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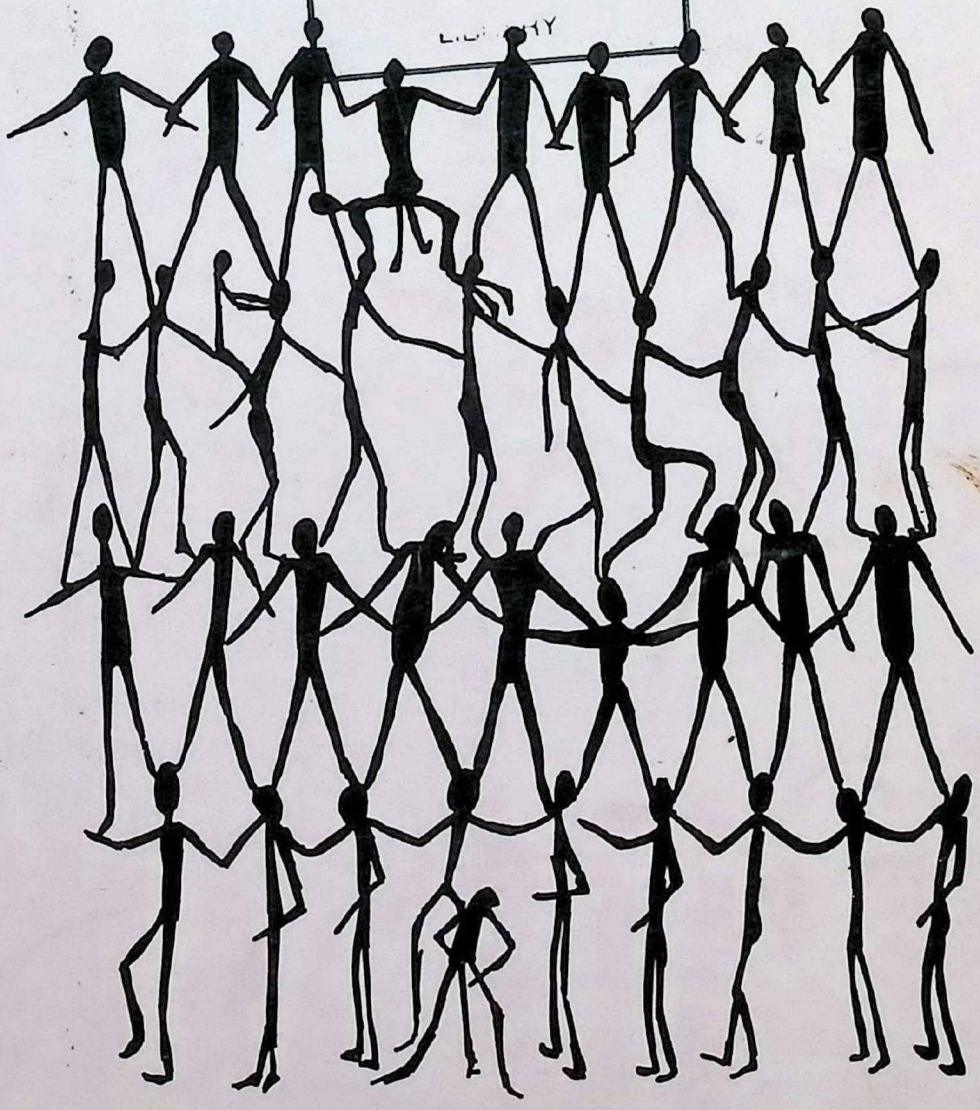

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Note The editors appologise to Colin Davis for renaming him Brian on the contents page of the last issue (V.4 No.2).

On Comparing Resolute Thinkers: I

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Robert Tristram
Department of Sociology and Social Work
Victoria University of Wellington.

> Against mediators. - Those who want to mediate between two resolute thinkers show that they are mediocre; they lack eyes for seeing what is unique. Seeing things as similar and making things the same is the sign of weak eyes. (Nietzsche, 1974:212, par. 228)[1]

Neitzsche's aphorism is worth remembering when undertaking comparisons of anything. For one of the most common charges brought against comparativists is their faulty (historical) sight. But his criticism is especially pertinent to the comparison of resolute thinkers precisely because it would seem to be a particularly vain task to try to mediate between thinkers who, although similar in that they will have made a significant contribution to human thought, often differ in at least some fundamental respects. Notwithstanding Nietzsche's critical shaft, the genre of mediating between and, more generally, of comparing two or, less frequently, three such thinkers has attracted an increasing number of authors. However, whereas social scientists have debated the difficulties of comparing things like nations and their economic growth rates, and while philosophers have discussed the commensurability or otherwise of theories, I do not know of any attempt to reflect upon the broad range of problems that arises in comparing resolute thinkers. This contribution toward making good this lacuna does so by outlining three of these problems in this paper and three in the subsequent article (which will be published in the next issue of **New Zealand Sociology**), by pointing out ways of avoiding or solving each problem, and by including illustrative references to comparisons of thinkers in general and of Marx and Weber in particular. Although this account concerns resolute thinkers, some of it is relevant to comparisons of other things. Indeed, the first problem can be expressed as the general question:

What are the Requirements of Comparison?

Identification. That the objects being compared must be identified pressuposes that they are identifiable. Yet the identification itself need not be carried out

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1 Kaufmann (in Nietzsche, 1974:212, fn. 58) speculates that Nietzsche, in writing this, 'may have thought especially of his sister as well as others who sought to mediate between him and Wagner'.

consciously. In fact, in this respect, it is worthwhile noting that comparison is part and parcel of biological evolution, which involves successful recognition, whether of a conscious or non-conscious kind, of similarities and differences between a diversity of objects in specific environments. Peter Munz exemplifies this general phenomenon when he quite rightly points out that 'only those human beings have survived whose cognitive apparatus allows them to discern human lineaments and to distinguish them from non-human lineaments'. (Munz, 1985:153)

Description. In speaking of human beings, though, we are already presupposing the emergence of a consciousness which is able to conceptualise similarities and differences in terms of 'selfness' and 'otherness' and of 'thenness' and 'thatness'. However, it took further phylogenetic development and, given this, it takes ontogenetic development for the possibility of fulfilling this requirement for all distinctively human comparisons, which condition is that the similarities and differences, whether concerning what is human or non-human, the past or the future, what is real or imagined, must be described in words or symbols.

