pull factors.

On the **push** side, the essential questions to be addressed include:

(1)   is the cultural capital one is endowed with through the family an essential ingredient for reaching higher education?
(2)   what is the relative importance of economic constraints on educational decisions?

On the **jump** side, when deciding about their education, do people respond rationally to their past achievement and to labour market opportunities?
And, embracing both sides of the argument, do people's personal preferences and aspirations make a difference in themselves to educational choices irrespective of social origin? Gambetta's basic theoretical question then is:

> To what extent can educational behaviour be represented as a product of intentional choice or, conversely, to what extent is it the result of processes which, in one way or another, minimise the scope for a socially meaningful choice at the   individual level?
> (p.7)

Gambetta outlines three major views of the individual agent: the first two see individual agents as essentially inactive, being either 'constrained by a lack of relevant alternatives', or pushed by 'causal factors that escape their awareness'. The third sees them as capable of purposive action and of weighing up the pros and cons of available alternatives.

The first view has been called "structuralist", and its most extreme form is represented by the work of Althusser. (Less assertive forms appear in certain studies of the labour

market.) Gambetta argues that a weaker version of the structuralist approach is tenable, in that **under given circumstances** (his emphasis) in the outside world as it presents itself to the individual, the alternatives available to the individual are severely constrained, or even collapsed into only one option.

The second form of pushed from behind view 'assumes that a given piece of behaviour follows from causes, either social or psychological, that are opaque to the individual consciousness and by acting **behind their backs**, push the agents towards a given course of action'. (p.11) As with the structuralist view, this approach assumes that individual decisions are of minimal importance, in that "choice" is severely constrained by contextual factors.

The disadvantage of such approaches is that they don't constitute a generalised explanation of human action, since it is clearly possible for thoughtful and intentional action to occur **at the same time** as mechanisms operate to constrain subjects' awareness. As Gambetta puts it (p.15): 'Subjects can still compare alternatives and choose rationally between them even if through a socially "biased" preference structure'.

The third approach, the 'pulled from the front' view, assumes that 'individuals act purposively in accordance with their intentions: when they are faced with multiple courses of actions, it predicts that they will weigh them up and choose according to some expected future reward attached to each course of action'. (p.16) This is a "rational-intentional" approach, and two versions of it can be distinguished (1) viewing individuals as capable of behaving according to their preferences; and (2) stressing the adaptive features of rational choice. Both tend towards emphasising the influence of economic factors and market forces in the choice process, and have many echoes in the work of Boudon and Nash.

Gambetta moves from his theoretical discussion to a consideration of how the three approaches outlined have been applied to the sociology of education. He distinguishes between (1) those authors who stress the importance of constraints, either economic or cultural (e.g. Bourdieu); (2) those highlighting the role of subcultural values and experiences (e.g. Lane, 1972); and (3) those who have pointed out that it is mainly a matter of rational decisions taken on the basis of costs and benefits. (e.g. Boudon, 1981) As Gambetta notes, the main controversy here is between the cultural capital hypothesis (Bourdieu) and the rational choice hypothesis (Boudon) - though, as he acknowledges, there is no a priori reason any one of these hypotheses should alone constitute a general explanation of educational choices.

Gambetta relates his detailed discussion of this work on educational choice to his Italian survey data. From a complex consideration of the factors involved, Gambetta rightly concludes that: 'The distribution of individuals across possible educational options appears to be the result of a dense combination of mechanisms'. (p.167) As he observes, while this doesn't take us very far, at least 'it is a claim that rather than emerging from mere speculation is generated through empirical analysis'. (p.168) H e then elaborates an approach which sees educational decisions as the joint result of three main processes: of what one can do, of what one wants to do and, indirectly, of the conditions that shape one's preferences and intentions.

Bringing all this back to Nash, Gambetta's picture of a complex of influences in educational decisions lends qualified support to the former's view that 'class-located

families adopt distinct strategies in pursuit of their intergenerational goals'; that class-located families possess intellectual, social, and economic resources; and that 'students generate themselves, through processes that have been identified as cultural production, group conceptions of their social and cultural situations, ... targeted at (particular) destinations'. (Nash, 1986:136) The difficulty remains, however, with how such 'group conceptions' are generated. Gambetta does not consider (in any detail at least) arguments for the operation of a hegemonic process, involving the imposition of ideological limitations on people's "choice" of options (c.f. his 'conditions that shape one's preferences and intentions'). It is this point that I now want to take up, linking the discussion back to the BCCCS Gramscian project.

Choice, Ideology, Hegemony

As already noted, people generally strive to better themselves and their families. This involves making choices, and, following Gambetta and Nash, we can see this as a complex process. But people's actions are also influenced by **their perception** of circumstances, and they follow those particular lines of action which they regard as most likely to bring about the ends they desire. Further, these perceptions and desires are not simply artifacts of individual consciousness, but are also the product of ideology. In other words, this is a process of "constrained choice", rather than "rational choice".

A critical question is how **particular** ideologies come to dominate during particular periods, and the relative weight of specific class interests. Clearly, classes do not have an equal say in how ideas are shaped and communicated. Particular groups construct the ideological field to their own advantage. While the view of dominant ideologies representing dominant social groups is evident in the writings of Marx and Engels, the work of Gramsci alerts us to the non-deterministic nature of this process. It is rather a question of "hegemony", the manner in which ideologies are reproduced as subjectivities and lived experience while appearing to be natural and unchangeable:

> ... hegemony refers to a form of ideological control in which dominant beliefs, values, and social practices are produced and distributed throughout a whole range of institutions, such as schools, the family, mass media, and trade unions. As the dominant ideology, hegemony functions to define the meaning and limits of common sense as well as the form and content of discourse in a society. It does so by posting certain ideas and routines as natural and universal.
>
> (Giroux, 1980:228)

Let me briefly indicate several examples of work illustrating the operation of ideological constraints (hegemony) upon cultural choices made by individuals/groups.

The influential study by Paul Willis of working class school leavers, **Learning to Labour,** is perhaps the most impressive achievement of the Birmingham group. Willis shows that schools help create and legitimate forms of consciousness which underpin the maintenance of existing sets of socio-economic relationships. While Willis does not overtly use the term hegemony, out of a concern for its lack of preciseness, he recognises the concept's value in attempting 'to denote the precise state of the **relationship** between ideology and located cultural forms'. (p.170, note 1) The two analytical concepts that Willis uses to interpret the lads' experiences - penetrations and limitations - draw heavily on Gramsci's discussion of the contradictory nature of commonsense and the notion of 'hegemonised commonsense'.

'Penetration' is meant to designate impulses within a cultural form towards the penetration of the conditions of existence of its members and their position within the social whole but in a way which is not centred, essentialist, or individualist. 'Limitation' is meant to designate those blocks, diversions and ideological effects which confuse and impede the full development and expression of these impulses. The rather clumsy but strictly accurate term, 'partial penetration' is meant to designate the interaction of these two terms in a concrete culture.

<div style="text-align:right">(Willis, 1980:119)</div>

Willis argues that the lads partially see through (penetrate) the surface of bourgeois society, and are aware of the mystifying role institutions like the school play in reproducing the structure of inequality. Such penetrations are limited, however, as these "commonsense" glimpses are structured and intersected (limited) by dominant or hegemonic meanings and practices which serve to mask the real nature of class domination. Let us attempt to explicate these processes a little further:

Willis argues that: 'The difficult thing to explain about how working class kids get working class jobs **is why they let themselves**'. (p.1, my emphasis) He suggests that "failed" working class kids do not simply take up those jobs not wanted by the least successful middle class or the most successful working class kids. Rather the working class cultural pattern of "failure" is radically different and discontinuous from other (dominant?) patterns. It is a culture which represents conscious acceptance of the kids eventual place on the shop floor:

> The specific milieu ... in which a certain subjective sense of manual labour power, and an objective decision to apply it to manual work, is produced is the working class counter-school culture. It is here where working class themes are mediated to individuals and groups in their own determinate context and where working class kids creatively develop, transform and finally reproduce aspects of the larger culture in their own praxis in such a way as to finally direct them to certain kinds of work.
>
> <div style="text-align:right">(p.2)</div>

In so far as it is their own culture which most effectively prepares some working class lads for the giving of their manual labour power, there is an element of self-domination in this taking on of subordinate roles in Western capitalism. Paradoxically, however, this damnation is experienced by the lads as true learning, affirmation, appropriation, and a form of resistance; this is partial penetration.

An important aspect of **Learning to Labour** is that it illuminates how the cultural capital of oppositional groups 'contains elements of a profound critique of the dominant ideology ... in our society'. (p.129) In this case, these elements are contained in the style and messages of the informal counter-school culture of the lads. There is a rejection of competitive individualism, conformity, and academic credentials, a rejection developed within modes of language, dress, habits, and styles of behaviour that demonstrate opposition to the dominant ideology of the school. A counter-school culture is developed by the lads, based on the importance of the group.

Hebdige's work on spectacular working class youth subcultures takes this point further. As with the lads in **Learning to Labour,** for the groups in **Subculture: The Meaning of Style** cultural experiences and practices are ideological, culture constitutes the means by which both individuals and groups actively and creatively construct their reality. Of course, while culture is not imposed upon them, the conditions within which

they create their culture are not of their own choosing. Furthermore, youth cultures, while frequently epitomising rebellion may be reclaimed and incorporated into the commercial and ideological interests of consumer capitalism, (witness TV ads using punk style to promote banking!)

Youth subcultures then, represent the working through of hegemony in the arena of style. As Hebdige puts it:

> The struggle between different discourses, different definitions and meanings within ideology is therefore always, at the same time, a struggle within signification: a struggle for the possession of the sign which extends to even the most mundane areas of everyday life ... the safety pins and tubes of vaseline, we can see that such commodities are indeed open to a double inflection: to "illegitimate" as well as "legitimate" uses.
>
> (Hebdige, 1979:17-18)

The work of both Willis and Hebdige is well-known to sociologists of education, and the operation of ideology can perhaps be more freshly reiterated via an anthropological example. In a study of the Baktaman, a Highland New Guinea people, Fredrik Barth is concerned with issues similar to those addressed by Hebdige and Willis. The Baktaman are a small, highly self-contained face-to-face community, relatively untouched by the outside world, who sustain a whole culture and world of their own. Barth was (in part) interested in how individual Baktaman were 'defined as actors and audiences in communication, and how are they equipped and constrained to change and control these definitions?'. (Barth, 1975:106) Barth shows how the knowledge gained by adult males through the tribe's initiation rituals enables them to attain deeper and perhaps more personally satisfying understandings of their lives. Yet this understanding remained constrained by the Baktaman's mode of subsistence, the relationships between men, women and children, and the sheer lack of concepts with which to think beyond certain limits.

All this is to argue, as many important theorists have before, that while individual members of a society create their own understanding of the world they live in, and act upon these, they do not do these things freely. People are constrained by the limited symbolic/cultural resources available to them, and by the restrictiveness of their concepts and "world view". Bringing this back to the working class and their educational choices, several years ago an essay by a stage one student, discussing Willis, put it thus:

> ... perhaps children from manual working homes have less parental adversity to such [manual] work, so the children are able to be happy to get manual work. Children from 'higher' social backgrounds often have the idea reinforced by parents that manual work is not as desirable as comfortable professional work. Would a carpenter's son regard 'success' as having a long formal education and professional job of high social status, or be content with life as a carpenter? If the latter were true he would **choose** not to pursue a higher education, and deliberately give up his educational opportunities. By saying this I am suggesting that it may be that children of working families may not succeed academically because that might not be their understanding of success.

Such a statement encapsulates both a notion of the influence of different, class-based, value systems, and an implicit acknowledgement of the prisoners of the dominant

ideology thesis. As such, it illustrates the need to find a way between the structure - agency impasse that has crippled much of the discussion of cultural/educational choice. A Gramscian approach to such questions correctly sees culture as the ground on which ideologies work. This avoids a functionalist reduction of culture and human action to "structural determinants", while still maintaining the idea that consciousness is shaped by social being. It also avoids the theoretically tenuous and politically dangerous "rational choice" view, which over-privileges agency.

We have, I hope, come full circle. I have demonstrated that the most productive Birmingham Centre "approach" to working class culture, if it can be accorded the coherence that term implies, must be seen as a Gramscian project. Further, that analyses of cultural/educational choices must be viewed in Gramscian terms, as the interplay between culture and ideology. This is not to deny 'the ability of people to understand their own best interests' (Nash), but to recognise that: 'People make their own history, but not under conditions of their own making'.[1]

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1   To move forward in the examination of educational choice, we need to undertake survey studies (of the kind represented by Gambetta), combined with ethnographic analysis (e.g. Willis, Jones), and with both subject to theoretical scrutiny, involving, among other things, a more considered definition of "choice" and its shaping. I make no pretence at initiating such a project here, but applaud Nash's own efforts in that direction.

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REVIEW ESSAY

The status of class

Gordon Marshall, Howard Newby, David Rose, Carolyn Vogler. **Social Class in Modern Britain**. London: Hutchinson. 1988.

Göran Ahrne, Raimo Blom, Harri Melin and Jouko Nikula. (eds). **Class and Social Organisation in Finland, Sweden and Norway**. Uppsala: Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis. Studia Sociologica Upsaliensis 28. 1988.

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Introduction

The two books under review are products of the Wright-inspired Comparative Project on Class Structure and Class Consciousness, in which New Zealand is also involved as a participant.[1] This highly productive comparative undertaking has to date managed to accumulate systematic comparative information on eleven countries, with the promise of more participants to come. This comparative information on the class structures of "advanced" societies should become available to New Zealand researchers in the New Year, so that it is timely to examine some of the first publicly available materials from national projects. **Social Class in Modern Britain** offers a detailed account of what the British project generated by way of an analysis of Britain's contemporary class structure; **Class and Social Organisation in Finland, Sweden and Norway** reviews the results of the Nordic Project, using a comparative model to present their arguments.

Class in Britain

Before I concentrate on a critical commentary, I want to make a general comment about the British work. The British book has on its dedication page the phrase 'For John H. Goldthorpe and Erik Olin Wright', and this somewhat surprising coupling tells us much about what is to come in the substance of the text. At the heart of the intellectual struggle which frames the work is the struggle between two forms of class classification, the first stemming from Goldthorpe's Weberian-inspired, occupational-based approach, the second from Wright's Marxist-inspired relational class model. The task of teasing out the details of this dispute is at the very heart of the arguments concerning the cogency of class analysis, and the book is thus of crucial importance to all those concerned with stratification studies.

The debate itself has a history, of course. Erik Wright (with Luca Perrone) wrote a seminal article in the highly prestigious **American Sociological Review**, which was published in 1977 (Marxist Class Categories and Income Inequalities, **American Sociological Review**, Volume 42, Number 1, 1977), following closely on the heels of Class Boundaries in Advanced Capitalist Societies (**New Left Review**, number 98, 1976). At the time when the ASR article appeared, I happened to be a graduate student at Stanford, where American Sociological Review was housed. I can vividly remember being shown a pre-publication copy of Wright's article; on the eve of my own dissertation it had a decided effect. The article's publication had a similarly important effect in wider circles. In essence, Wright and Perrone tried to show that sophisticated theoretical marxism could foot it with the best of them when put to the test with Weberian-inspired occupational models. By using the orthodox quantitative techniques

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1   See Wilkes, C.et.al. **The New Zealand Class Structure**, Sociology Department, Massey University, 1985.

of mainstream sociology, Wright was able to show that the **theoretical** and **ontological** justification for much of stratification research was as much ideological and tautological as it was scientific. If "science" were to be taken to be the enduring criterion on which to assess the value of analysis, then Wright showed that Marxism had as much "right" (the puns are inevitable) to be accorded scientific status, if the essential difference between models was to be determined by mundane reference to such techniques as the degree of variance explained by contrasting theorems. This initiative led to a much wider set of publications[2] and the interest shown in his work provided Wright with sympathetic colleagues in several countries. This in turn offered the necessary network for the structuring of the present comparative project.

However, even a cursory reading of Marshall *et al.*'s book should quickly dispel the assumption that the comparative class project is little more than a series of replications of Wright's earlier work. Indeed, if anything, it is John Goldthorpe's "line" that is followed in this volume, rather than Wright's. For the British, year after year, it has been the banner of Goldthorpe[3] which has been held high; Wright has frequently been the target of intense criticism. This criticism has sometimes taken a tone which seems mildly petulant and somewhat excessive.[4] I am unclear what the origins of this particular intellectual tradition might be, save the usual explanations of association, collegiality or familiarity, but to my view their adherence to Goldthorpe's argument is not directly connected to the present scientific adjudication. Indeed, well before the present British survey was ever fielded, the British researchers, in a meeting which took place at Essex in 1983 appeared to have decided a priori that a critical stance was necessary vis-a-vis Wright's explanatory schema. Thus from early days it is unclear

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2   Among others, See the books **Class Crisis and the State,**, NLB, 1978, London; **Classes,** London, NLB/Verso, 1985; **Class Structure and Income Determination,** Academic Press, New York, 1979; as well as a series of highly influential articles, especially **The American Class Structure, American Sociological Review** 47, 1982, pages 709-726; **Varieties of Marxist Conceptions of Class Structure, Politics and Society,** 9 (3) pp.323-370, and **Class and Occupation,** 1980, **Theory and Society** 9, pages 177-216.

3   I am at pains to emphasise that this adulation of Goldthorpe's work is not unalloyed; for example, in the present book they part company with Goldthrope on the gender issue. However there are many indications of the imbalance in the influence Wright and Goldthorpe have had on the British work. Witness a crude indicator in a recent paper [**Social Stratification.** D. Rose, G. Marshall, **Working Paper 37,** in the Comparative Project on Class Structure and Class Consciousness Working Paper Series] where Goldthorpe contributes nine references, Wright only three; the thirteen bibliographic references in the present book accorded to Goldthorpe; Wright has six.

4   See, for example the **British Journal of Sociology,** 1985 Volume 36 number 2, pages 259-284, where they comment (page 266): 'Wright's analysis...is static, mechanical, crudely deterministic, eliminates human agency, offends common sense and therefore, not surprisingly, offers *ad hoc* explanations for the nature of specific 'historical conjunctures'. Again, this article (which is largely repeated in the book) offers evidence of an almost entirely uncritical reverence for Weber.

(See especially the Weber exposition (p.263); Weber's equality with Marx (p.260), further Weberian exposition (p.267) modest critique (FN, p.281) followed by FN 13, p.281 and FN 22, pages 282 and 283 where the eulogy continues).

why, if they held such manifestly oppositional views to the fundamentals of Wright's argument, they continued to be so directly involved in the Wright project. This profound a priori tension in the British component of the project coloured all their later empirical and theoretical writing.

The most succinct critique of Wright's structuralist position is to be found in **Class, Citizenship and Distributional Conflict in Modern Britain** (Marshall *et al.*, 1985). The book paraphrases the criticism of the article, and here Wright is found to be offering an analysis which is again 'static, mechanical, crudely deterministic and ...devoid of human agency'. (Marshall *et al.* 1988:24)

Whether any or all of these charges can be supported is, of course, for the reader to decide. But the important task at hand is to discover whether or not the present book avoids major pitfalls. One particular pitfall is of most interest. The authors comment:

> This is not to suggest we are total relativists where social class is concerned. Our own conception of class ... is itself theoretically derived. Rather, our objection is to protracted disputes conducted almost exclusively in theoretical terms, where the issues involved are at least in part resolvable in practice on empirical grounds. Our modest intention here is to offer a more systematic and empirical assessment of their alternative conceptions of the class structure and class processes in modern capitalist societies...
>
> (Marshall et. al., 1988:26)

Does the book achieve their modest intention?

Let me say at the outset that the book is a decidedly worthy undertaking. By this suggestion I mean it has a series of enviable virtues which can reflect nothing but credit on the reputations of the authors. The text is well-organised, smoothly-written and logical in its structure. It begins by carefully setting out the purposes of the book, analysing and (sometimes brilliantly) critiquing Wright and Goldthorpe's models, reviewing the definitional aspects of class, then going on to set out the major findings of the class survey before the obligatory politics chapter and conclusion. In all this, the quality of exposition is thoughtful and sufficiently thorough to do justice to the task in hand. In essence they want to know if class matters in contemporary Britain, and, if it does, what form of class analysis makes sense. As an indication to students in sociology about what is to be expected at the highest levels of scholarship, it therefore combines qualities of logic, carefulness and convincing argument which will provide a genuinely worthy model.[5]

I have four major criticisms, however, which I shall try and document carefully in what follows. These can be summarised under the following headings - sociological false consciousness; epistemological and methodological weaknesses; gender issues; and the lack of alternatives.

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5   We are even told Gordon Marshall typed the whole manuscript!

1. Sociological False Consciousness

I take the view that the writers are guilty of a sociological false consciousness which has profound implications for the structure of their work. This false consciousness[6] leads them to assert the belief that, with a proper adjudication, sense can be made of class analysis by resorting to scientific evidence. The reason that I believe this to be an example of sociological false consciousness is that their Weberian pedigree was manifestly clear well before any of the present research findings came to hand, and thus well before any purely scientific adjudication was possible. The delusion that this theoretical attitude was amenable to change leads them to place Goldthorpe's arguments in far too prominent a position for the weight of evidence.

This process is not however a simple one. Goldthorpe is assessed, reviewed, tested, critiqued, done over, wrestled to the ground and generally subjected to the sort of intellectual mugging that we would expect from such talented practitioners of the discipline. However, it is Goldthorpe that finally rises from the canvas, and while he may have suffered some minor damage, he remains the unmistakable winner in the struggle of the paradigms. Indeed, the outcome was never really in doubt, and the authors were right to say of themselves that they are not absolute relativists in relation to class. Indeed they are not, and nothing the members of the British project have ever written at any time has left any doubt at all as to the overall Weberian quality of their undertaking.

While Marxists are frequently accused of holding to views independent of the evidence, it is a charge rarely directed at Weberians. Yet it seems to me entirely consistent with what we know from Kuhn and others about the nature of sociological paradigms that this research group were unlikely to move beyond the flexible boundaries of their paradigmatic position, evidence to the contrary or not. I should be clear that I am not suggesting that Marshall *et al.* were leading us up the garden path in all this. What I am suggesting is that this present undertaking was not a genuine test of alternative models. Indeed, the formulation of any theoretically-directed empirical research implies that certain theoretical approaches are privileged above others, and Marshall et. al.'s undertaking was no different from any other. And while Wright's class mapping had, by necessity, an important place in the research, it was Goldthorpe's classification that held sway over their hearts and minds. This was indeed an example of sociological false consciousness - nobody could reasonably accuse the researchers of following anything but the highest standards of investigatory procedures. Yet, in spite of this, the outcome is decidedly tautological. Strengths and weaknesses are found on both sides of the argument of course, but in the end (and with the best possible taste and with some subtlety) it is a one-horse race. (see especially FN.4)

This is not true merely in their (largely) indirect but almost wholesale acceptance of Weber's views but directly in their treatment of Goldthorpe himself. For example,

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6   The irony in the use of the term is intended. The question of adjudicating research findings is, of course, a complex one. Marshall et al. make the general case that changes in post-war Britain are better explained by Goldthorpe than by Wright. This is not surprising since Wright offers no such account. But more important, this is not sensible ground for prejudging the present survey; otherwise, there can be no sustainable reason for undertaking the work in the first place.

when Goldthorpe's life-style and market logic is carefully presented (*ibid*.21-22) it is displayed as 'an elegant argument finely grounded in the mainstream of sociological theory'. (*ibid*:22) It is found unnecessary to dwell on Goldthorpe's critics:

> Goldthorpe's interpretation ... (has) been subject to extensive criticism ... But it is not necessary to pursue these issues here, since it is the practice of class analysis that forms the object of our concern, rather than its theoretical rationale (*ibid*:22-23).

However, this is an untenable position to take, because it is patently clear that theoretical rationale and the 'practice of class analysis' are ultimately tied together - one cannot, quite obviously, separate one from the other. This error is emphasised when in the very next section (*ibid*:23-24) the authors are very happy to elaborate upon the theoretical weaknesses of Wright's work in some considerable detail. Surely, if the 'practice of class analysis' and 'theoretical rationale' are separate for Goldthorpe the same should be true for Wright. Chapter Three perhaps offers the most extreme attack against Wright in its opening paragraph:

> Before proceeding to our class analysis proper there is one preliminary complication that must be dealt with. Having initiated an international project in order to test the worth of his theory ... Wright subsequently raised his whole class scheme and **indeed abandoned his initial formulation altogether.** (*ibid*:31 my emphasis)

The criticism greatly overstates the case of course, but it is the tone of the commentary which is interesting, implying as it does some form of betrayal by Wright of his colleagues in the project - it is suggested that he has recanted the early argument altogether. Then follows some fourteen pages of detailed criticism of Wright's schema. At the end of all this it is not surprising that the names of Weber and Goldthorpe are invoked as the necessary antidote. In the first part of the criticism Wright is accused of giving ground to his non-marxist critics and bringing his analysis very close to theirs (*ibid*:44). This is again ironic. Having criticised Wright soundly there can be little solace among the authors that Wright and they share so much common ground. On the next page they are back to the gospel according to Goldthorpe:

> Wright's implicit model ... is too crude to bear the weight of his own insights. As Goldthorpe has argued, class formation must be shown to exist at the demographic level before it can be expected to exist in any socio-cultural sense...(*ibid*:45)

The asymmetrical treatment is continued throughout the book.[7]

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7   To summarise, rather than repeatedly document the argument to the point of tedium: Wright has found 'credentials', but Weber found them first (p.47); Wright has finally found the market; Weber was there before him [ibid.] Weber avoids historicism, Marx and Wright do not; Wright's argument is '19th century', Goldthorpe's (while less tidy) is 'closer to reality' [ibid: 59]. Wright rather than Goldthorpe is said to be a 'prisoner of occupational coding' (news indeed!); [ibid: 94]. Deskilling a la Wright is unsubstantiated [p.116], but skills are, magically explained by Goldthorpe's class categories [p.117]; though Goldthorpe is criticised 'we disagree with John Goldthorpe' [p.138] ... however 'we have been led again and again to the conclusion that, whatever its weaknesses.. (his model) is generally more robust than either ... alternative ... offered by Wright' [p.139]. Even where Goldthorpe is wrong, he is 'better than Wright', it seems! Chapter 7 reviews Wright's arguments about politics and class; none of this is said to be news to non-marxists [p.169]; John Goldthorpe explains more class consciouness than Wright

2. Epistemology and Methodology

Second, my argument is that **Social Class in Modern Britain** is epistemologically and methodologically limited. This is again a point of debate of the utmost importance in assessing the value of the work. Members of the British project have frequently criticised Wright for his scientism, his dependency on quantitative, scalar measurements of such subjective phenomena as attitudes and his reliance on regression models for the source of explanatory power. In its stead, they themselves have argued for interpretive approaches, and we might have expected to find, looking to Marshall's own pedigree, a more historical approach being invoked and appended to the findings that are presented.[8] Yet there is little if any epistemological sophistication in the work. What seems to underpin their methodological exposition is a loosely-framed Popperian strategy - the simple policy of testing alternative models by evidence, with the likely outcome to be found in a revision of the theory - this seems to be the aim, repeatedly stated in the early part of the book.

It very much behoves those who cast stones to make sure their own glasshouse is solidly reinforced. While Wright's scientism is potentially indefensible, their own failure in not developing anything remarkably different leaves them vulnerable to the charge that they are quite unreflexive in the shaping of their own scientific practice,[9] that their data is weakly presented and that they fall foul of similar charges to those directed at Wright. Let us therefore analyse their own 'scientific approach', by examining one of the key points of contention between Wright and his British colleagues - the issue of studying attitudes. Wright uses Likert scales, whose intervality, reliability and validity have been justly criticised. For the sake of comparability, the British researchers included such items in their own work, all the

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[p.180]; indeed Goldthorpe's model in relation to class consciouness is better (analytically superior) to the 'neo-marxist' schemes of Erik Wright; Goldthorpe explains more about attitudes towards distributional justice than Wright [p.185]; the author's have no use for Wright at all after page 236 in chapter seven:

'.. no further reference will be made to Wright's class frameworks in the course of this chapter, since direct comparison with Goldthorpe's neo-Weberian categories shows that the former are less useful than the latter for the explanation of voting behaviour'. [my emphasis]

Happily, in the conclusion Wright's almost moribund corpse is doused with water to be readied for another drubbing. His henious crimes are read out again [264 ff]. The authors eschew the immediate canonisation of St. Goldthorpe, however. Yet the feeling is that the date for the ceremony cannot be far into the future. Differences between the researchers and Goldthorpe are distinctly downplayed: 'If in fact ... Goldthorpe agrees with this prognosis, then we are separated only by the programatic issue...' [ibid: 266] Oh so close to absolute agreement! Nonetheless, Marshall et al. do have one real difference with Goldthorpe (see page 86). And for a rare respite from the critique of Wright, see P. 168: Wright's analysis is Marxist - but it is not unduly abstract nor is it unwarrantably romantic! [my emphasis] Clearly Marxism is generally both far too abstract and romantic.

8   See his 1982 **In Search of the Spirit of Capitalism**, London, Hutchinson, and **Presbyteries and Profits** (1980) O.U.P., Oxford.

9   See, for example, **Leçon sur la leçon**, Pierre Bourdieu, Collège de France, Paris, 1982.

while not believing that they would tell them much.[10] Instead, the British researchers examined the problem in another way. In addition to Likert questions, therefore, their survey asked further questions about attitudes. By their own admission however, this did not solve all the problems. Logical inconsistency can stem either from genuinely felt inconsistencies in a respondent's world-view or it can stem from poor interviewing. To this no answer is offered (p.173). The survey strategy itself is criticised, yet an alternative approach to gaining structural information from large numbers of people is not explored. Indeed, their attempted alternative had already meant that they had developed a very long questionnaire. Even then, they felt the questionnaire was too short. Even by modifying the questionnaire drastically therefore, they did not overcome the problems they posed to Wright. Yet, with very little qualification, they are perfectly willing to suggest that Wright's theory can be thoroughly discounted. Again the logic is faulty: they cannot have their cake and eat it. Either their findings are to be depended upon and Wright is proven wrong, or the evidentiary nature of their case on this point is limited and only limited conclusions can thus be drawn. The only defensible logic is the latter one. It is not enough to suggest that a simple switch to contextual analysis (p.189) will somehow solve the problem. Ethnographic researchers have frequently accepted that long-term research of an entirely qualitative kind is no guarantee of the "final truths". But the researchers want a bob each way. Having made their caveats clear (p.190) they still want to go on and draw their conclusions anyway. Criticism is easy, but no-one will be convinced that the British researchers were able to go very far beyond the object of their criticism towards developing a more sustainable strategy for documenting attitudes.