As long as the first two requirements are met, it is logically possible to compare anything. In other words, similarities and differences between any objects of thought can be expressed in non-contradictory propositions. Or, less formally, we may say that in answer to Shakespeare's question, 'Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?' the Philistine comparer can reply, 'Well, you *can* compare me *with* anything'. But P. F. Strawson's reference to 'category-inappropriateness' (Strawson, 1974:116ff.) prompts us to introduce:

Category-appropriateness. For we could well ask whether it would be appropriate to compare Proxima Centauri and the Chinese *Hanlin Yuan*, the battle of Tursk and Renaissance Florence, or the Muslim idea of *hurriyya* (freedom) and Marcus Aurelius. And these would indeed be category-inappropriate comparisons. This means that each of these objects is an individual instance of a more general category - in these examples, those of inorganic thing, institution, event, period, idea and person; that each of these categories involves the attribution of distinct kinds of predicate; and that, in these comparisons, one would thus be merely noting differences in the predicates that are attributable to these instances of two general categories. So, although the differences between, say, a star and an academy can be compared

in non-contradictory propositions, it would be inappropriate to compare objects like these which fall under different categories, namely, those of inorganic thing and institution. From this argument it follows that comparisons will satisfy the requirement of category-appropriateness if, and only if, the objects being compared belong to the same general category. It would thus be appropriate to compare, for instance, Proxima Centauri and a cannon ball, the *Hanlin Yuan* and Western marriage, the battle of Tursk and the assassination of the Archduke Ferdinand, Renaissance Florence and neolithic Egypt, '*hurriyya*' and the feminist notion of sisterhood, and Marcus Aurelius and Greta Garbo.

Cultural Relevance. But just because a comparison is category-appropriate does not mean that it fulfils this fourth requirement. For by the latter is meant comparisons of objects that not only fall under the same general category but also are deemed by scientists or scholars to have sufficiently similar predicates as to be worthy of comparison, which 'worthiness' is based upon, and decided by, the interests and values of individual or groups of comparers. Although this definition allows for the comparisons that natural scientists undertake, it evidently owes much to Weber's conception of intellectuals as a group of people who have 'access to certain products that are considered "culture goods"' (Weber, 1978:926) and to his claim that 'cultural (i.e., evaluative) interests give purely empirical scientific work its direction' and that 'the problems of the social sciences are selected by the value-relevance of the phenomena treated'. (Weber, 1949:21-22)[2] If, then, we suppose that there are intellectuals with a cultural interest in, who find as value-relevant, problems concerning religious buildings, aristocratic political institutions, uprisings by subordinate groups, feudalism, spiritual principles and world-historical individuals, then their comparisons of, say, the Erechtheum and Reims Cathedral, the Roman Senate and the British House of Lords, Spartacus's revolt and Nat Turner's rebellion, the Chou Dynasty and Japan during the Shogunate, the Chinese dualism of *Yang* and *Yin* and the Hindu distinction between *purusha* and *prakriti*, and Ceasar and Napoleon would all be culturally relevant.

Historical Significance. Those offering such comparisons usually regard historical knowledge itself as a cultural good and treat the comparisons

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2 According to Weber (1949:160), 'this way of being conditioned by "subjective values" is, however, entirely alien in any case to those natural sciences which take mechanics as a model'. As against this it must be pointed out that nothing human is alien to natural scientists, including a certain conditioning of their sciences by 'subjective values'!

themselves as a contribution toward such knowledge, whether directly by shedding light on resemblances and differences between places, institutions, events, periods, ideas and people, or indirectly by enabling the abstraction of typologies and generalizations which can then be used to help account for particular occurrences. Given that, for Weber, comparison is integral to sociology, the latter alternative is exemplified by his contention that 'an important consideration in the formulation of sociological concepts and generalizations is the contribution that sociology can make toward the causal explanation of some historically and culturally important phenomenon'. (Weber, 1978:19-20) Following on from these points, we can say that this fifth and final requirement is the historical significance of a comparison in the sense that comparers, when pressed by imagined or very real critics, cannot rest content with simply declaring their cultural interests and values, but must, in addition, as even Weber's distinction between 'culturally' *and* 'historically' important phenomena implies, attempt to justify their comparisons in terms of their illuminating important historical similarities and differences and/or helping to account for historically important phenomena.[3]

But we can go one stage further and refer to *historically significant comparisons*. What is meant by the latter is best understood by drawing attention to a common characteristic of those six comparisons that were cited above in relation to the requirement of cultural relevance. For all of them can be seen as involving what Marx once described as 'abstract counterposings and historical constructions'. (Marx and Engels, 1965:152) Now, although he uses

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3 An example of the former possibility is Joseph Needham's discussion of Chinese mathematics. (See Needham, 1959: Chapter 19) Reflecting upon the similarities and differences between mathematics in China and the West, and starting with the cultural relevance of achievement, Needham notes how 'few mathematical works before the Renaissance were at all comparable in achievement with the wealth and power of the developments which took place afterwards'. But for this very reason 'it is pointless to subject the old Chinese contributions to the yardstick of modern mathematics'. Therefore, 'the only comparison which can be made is between the old Chinese mathematics and the mathematics of other ancient peoples, Babylonian and Egyptian in their day, Indian and Arabic ... Chinese mathematics was also quite comparable with the pre-Renaissance achievements of the other medieval peoples of the Old World'. (Needham, 1959: 150) Although in other parts of his monumental work Needham is just as preoccupied with accounting for historically important phenomena, a far more modest, though still worthy, illustration of a concern with both illumination and explanation is Robert Kelley's comparison of politics and ideas in the United States and the Soviet Union, which does, however, begin with the mistaken rhetorical question, 'are they [the 'systems' of the United States and the Soviet Union] not mirror images, opposite in *every* particular'. (Kelley, 1984: 672, my italics)

this phrase to label the application of general and even opposite philosophical terms to historical periods that have different material bases, and although he believes that 'there is little to be gained' from these counterposings and constructions, not only are these useful epithets for these and similar comparisons but also something and, on occasions, as is the case with Rushton Coulborn's overview of feudalism (1956) and Weber's sociology of religion (1978:399-634), even a great deal can be gained from such counterposings and constructions. Be that as it may, historically significant comparisons can be defined as those that involve less abstract counterposing and fewer historical constructions precisely because they require more reasoning about the concrete in order to make discoveries about compared objects that have an even greater number of similar properties, which similarities are by virtue of these objects belonging to, as well as helping to constitute, the same objective period and/or the same objective tradition. And comparisons of this kind are not in short supply. For we have a discussion of a number of Greek temples (see Bowra, 1957: Chapter 8), contrasts drawn between American and English political institutions (Tocqueville, 1956), an examination of the events making up French and German economic development (Clapham, 1951), a focus upon Spain, England, France, Prussia and Russia in relation to the period of Absolutism (Anderson, 1974), an account of the Greek ideas of *physis* and *nomos* (Myres, 1917), and consideration of Smuts, King and Nehru as men of the Commonwealth (see Mansergh, 1969: Chapter 14).