Given these deep misgivings about the quantitative approach, we might have expected innovations in presenting the results, However, in most cases simple contingency tables are the preferred method of exposition though ambivalence is clearly woven into the argument, as we shall see below. 113 separate tables are listed, and these tables form the basic source of methodological exposition.

These tables fall into four categories. A very small number (2) set out the detailed characteristics of respondents in a series of paragraphs. These tables (especially table 3.7, pages 55-58) offer an excellent method of bringing detailed information about respondents together in a way which also allows comparison between individuals to be made. Because of the continued complaints about the limitations of survey methodology and thus implicitly to the quasi-positivist solutions which constrain the form in which results can be displayed, it is therefore a great surprise and a disappointment that such a form of "case-study" display is not persisted with throughout. But in fact table 3.7 is the only instance of this very fruitful expositional method being used (the other similar table, 3.6 offers a condensed, but still useful, version of the format used in table 3.7). After page 58, the preferred method is the familiar frequencies table (70 out of 113); a third format is used to display the logic of

10   The anticipation of failure is palpable, and this anticipation can not have helped the success or otherwise of the questionnaire's implementation: for example, on p. 194, FN 12, they comment 'we ... tried to persuade the American team not to use Likert items ...in the event they were retained. In the interest of (poor?) comparative research we included the items... but respondents were clearly irritated by them'. So too clearly were the researchers. It is not surprising therefore that the answers did not come easily.

the class models in some way (14) and the remainder of the tables are analytic expositions, setting out measures of association, (4.4) odds ratio analysis (5.3), factor analysis (7.5) and log linear analysis (9.8). Overall, the "leitmotif" is decidedly apologetic in the use of the kind of methods that clearly make the authors uneasy. On page 190 we find:

> The limitations of survey-based research ... are ... responsible ... for some researchers arriving at conclusions ... on the basis of methodological delusion rather than substantive proof.

Yet later on the same page:

> **Nevertheless**, despite these limitations, we feel our analysis has provided sufficient data to substantiate ... conclusions.

On page 210:

> The numbers in some of the cells are rather low, so the findings are of questionable reliability, and we would not wish to place too much importance on them. **Nevertheless**... our data suggest...

On page 217:

> ...our survey data are inevitably constrained in what they can tell us ... **Nevertheless**, with all their limitations, we submit that our data vindicate the argument...

And page 252:

> Causal analysis remains a matter of interpretation and therefore debate... (But that familiar word is with us again) **Nevertheless**, we would argue that our data and analysis are sufficiently robust as to sustain the conclusion...

Finally, on page 253:

> Of course, with an increase in numbers both in absolute terms and relative to the availability of cells it is not surprising that most relationships appear more significant (in a statistical sense) in this analysis of the data. **Nevertheless**, class and self-assigned class certainly are relevant... (my emphases)

The view is often expressed, that, in the words of the old song *If I Only Had Time*, then things would be different. The yearning is voiced that if only the interviewers had been able to ask more questions, longer questions, better questions, complexities as yet unfathomed would be revealed. Two direct references will suffice as adequate evidence of a consistent pattern:[11]

> It is clear from the interview schedules that many individuals hold possibly sophisticated (and certainly complex) views about the relationship between birth and ... other factors. Unfortunately, because of the constraints of the interview situation, it was impossible for them to elaborate these. (Marshall *et al*, 195)

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11   See also pages 165 & 185 among others, for further examples of this deep ambiguity being displayed.

And again (p.174):

> Perhaps ... interviewees did not fully understand our rather clumsy questions? Perhaps rather formal survey interviews are unrepresentative because they do not offer respondents adequate time to express themselves fully?

As I have outlined above, since the average interview time is listed as 77 minutes, involved some 136 questions, and required the interviewers displaying so many showcards that they must have been trained by a cardsharp to keep them all straight, (there are 18 separate card displays by my estimate), it stretches the reader's credulity to suggest longer interviews would have helped. At 77 minutes (and many interviews must obviously have been longer) the concentration of many respondents must have frequently flagged. Well, if not **longer** interviews, perhaps a different approach should have been preferred? If so, one can only follow the researcher's logic to their own self-directed and inevitable conclusion - that they should have implemented a different methodological procedure to have gathered their comparative data. But as it is, they made their choice and must live with it. This leads to some extremely tentative conclusions being expressed. In a typical passage, the authors comment:

> The fact that collective action by managerial and administrative employees has consistently sought to maintain favourable differentials in pay, conditions, and life-chances generally is, for Goldthorpe, indicative of future political sympathies.
>
> **Our data are not inconsistent with both these conclusions** (*ibid*:245 my emphasis)

The use of the double negative is to damn the strength of their evidence with the faintest of praise - the authors clearly know that this will not help in their adjudicatory tasks. But since their support for their own data is so consistently half-hearted, it is unsurprising that they do not make any confident claims about its worth.[12]

In short, their lack of self-reflexivity in their reliance on an outmoded epistemological status for their work, together with the highly compromised presentation of quantitative data means that the "scientific" status of their research findings is in serious doubt. The work is unremittingly caught on the horns of a dilemma - whether to follow Wright in the methodological strategies he has used, or to adopt some alternative data-collection remedy which could be shown to supersede Wright's "science". In the end, they do neither. In an unsophisticated display of neo-positivism and keen to show the theoretical strength of Goldthorpe over Wright, Marshall *et al.* go part of the way methodologically with Wright, but qualify their conclusions so frequently and so much that their evidence has no capacity either to finally confirm or deny the value of anyone's theory with the sort of confidence that they sometimes manage to express.

There are other methodological quibbles, some considerable, others mere details. There can be little to say about displaying contingency tables - little is finally decided

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12   Their cautions are not without merit, of course. To overblow the strength of their findings would have been unfounded and injudicious. British understatement is not always to be scorned. Yet there is more than stylistic subtelty or appropriate modesty at work here - their uncertainty stems directly from their own deep ambivalence felt towards their work.

in the realm of causal analysis by the simple inspection of rows of figures. However, things could have been better presented. There is a Lilliputian tendency which emerges in certain of their tables (e.g. 6.3, p.145, also Table 6.8) in which the data are miniaturised to such an extent that a magnifying glass might be considered necessary among the more myopic of us. A more important criticism is that ethnicity is dealt with in a curious way. On page 148, they comment:

> The random sampling techniques we employed generated, as they should have, an overwhelmingly white group of respondents, but seventy-five individuals selected were black, brown or yellow-skinned, though only about half of these claimed an ethnic or racial identification. (Marshall *et al*, 1988:148)

The question of ethnic self-identification has been widely rehearsed and accepted as a measure of ethnicity far superior to race categorizations of old based on skin colour or "racial" inheritance, so surely the British group are not categorising people literally on the basis of skin colour. Yet this extract clearly implies that two measures of ethnicity - skin colour and ethnic or racial identification were used. The reader's possible confusion is not cleared up by reference to the questionnaire. Under q.122(a) we see simply (a) (Sex of respondent) (b) (Ethnic group). On reference to the actual questionnaire itself we find a quite surprising entry[13]. Under question 122b, we read:

122B	Code from observation ethnic group	Code
	Indian (inc. E. African), Pakistani, Bangladeshi	01
	Black, African, West Indian	02
	White / European	03
	Other Non-White	04

Here we have direct evidence that the survey used a thoroughly discredited measure to evaluate the position of respondents in relation to ethnicity[14]. Moreover it required the interviewer to evaluate respondents' ethnicity by ascertaining the tone of the skin or other "racial" characteristics. This error is further embellished by the clumsy use of only four categories to cover all ethnic (or "racial") groups. This of course would not be a fatal error if an ethnic self-identification had been included elsewhere, as the quotation above seems to indicate. However a careful search of the interview schedule itself reveals only a far more ambiguous strategy than the one which was needed:[15]

34.   Apart from class is there any other major group you identify with?

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13   The British Questionnaire, Technical Paper 13, Comparative Project on Class Structure and Class, Consciousness, 1984, Page 61.

14   See for example, R. Miles and A. Phizacklea, **White Man's Country** (1984, Pluto)

15   British Questionnaire, p.16

35.   (If yes)

    a)   What sort of group are you thinking of?
         PROBE: What sort of people? **RECORD FULLY**

    b)   Do you normally think of yourself as a member of that group
         or as a member of a social class?

This undirected question scoops up a lot of possible alternatives, among which religion and occupational groups ranked well.[16] It is wholly unacceptable as a method of measuring ethnic self-identification, and the sample is thus thoroughly deficient in its capacity to identify ethnic (or indeed "racial") differences. This gap is mirrored in the failure of the book index to even mention "race" or ethnicity. While the emphasis on class is thoroughly understandable, the failure to establish ethnic divisions adequately, and the consequent failure to discuss the role ethnicity may play in class relations is an omission of considerable importance far more "fatal" for a Weberian based analysis than a Marxist/Wright analysis.

A final methodological quibble, this time in the minor category, should also be noted. On many occasions results are reported in a highly ambiguous way, which could have been overcome by more thoughtful presentation. For example, tables 6.2 and 6.3 report responses for multiple-response items - here the number of valid cases is often exceeded by the number of responses. A note at the bottom of page 144 offers a reasonable explanation, but the sense of a good many tables depends on the careful reading of this note which at first glance appears to apply only to Table 6.2. It would have been more preferable to find a method of presentation which allowed the sense of each individual table to be gained independently.

3. Gender

Let me turn now from general epistemological and methodological questions to the third of my critical themes - the analysis that Marshall and his colleagues offer on the matter of class and gender.

The question of gender, unlike ethnicity, is a matter of central importance to the British project. This interest is to be explained in part by the direct involvement of John Goldthorpe in a vigorous polemic on gender issues, published largely in the pages of Sociology.[17] In one of the recent articles, (Leiulsfrud and Woodward, 1987) a succinct summary of the debate so far is presented. (*ibid*:393-394) In Goldthorpe's argument, the family is taken to be the basic unit of analysis rather than individuals; the head of household determines class position. This implies families act as homogeneous units in

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16   Marshall et al.:148-149
17   Goldthorpe, J. H. (1983) Women and Class Analysis: in defence of the conventional view, **Sociology**, 17 pages 465-488; Goldthorpe, J. H. (1984) Women and Class Analysis: reply to the replies, **Sociology**, 18, pages 491-499. Responses include A. Heath and Britten, N. Women's jobs do make a difference: a reply to Goldthorpe (1984) **Sociology**, 18 pp.475-490, and Women and Class Analysis: a reply to Goldthorpe, (1984) M. Stanworth, **Sociology**, 18, pages 159-170. See also **Women at Class Crossroads**: repudiating conventional theories of family class, **Sociology**, (1987), Volume 21 number 3, pages 393-412, H. Leiulsfrud and A. Woodward.

the class structure. Further, it is argued that women's involvement in the work is limited, thus of less importance in the process of class conditioning. This position is opposed by Leiulsfrud and Woodward (op.cit) Stanworth (1984), Heath and Britain (1984) and by Marshall *et al.* in the present book. The arguments are various: Leiulsfrud and Woodward contend that family structures are complex and that evidence of real differences exists between members of cross-class families, where the two major participants have different class positions. Criticism is made of the idea that the family is the most appropriate unit of analysis, and it is asserted that women's work is grossly neglected by Goldthorpe's conventionalist methodology.

Marshall *et al.* confront these issues directly in their own book in Chapter Four. Here they argue that what is mostly at stake is the decision about the unit of analysis. In a rare moment of criticism about Goldthorpe, they comment:

> ... as Goldthorpe's own data confirm, some professional and managerial women are married to manual labouring men, and it is by no means clear how he would assign class membership to these families if the wife's career is significantly interrupted by motherhood. In some places he states that his *revised* conventional approach locates whole families in the class structure according to the social class of 'the family member who has the fullest commitment to participation in the labour market'.[18]
> (Marshall *et al*:67, their emphasis)

To be fair (with reference to my previous arguments), a considerable amount of critical commentary **is** directed towards Goldthorpe in this chapter. However, this does not mean, as one might have anticipated, that Wright's proposals are successful over and against Goldthorpe's. The authors begin by arguing with evidence from the survey, that there can be little doubt that many cross-class families exist: 'fully half of these conjugal units in our sample are cross-class families'.[19] The importance of cross-class families is further emphasised by looking at cross-generational information. By a careful analysis of the survey data, they draw the conclusions that the individual is the correct unit of analysis (*ibid*:72) and that women's participation in the paid work-force is important. (*ibid*:73) On these issues they 'part company with John Goldthorpe': class segmentation by gender is strongly supported by the evidence (*ibid*:75); women's mobility chances are poorer than men's (*ibid.*) Returns to men are higher at each occupational level. (*ibid*:76) More than this, far more men than women are in jobs with career ladders. (*ibid*:79) Qualifications pay off much better for men than for women (*ibid*:80), and women clearly require credentials more than men to move up the class ladder. (*ibid.*) The Essex group set out their position most clearly on pages 86-87, where they show how they have deviated from Goldthorpe by allocating individuals to

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18   On the very next page, Goldthorpe is given a reprieve, however, where we are told (ibid:68): 'Our view is that the participants in this particular controversy (with Stanworth) were... talking past each other's positions. This raises the intriguing possibility that Goldthorpe and Stanworth may both be correct'.

19   Many issues are skimmed over here, of course. They are using Goldthorpe's three category class schema. Clearly whether a family is cross-class or not depends on what constitutes a class and at the crudest level, how many class categories exist. Obviously classifications with many subdivisions will throw up many cross-class examples compared to classification in which few class options exist. See also their FN 9 (page 95).

class positions, rather than using heads of households only. Unwilling to push the point home, they then (88-89) turn to Wright's orthodox socialist argument about the family class position depending on the main income earner, and leave their own detailed analysis on gender to the following chapter. But the following chapter (5) concentrates on the mobility processes in the class structure, which does little to illuminate what goes on within the family, and cannot adjudicate issues of class and gender directly. Indeed it is really the question of proletarianisation which is being discussed, and the only evidence that Marshall *et al.* offer on families is that situation where both partners are working. This lack of evidence about women not in paid employment within families seriously limits the usefulness of the information they can provide, a point glossed over in the detailed exposition of their findings. This problem began, of course, back in the planning stages of the present research, and the decision that they made on sampling graphically illustrates the dictum that theoretical matters are deeply embedded in the most practical of methodological decisions. In Marshall *et al*'s.' case, they chose to sample to achieve random interviews with 2000 men and women of employable age. (*ibid.*:288ff) It is plain enough that 'One person at each address was ... selected from those eligible for the survey. (*ibid*:289)'

Two problems immediately emerge from this approach. First, it appears from the information given about the sampling frame that those people living in homes where multiple voters live are less likely to be interviewed than those who live in isolation or in smaller groupings. This stems directly from the logic of the sampling frame. The researchers used the Electoral Register as a sampling frame. (*ibid.*:288) Thus since one person, and one person only was interviewed at each house, members of households with multiple voters would have been less likely to be interviewed than single voter households, because a smaller sampling fraction was invoked for this category than for others. But the more profound problem is that by choosing to make their assessment of class and gender on the basis of a randomly distributed set of individuals, who are unconnected save by the abstract features of the social structure, they can say nothing about the logic of individual family units themselves.