We are now in a position to make some preliminary remarks about comparisons of resolute thinkers. Relative ease in identifying and describing these determined persons with powerful minds means that it would be logically possible to compare them. No category-inappropriateness would appear to be involved, moreover, in comparing, say, their ideas. However, with the requirements of cultural relevance and historical significance there arise the issues of the choice and usefulness of comparisons. Let us suppose, for instance, that there are intellectuals with cultural interests in literature, dialectics, freedom and relationships. *They* may well find it both relevant and significant to compare: Homer, Shakespeare and Shaw - Shaw himself saw this sequence as marking qualitative leaps in the excellence of mind!; Chu Hsi and Lenin - and Joseph Needham (1969:66-67) has pointed out the affinities between organic naturalism and dialectical materialism; Plato and Hegel - Karl Popper (1966: Volumes 1 & 2), of course, treating these as similar in their opposition to 'the open society'; and Aristotle and Mead - and R. K. Merton

(1968:20) has noted how the former 'adumbrates' the latter's concept of 'significant others'. Yet it could be argued that what Merton says about this latter adumbration would apply to each of these comparisons: 'Such attributions do not make for an understanding of the historical *development* of thought'. (Merton, 1968:20, my italics) And this is surely true. On the other hand, we must emphasize that even these comparisons would have a degree of historical significance insofar as they illuminated important similarities and differences in the context, nature and products of thought. There is historical significance in, for example, Douglas R. Hofstadter's **Gödel, Escher, Bach: An Eternal Golden Braid**, which not only compares the 'Strange Loops'[4] in Gödel's Theorem, Escher's drawings and Bach's canons, but also discovers these 'Loops' in government. (1980:*passim* and 692-693) Moreover, although this work quite rightly does not question the point underlying Aaron Lerner's query, 'can the achievements of Shakespeare be measured *against* those of Newton or the talent of Bach be compared *to* that of Einstein?' (Lerner, 1973:12, my italics), it does show that a comparison can be both relevant and significant even though one subject (in this case Bach) lived in a different period from the other subjects and all three subjects were eminent in different traditions.

As for historically significant comparisons of resolute thinkers, their authors usually expressly single out as justificatory reasons for them exactly the same criteria as we used to define this kind of comparison. Consider, for instance, George Steiner's **Tolstoy or Dostoevsky**. For Steiner (1980:41 & 12) is at pains to emphasize how the *period* 1861-1905 in Russia was a 'golden' one of 'creativity' and how, in the context of it, Tolstoy and Dostoevsky afford 'the historian of ideas and the literary critic a unique conjunction, as of neighbouring planets, equal in magnitude and perturbed by each other's orbit'. Similarly, although it is now the criterion of objective *tradition* alone which is singled out, we have Ramon Lemos (1978:163) comparing Hobbes and Locke because they are both 'clearly within the natural right/natural law tradition', Lerner (1973:12) stating that his comparison of Newton and Einstein is 'meaningful' because they 'excelled in the same field', and Joseph Fell (1979:ix) comparing Heidegger and Sartre because they 'share in large part a common philosophical ancestry and a common preoccupation with a very

4 According to Hofstadter (1980:10), 'the "Strange Loop" phenomenon occurs whenever, by moving upwards (or downwards) through the levels of some hierarchical system, we unexpectedly find ourselves right back where we started'.

particular ontological problem'. But even if comparisons meet the criteria of both objective tradition and objective period, there is the further problem of:

Social Position and Situational-Relativity

The sociology of knowledge is concerned with the relationship between society and knowledge. It examines whether and, if so, how various dimensions of society, on the one hand, determine or merely influence the genesis, structure and validity of all kinds of knowledge, and, on the other, constitute objects for literary works, political programmes, philosophical systems, social theories and so on. Karl Mannheim discusses this dual relationship in terms of the '"infiltration of the social position" of the investigator into the results of his study' and of 'situational-relativity', that is, 'the relationship of [the] assertions [found in the study] to the underlying reality'. (Mannheim, 1936:244) According to the logic of his ideas, social position and situational-relativity would not be issues in all comparisons of thinkers. Given his belief that thinking in mathematics and the natural sciences is carried out by 'an abstract "consciousness as such"' and results in the one 'system' of '"absolute truth"' being built up (Mannheim, 1952:194 & 177), he would thus have regarded Lerner's simple juxtaposition of the events, aspects and accomplishments of Newton and Einstein's lives as the only way in which they can be compared. Even in respect of a comparison of Tolstoy and Dostoevsky, Mannheim's conception of art as located primarily, though not exclusively, within the '"psychic-cultural" domain' (1952:114-116) means that he would have seen it necessary to employ, not the category of causality in order to ascertain the 'existentially-determined' relationship between Tolstoy's and Dostoevsky's social positions, works and underlying realities, but Gestalt concepts such as whole and part in order to detect, for example, any similarities in their styles. (See 1952:121) But given Mannheim's claim that the concept of existentially-determined thought does include political thought, historical thought and thought in the cultural and social sciences (1952:193), another problem in comparisons of resolute thinkers like Hobbes and Locke, Heidegger and Sartre, and, let us add, Marx and Weber is the implications for the comparison when, and insofar as, the thinkers have dissimilar social positions and focus upon different underlying realities. And we can begin to draw out these implications by considering what is involved in comparing Marx and Weber.

To begin with, the very emphasis upon social position and situational-relativity not only requires the labour of finding out what their own *individual* positions

and situations were but also questions the assumption that they were 'unique' resolute thinkers. Contrary to this Nietzschean notion of the complete differentness of supermen, the sociology of knowledge thus at least begins with the similarities that are integral to their individual positions and situations. Indeed, for Mannheim,

> the approach of the sociology of knowledge intentionally does not start with the single individual and his thinking in order then to proceed directly in the manner of the philosopher to the abstract heights of 'thought as such'. Rather, the sociology of knowledge seeks to comprehend thought in the concrete setting of an historical-social situation out of which individually differentiated thought only very gradually emerges. Thus, it is not men in general who think, or even isolated individuals who do the thinking, but men in certain groups who have developed a particular style of thought in an endless series of responses to certain typical situations characterizing their common position. (Mannheim, 1936:2-3)

Given this claim and his more detailed concern with class conflicts, generational unit, political allegiance and intellectual stance, any comparer of Marx and Weber would therefore have to know the following. Firstly, such constellations and sequences in Marx's life and thought as: the relative backwardness of Germany, pressure from the liberal bourgeoisie, the Young Hegelians, radical journalism and the inversion of Hegel's dialectic; social-political conditions in France, an emerging working class, Marx's experience of class struggles and adherence to Communism and his criticisms of capitalist society and transformation of Hegel's dialectic; and social-economic conditions in Britain, national and global capitalism, more developed working class organizations, the First International and **Capital**. And, secondly, the extent to which, and the way in which, the development and impact of capitalism in Germany, the kind of class conflict in that country, Weber's education and status as a German mandarin, his beliefs and activities as a liberal nationalist, and his 'modernist' *Weltanschauung* (see Ringer, 1969:199, for example) all influenced his engagement in, and his works resulting from, 'the scientific investigation of the *general cultural significance of the social-economic structure of the human community* and its historical forms of organization'. (Weber, 1949:67)