They could have chosen other forms of sampling to overcome this problem. They could have spoken to all main income earners and their cohabitees, thus providing a direct source of information within families about how class and gender interact. As a fall-back position, they could have decided to speak to all those in paid employment. In this strategy, families with two income earners could have been reached. They chose neither of these strategies, choosing instead to base their theoretical conclusions on evidence from single members of households. Thus while they do indeed have individual respondent information, rather than family information, they cannot aggregate these data to make up family data, since all the individuals are from different families! If this is an accurate rendition of what they did, it ill behoves them to attack Wright, Goldthorpe the Registrar-General and uncle Tom Cobbly and all for treating families as homogeneous units, since their own sampling methods offer little in the way of help towards more cogent theoretical conclusions.

4. Alternative Methodologies

Finally, we can point to Marshall *et al.*'s failure to treat alternative methodologies seriously as a matter for genuine concern; I have mentioned this point briefly above, but it deserves wider consideration. This book is a sort of "Spycatcher" revelation about class analysis because it reveals to all that while Marshall *et al.* might have seemed to have been working on Wright's project all these years, in fact all the time they have been secretly engaged in Goldthorpe's purposes. Trying to please two sets of

theoretical masters all the time has taken its toll, but we could reasonably have expected far more to be made of alternatives, especially of interpretive methodology. While some of the questions which were asked were indeed interpretive in intent, their chosen form of exposition almost completely depends on contingency tables and relatively unsophisticated forms of quantitative analysis which, of course, is a domain in which Wright himself excels. This appears to be the preferred path because it appears that their primary aim is to appease the masterspy Goldthorpe and it is clearly from this pedigree that the predilection for quantitative analysis derives.

And what of history? History, along with interpretive sociology, also gets short shrift. Sometimes, brief reference is made to the recent history of the political economy (pp.3-10), and on other occasions to broad questions of class and social and political rights (pp.196-202), but such minor skirmishes with history hardly add up to an alternative methodology to Wright's account which is consistently caricatured as static. Thus while managing to attack Wright for what are alleged to be lethally damaging inadequacies, they fail to develop alternative methodologies at all, but instead hope to use the strategies they themselves have rejected.[20].

None of this should detract from the very considerable contribution Marshall *et al.* have made to the question of class analysis in Great Britain. Indeed, I have only spent considerable effort of critical analysis as a result of coming to firm conclusions that **Social Class in Modern Britain** is a book of the highest quality, demanding the detailed attention of all those seriously concerned with class analysis. Because I believe its influence will be considerable and because its impact will be both theoretical and political, in contributing much to our understanding of modern British politics, it is all the more important to assess its value.

Class in Scandinavia
I will now turn to consideration of the Scandinavian projects' publication, an altogether different undertaking. The Scandinavian book reports findings from three national surveys - Finland, Sweden and Norway. Unlike the British book, it is an edited collection of papers, and again, unlike the British, it has less ambitions towards theoretical reformulation. The book is also far less polemical than the British book, calling in turn on a less polemical analysis from its readers. Ahrne *et al.* begin by setting out Wright's formulation, and mentioning his reformulation in **Classes** (1985). This is followed by a broad-brush treatment of differences in the class structures of the three countries:

> In Finland, the petty bourgeoisie (especially the farmers) continues to be a quantitatively significant class group, which is not the case in Norway and Sweden ...

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20   The only spelling error I could find was 'in' for 'is' on page 27, line 3.
      Other minor quibbles can be mentioned. Louis Althusser's mother will be surprised to know that he was christened Lewis (p.311) The index itself is rather inadequate for such a long and complex book. Apart from this however, the long bibliography and general attention to detail was gratifying. Some of the questions in the questionnaire appeared to require a graduate degree in history to make a sensible answer - how, for example, is a respondent supposed to deliver a coherent answer to the question (29a, p.295) 'How is it that people come to belong to the class that they do?' in the space of the few seconds available in the questionnaire.

Secondly, there are some disparities in the organisation of managerial tasks. The share of managers is highest in Finland and lowest in Sweden but the differences ... are not significant. Supervisors form a larger group in Norway and in Sweden than in Finland. The proportion of semi-autonomous employees, essentially linked to the size of the female labour power in the state's reproduction sector, is higher in Sweden and in Norway than in Finland. Similarly the working class is larger in Sweden than in the two other countries.

In all three countries ... men hold the vast majority of managerial and supervisory positions ... In all countries, women form the majority of the working class (*ibid*:10-11).

All this in unsurprising, save for the last phrase which is a little unusual. The finding, pointing to the dominance of the working class by women would, if it were generally substantiated, give a new look to working-class politics. What is meant as far as I can ascertain is something somewhat different and unsurprising - that most women are in the working class. The argument finds support in table 3.2 (page 39), where a majority of women are found in the working class in the USA (54.7%), Sweden (62%), Norway (63.7%), Finland (55.5%), on page 47 where, in the private sector, women comprise 53% of the working class, 66% of the public sector for Finland, and (in Sweden's case) 40% of the private sector working class, and 69% in the public sector. On page 130, we are told:

In both countries (Finland, Sweden) women are over represented in the working class, where their relative share is higher than in the total active labour force.

In appears (though it is by no means certain) that the stronger claim can also be sustained, particularly in Finland, perhaps in the two other countries as well. It is therefore likely that women do comprise a majority of the working class, in contrast to some other countries' findings. This is perfectly feasible in a situation where women's labour-force participation rates are high and where, as in all countries, they are over-represented in the working-class category.

The book is a departure from the British project in other ways. It begins with presenting a historical overview, which traces the development of class structure in the three countries since 1920. This is based on a reworking of census findings, which required a re-examination of the details in many cases and reclassification in some instances (*ibid*.:16-17) The authors of this chapter (Ahrne and Leiulsfrud) make the important advance of including farmers' wives in the self-employed category, thus making a long-overdue revision to traditional accounts, which excluded women's work even when directly connected to class processes. This is to dramatically alter previous figures (Kleven, 1965) which relied directly on empiricist grounds. In Norway, what we witness is that a large proportion of the wage earners are petty bourgeoisie, and though this proportion decreased, by 1950, still a third were in this category. (Ahrne *et al*. 1988:18) Salaried employees increased in number, and while the working class changed in composition, its proportion stayed constant:

The proportion of farm, forest and fishing workers halved from 1920 to 1950. The proportion engaged in household work, above all maids, was no less than 8 per cent in 1930, but decreased to 3 per cent by 1950. Instead, the proportion of manufacturing labourers and transport and trade workers has increased. (Ahrne et. al., 1988:18-19).

In Sweden, a similar pattern emerges - a constant level of working class participants, somewhat more than half of the labour-force, a reduction (from 40% to 29%) in the proportion of self-employment, a doubling of salaried employees, from 9% in 1920 to 20% in 1950 (*ibid.*:19) Again, the exclusion of farmers' wives has led to an underestimation of the self-employed category. Similar changes in the composition of the working class are reported to have taken place.

Finally in Finland, a reduction from 48% to 44% in the size of the working class can be reported. In unison with the two other countries, a change in composition within the working class has also taken place. However the decline of the petty bourgeoisie has been less marked here. The proportion of salaried employees has almost tripled during the thirty years, though it reached only 14% at the end of the period. (*ibid.*:20).

These trends are followed through to the later period 1950-1970, and the three broad tendencies are further exemplified, the proportion of workers stays stationary or increases slightly; the self employed continue to be a reducing proportion of the class structure, and the salaried middle-class increase in parallel.

But real changes are apparent in the 1970's. In Norway (*ibid.*:27), the working class and the self-employed were both considerably reduced. Huge increases in participation rates for women are evident - a 25% increase between 1968 and 1983. In Sweden the increase is 16% and in Finland 13%. A strong increase in wage earners continues as a dominant trend. However, Finland is a little exceptional (*ibid.*:29), because the working class has remained unaltered at 60% in both 1970 and 1980. But self-employment has reduced by one-third.

Overall, and using an orthodox modernisation approach, the authors conclude, it might be supposed that Sweden was developing most quickly and the others were lagging behind. (*ibid.*:34) However this will not do as an explanation; what appears to be happening is that a variety of paths of development are being followed. Three points are drawn to our attention by the comparison of the countries; the early reduction of the self-employed in Sweden compared to the other countries and the size of the working class, which exceeded that in Norway and Finland. This enduring feature of the Swedish class structure has been a central characteristic of the politics of Sweden. Second, Norway has had a relatively large proportion of white collar workers over a long period of time, thus giving its politics a somewhat different class complexion. Third, Norway has had a more important petty bourgeois character, again influencing the path of development that has been taken (*ibid.*:33-44).

As far as Finland is concerned, the large proportion of petty bourgeois is striking, and may well offer a parallel to patterns of class formation in New Zealand, though evidence is sketchy. In Finland, this pattern results from family involvement in agriculture, and in this respect Finland and Norway show some similarities. However they have differed in that petty bourgeois dominance in Finland has been paralleled by the importance of the white collar category in Norway.

These findings are most interesting, and very valuable in the sense that they give us a necessary and clear introduction of what is to come. Without such an historic preliminary class structures are indeed static and mechanistic. I would have preferred an ever fuller account of the historical phase, fleshing out some of the texture and variety which would illuminate the history of the three societies. Nonetheless, the advantage of this somewhat stark approach is that the patterns of changing class structure are vivid, clear and very easy to follow.

Not all tables are as transparent as they could be, however. Table 2.5 (p.33) shows us the total change in proportions of workers etc.. in the three countries. While it is technically correct, as a summary measure of change in all classes, it would have been far more revealing to have offered us a partitioned table in which changes in each class were compared. The data in the table is so compressed that many variations are hidden.[21]

Chapter Three offers a comparison of economic structure and class relations in Finland and Sweden. Here further interesting findings are reported; the higher level of women's participation in paid work in Finland as compared to Sweden, which Sweden has been balancing out since 1970. (ibid.:35-36) Similarities are found in the class structure, save in agriculture where twice as many Finns are self-employed (85%) as Swedes (39%). Julkunen, the author of this chapter, argues that women occupy somewhat higher ranking in Finland compared to Sweden, with larger numbers of entrepreneurs, small employers, and an equal number of women who are self-employed compared to men. Women are also better represented in managerial positions in Finland compared to Sweden. Only in the semi-autonomous category, (that group in the working class who have control of their work environment), do Swedish women gain equity with their Finish sisters. In terms of the crucial dimension of ownership of the means of production, Finnish women rank at 84 (vs.100 for men) whereas Swedish women rank at only 33 (vs.100 for men). However, this particular finding is unclear because on the previous page (38) we are also told that, in the Finnish sample only one woman 'represented the bourgeoisie'. The index may infer a measure of all categories of ownership, including small employers and self-employed. If that is the case, then the index may well reflect the large number of self-employed women in farming in Finland, and the difference between Sweden and Finland is thus a result of the differences between the size of the self-employed in each category. Finally, Finland also ranks highly in terms of the participation rate for women, where almost half the economically active population (49%) are women. Clearly however, both countries still have a long way to go to achieve equality (ibid.:40).

State employment is the next matter for discussion. Here Julkunen argues that both countries have, since 1950 experienced high levels of growth, though Sweden has more state employees than other countries. Indeed by 1982, Sweden had outdistanced any other capitalist country in terms of proportion of state employees (ibid.:41). This leads to a high level of semi-autonomous workers in Sweden (11%) most of whom work in the state.

In the breakdown of the state sector by class, however, there appears to be a confusion. The argument is that since more people work for the state in Sweden than Finland, a larger proportion of every class is likely to be in state employment. This is plausible and is supported by the evidence. However:

> actual managers represent an exception to this comparison because Finland has a
> higher percentage of managers in the state sector than Sweden. (ibid.:42)

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21   Certain infelicities in phraseology are widely scattered, as are a considerable number of spelling errors. It is hardly necessary to say that those gracious enough to translate work for the language-deficient Anglo-Saxons need not apologise for minor inadequacies.

Figure 3.1 (page 43) is unclear on this issue. It shows that 6% of all employed Finns are state managers and 7% of all employed Swedes have the same role. This does not adjudicate the issue of course, because the 6% of Finns could be all the managers they have or a large percentage of them, and the 7% Swedish managers could be a small part of the overall managerial class. However figure 3.1 also tells us that 7% of Swedes are private sector managers, and the same percentage is true for Finland. Thus, within the managerial class in Sweden 50% (7% of the total workforce) work in the state and 50% (7% of the total workforce) work in the capitalist sector, whereas in Finland 46% of all managers (6% of the total workforce) work for the state, 54% (7% of the paid workforce) for the private sector. Over the page (page 44, table 3.5), the evidence is contradicted, because we are told that 16% of all state employees in Finland are managers, whereas only 10% of all private employees are managers. For Sweden a slight edge (13% vs 11%) is afforded to the private sector. The case is not altered by adding in adviser managers.

The gender distribution within the public and private sector shows the inevitable inverse relation between class and women's participation. Interestingly, women form the majority of labour-force participants in the state sector, men in the private sector. Moreover, women are more likely to be managers in the state than in the private sector. Indeed the author comments:

> As a whole Finland and Sweden do not however come very close to each other in terms of gender relations in working life; as a matter of fact this is one of the few areas where we can see some very clear differences between the countries. (*ibid.*:46-47).

Sweden clearly lags behind Finland with regard to gender equality. For example, more top state managers are women in Finland than in Sweden.

Finally Julkunen compares these figures to those in Canada and the U.S., allowing comparison to be made with the North American pattern. Supervisors are more plentiful in the American situation than in Europe. '...wage earners who in North America have control over the labour of other workers are less often involved in decision-making than the respective group in Northern Europe' (*ibid.*:52) He summarises by arguing that in private primary production the U.S. and Canada are very close (as are Finland and Sweden) but in the service sector, similarities are hard to find. American workers appear to exercise more authority than European workers (*ibid.*:56), a difference that holds true across sectors. Shop floor autonomy is higher in Scandinavia; one Finnish supervisor controls an average of ten workers, in Sweden one to seven. But in the U.S. and Canada, the ratio is only one to four. The chapter concludes by commenting on the client-status of Canada and Finland in relation to their neighbours. The author concludes that there are distinct differences between the organisation of labour on the two continents. In particular, he argues that a mild form of colonialisation has taken place in both less-powerful states as a result of the penetration of the larger nations' activities. This has not taken place on an Americanisation model, where the class structure of the weaker society has become synonymous with that of the larger society, but as a result of changes, rather than the copying of an alien social structure. However this is far less true for Finland than it is for Canada, because Swedish capital penetrates Finland far less than American capital penetrates Canada. These are provocative arguments which call out for further historical, comparative analysis as the writer himself concedes. It directly questions,

for example the work that Black and Myles have already completed on the Canada - U.S. relationship.[22]

Chapters Four and Five examine the political implications of class structures. In chapter Four Raimo Blom examines the class basis of party formation. Classes and parties are seen to have an influence on each other. Blom begins by pointing to the splits in bourgeois groups in all Nordic societies and the formation of both peasant parties and industrial and merchant bourgeois parties. In all three countries, the first labour parties developed before the turn of the century. During the inter-war period, social democratic parties were generally able to gain power. Class parties were supplemented, however, by linguistic and religious groupings, and populist parties have also been important in Norway and Finland. (*ibid.*:64-65) The traditional problem of working class parties seeking alliances with middle-class groups has evolved in Finland, Sweden and Norway towards a resolution in governmental coalitions since WW2. Social Democrats and agrarian-based parties cooperated to fight off the right in many instances (*ibid.*:68). In Finland, three coalitions have been important - the S.D./agrarian alliance (1937-1944), with the addition of the People's Democratic Party (1944-1948); then, the period 1948-1966 saw the Social Democrats connected to the Agrarian party or making coalitions with centralist parties involved. In 1962 and 1964, a right-wing coalition took power; mainly it has been "popular front" parties which have dominated. In Sweden, coalitions have been less important, being in office between 1951 and 1957, and the rightists formed a coalition between 1976 and 1980. For a long period (1957-1976) (1982 onwards), the Social Democrats have governed. In Norway, the Social-Democrats have been even more dominant. In 1963 and 1965 bourgeois parties formed governments, and a coalition government gained power in 1972. Apart from these brief spells, the Social Democratic party has ruled.