Now, Mannheim's claim and this kind of knowledge certainly indicate how mistaken is Popper's contention that the sociology of knowledge 'looks upon science or knowledge as a process in the mind or "consciousness" of the *individual* scientist, or perhaps as the product of such a process'. (Popper,

1966, Volume 2:217, my italics) For what Mannheim and I have drawn attention to is precisely the *group* bases of thought and knowledge. But just how necessary is it to know these bases? According to Popper:

> 'we can learn *more* about the heuristics and the methodology and even about the *psychology* of research by studying theories, and the arguments offered for or against them, than by any direct behaviouristic or psychological or sociological approach. In general, we may learn a *great* deal about *behaviour* and *psychology* from the study of the products'. (Popper, 1972:114, my italics)

That this is an exaggerated claim, however, can be appreciated by simply considering whether from a study of **Capital** or, say Weber's **Economy and Society** we could learn much about those aforementioned configurations in and influences on the lives and thought of Marx and Weber. More generally, it is not the case that an examination of the products of thinking will provide us with much information about the positions on the basis of which the thinkers' psychology and behaviour emerge and occur.

Yet it is equally true that a knowledge of the common social position of a group of thinkers will not necessarily enable a successful *prediction* even of their individual *opinions*. This is well exemplified by Fritz Ringer's reflections upon his work on the German mandarins. For although the sociology of knowledge is his point of departure, we note the use of the qualificatory (as regards the possibility of full and general predictability) words 'typical' *and* 'more' in his claim that whereas the views of the orthodox mandarins were 'more fully "predictable"' than those of the accommodationists (to the new socio-cultural order),

> the self-consciousness of the modernists, by contrast, intervened to *mediate* the causal action of the *typical* mandarins' social role upon their *typical* opinions. Though the orthodox and the modernists certainly shared certain common assumptions, the 'ideological sequence or explanation' [which accounts 'for a man's opinions by tracing them to his psychological orientation, his social position, his economic or his religious needs' (Ringer, 1969:4)] was more completely and exclusively adequate for the orthodox than for the modernists, whose more articulate beliefs called for relatively greater recourse to the 'logical (or rational) sequence or explanation' [according to which 'someone held a certain view because it seemed to him unavoidable in the face of the then available evidence and in accordance with the rules of right thinking as he saw them' (Ringer, 1969:4)]. (Ringer, 1986:151)

In contrast to opinions, though, the crucial logical point about novel *theories* is that we cannot, in principle, predict at time T1 a theory that will be produced at time T2 for otherwise the theory would be produced at T1. To be sure, in

retrospective research we can and must be open to the possibility of the same or at least similar theories being produced. Nevertheless, from a knowledge of the social positions of, say, Marx and Weber in 1848 and 1900 it would still not be possible to predict the theoretical content of **Capital** and **Economy and Society.**

For Popper, or at least for the older Popper,[5] this point about prediction shows the error of determinism, whether it be physical or social determinism. The very fact that we cannot predict products such as Mozart's or Beethoven's music means that they were not determined by physical or social conditions. (Popper, 1972:223) However, it has been argued not just that such products can still be *explained* after their production but that even when predictability is excluded by various considerations, 'the issue of determination remains open'. (Gellner, 1985:29) As against this latter claim by Ernest Gellner, though, if it really were the case that our products are completely and invariably determined by the causal chains of physical conditions, social position or whatever, then this doctrine, rather than being an 'issue', would be caused to be accepted or rejected. And this telling, albeit implicit, point about the possibility of rational reflection upon issues is equally relevant to both of Mannheim's contentions about that first side of the sociology of knowledge. For if we take seriously his notion of *'existentially-determined* thought' and his belief that the social position of a thinker (inevitably?) infiltrates into 'the results of his study', then Popper is quite correct in saying that, according to the sociology of knowledge, 'the social habitat of the thinker *determines* a whole system of opinions and theories which appear to him as unquestionably true or self-evident'. (Popper, 1966, Volume 2:213, my italics) On the other hand, at least Mannheim's reference to infiltration could be taken as no more than necessary openness to the empirical possibility of a thinker's social position influencing his or her interests, orientations and, yes, results. There is, nevertheless, also the possibility of the self-consciousness of a thinker enabling recognition of *and* checks to this infiltration, and thus of the production of the results being accounted for, at least in part, by what we saw Ringer refer to as 'logical (or rational) sequence or explanation'.

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5 The ('physical indeterminist') Popper of **Objective Knowledge** (1972), unlike that of **The Open Society and Its Enemies** (1966), *does* 'wish to quarrel with the metaphysical determinist who would insist that every bar Beethoven wrote was determined by some combination of hereditary and environmental influences'. (Popper, 1966, Volume 2: 210)

But what are the implications of these points about social position for the actual comparison of thinkers? Still following what he regards as the logic of the sociology of knowledge, Popper argues that we can see that one thinker has treated his opinions and theories as unquestionably true 'if we compare him with a thinker who lives in a very different social habitat; for he too will proceed from a system of apparently unquestionable assumptions, but from a very different one; and it may be so different that no intellectual bridge may exist and no compromise be possible between these two systems'. (Popper, 1966, Volume 2:213) Now, it is undoubtedly the case that differences in the thinkers' habitats or positions will complicate a comparison which seizes upon their common membership of an objective tradition as a justification for the comparison, as a criterion for what we have called a historically significant comparison. For although the thinkers in a comparison of this kind will belong to one tradition - in a comparison of Marx and Weber it can be regarded as the general one of social scientific investigation of history and especially of the development and nature of capitalism, the differences may well influence their membership of, and contributions to, other or more specific traditions - for example, Marx as a communist in his critiques of political economy and Weber as a liberal nationalist in his use of marginalist economics. Complications of this kind, however, do no more than illustrate the general point that comparisons have greater historical significance when they do indeed involve a combination of differences, though not absolute ones, in social position, and similarities, and not necessarily identities, in intellectual tradition. Concerning the latter, moreover, another implication of our claims is that as long as the comparison satisfies the requirements of identification, description and category-appropriateness, differences in the thinkers' habitats do not make it impossible to construct an 'intellectual bridge' between their 'systems'. For in arguing that there are, in effect, dialectical interactions between thinkers and their positions, we allow for a comparison of their opinions and theories.

However, the principal implication of situational-relativity, which is that other side of Mannheim's conception of the sociology of knowledge, is that the assertions found in the thinkers' studies may have a 'relationship' not to '*the* underlying reality' but to *different* underlying realities. It could thus be claimed that while much of **Capital** concerns what E. J. Hobsbawm (1975) calls 'the age of capital', at least some of the assertions in **Economy and Society** presuppose a Weber who lived, as Göran Therborn (1976:271) says he did, in

'the age of imperialism'. Bearing in mind Hofstadter's interpretation of Escher's 'Print Gallery' (see Hofstadter, 1980:714-717), which depicts a man viewing a picture of a town which is physically connected to the gallery in which the man is standing, this difference could be construed as the 'Strange Loop' of Marx viewing a capitalism which is the basis of his social position and another 'Strange Loop' of Weber gazing upon an imperialism which is the basis of his position. The upshot of situational-relativity could thus be that thinkers never belong to the same objective period and that this cannot, then, be a criterion for historically significant comparisons.

Three arguments can be offered against this relativism. The first is that Mannheim himself puts forward 'relationism' as an alternative to both realism *and* relativism. Rather than claiming that showing the relationship of an assertion to a given social situation either 'tells us nothing about the truth-value of the assertion' or warrants that we deny its 'absolute validity', he thus contends that the sociology of knowledge (in effect, merely) seeks to 'particularize' the 'scope and the extent' of the validity of the relationship. (Mannheim, 1936:254-255) However, whereas he falls into an unthinking kind of realism when he allows and calls for a '*direct* examination of the facts' (Mannheim, 1936:256, my italics), the points to make about his relationism are that it rightly and necessarily *presupposes* a reality to which one can *refer* in assessing the scope and the extent of validity of assertions, and that it is simply a worthy *methodological* maxim not to overextend the range of applicability of an assertion.[6] Following on from this first argument, it can be claimed, secondly, that notwithstanding, say, Croce's belief that the unity of documents and thought supports the proposition that 'all true history is contemporary history' (Croce, 1966:498), the fact that history as an object involves a real past which is not dependent for its occurrence on the historian's thought[7] means that thinkers can and do make assertions about realities *other* than those

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6 Although Merton has already made this latter point, he makes the mistake of thinking that 'the "particularizing function" of the sociology of knowledge simply assists us in *ascertaining* the limits within which generalized propositions are valid'. (Merton, 1968: 559, my italics) For if particularization is but a new name for this 'methodological precept', then it cannot actually assist us in 'ascertaining' such limits.

7 Wolfgang von Leyden (1984: 54) expresses this in more general terms: 'no past happenings as such depend on anybody's subsequent thoughts about them'. Although he allows that 'this principle represents the only incontestable truth in the doctrine of historical realism', he makes the mistake of referring to attempts to '*construct* the past'. (55, my italics) For acceptance of the principle means that one must think of efforts to *disclose* or *discover* what happened in the past.

that are part and parcel of their ages and positions. Marx and Weber thus discerned objects - for instance, aspects of Antiquity and Western feudalism - which, although remote *conditions* of their standpoints, were not *constitutive* of them. Thirdly, the criterion of belonging to the same objective period can be satisfied if there are fundamental similarities in the realities that make up the ages in which the thinkers lived. So it could be claimed that the capitalism that Marx viewed both caused and, in essential respects, underpinned the imperialism that Weber gazed upon. In fine, whereas the art historian Pinder could describe the different experienced times of generations living at the same time as 'the non-contemporaneity of the contemporaneous' (quoted in Mannheim, 1952:283), we can epitomize the possibility of thinkers living in different ages making assertions about the *same* underlying reality as *the contemporaneity of the non-contemporaneous.*

Absent Dialogue and Incommensurable Discourses

Notwithstanding this kind of contemporaneity, is a comparison of resolute thinkers not rendered impossible if there was no dialogue between the thinkers? This question quite obviously raises the problem of what we mean by 'dialogue'. In the course of outlining Schleiermacher's hermaneutics, Hans-Georg Gadamer paraphrases his conception of dialogue as 'nothing but the mutual stimulation of thought'. (Gadamer, 1979:165) If we took Ancient Greek philosophy as our reference point, we would no doubt believe that this mutual stimulation requires an actual meeting of the two thinkers. Indeed, it is mainly because Tolstoy and Dostoevsky never met that Steiner asks: 'But are Tolstoy and Dostoevsky, in fact, comparable? Is it more than a critic's fable to imagine their minds engaged in dialogue and mutual awareness?' (Steiner, 1980:11) Yet his comparison of these novelists shows that dialogue as the mutual stimulation of thought does not have to be understood in this restrictive sense. For the possibility of a comparison being partly justified by, and partly resting on, the fact that the thinkers simply knew of one another's work and that we have knowledge of this potentiality or actuality for mutual stimulation is well exemplified by Steiner's answer to his own question: 'But the documentation on Tolstoy and Dostoevsky is abundant. We know in what manner they regarded each other and what **Anna Karenina** signified to the author of **The Idiot'.** (Steiner, 1980:11)

Implied by this instance of signification, moveover, is the possibility of speaking of a dialogue even though only *one* of the thinkers was stimulated by

the thought of the other. So, although their different chronologies may have meant that the earlier or older thinker could not have been stimulated by the later or younger thinker, the latter was stimulated by the former's writings. And it was quite obviously with this one-sided stimulation in mind that Albert Salomon made his oft-cited claim that 'Max Weber, the historian of law, the political scientist and economist, became a sociologist in a long and intense dialogue with the ghost of Karl Marx'. (Salomon, 1945:596) Now, this is certainly a more flexible and still acceptable conception of dialogue. Yet it is clearly limited in that it entails that a dialogue of the thinkers can be based only on those texts of the earlier or older thinker that were read and responded to by the later or younger thinker. For example, any comparer of Marx and Weber must recognize not only the relatively small number of Marx texts that were available to Weber, but also how he concentrated - sometimes at a low level - on just a few of these texts. In other words, his dialogue was with but some attributes of the ghost of Marx.