Blom's analysis leads to the conclusion that in Finland and Sweden, class-based support has declined, but that in Norway, some increased polarisation occurred during 1965-1977. (*ibid.*:90) Political conclusions are not too clear - whether or not a period of stability or of conflict will emerge appears to be a conclusion on which Blom remains agnostic. The chapter has the great advantage that it outlines, perhaps in the best example so far, the detailed political history of the three nations. If it has a deficiency, it is that it is informed by a somewhat reductionist and orthodox account of class, particularly in the retelling of the early political history. This deficiency is superseded however in the later stages where a sensitive account of the middle class is offered.

The other chapter on politics (Political and Occupational Organisation of the Petty Bourgeoisie in the Nordic Countries, Juoko Nikula, Chapter 5) concentrates on the political fortunes of the self-employed, an emphasis of particular concern to New Zealand researchers, because of the obvious importance of the petty bourgeoisie in this country. Nikula points to the systematic reduction in number of self-employed on farms in each country, and in the primary sector in general. Centre agrarian parties have generally been supported by farmers (*ibid.*:100) and occupationally producer

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22   See especially Black, D. and Miles, J., Dependent Industrialisation and the Canadian Class Structure. Comparative Project on Class Structure and Class Consciousness **Working Paper Series**, Working Paper number 24, Department of Sociology, University of Wisconsin, 1985.

boards have dominated. Nikula periodises the history of this pattern. Between 1900 and 1940, the phase of dissension saw small farmers go along with Social Democratic parties, and only the few large farmers support bourgeois parties. In Finland, the peasantry fought the working-class, the peasantry linking up with the bourgeoisie to form 'the members of the "white army" '. (*ibid*:101) However the depression era heralded a phase of collaboration between the S.D. and farmer interests, leading to a phase of integration (1950 onwards) which has persisted ever since. As industry developed, agriculture weakened:

> The political result was a change in the character of the agrarian parties, which started to develop into petty bourgeois parties of the centre. In Sweden and Norway, these changes became visible at the end of the 1950s, when the parties adopted the name Centre Party; in Finland the transformation did not take place until 1965. (Ahrne *et al.* 1988:103)

These small petty bourgeois parties have sought to gain support from the urban self-employed, but have met with limited success. Populist parties appear to have had a chequered career, weakening as the rural-urban transition accelerated strengthening around moral issues (*ibid.*:105). Nonetheless, the petty bourgeois parties have been important coalition partners in all three countries, but this has only been possible by a movement away from merely rural issues towards a more centralist and generalist position. Nikula concludes that the political weight of the peasantry must decline with the demographic decline of the class. However, changes to the policies of such centre parties means support may endure longer than the class they once represented. Structural changes within agriculture, coupled with considerable changes in the occupational structure of farming have meant the once uniform politics of farming is now a thing of the past.

Nikula's article is very persuasive; it is also written without the benefit of any of the survey data and in common with several of the other articles it lacks a detailed theoretical engagement. This is the most obvious contrast to be made between the two works under review. However, its carefully written historical analysis illuminates the trajectory of one crucial class in an enlightening way, giving the lie to the assertion that class structural analysis is necessarily static in nature. What is specifically lacking perhaps, is any mention of the Poulantzas - inspired debate on the nature of the new and the old petty bourgeoisie. Much of Nikula's material impinges on this issue, and a more thoroughly theoretical treatment would have offered much food for thought.

Harri Melin's chapter on trade unions also takes a historical approach, beginning by outlining the history of the trade union movement. Melin's argument is that trade unions were consistently close to Social Democratic parties in all three countries; Finland is distinguished by the late development of its union movement. As far as white collar organisation is concerned, Melin suggests that they have little political importance until after WW2, when central organisations developed, and when their evolution was extremely rapid (*ibid.*:116) Melin points to basic blue/white collar divisions within the union movement; however the relationship between white collar workers and white collar organisations is extremely complex. Instead of wholesale class organisation, the middle class divides along "craft" lines (doctors, teachers etc.). In addition, some middle-class workers join blue-collar unions.

Co-operation has been consistent between the groups, but this has sometimes been in the face of attempts by "experts" to maintain differentials. In contrast to the partisan

politics of blue-collar unions, white collar organisations have tried to stay neutral. (*ibid.*:124). Melin argues that these issues directly impinge on the key issue of Swedish reformism and the question of the 'third road to socialism'. The male-dominated structure of many trade unions emerges as a crucial issue here. Melin concludes that orthodox accounts of working-class politics are clearly inadequate for dealing with the gender challenge and even less capable of dealing with the issues of the middle class. Here there can be no single common grounds between classes. These inevitable splits in political organisation are clearly fundamental to class politics.

Melin's chapter offers another example of a broad social history; again the Wright-influenced survey takes a back seat. Melin makes a brief skirmish with theoretical issues in the first few pages, but leaves them well behind by the third page, and delivers an informative (if largely untheorised) account of realignments in the union movement. The book concludes with a chapter by all the editors emphasising changes in the class structure and forms of political dominance which were associated with these changes. The role of the peasantry and agrarian politics in general is again emphasised, and the importance of the late emergence of the industrial working class together form the basic structures of class formation, accompanied with the rise of the salaried middle classes. Distinguishing features in each country are carefully drawn out - in Finland, the peasantry have always been important, and the working class grew late. In Norway the middle classes developed earlier than elsewhere; in Sweden the large-scale and early development of the working-class explains much about the predominance of the Social Democratic Party in that country. Overall, the decline of agriculture (slowest in Finland, fastest in Sweden) is a constant theme and coupled with it is an explanation of the declining power of agrarian parties, enduring longer in Finland than elsewhere. In recent years, these rural petty bourgeois parties have 'increasingly transformed into middle-class parties oriented towards entrepreneurs' (*ibid.*:131).

The authors conclude by assessing the importance of class politics in Nordic countries:

> The labour parties ... showed some clear differences from the very outset: in Sweden there developed a distinctly reformist party, in Finland and Norway the labour parties were more radical by nature...

> In structural terms the Nordic party system has developed essentially on a class basis. The main differences between the systems trace back to religious and linguistic factors.. (*ibid.*:131).

They then outline how the changes in the class structures have been mirrored by changes in party politics. The authors direct their attention to the central issue of Scandinavian politics in the last few pages: how far can the Scandinavian experience, particularly the Swedish experience, be seen as an "historic compromise", in which the increasing power of the working class directs itself towards an inevitable socialist conclusion. Ahrne *et al.* suggest that this argument must confront the fact that many Social Democratic reforms have been directed towards appeasing market forces. The key question for them is to explain the changes of the 1970's, when the Social Democratic hegemony was challenged. The authors tend to the view that in Sweden at least, the labour movement remains powerful, but is no longer 'capable of accomplishing any significant progress' (*ibid.*:138). They point to two enduring (and not unfamiliar) problems for the left: the failure to deal with the needs of women, and the problem of aligning middle class and working class interests.

Conclusion

The overall impression left by reading these two quite different books is a feeling of deeply contrasting approaches to the question of the status of class. For Marshall *et al.*, class is a highly contested term; their treatment is a narrow, but very thorough attempt to adjudicate some of the central issues in class theory. They develop an argument which succeeds enormously well in critiquing the theories of Wright and Goldthorpe not merely in a theoreticist style, but, to their enduring credit, by the careful invocation of detailed empirical evidence. In contradistinction, and in less polemical fashion, Ahrne *et al.* do an excellent job in laying out the history of class formation in Scandinavia, using an umproblemmatic (and largely implicit) neo-marxist account of class. Rather than a concentrated look at key issues, this book offers a broad-brush review of historical trends. Instead of carefully outlining the findings of the surveys, they set the historical scene for the political analysis of contemporary class structure. Together these books tell us something of the necessary complexity involved in the task of explaining the importance of class, a task which will require us to direct attention not only towards contemporary class structures, and not only towards the history of classes, but to the ethnographic study of class practices as well. For my money, New Zealand researchers can find much which is useful here. The British book is extremely rigorous in most respects and its use of theoretical exposition closely connected to theoretically-inspired empirical work offers an illustration of how theoretical debates can be directly informed and advanced by sociological inquiry. The Scandinavian book is less interesting theoretically; here the strength to be found is in the location of present problems in the recent history of class formation, which is a necessary addition to Wright's own a-historical expositions. The ethnographic study of class, exemplified by the work of Burawoy in the United States, Berteaux in France, Willis and Thompson in the United Kingdom is a form of investigation only recently developed here. Taken as a whole, studies of class structure, class formation and class practice offer the boundaries of work to come on the enduring problem of social class.

REVIEW ESSAY

Class analysis: powers, forces and agencies

Barry Hindess. **Politics and Class Analysis.**
Oxford: Blackwell. 1987.

Review by Roy Nash
Education Department, Massey University

With Barry Hindess now settled in close offshore at the Australian National University it seems appropriate to afford his work a fuller discussion than it has been given hitherto in these pages. Not that Hindess has much new to say, but in this slim volume (120 pages of text) he is addressing, perhaps for the first time, a general student readership on a matter of central importance to sociology. It will be a useful book for students to read. However, people who struggled through those two volumes of epistemological critique, **Marx's Capital and Capitalism Today** (Cutler, Hindess, Hirst and Hussain, 1977 and 1978), need feel under no compulsion to rush to the library. For many readers, then, the book is already reviewed! Yet there is something more I want to do. Hindess, as we know, has long been concerned to deny that classes can be social actors. Classes are not agents and therefore, he argues, not social forces, and class analysis is consequently unable to fulfil its sociological and political agenda. This is the central argument I want to confront in this extended review. Is Hindess right? And if he is right what follows?

The key elements of the argument are presented in the short section *Classes as collective actors.* (pp. 110-111) It is necessary to be clear, Hindess argues, about what is minimally required for something to be called an actor. 'An actor is a locus of decision and action, where the action is in some sense a consequence of the actor's decisions'. (p.110) Human individuals are, of course, actors, but social organisations with an appropriate form of mechanism for reaching decisions and carrying them out may also be regarded as actors. Hindess instances capitalist enterprises, state agencies, political parties and trades unions, as examples of collective actors. Can classes be regarded as social actors in this sense? It is clear, Hindess observes, that difficulties arise when the concept of actor is extended to collectives such as classes, societies, or "women", that have no identifiable means of formulating decisions, let along acting upon the. There will always be individuals and organisations asserting that their own actions are carried out on behalf of a class or other such social collective, but the very diversity of such claims is enough to raise scepticism. Hindess thus arrives at the conclusion that reference in social theory to social classes, and other categories which do not constitute formal social organisations, as actors is at best allegorical, and at worst deeply misleading. Such accounts might, Hindess suggests, provide an allegorical story, in terms of a particular social-scientific and political shorthand, but the price of that convenience is often paid in confusion and error.

> We believe that classes are to be viewed as entities possessing causal powers, powers in other words to generate empirically observable occurences, and therefore we reject the notion that social reality is to be viewed as sets of discrete events. Rather this event-ontology should be replaced by an ontology of relatively enduring entities, and their interrelationships, which have the power to produce empirical events. (p.131)

I also find scientific realism a convincing position and my critical work on intelligence testing draws extensively on contemporary realist philosophy of science. Theoretical realism in social science is, them, a position which I am inclined to consider seriously. Abercrombie and Urry's work rests, in fact, on theoretical arguments developed more fully in Keat and Urry (1982). The central question at this point concerns the nature of

the causal powers of social classes as Abercrombie and Urry depict them. In contemporary capitalist states, these authors suggest, the powers of the middle class (the "service class") are to

> restructure capitalist societies so as to maximise the divorce between conception and execution and to ensure the elaboration of highly differentiated and specific structures within which knowledge and science an be maximally developed. They are thus to deskill productive labourers and to maximise the educational requirements of places within the division of labour. (p.132)

Classes are understood as real structures of the relations of production which possess definite and empirically identifiable powers to generate social effects. Hindess, then, is not attacking phantoms of his imagination and it looks as if (disregarding the unprincipled convenience of "perspectivism") that someone must be wrong. Some problems with the realist theory of social science will be discussed more fully with reference to Keat and Urry's work, but now the question of collective actors may be addressed.

What is a 'Collective Actor'?
We have seen that for Hindess action requires a locus of decision-making. It can surely be said that an actor is an entity capable of performing actions. But what are actions? Of all the questions which contemporary philosophy has set itself to answer perhaps more attention has been devoted to this than any other. As a workable effort in this context I suggest that actions are performances which are, or are deemed to be, directly or indirectly carried out by an entity deemed to have the capacity to carry them out. Actions must, in other words be deliberate or intended performances, or performances deemed to be intended on the grounds that they were carried out by an entity capable of intentionally performing them. What sort of entities, then, are capable of carrying out intentional performances? Some philosophers acknowledge only human individuals in this category whereas others admit, although usually in a guardedly metaphorical sense, organised social collectives with an appropriate mechanism for reaching collective decisions.[1] There is general agreement, however, that a category of individuals, those employed in wage labour, for example, cannot be considered even metaphorically as being capable of reaching a collective decision.

Hindess seems not to sufficiently recognise the somewhat metaphorical sense in which the capacity for action is extended to collective actors. The issues are far from being settled. To say that an organisation has the power to make collective decisions means that certain individuals (members of boards committees, etc.) reach those decisions, and to say that an organisation performs actions means that its agents carry out its instructions. It is entirely meaningful, for example, to say that the sinking of the

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[1]   Tuomela's (1984:145) position is representative: 'Groups can be said to intend to act. I think this is plausible as long as the somewhat metaphorical character of this usage is recognised...' Considering the scorn with which Hindess (1977) rejected "rationalist" theories of action his present position seems to mark something of a retreat. "Intention" has always been regarded as a "rationalist" concept, but if an entity reaches a decision to perform an action (tomorrow) then it has formed an intention to perform that action (tomorrow). I do not see how we can separate decision-making capacity and intentional activity.

'Rainbow Warrior' was an action of the French state. As a formally constituted apparatus of the French state the DSG is a social entity, a collective organisation, which can be regarded as having a real existence. At any rate and in its favour, the element of metaphorical usage should, however, not be overlooked. It is not easy to determine the powers of collective agencies for the simple reason that while their formal spheres of action might be more or less precisely defined and open to examination; what their agents are actually able to do within their capacity as agents and with the resources they actually command is quite another matter. Yet this discussion is somewhat parenthetical. We can recognise social collectives of an appropriate kind as actors and social classes are not collectives of the right kind. In this important respect Hindess is correct.

Must "Social Forces" Be agents?

Hindess concludes that since social classes are not actors they are not social forces and cannot have effects on social processes. This argument rests on the assumption that to have some effect on social processes social classes must be actors. But is it so that every social entity must, in order to have an effect on social processes, be an actor? I think this question must be given a negative answer and that in consequence the implications Hindess draws from his essentially correct position on the nature of social agency cannot be sustained. The argument will require a little elaboration.