Coupled with this limitation is the fact that the later or younger thinker's interpretation of the available texts will be influenced by, and could even be refracted by, his or her social position and situation. Again, Weber's dialogue with some of the available Marx texts can be used to illustrate both of these possibilities. In approaching this dialogue, Anthony Giddens quite rightly advises us to distinguish between Weber's 'views upon the academic contributions of Marxist authors to history and sociology' and his 'views upon what he considered to be Marx's own original ideas'. (Giddens, 1970:290) Although we need to bear this distinction in mind, what we actually find is that the combination of Weber's position as what *he* described as a 'class conscious bourgeois' (see Dronberger, 1971:84) Mandarin and his facing a tradition of Marxism that espoused ethical historicism, Hegelian emanaticism and economism led him to interpret the available Marx texts in the light of this contemporary tradition. In order to see this we have only to compare:

(1) his characterization of *Marxism* as: attempting to derive ethical imperatives from and to justify them in terms of, empirical processes - as, for example, in determining the value and distribution of commodities (see Weber, 1949:95 and Weber, 1978:872-874); tending to treat as 'real (i.e., truly metaphysical) "effective forces"' its '"laws" and developmental constructs' (Weber, 1949:103); and believing that material conditions, economic causes and economic interests are the

'"real"', '"true"' and ultimately determining factors (see Weber, 1949:68-69 and Weber, 1978:341); and

(2) his claim that **The Communist Manifesto** combines moralizing and prophesy, purports to reveal ineluctable 'laws of nature' and hints at the 'laws of economics' (Weber, 1971:205-208); his taking issue with Hegel's '"emanatist"' conception of the relationship between concept and reality, and his subsequent reference to 'the form of the Hegelian dialectic represented by the **Capital** of Marx' (Weber, 1975:66-68 and 220 fn. 37); and his charging Marx with technological determinism: contrary to Marx, 'the hand-mill has lived through all conceivable economic structures and political "superstructures"'. (Weber, 1978:1091)

And the upshot of this influence and refraction would be that *if* they led Weber to offer a *mistaken* interpretation of many of Marx's principal ideas, then his dialogue was with a *false* apparition of aspects of Marx's ghost.

But we can go beyond these limitations of dialogue as the one-sided stimulation of thought. For it is obviously possible for the comparer to consider not just the texts that were available to the later or younger thinker and the latter's mistaken interpretations of them - interesting though these will be, but also *both* thinkers' entire corpora. Indeed, this task would be an essential undertaking even if they had conversed with one another. Accordingly, although in comparisons of, say, Marx and Proudhon, and Weber and Lukács it would be worthwhile to include reliable reports of their discussions with one another, the bulk of the comparisons would still have to dwell upon their writings that preceded and followed these meetings. Whether there was dialogue as either the one-sided stimulation of thought or even the mutual stimulation of thought, then, a comparison will be more meaningful and, yes, truer if it presents a (latent) dialogue of the thinkers that is based on a consideration of the whole ranges of their texts.

Going by this broad conception alone, however, one could present a dialogue between any thinkers, even if this comparison turned out to be nothing other than a catalogue of the differences between their texts. But this notion can be supplemented by what Gadamer reports was Schleiermacher's conception of '"dialogue proper"', namely, as 'the common search for meaning'. (Gadamer,

1979:165) It could thus be regarded as category-appropriate, culturally relevant and historically significant to compare the texts of thinkers who at least started from a similar concern with the meaning of one or more things. One of the abiding merits of Karl Löwith's comparison of Marx and Weber, for instance, is his contention that they are comparable not just in terms of personality and achievement but also by virtue of the fact that the 'original motive' for their scientific investigations of capitalism was 'the *one* single and profound question concerning our contemporary mode of being human'. (Löwith, 1982:19-20, my italics)

Given, however, that a search for meaning is not necessarily a search for truth and that most, though not all (this applies to Nietzsche's formal declarations), resolute thinkers have been concerned with truth, another addition to our broad notion of dialogue must be dialogue as the common search for truth. In the case of Marx and Weber this joint search could be grounded in the one's implied linkage of science to the production of 'true' rather than 'useful' theorems (Marx, 1976:97)[8] and in the other's identification of science with the belief in the value of 'scientific truth' and with the discovery of 'truths'. (Weber, 1949:110 & 68) Of course, as Weber and Marx themselves well knew, such a search presupposes certain cultures and specific traditions. Needham, too, recognizes this. Yet this has not precluded him from both correctly claiming that '"true knowledge of natural phenomena"' is a provisional knowledge *and* allowing that there has been 'gradual percolation of true knowledge through the successive civilizations, and its *general accumulation*' *and* 'viewing the whole march of humanity in the study of Nature as *one single enterprise*'.(Needham, 1976:xxxi & xxiv, fn. a, my italics) And it was no doubt these latter two beliefs which led him to talk in terms not of a particularized dialogue of truth-seeking thinkers but of the three thousand year old 'dialogue of *East and West*'. (Needham, 1969:11, my italics)

Yet it is these sorts of reference which bring us to a problem that is integral to dialogue as a comparison of texts. Mannheim, for one, was well aware of it. Even though, as we have seen, he treated the search for truth in mathematics

8 Marx (1976: 97) argues that the 'more explicit and threatening forms' of the class struggle in France and England 'sounded the knell of scientific bourgeois economics. It was thenceforth no longer a question whether this or that theorem was true, but whether it was useful to capital or harmful, expedient or inexpedient, in accordance with police regulations or contrary to them'.

and natural science as a supra-societal endeavour, he was firmly of the belief that 'the very idea of a "sublime dialogue" of the spirits of all ages, as Scheler conceives it can occur, even as a utopian fantasy, only to someone who believes in *one* system of truth'. (Mannheim, 1952:177-178) But, for Mannheim, 'a "dialogue" of this kind cannot take place in this simple fashion, if for no other reason, because every word has a different meaning in different cultures, as a result of the fact that its existential function is a different one in each case'. (Mannheim, 1952:178) Although Wittgenstein only rarely drew attention to how language games are anchored in 'the ways in which men live' (quoted in von Wright, 1982:207), this point about variations of meaning is central to his belief that the meaning of words depends upon, and varies with, different language games. And what this line of argument does is to oblige us to supplement all this talk of 'the common search for meaning' and 'the common search for truth', and, more importantly, to reconsider our passing claims that it would be category-appropriate to compare the ideas of resolute thinkers and that it would be possible to construct an 'intellectual bridge' between their 'systems'. For, according to those Wittgenstein-inspired philosophers, Thomas Kuhn, Paul Feyerabend and Richard Rorty, these ideas and systems could well constitute 'incommensurable' viewpoints, theories or discourses.

Each of these philosophers in fact defines 'incommensurability' in different ways.

Kuhn. Seizing upon contrasts in the use and thus, for him, in the meaning of terms, he claims that 'two men who perceive the same situation differently but nevertheless employ the same vocabulary in its discussion must be using words differently'. In short, they speak from 'incommensurable viewpoints'. (Kuhn, 1970:200)

Feyerabend. Unlike Kuhn, he believes that 'mere *difference* of concepts does not suffice to make theories incommensurable'. (Feyerabend, 1982:67 fn. 118) Notwithstanding an admission that defining the latter is difficult, he argues that it 'involves major conceptual changes' such that 'the conditions of concept formation in one theory forbid the formation of the basic concepts of the other'. (Feyerabend, 1975:225 and Feyerabend, 1982:67 fn. 118)

Rorty. He, too, distances himself, albeit unwittingly, from Kuhn's definition. 'To say that parties to a controversy "use terms in different ways"[9] seems to me', he thus avers, 'an unenlightening way of describing the fact that they cannot find a way of agreeing on what would settle the issue'. (Rorty, 1979:316 fn.1) Accordingly, incommensurable discourses are regarded as those between which there is, at present, no 'set of rules which will tell us how rational agreement can be reached on what would settle the issue on every point where statements [in the discourses] seem to conflict'. (Rorty, 1979:316)

We need to bear in mind each of these definitions. Similarly, although the problem of incommensurable *discourses* has been singled out, we must be alert to thinkers having incommensurable viewpoints and incommensurable theories.[10] Focusing upon 'discourse', however, allows us to draw upon those of Paul Ricoeur's characterizations of this concept that tie in with our remarks regarding dialogue. For he treats discourse not only as the 'event' of the establishment of a 'dialogue' about 'a world which it claims to describe, express or represent' but also as 'meaning' which can, through the 'labour' of writing, be objectified or fixed as 'the world of the text'. (Ricoeur, 1981:133-140) Singling out 'discourses' is even *necessary*, given that at least some of the principal viewpoints of resolute thinkers must be embodied in discourses which may not, though, be intended and organized as theories.

In what respects, then, do incommensurable discourses constitute a problem? For a start, just as there is a need to focus upon the thinkers' own social positions and situations, so in a full comparison of their ideas and systems there is the task of discovering and discussing any incommensurabilities in their individual discourses. One possibility is for the comparer to consider the degree to which, if at all, the *thinkers* perceived themselves as working in incommensurable discourses. From Lerner's point of view, for example, there was nothing wrong in his comparing Newton and Einstein in the separate chapters, 'Mature Scientists' and 'Religion'. (See Lerner, 1973) Although Newton, unlike Einstein, was preoccupied with the 'language games' of (natural) philosophy *and* religion, this demarcation can even be grounded in

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9 Although Rorty (1979: 316 fn.1) says that this meaning is 'the one often used in discussing Kuhn', we have just seen that this is the way in which Kuhn himself difines 'incommensurable viewpoints'.

10 Yet other nouns are sometimes used: 'incommensurable aims' and 'incommensurable vocabularly' (see Rorty, 1979: 360), and 'incommensurable frameworks and incommensurable concepts' (see Feyerabend, 1975: 277).

the former's 'rules' that 'we are not to introduce divine revelations into Philosophy, nor philosophical opinions into religion'. (Quoted in Frank Manuel, 1968:119) Newton (like Einstein) is therefore alert to the mistake of permitting incommensurable viewpoints to enter scientific and theological *inquiries*. On the other hand, Newton's conception of God and of the **Principia** as an enforcement and demonstration of 'the power and superintendency' of the Supreme Being (see Manuel, 1968:125) and Einstein's insistence that 'the realms of religion and science in themselves are clearly marked off from each other' (quoted in Lerner, 1973:117) testify to the one's denial[11] and the other's affirmation that religion and science are, ultimately, different 'language games' or 'incommensurable discourses'.

Another possibility is that one or both of the thinkers may have used or produced several incommensurable discourses. Although not explicitly concerned with incommensurability, Steiner, for instance, asks: 'Was there a decisive break (possibly in the period from 1874 to 1878) between the "pagan" creator of **War and Peace** and the Christian ascetic of **Resurrection** and the later years?' (Steiner, 1980:247) Instead of attempting to supply his own 'rules' to try and bring these two Tolstoys into 'rational agreement', to use Rorty's terms, Steiner takes the line that 'Tolstoyan paganism and Tolstoyan Christianity were not diametrical opposites, but successive and interrelated acts in the drama of a *single intelligence*'. (Steiner, 1980:248, my italics) Opposed to all such talk of this kind of drama is Louis Althusser, who comes to a very different conclusion regarding Marx's development. Armed with the notion of 'epistemological break', which is similar to Feyerabend's conception of incommensurable theories, he insists that there is this kind of break between Marx's early works, which use such ideological ideas as alienation, and his mature works, wherein he is able to 'think' scientific concepts like exploitation. (See Althusser and Étienne Balibar, 1970:17 & 181, and Althusser, 1969) As against Althusser, it can be argued - and, in effect, has been argued (see István Meszáros, 1970 and Bertell Ollman, 1971) - that 'the conditions of concept formation', to use Feyerabend's language, in Marx's early discourses facilitated rather than forbad 'the formation of the basic concepts' of his mature discourses. But whatever the interpretation of individual thinkers and even if both the comparers and the thinkers regard(ed) the discourses as '*commensurable*', the general point is that full comparisons

11 Manuel (1968:180, my italics) goes so far as to refer to 'the *identity* of his religious and his scientific thought'.

will rarely, if ever, be simply of one thinker's only discourse and the other's one discourse. Notwithstanding his reference to 'a single intelligence', Steiner thus has to compare Tolstoy's pagan discourse, Dostoevsky's discourses and Tolstoy's Christian discourse. Likewise, even though it would indeed be a mistake to think of an epistemological break involving (Feyerabendian) incommensurability between Marx's early and later works, the metaphor must be, not of Weber's 'dialogue with the ghost of Karl Marx', but of a dialogue between Weber's discourses and the variety of (textual) ghosts that hover in Highgate Cemetery.

Having discovered and reviewed any incommensurabilities in the thinkers' individual discourses, the next task is for the comparer to judge which of their discourses are sufficiently alike to warrant direct comparison. This judgement will be guided by the category-appropriateness of including the two discourses under the topic headings of similar traditions and/or similar stages in the thinkers' development. Illustrating the former is indeed, and notwithstanding Newton envisaging a higher unity of religion and science, Lerner's comparison of Newton's and Einstein's scientific discourses in his chapter, 'Mature Scientists'. And exemplifying the latter is Fell's comparison of the early phenomenological ontologies and then, because each of these required 'a form of supplementation or revision', of the subsequent ontologies of Heidegger and Sartre. (See Fell, 1979:xv & parts 1, 2 and 3)