Let us return to the realist conception of social forces and take up Keat and Urry's (1982) discussion mentioned earlier. If social classes are conceptualised as real entities then certain questions follow. What is the nature of such entities? What properties do they possess? What are the unique and characteristic effects of those properties? What qualities may be recognised as appropriate to the description of those properties? Keat and Urry advocate theoretical realism in order to distinguish their social realism from certain positivist and empiricist tendencies but, in my reading at least, they fail to specify the precise way in which we are to conceive of social classes as theoretically real entities. Classes are clearly not theoretical in the sense that genes are theoretical (that is convenient functional labels for certain discrete combinations of specific chromosome loci) and it seems incumbent upon Keat and Urry to declare in unambiguous and straightforward terms the way in which they understand social classes to be theoretically real. Moreover, according to Keat and Urry the properties of social classes may be described in terms of the powers of those social classes, but this move collapses discrete stages in the realist investigation of the nature and properties of things. It is for empirical scientific investigation to determine the inherent and characteristic powers of things and the conditions under which those powers will be realised or instantiated. It is, of course, often the case that the powers of an entity, electro-magnetism for example, are identified long before the nature of the entity itself is adequately conceptualised in theory, but it is at least necessary to be certain that an observed effect of a particular kind is the effect of an electro-magnetic charge and not the effect of some other entity. In the same way there might be developed theoretically some conceptualisation of the qualities appropriate to the description of those powers (as, for example, strong and weak electrical charges), but that is a distinct aspect of scientific development. Keat and Urry, for all that they acknowledge their indebtedness to Harré's (1970) realist philosophy of science, are not as clear on the crucial parallels between physical and social ontologies as they need to be. The properties of an entity confer upon that entity certain causal powers, but it is unhelpful to suppose that an account in these terms will serve as a satisfactory explanation either of those properties or of those powers. To say, for example, that it is a property of blotting paper to absorb ink is somewhat uninformative as an explanation of anything. But it may be helpful to

say that the properties of blotting paper, as a loose-fibred cellulose tissue, give this substance inherent powers of absorption. The point is that if we did not know what actual properties of blotting paper were responsible for its capacity to absorb fluids then we could, for the time being, explain why blotting paper soaked up ink in terms of its "absorbent properties", that is in terms of its "powers of absorption". But such as "explanation" would be provisional and serve mainly to direct scientific investigations to the material properties of blotting paper which make it absorbent. There is simply no hope of being able to establish the properties of, say, a "mode of production" (conceived as a set of relatively enduring "relations of production") as the properties of, to remain with this example, blotting-paper can be established. The whole idea of the ontology of relatively enduring structures of social relations is a somewhat metaphorical extension of realism about physical entities and threatens to collapse under close scrutiny.

I am willing to accept this metaphor (if only because there seems little to be gained from saying that structures of social relations are not real), but the practical difficulty that has been identified is troublesome indeed. If we take any social process, then by what means can that process be identified as the actual effect of a particular mechanism of the (theoretically real) structure of social class relations and not some other (theoretically real) social entity? If we know how to do social science as well as we know how to do physical science, I doubt that we would have to bother much about whether the structures or the social mechanisms we identified and included in our explanatory accounts were theoretically real or not. But since we don't know how to do our work as well as physicists do theirs, I doubt that theoretical realism is going to be of much help when it comes to substantive social analysis. It may be salutary to note that the study of physical entities and their properties was able to make dramatic progress early in this century at a time when many leading physicists were in such an idealist frame of mind that the effected to believe that everything that existed in the universe existed as sensory data of the observing scientist! It has been argued plausibly, moreover, that this absurd idealism played a progressive role in particle physics. It is not the philosophy of science held by scientists that matters but what their work reveals about but the nature and the mechanisms of things.

The power of the middle classes which Abercrombie and Urry describe are thus open to question. We are told that the middle class (conceived as an element of the relatively enduring structure of the relations of production) possesses the power to divorce conception and execution and deskill productive labourers. But is this an inherent power of the middle class in the sense that dynamite has the power to explode or blotting paper the power to soak up ink? I think not. We might discover by empirical studies that, if such is the case, professional organisations seek to maintain and improve their collective social and economic position through raising the educational level of their entrants, that commercial and industrial organisations seek to maximise efficiency (in their view) by imposing executive/non-executive divisions of labour, and so on, with the consequence that deskilling at the level of productive labour results, and then we will have discovered something important about the social processes of labour and creditialled knowledge. What else is there to discover? What does theoretical realism about the powers of classes and other social forces contribute to this investigation? I have suggested that a social science prepared to work with empirical data and committed to the investigation of the causal mechanisms which generate social processes and events should be able to discover what set of social mechanisms are actually effective in the generation of social phenomenon provided that appropriate questions are asked and the investigation is carried out with sufficient methodological

competence. If this is not so then history and sociology really are condemned to the role of propaganda. Perhaps this realism can save us from that. Nothing, however, is finally explained by science in terms of "powers" - the term is, as Harré puts it, to be understood as a promissory note to be cashed in when the properties of the causal entities effective in generating the social processes which have been isolated as the object of scientific sociological investigation have been determined.

A realist sociology cannot work backwards from social processes and events and attempt to demonstrate these as inherent powers of the properties of social entities. If it is to be useful realist social theory must rather analyse the structures of relations which exist and from the nature of those structures determine what, in fact, the effective properties of those social entities, considered as such, actually are. Hindess refers to the 1984-5 British miners' strike (in the context of a discussion about class interests) and this will serve here as well as any other example. We can truthfully say that the decision to strike was made by the executive of the National Union of Miners, and therefore by the union, but, of course, the capacity of the union to carry out its directions (but in the event not enough of them did) and by so doing halt the extraction of a raw material vital (but in the event not quite vital enough) to the continued functioning of the economy. It is necessary to decide whether that power to halt production is a power of the union or whether it is a power inherent in the collective body of miners as a class of wage-labourers. And it seems obvious, put like this, that any collective of wage labourers possesses an inherent power to withdraw its labour, and that although that power might remain latent, or might be suppressed, is in any case, to be conceptualised as an inherent power of the relatively enduring structure of the relations of production, rather than a power of union organisation as such. A union of workers, on the contrary, might be supposed to draw its strength from an inherent property of the class determining relation of production, the sale of labour-power, and from whatever strategic effect the withdrawal of its members' labour will have. It is the nature of the powers inherent in social relations of a definite kind, the powers inherent, that is, in the determining characteristic of the social relation, that ought to be the focus of attention by realist social theorists.

To return to Hindess. This author argues that since a class cannot act it cannot be regarded as a social force. In Harré's elaboration of scientific realism the terms 'action', 'powers' and 'forces' are not synonyms. 'Action' actually means much the same to Harré as it does to Hindess. Then we can say, in the language of scientific realism, that actors have the 'power' (i.e. the capacity) to act. As to 'force' Harré regards the use of this term in scientific explanations as metaphorical. In short, we may say that the union acts to bring about a strike and in so doing realises (i) a decision-making power inherent in its existence as a form of collective organisation, and (ii) realises a power inherent in the collective capacity of its members to halt production. As far as I can see there is no reason to speak of 'class forces' in a realist sociology at all. When Abercrombie and Urry speak of class and other social forces they presumably mean only to draw attention to the fact that social entities possess causal powers which have effects. It might well be necessary, however, to talk, as I have done, of powers of capacities inherent in the class relation of a social collective. Of course, it is necessary for groups of workers to act collectively in order to realise those capacities, but that seems to create no particular theoretical problem.

Conclusion
I wanted in this review to consider whether Hindess was correct about social classes not being actors and if so what follows. If the arguments I have developed are sound

then Hindess is correct, but his conclusion that classes are not 'forces' is irrelevant. I do not want to say that social classes are forces either, but I do think that social classes possess inherent causal powers. (actually, that is to say no more than that the class relationship of selling labour-power is a social property of certain kind, which I think cannot be denied.) The causal powers which such properties confer must, however, be determined from the nature of the relations which constitute a social entity as a social entity of the kind that it is, and it follows that the nature of that relation must be specified with an appropriate degree of precision. Moreover, it is illegitimate to ascribe powers to social classes after the fact, from certain effects or consequences of the practices of class located actors. Notwithstanding all this, however, I am left with the lurking suspicion that political class analysis, beyond the level of common sense real politick, is a waste of time since the nature of the powers inherent in more or less distinct structures of class relations and the likelihood of their realisation may only be known (or estimated) in theoretically abstract terms whereas what political class analysis whats to know is the conditions of their effective realisation in practice. It is all very well to argue, as Abercrombie and Urry do, that a working class might possess the power to accommodate to capital as well as the power to overthrow capitalism by revolution, but if we do not know the conditions of the realisation of those powers, and we never could, then we are multitudinous and complexly inter-related as to defeat even historians who, despite the enviable advantage of dealing with social events which have already happened, are no more able to reach agreement on such political questions than sociologists and political scientists.

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Sharon Mast. **Stages of Identity: A Study of Actors.** Aldershot: Gower, 1986.

Reviewed by Steve Maharey, Department of Sociology, Massey University

Metaphors are popular in sociology, none so much as that which suggests that the world is a stage and people merely players. Intrigued by the comparison between theatre and everyday life, Sharon Mast has written **Stages of Identity: A Study of Actors.** The general argument explored is that because actors are often taken to be constrained by the dictates of the script, the director and the stage, so too are people in everyday life. Perhaps, suggests Mast, a close empirical study of what actors actually experience might reveal different conclusions.

The book begins with a general statement on the theoretical perspectives that inform the study - symbolic interactionism and dramaturgy - and the research methods used. For those interested in these interpretive perspectives the chapter is worthy of study. Students in particular will find Mast's clear exposition of the positions very useful indeed. Equally useful is the short discussion of how Mast went about researching the problem. Why is it that only qualitative researchers seem prepared to say anything meaningful about the realities of the research process?

The focus of the book is the reporting of research findings from a study undertaken during the 1970's for Mast's Doctoral thesis. She provides a detailed series of case studies which allow us to: follow the process of becoming an actor; explore the world of professional actors as they rehearse a play; and find out more about the often hidden world of the television actor. Packed with verbatim comments from actors, directors and a playwright, this empirical material is fascinating. It once again reinforces the real strength of grounded research - something at which Mast is clearly very proficient.

Two more theoretical chapters follow. In 'The Socialisation of the Actor' Mast makes a useful contribution to our overall understanding of socialisation processes by reflecting on the experiences of actors. In 'Acting, Life and the Theatre' Mast makes use of her data to qualify and refine the dramaturgical perspective and returns to her central problem of the differences between real life and theatre.

On the basis of her work, Mast reaches some intriguing conclusions. Dramaturgy, she argues contains the paradoxical elements of freedom and constraint. It is most usual, in the work of Goffman for example, to emphasise the element of constraint. Like Shakespeare, Goffman regards the script and the stage as the ultimate guide of social interaction. Mast disagrees, arguing that her work demonstrates the interpretive, socially constructed nature of dramatic reality. She wants to emphasise the interpretive rather than the constraining features. These conclusions are reached because Mast has shifted the emphasis from the dramatic role to the dramatic actor. By doing so she is able to show that actors do more with the script than just act it out.

These conclusions, apparently, challenge the common understanding of actors which is available from other sources. For those who are concerned with such issues this is no doubt of interest. But I have to confess to being less content to accept Masts's conclusions about the comparisons to be made between everyday life and theatre. If Mast began by wondering about the difference between everyday life and theatre, she concludes that there is none.

> In concluding this study, I would like to emphasise how dramatic acting mirrors the
> freedom which is potentially available to everyone in everyday life (192).

She arrives at this conclusion on the basis of three areas of evidence. First of all, in looking at secondary socialisation, Mast discovered that the actor 'transcends the

boundaries of everyday life through this strange brand of broadened and heightened participation in varied social worlds. (192) Such a state, Mast says, is something attainable by everyone if they make use of dramatic techniques in everyday life. Second, Mast emphasises the interpretive efforts required by dramatic actors despite the presence of a script. Ordinary people too can and must interpret the rules of life; and when they do they gain freedom. Finally, in her work on television actors, Mast shows that even in the most restrictive of circumstances, the actor manages to circumvent constraint.

The result is that far from being a symbol of constraint, the actor is a symbol of potential freedom. Actors transcend the mundane and in doing so remind us that transcendence is a human quality. Ordinary people in everyday life can also be free.

At the time I was reading Mast's book, I was given a piece from the British **Observer** which dealt with the town of Skelmsdale near Liverpool. In this once hopeful town, the policies of Margaret Thatcher have resulted in such mundane circumstances as 70 percent unemployment, rotting houses, crime, sickness, low educational attainment and despair. The article reported that in the midst of all these problems, there were many people ready and willing to try and rise above it all. The problem was that few made it.

I could not help wondering what the people of Skelmsdale would make of Mast's discovery of the actor as a symbol of freedom. I think, if they had the desire to read her book, they might want to remind Mast that material and historical conditions have a way of decentering social actors. As the old saying goes, "men/women make history, but under circumstances not of their own making". If we are to fully understand what it is to be a human being in the real world, we have to take account of the dialectic between agency and conditions. (Hall, 1980:24) At least that, it seems, is the lesson of the social actors on stage in Skelmsdale.

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Sue Middleton (ed.) **Women and Education in Aotearoa**. Wellington: Allen & Unwin/Port Nicholson Press. 1988.

Reviewed by Roy Shuker, Education Department, Massey University

I had initially not intended to do this review. However, in attempting unsuccessfully to organise a reviewer, I jokingly said to a feminist colleague: 'Perhaps I'll do it myself'. Her negative response, along the lines of how could a male undertake to review a volume by and about women, prompted me to react; so here it is.

Indeed, I'd like to begin with some consideration of this question of "gender appropriateness", as it does raise some sensitive issues. Reviews of women's work by male academics can all too easily be seen as a form of patriarchal legitimation or colonisation. There is also the issue of male ability to relate to the strong emphasis some feminists place on personal experience as a critical base for theory construction in women's studies. But it is possible, I would want to argue, to judge **academic** work, whoever its author, in traditional terms of strength and coherence of argument,

use of evidence, etc. It is also worth pointing out that no-one has raised the converse of the above issues - the appropriateness of reviews by women of "men's books" (such as Allanah Ryan's review of Jock Philips', **A Man's Country**, in the previous **NZ Sociology** 3 (1)). What needs to be remembered here, is that male and female experiences take place within common social structures, even though these structures are experienced differently. Boys and girls experience of schooling, for example, is different partly because traditionally a clear gender division of future social and occupational roles *has* been generally accepted in education. That is to say, the different gender experiences are to a degree complimentary, and to consider either in isolation is ultimately to leave out part of the equation. All that aside, it is perfectly understandable that the group who are most disadvantaged by prevailing gender arrangements, i.e. women, should want to concentrate on identifying, examining, and challenging those arrangements from the starting point of **their** experience (and not that of males).

To get to the book. Sue Middleton's edited volume must be regarded as an excellent introduction to women and education in New Zealand. I found the majority of the contributions to be readable, well-argued and informative, and at times, provocative. The book will clearly have a ready market (it has no competitor) in courses in education, sociology, and women's studies, and deserves its success.

A few minor quibbles: the title of the volume is an obvious political statement yet Middleton does not take it up in her introduction, while the contributors stick largely to 'New Zealand'. While selecting appropriate contributors is always difficult, (not to mention ensuring that they produce), the exclusion of Margaret Tennant's work on the development of co-education, and its implications for girls, is noteworthy. And Middleton's overview of the *Sociology of Women's Education in Aotearoa* would arguably be better placed at the beginning of the book, establishing as it does the parameters of the field.

Obviously, it is not possible to deal with each of the contributions in detail here. As Middleton's introduction points out, they come from 'a variety of disciplinary orientations and backgrounds as educators', and represent a wide range of practical experience of teaching. A strength of the volume is the two Maori contributions, Rangimarie Rose Pere on growing up in a traditional rural Maori tribal setting, and Ngahuia Te Awekotuku's autobiographical account of her own schooling in the late 1950's and 1960's. Both these powerful accounts are directly experiential, and, as such, are interestingly placed alongside the more "academic" approach of the "pakeha" contributors. Several of the latter, however, draw extensively on collective life histories or ethnographic work. This approach is used to particularly good effect in Alison Jones study of how school knowledge is 'differentially distributed' on the basis of race and class to different groups of girls within one New Zealand all-girls secondary school. The work of some of the writers here is already well-known and more fully developed elsewhere - such as Ruth Fry's historical examination of the curriculum; Helen Watson's studies of women's (lack of) involvement in educational administration and policy-making, and Middleton's own prolific writings on the sociology of women's education.

Other contributors are perhaps less well-known, but their work here suggests they have much to offer. Generally, the various papers usefully and succinctly bring together relevant research, thereby making the book particularly appropriate for those looking for an introduction to the various aspects of women and education.

Finally, Middleton's guide to the literature and analysis of the various theoretical positions embraced by the term 'sociology of women's education' has an ambitious canvas. Of necessity, her review is forced to be highly selective, but still encompasses well over a hundred references. Three 'perspectives on the sociology of women's education' are identified and examined - liberal feminism, radical feminism (including Marxism) and socialist feminism. Middleton's own preference seems to lie with the socialist feminist, which she sees as combining radical feminist and Marxist analysis. In developing this point of view, Middleton takes to task some admittedly influential neo-Marxist works of the 1970's, notably Bowles and Gintis and Willis, contrasting these with the writings of Connell et al and McRobbie. It may have been more appropriate, however, to take on more recent (and more thoroughly theorised) neo-Marxist contributions (i.e. with a proper account of gender), such as Aronowitz and Giroux (1985), Aggleton (1987), and Wilson and Wynn (1987). Such a comment, of course, may simply reflect academic gamesmanship, but Bowles and Gintis do now seem rather passe as "whipping boys".

Such caveats notwithstanding, **Women and Education in Aotearoa** is a book I shall return to, and certainly one which I shall direct students to. Sue Middleton is to be congratulated for putting together a volume which provides a much-needed resource, not just for "women and education" courses, but for education studies generally in New Zealand.

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Paul Spoonley. **Racism and Ethnicity**. Oxford University Press. 1988.

Reviewed by David Pearson, Department of Sociology and Social Work, Victoria University, Wellington.

Let me state at the outset that I cannot be considered an innocent bystander casting a detached eye over this book. Such is the incestuousness of academic life in New Zealand that authors and reviewers change places rather frequently. Paul Spoonley is warm in his acknowledgements to my minor input into his text but retains a scholarly critical eye on my own work. I shall pay him the ultimate compliment of preserving this tension in this review, for he will assuredly doff his reviewer's cap in the not so distant future.

Racism and Ethnicity is the first book in a new series debating critical issues in New Zealand society. The editorial preface sets out an ambitious but highly laudable set of aims. Authors in the series must argue their case in a distinctive fashion, they must be assertive in their views and proffer solutions to the problems addressed. Most terrifying of all for those contemplating writing for this series, is the direction to be clear, concise and readable in the presentation of one's arguments. This is a very tall order, especially with such a complex and emotive issue as the one Spoonley addresses. So does he succeed?

This book is certainly concise and highly readable. After a brief introduction, the author sets out respective chapters on racism and ethnicity. These are followed by sections that review state policies and practices and develop the author's thoughts on anti-racism. A brief concluding statement reaffirms Spoonley's central arguments and suggests further avenues that need to be explored. Each chapter is neatly summarised and there is an adequate if hardly comprehensive bibliography. Regrettably, readers are not offered any guides to further reading.

A great deal of material is packed into these chapters. The section on racism dwells, albeit cursorily, on the historical back-cloth to "race" and its relationship to colonialism, and then looks at the political economy of labour migration and contemporary ideological expressions of racism. There is also lengthier discussion of institutionalised racism and some useful new evidence on media bias. But ethnocentrism is hardly mentioned and scant attention is paid to class analysis, so institutionalised racism is portrayed as an all embracing concept that effectively explains the greater part of ethnic disadvantage.

The chapter on ethnicity is similarly wide ranging bringing in the politicisation of Maori ethnicity, the language question, a section on Jewish ethnicity, and a highly stimulating discussion of Pakeha ethnicity. Again there is a tendency to skim over topics. Why, for example, did Maori politicisation become so vigorous in the 1970s and why has it retained this momentum? Is it really a "revival" or simply the latest stage in a continuous stream of iwi and Maori attempts at self-determination? Spoonley does tell us but in tantalisingly superficial terms.

The solid chapter on state policies and practices returns us to the Maori/Pakeha agenda which is the central focus of the text, there being little mention of other ethnic minorities. Again the topics are familiar but displayed in a refreshingly open style. The assimilatory slant of past and present state policies, the role of the Department of Maori Affairs, the Maori parliamentary position, educational disadvantage, race relations legislation, and, inevitably, the Treaty are all discussed with a good eye for topicality and judicious examples. There is also an appraisal of policy options that leads into the penultimate chapter on anti-racism.

Positive discrimination, affirmative action, biculturalism and multiculturalism all get an airing and the author deals with them in a sensitive manner. Anti-racism strategies, from public protest to individual awareness, are assessed and the merits and demerits are briefly debated. There is also a useful list of resource material and agencies provided for those encouraged to join some section of the anti-racist movement. But given the polemical trust of the editorial framework one might have looked for more passion here. Anti-racist agendas are displayed like wares at a political fair - you pick and choose what takes your fancy. One can almost hear those with power over Maori and Pakeha chuckling up their sleeve at this approach.

There is much to commend in this attractively produced short introduction to racism and ethnicity. It is a clearly written text that should appeal to readers beyond the groves of academe. There are dangers, however, in its popular style. When I put the book down there were some major questions raised in my mind, some of them brought about by the very format laid down by the editors. Brevity and readability are virtuous ambitions but they are terribly stern task masters when it comes to setting out an argument. To be brief is often to simplify, to popularize is often to limit thoughtful abstraction. To appeal for more complexity is to meet the charge of academic stuffiness and elitism. But can we afford to be simplistic about racism and ethnicity?

Paul Spoonley is all too aware of the constraints within which he is forced to operate and it shows in the unease of the general cast of his introductory and concluding remarks. It is thoroughly unreasonable to review the book the reviewer feels the author should have written, but there are some notable quiet asides in Spoonley's book that echo resoundingly back to some of his earlier work and therefore deserve comment.

In 1985 Paul Spoonley and Bob Miles developed a neo-Marxist critique of current "silences" in local sociological theorising and research on "race relations". I disagreed with a number of their assumptions but was in broad agreement with their endeavours to place political economy, and therefore class analysis, on the centre stage in any discourse on racism and ethnicity. Spoonley's (1987) work on the extreme right in New Zealand continued to exemplify his earlier agenda. In a rather startling *volte face* in this latest text, he has swept much of his earlier thought into the wings.

At various stages in **Racism and Ethnicity** the author does acknowledge the importance of class analysis and there is some brief mention of his past views on labour migration, but generally he brushes them aside pleading lack of space. However, in the introduction, once again acknowledging the inadequacy of the treatment of political economy, we are told that:

> Theories and concepts, which are appropriate in the advanced capitalist societies of
> Europe, do not necessarily transplant well into the South Pacific (p.xiii).

He contends, moreover, that New Zealand sociologists have not been very successful in making local modifications nor have they managed to "partial out" class from sex and "race".

Clearly the rights and wrongs of these statements are open to debate but I for one would have found them more convincing if Spoonley had not spoilt his claims by firstly, drawing most of his definitions and concepts in the book from overseas authorities; secondly, had not completed an impressive amount of earlier work which clearly demonstrated the utility of such imports if sensitively accommodated to local conditions; thirdly, had not overlooked much of the local work that had been done; and, finally, excused himself on the very dubious grounds that different facets of inequality can be reduced, in positivistic fashion, to quantifiable variables.

In my view, a neglect of class analysis, however conceptualised, weakens many of the central arguments in the text. Spoonley's treatment of racism is a case in point. The author vacillates between viewing racism as an ideology or a set of attitudes. His oft-used phrase 'prejudice plus power' (which is taken from the Greater London Council's anti-racist campaign, see Gilroy, 1987:143), has the virtue of being pithy and thus easily remembered, as current media use illustrates. However, as Gilroy points out, and I fully concur with his remarks, this phraseology reduces the conception of racism solely to the observance of individual thought processes rather than locating them at the level of ideological and cultural formations. It also portrays power as a *resource* of the racist rather than viewing it as a dynamic feature of all dominant/subordinate relations. Curiously, Spoonley switches to a structural set of explanations in his treatment of institutionalised racism but does not recognise the logical slip between his definition of racism and its socially reproduced forms.

As Gilroy notes, and this is an author that Spoonley uses approvingly elsewhere in his text:

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"Race" is, after all, not the property of powerful, prejudiced individuals but an effect of complex relationships between dominant and subordinate social groups. (Gilroy, 1987:149)

This complexity, which must surely embrace class and gender relations, is recognised in some parts of the book but sadly overlooked in the central thrust of the text.

I would be the last person to applaud a slavish adherence to a *priori* assumptions, but I have to conclude from my reading of this book that it would have been considerably improved if the author had held on to past convictions. Overall, I think this a reasonably good popular book but it constitutes a sideways (some would say backward) scholarly step in the light of the author's past achievements.

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Pavla Miller. **Long Division: State Schooling in South Australian Society.** Wakefield Press, Netley, South Australia, 1986. 433 pp., A$35 p/b.

Reviewed by Roy Shuker, Education Department, Massey University

This review in a New Zealand sociological journal, of an Australian historical study, may strike readers as being somewhat out-of-place. However, Miller's approach to her study makes **Long Division** of wider theoretical interest, and is suggestive of ways forward for New Zealand based "historical sociology". (see Shuker and Wilkes, 1987)

In the past decade or so, many historians of education have shifted from their traditional preoccupation with institutional and administrative history. The former perception of the development of mass school systems as the steady and relatively benign intervention of the State in the public interest, has been replaced by more critical perspectives on schooling as a site for struggle between class groupings, a struggle related also to gender and ethnicity, and changing conceptions of childhood and adolescence. Such "revisionist" analysis is now widely recognised to have made a significant contribution to the history of education. Most recently, the revisionists' concern with the structures of power and how these imposed and developed public education, has been extended to pay greater attention to the human responses to these structures. This involves considering more fully what have been termed "private places," which extend and reinforce what occurs in formal schooling to such private places as the home, the nursery, kinship systems, and voluntary associations.

It is against this background that Pavla Miller's study must be situated. Australian history of education has been rather slow to adopt the perspectives, methodology and insights of revisionism and the newer social history. Accounts like Bacan's **A History of Australian Education** (OUP, 1981), continued to be written in traditional narrative fashion, largely untouched by the historiographical developments of the previous decade. Such accounts do not simply present a flawed view of the past, they also largely detach history from the concerns of the present. It is partly for this reason that

many students find them both boring and irrelevant. Miller's study, on the other hand, self consciously utilizes a broadly revisionist approach. In doing so, she displays considerable grasp of three major theoretical traditions: marxist theory, the sociology of knowledge, and feminist theory. Added to these is a concern to record and explain the experience of ordinary people, adding a social history dimension to the development of the state education system in South Australia. Importantly, the social, economic and political context to these developments is fully treated, rather than providing a sketchy "background", as is generally the case in traditional histories. The various themes considered - notably class, ethnicity, gender, and ageism - are skillfully woven together in the general narrative, and the book is structured in such a way that the interested reader can follow through a particular theme in isolation should they wish to. The writing style is generally fluid and agreeable, while some striking and well - reproduced illustrations nicely supplement the text.

In a work of such ambitious scope there are bound to be absences. Given the importance of private schooling in Australia, I would have liked greater attention paid to it. Tertiary education is also not dealt with systematically, while some consideration of rural - urban differences in educational policy and provisions would also, I feel, enrich the analysis. The author's focus, however is on state education (primarily during its compulsory stage), and here the book is comprehensive and provocative.

A History of Schooling in South Australia is an important contribution to understanding how state schooling has developed in Australia. It also offers a useful model of the application of social theory to historical writing, a model which New Zealand historians and sociologists could well take note of.

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David Corson (ed) **Education for Work: Background to Policy and Curriculum.**
Dunmore Press, Palmerston North. 1988.

Reviewed by Liz Gordon, Education Department, Massey University

Education for Work is an edited collection of 18 papers, dealing with some philosophical underpinnings, key issues and implications for practice in this area. It is a transnational collection, with the contributors being drawn from six western countries, linked, according to the back cover, by their 'humanistic conception of work and education'. The book has been put together by David Corson as a text for teachers wishing to study further in the subject of vocational and transition education. Dr Corson has divided the book into four sections, writing an introduction to each section; this approach gives more coherence to the book than is usual in edited collections of this type.

The first section deals with education and work in relation to the individual. The papers by Corson, Chomsky (first published in 1975) and Wringe (first published in 1981) examine conceptions of work, and each points out that much of what we call work in capitalist societies, although not all of it, is meaningless, constrained and linked more to the pay packet than to any intrinsic satisfaction. The implications of this

situation for education (and Chomsky brings these out most clearly) are that education should be liberal, growth-orientated and should not indoctrinate students into particular social values. This section lays the groundwork for the 'humanistic' approach of the book.

The second section is centrally involved with Dewey's debate with the social efficiency philosophers over the appropriate forms of vocational education. Corson's introduction relies on analytical philosophy to distinguish educative aims from those of training, and shows how these fit into the schooling system today. The paper by Wirth is historical, and looks at Dewey's conception of vocational education, and Sherman looks at the implications of Dewey's views, arguing that the task of an education system is to promote democracy and that no narrow vocational curriculum can do this. This section, thus argues convincingly for a Deweyian approach to vocational education.

The third section examines some "key" policy issues of education for work. Corson's overview sets up some important policy problems and attempts to answer them, again from a rather broad humanist perspective. I will not comment on all of the papers in this section. Branson's paper on gender points out that educating women to enter the work-world of men, to achieve equality by becoming like men, is not likely to lead to a better society. Her feminist approach stands in stark contrast with many of the other papers in this book, and contradicts them at times; broad liberal education has often proved to be unrelentingly male. Shirley's paper draws heavily on Therborn's work, and stresses the importance of doing comparative work in this field. Furnham's paper reviews the literature on the effects of unemployment on the individual; a more "macro" paper focussing on policies of unemployment may have been more relevant here.

The final section deals with the implications of policy for practice. It is potentially the most useful section for a book aimed at educators. In his introduction Corson looks at the development of 'education for work' across the curriculum. He promotes an idealised view of work as a creative, autonomous process that is an end in itself; the work of a 'craftsman'. There is no attempt to solve the problem of the gap between this view of work and the reality of the workplace. This contradiction is evident (although not always explicit) in each of the papers in this section. Walker's paper is an interesting summary of his ethnographic study, and he goes on to argue for a culture-based view of work in the schools, that taps into the meanings of each of the cultural groups in the school. Taylor's paper is a conservative piece, largely located within dominant understandings of the nature of school success and failure. At one point he ponders whether all students can be 'brought up to the level of the best', but concludes that because of the high correlation between 'general ability tests' and school success, equality of outcomes are unlikely. Such unproblematic acceptance of the validity of IQ tests flies in the face of all that we know about these tests today, and Taylor is not excused by the fact that his paper was first published in 1980. Snook demonstrates, in a short paper, that schools do not cause unemployment, but argues that they can still improve their practice in a number of ways. Korndorffer's paper is the only one to successfully negotiate the contradictions between schooling and work. She shows that these contradictions impinge on the teaching and learning processes of transition education, and argues that only when the contradictions are removed can an adequate vocational education be offered.

Whilst claiming to work from a humanist approach, the collection actually holds no single theoretical perspective. Missing from the book is any theoretical account of

class or ethnic issues relating to education for work. The latter omission is particularly surprising given that minority ethnic groups bear the brunt of poor education and unemployment in all the countries represented here. The collection is cross-national but not comparative. As we struggle for adequate policies for schooling and transition, a book that reviews developments comparatively would have been a welcome addition to the literature. I found the book interesting to read, and some of the papers were particularly good. Yet as a text it provides only a broad background into which specifically national policies must be inserted. At the same time, there is little in it that is original or that extends current thinking on the subject of education for work.

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Robinson, L. **Sex, Class and Culture.** London: Methuen. 1986.
Barrett, M. and R. Hamilton. **The Politics of Diversity**. London: Verso. 1986.

Reviewed by Kay Saville-Smith, Office of the Hon. Fran Wilde
Parliament Buildings, Wellington.

Sex, Class and Culture and **The Politics of Diversity** come from the need to take stock, to reconstruct the theoretical and strategic history of modern feminism. Such a project is opportune given that many of the young women who are now, or about to become, politically active were not even born when the first of Lillian Robinson's articles in **Sex, Class and Culture** were initially published or were toddlers when the debates rehearsed in **The Politics of Diversity** first raged. It is desirable too, to reflect on the extent to which we have developed over a period of almost two decades. There are real benefits in rediscovering the elements in polemics and analyses which have for some reason been lost from contemporary debate.

This process of rediscovery is important for two reasons. Firstly it warns us of the futility of certain directions of thought. Secondly it retrieves ideas and understandings from the fate of becoming mere taken-for-granteds. Thus, the recapitulation in The **Politics of Diversity** of that tedious debate over whether domestic labour should be conceptualised as productive or non-productive labour may protect the next generation from engaging in the sterility of issues defined by non-feminist conceptual agendas. On the other hand, the reproduction of the principles of the Domestic Labour Debate which one also finds in **The Politics of Diversity**, reminds us that the most common place piece of socialist-feminist analytic lore (that housework benefits both capital and men) comes out of extended and difficult analytic wranglings.

It should also remind us too, that without the Marxist-inspired Domestic Labour Debate it is unlikely that the insightful analyses of the fascinating ethnographic material found in the first section of **The Politics of Diversity** would ever have been developed. The joint editor of that volume, Roberta Hamilton, would have done well to remember this before writing her apparently gratuitous and indulgent (she gives herself two bites at the cherry) attack on the contribution of Marxists and the relevancy of the Domestic Labour Debate.

In essence, then, looking back gives us a feel for where we have been. It allows us to appreciate the sheer intellectual sweat which has been expended in uncovering social processes, relations and structures which now appear to be so obvious to feminists. But to be useful, "looking back" has to be tempered with a commitment to the future. It must represent more than a nostalgia for a seemingly less confused time for

feminists when we knew who the "enemy" was (if not how to deal with them), and what was "ideologically sound" and "politically correct". "Looking back" can too easily become a practice protecting us from responding to new configurations of gender inequality. Unfortunately Lillian Robinson's **Sex, Class and Culture** gives one precisely the impression of a movement not so much resting on its laurels but a movement wanting to avoid answering the questions by repeatedly posing the problem.

Sex, Class and Culture is a collection of articles initially published between 1968 and 1977 and collected together in a single volume in 1978. (It was in this volume that the rather suspect updating of terminology was undertaken).[1] This paperback is virtually a reprint of the 1978 volume. Lillian Robinson (1986:xxx) herself asks '"should" this book be made available once again?' I too believe it pertinent to ask whether this collection is useful or merely of historical interest.

There seem to be three reasons why one could usefully republish a collection such as this. Firstly, because the author needs money in a hurry and what better way than to dust off previous writings for republication? Secondly, it could occur because an individual's writings over time demonstrate not merely a set of intellectual changes but illustrate these changes within a personal-political development which is integral to the feminist project. Thirdly it could happen the writings themselves represent a major analytical intervention which make them not merely a landmark but excite continued debate and reinterpretation. Republishing Engels, de Beauvoir, Firestone, Millet make sense in this context; republishing Robinson I think does not.

It is in some senses inappropriate to compare Robinson's collection directly with the series of articles found in **The Politics of Diversity**. The articles in the latter are so much more recent that they automatically appear more congruent with our own immediate concerns and experiences. It is, however, quite fair I think to compare **Sex, Class and Culture** with Sheila Rowbotham's collection of past writings, **Dreams and Dilemmas** (1983). In that collection Rowbotham exposes not merely her need for cash, but the personal struggle to transcend these structural and intellectual operative modes which continually constrain our thoughts and actions. For the reader of Rowbotham's collection there is the constant pressure of engaging with a writer who is in the *process* of making analysis. Robinson's intellectual struggle is rather too studied. Too often she uses the self-denigration of her past positions as de facto proof of the validity of the position she now wishes to assert. The most concentrated instance of this can be found in *Criticism and Self-criticism*, (particularly the paragraph bridging pages 54 and 55).

The section in which the article mentioned above falls is entitled *Critical Theory*. We should remember that Robinson was working in a field of study, artistic and literary criticism, which is even now notoriously resistant to taking into account the social context of literary and artistic work. Certainly Marxist literary criticism, as indeed Marxism of any sort in the United States, was an anathema. Even among the American New Left one must consider the extent to which, as Robinson herself

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1   Robinson replaces 'feminist' & 'politics' with 'radical feminist' and 'socialist-feminist.' In doing so she conflates Marxists and those who acknowledge the primacy of productive and reproductive relations in determining gender inequalities. These I refer to as socialist-feminists.

acknowledges, there was a serious engagement with critical social theory. Indeed it is Marxism as political sloganeering which is most in evidence here, just as there is continual assertion but little demonstration of a relationship between race, class and gender structures. This is not a reflection on Robinson but rather on the intellectual environment in which she developed. However again it does call into question whether there is much she can offer in this area relative to the continental tradition which informs the **The Politics of Diversity**.

It is interesting to note that the most exciting and vigorous theoretical article in Robinson's volume **Modernism and History**, was co-authored by Lisa Vogel who has since produced an excellent critique of classical Marxist positions regarding gender inequality (1983).

Robinson is most convincing in the second part of **Sex, Class and Culture** where she applies her feminist understandings to literary texts and dismantles, particularly in *Who's Afraid of A Room of One's Own?; On Reading Trash;* and *What's my Line?*, the codes embedded in gender representations. And, of course, who can resist a critique of Mr. Collins' attractions?

If **Sex, Class and Culture** represents a retreat into nostalgia, **The Politics of Diversity** uses the past to construct an agenda for the future. Edited by Michèle Barrett and Roberta Hamilton it is presented as the expression of Canadian feminists' concerns. As such we have much to learn, for we have much in common with Canada. Both societies have a colonial heritage which specifies our interests.

Intellectually feminists here and in Canada have had to cope with the exclusion associated with being on the periphery. At the same moment, as the section *Towards Feminist. Marxism* shows, Canadian analysis (and our own) has been profoundly affected by the European tradition of feminism and its concern with class as well as gender. In Canada this tradition has been strengthened by the migration of radical academics from the United Kingdom in the wake of pressures on the British tertiary system.

The colonial heritage of Canada also raises issues of race and ethnicity which are pertinent to our own situation. Unfortunately this section is disappointing despite Roxana Ng's excellent analysis of the complexities of the social construction of the category 'migrant women'. The silence regarding the position of indigenous Canadian women, Indian and Inuit, is glaring.

The content of the first section *Home and Workplace*, is indicative of the similarity between our two societies and the consequent congruence in concern. Meg Luxton's article exposes the way in which the entry of married women into paid employment has led to a crisis within the organisation of private life which commits women increasingly to the double day and apparent liberation through anti-feminist politics.

Susanne MacKenzie's article exposes the impact of economic restructuring on gender relations, which is very pertinent given our own situation. Hopefully it will stimulate some concentrated debate and analysis of the impact of New Zealand monetarism on the conditions women, particularly low income women, experience.

The other sections are predictably traditional in structure and concerns, if not in content. Outstanding in the section entitled *Towards Feminist Marxism* is Mary

O'Brien's strong critique of Neo-Marxism and, by implication, the appropriateness of the tendency to absorb feminism and the analysis of gender inequalities into the domain of Cultural Studies. Angela Miles too makes useful criticism, highlighting once again the failure of socialist-feminists to really deal usefully with the problem of biological reproduction.

I do find, however, the tendency (apparent in the Hamilton-Curtis exchange) to caricature positions, rather offensive. In the introduction Barrett and Hamilton suggest that feminist work in Canada has been notable for the solidarity between academics, intellectuals, activists and reformers. The close to personal attacks found in discussion of the Domestic Labour Debate seem hardly likely to maintain that record of fair exchange. In the introduction this is referred to obliquely as animated debate. It may be animated but misrepresentation is not constructive, nor is it happy to see the seventies style of British Leftist debates resurrected here.

The article in the remaining sections of **The Politics of Diversity** (which includes a section entitled *The Social Reproduction of Gender* and another called *Subjectivity Sexuality, Motherhood*) which requires some specific mention is Heather Maroney's. It could be retitled "What do we do about essentialism?" Maroney argues that feminist theory is becoming increasingly concerned with the nature of femininity.

Much of the work, and that of O'Brien whom she reviews, is concerned with the alienation of reproductive labour and the implications of this process for women and men. The strategy to undermine this alienation rests in extending the feminine sphere. Is this radical essentialism? I am not sure. But it is certainly stimulating in a society in which some modern feminists and anti-feminists appear to be making some strange alliances based on essentialist views.

All in all, **Sex, Class and Culture** is a historical record which has interest in that context. **The Politics of Diversity** pushes the debate on, if not in radically new directions, at least definitely on.

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Phillida Bunkle. **Second Opinion: The Politics of Women's Health in New Zealand**. Auckland: Oxford University Press. 1988.

Reviewed by Liz Gordon, Education Department, Massey University

Second Opinion marks a new stage in the academic study of women's health in New Zealand. It provides a historical, issue-based account of the recent history of the women's health movement. The major strength of this collection of Bunkle's women's health writings is that it shows the development of the concerns that the movement has dealt with over the years. It is an achievement in itself that the movement now has a history; although this achievement must be tempered by the failure, which becomes evident throughout the book, of women's central health concerns to be translated into policy and practice. In this respect, the book ends on a

positive note with the reproduction of the article that triggered the cervical cancer enquiry (although it was published before the release of the Cartwright Report and therefore does not discuss this). It seems likely at the present time that the results of the Report will, at last, ensure the provision of some of the services that women have been demanding for years.

The number of subjects covered in the book is itself an awesome commentary on the energy and commitment of the women's health movement in New Zealand. The introduction (*Who's a Silly Girl, Then?*), deals in general terms with the relationship between women and their Doctors, using Bunkle's own graphic experience to describe the power relations that this entails.

> On my last visit before my [baby's] due date, the doctor who was examining me suddenly grunted and using all his strength pushed his finger through my cervix. 'That'll get you going, my girl,' he said, and indeed it did. I started to bleed and was admitted to the hospital during the night.(p.vii).

The book goes on to discuss, in the historical order in which they became "issues", abortion, sex segregation in the medical labour force, breast cancer, Depo-Provera, reproduction technology, the Dalkon Shield and the whole issue of inter-uterine devices and finally, the cervical cancer issue at National Women's Hospital.

Whilst the book is not primarily written for an academic audience, the absolute thoroughness with which Bunkle undertakes all her work, whether it be a scrupulous analysis of her own experiences as a 'suspected breast cancer case', an empirical analysis of women's health or women's position in the medical hierarchy, or a complex unpacking of the meaning of medical terminology, commands absolute respect. This book should be required reading in courses on the sociology of health (which it probably will be), and also in every medical school in the country (where it will probably never surface).

A particular strength is the relationship between personal experience and theoretical examination that characterises each section of the book. This relationship is heightened by Bunkle's commentary on the particular social and political conditions that led to each piece being written in the first place. She contextualises each section into a meaningful whole, and as such is charting a whole history of the contemporary women's movement in New Zealand. Her own involvement in the struggles she describes, both as academic commentator and as activist, adds a human flavour to the issues under discussion. For example, on abortion: 'My speech was, I believe, the first time in New Zealand that a women had publicly admitted having had one.'

Another important characteristic of this book is the way that Bunkle's work has been embedded in the concrete struggles of women to improve their lives. Each paper was written for a specific event, a specific purpose, and together the collection provides a coherent overview of the struggles that have accompanied feminism. It inevitably leads one to reflect how little has been gained by over fifteen years of struggle, particularly in the health area. The arrogance of Doctors; the anti-feminist defensiveness of the Department of Health; the self-interested manipulation of a multi-national drug company; the whole structure of health services in New Zealand stands condemned - not for their ignorance in the early 1970's, but for the ways in which they continue to ignore the demands of women.

Bunkle criticises health professionals for dismissing the personal experience of the people they deal with in favour of 'empirical facts'. She demonstrates again and again that, where women's experiences have contradicted the Doctors' received wisdom, it is professional knowledge that has been asserted as correct, whilst women's experiences have been condemned as neurotic, psychophysiological or merely difficult. I think there is a message here too, for sociology, which tends, upon occasion, to ignore experience in favour of reified theoretical or empirical models. We have tended too much, in an essentially Platonic manner, to ignore or denigrate experience as unreliable, whilst rather blindly accepting the received wisdom of our field. Bunkle's message is that knowledge that comes "from the top" is the knowledge of dominant groups, and as such may bear little resemblance to the lives of the oppressed.

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

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

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

4. Manuscripts should be typed double spaced throughout on one side of A4 paper with reasonable margins all round (2 cms. approx.).

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

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

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

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

9. References should normally be indicated by citing in parentheses the author's surname and the year of publication (together with page numbers where relevant), as given in the list of references or the bibliography at the end of the article. For example:

> 'it has been argued (Baker, 1948:26) that...' etc.

The full list of references at the end of the article should be arranged alphabetically by author's surname. The following examples should be used as a guide, paying particular attention to the sequence of the items in the reference and to punctuation.

> Able, P. and Collins, S. 1961. 'Structuralism and the concept of class.' **Journal of Social Class**, 24(3), 138-159.
>
> Baker, R.S. 1948. **Sociology and Social Change**. London, Charles Publishing Co.

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

10. Footnotes are to be reserved for substantive commentary. Number them from 1 upwards. The location of each footnote in the text must be indicated by the appropriate superscript numeral. Type the complete, numbered set of footnotes on a separate sheet and attach to the end of the manuscript. Footnotes will appear at the foot of the page where they are located.

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