But the key problem is whether it is at all possible for incommensurable discourses to be directly compared. For if the thinkers employ terms differently, if there are major conceptual contrasts between their theories and if there appear to be no rules for reaching rational agreement on the conflicting statements, then is not such a comparison precluded? Yet the interesting point is that the latter is not excluded even by those who *first* raised the issue of incommensurability against the Baconian/Needhamite belief in the 'general accumulation' of 'true knowledge'. Kuhn's solution to 'a communication breakdown' between those with incommensurable viewpoints is thus for them to take 'the differences between their own intra - and inter-group discourse as itself a subject for study' and then learn 'to translate the other's theory and its consequences into his own language and simultaneously to describe in his language the world to which that theory applies'. (Kuhn, 1970:202) But whereas Kuhn (1970:203) claims that translation permits 'more extended comparisons', Feyerabend (1975:223, my italics) rejects this possibility

precisely because, and insofar as, 'the *content* classes of *certain* theories are incomparable in the sense that none of the usual logical relations (inclusion, exclusion, overlap) can be said to hold between them'. Nevertheless, he still allows that we can 'discuss' different views by, for example, examining 'what kinds of things can be said (represented) and what kinds of things cannot be said (represented)' by them (1975:270 & 232-233), and that theories *can* be compared *in the sense of choosing which one is 'preferable'* by 'a complex decision' involving 'preferences' for various formal and informal criteria. (See Feyerabend, 1982:67-69, my italics)

If we now relate these claims to comparisons of resolute thinkers, we can discern some significant differences between them. A number of comparers engage in little or no translation of the thinkers' discourses, certainly not of their content. They rest content with discussing not so much what 'can' be said by them but more simply what *is* said in them. Rather than attempting to translate 'the antithetical worlds' of Tolstoy and Dostoevsky into one another, Steiner (1980) 'merely' presents them. Similarly, and bearing in mind how Feyerabend (1975:282-283) distinguishes between 'using' and 'referring to' the terms of classical physics and relativity, Lerner (1973: chapter 10) simply referes to the 'accomplishments' of Newton and Einstein.

Other comparers, though, have rightly recognized that by acting as translators of one or more of the thinkers' discourses they could build an 'intellectual bridge' between their 'systems' and thereby offer (Kuhn's) 'more extended comparisons'. One instance of this is Lemos' comparison of Hobbes and Locke. For, after claiming that they 'use the expression "natural right" in such radically different ways that to a considerable extent they are talking about different things', he not only outlines these different things but also seeks to resolve this problem of their different understandings of 'natural right' by dispensing with the latter in favour of examining what they say in terms of 'natural obligation'. (See Lemos, 1978:163 & Conclusion) Equally ingenious is Fell's discussion of the kind of dialogue that Heidegger and Sartre engaged in - the latter's appraisal of the other in his lecture, **L' Existentialisme est un humanisme** and the former's response to this in his **Letter on Humanism** - and, especially, his translation of Heidegger's notion of 'Being-with' into the language of Sartre's **Critique of Dialectical Reason** and of Sartre's attempt to ground 'the phenomenon' in praxis into the terminology of Heidegger's **Being and Time**. (See Fell, 1979: Chapter 6, 306 & 399) More one-sided than Fell's

comparison is Löwith's identification of the perspectives of Marx and Weber as, respectively, 'alienation' and 'rationality', and decision to 'interpret' Marx's writings of 1841-45 'with particular reference to Weber's guiding principle of rationalization' and to confine himself to outlining 'Weber's Critique of the Materialist Conception of History'. (See Löwith, 1982:69 & Chapter 4).

This reference to 'critique' and singling out of but one critique in fact alert us to a potentially serious error in comparisons of resolute thinkers. For it would be profoundly mistaken to presume that one thinker's discourse(s) can simply be taken across that metaphorical bridge and placed snugly in the other thinker's terrain. Having read Schumpeter (1943:11, my italics) support his (correct) contention that Marx did not treat religions, metaphysics and the like as 'either reducible to economic motives or of no importance' by asserting that 'the *whole* of Max Weber's facts and arguments fits *perfectly* into Marx's system', it must therefore be remembered that the latter's 'system' presupposes and involves conceptions and standards of critique which have to be employed to assess the merits of 'the facts and arguments' of Weber's sociology of religion and which may well exclude some of them. Comparers as translators, then, must not only, as Kuhn implies, ensure a two way crossing of the constructed 'intellectual bridge' but also be prepared to invoke any critiques that are integral to the 'systems' that lie on either side of it.

Still other comparers are either not content with or unconcerned with this even handed critical translation. Although they may readily concur with Feyerabend's claim 'that *certain* rival theories, so-called "universal" theories, or "non-instantial" theories, *if interpreted in a certain way*, could not be compared easily' (Feyerabend, 1975:114), they clearly believe that their interpretations are such that they allow comparisons as exercises of showing which thinker's discourse, even if it be a theory, is, to use Feyerabend's term, 'preferable'. Sometimes this 'preference' is grounded in criteria that are part and parcel of *one* of the thinker's discourses. This is certainly true of Paul Mattick's **Marx and Keynes**, which subjects 'Keynesian theory and practice to a Marxian critique' (Mattick, 1969:viii), and of Munz's **Our Knowledge of the Growth of Knowledge Popper or Wittgenstein?**, which takes issue with 'sociologising philosophy' as 'represented' by Wittgenstein from the terrain of

'a biology-oriented philosophy' as 'represented' by Popper.[12] (Munz,1985:18) In yet other comparisons, the 'preference' is based on criteria that derive partly from the two thinkers and partly from other discourses, including the comparer's. One such work is John B. Thompson's **Critical Hermeneutics: A study in the thought of Paul Ricoeur and Jürgen Habermas.** For the critique in this '*critical* dialogue' is 'not purely "immanent", in the sense of examining only the extent to which a tradition resolves the problem it has posed to itself; it is also "*comparative*", in the [Feyerabendian] sense of assessing the relative merits of the contributions offered by different traditions'. (Thompson, 1981:4, my italics)

What emerges from our account is that incommensurability, certainly as construed by Kuhn and Feyerabend, does *not* entail incomparability. Although we, like Mannheim, must look askance at Scheler's conception of a 'sublime dialogue' of the *spirits* of all ages, it *is*, firstly, category-appropriate to compare the ideas of thinkers, including those who belonged or belong to very different cultures. Even Chu Hsi and Lenin can be compared! Secondly, it *is* possible to build an 'intellectual bridge' between the thinkers' 'systems'. Just as Kuhn allows translation of what lies on either side of the bridge, and just as Feyerabend permits discussion of the systems and preference for one of them, so can and do comparers translate, discuss and evaluate the commensurable or incommensurable discourses of resolute thinkers.

Yet we have by no means finished with the problem of incommensurable discourses. No consideration has been given to those 'criteria' for which preference is given according to Feyerabend's allowance for comparability. Nor have we examined Rorty's claim that incommensurable discourses are those for which there are no 'rules' for reaching 'rational agreement' on all the key differences between the discourses. As we turn to these still unresolved

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12 Given this twofold use of the term 'represented', it may be wondered to what extent, if at all, it is warranted to treat this work as an instance of a comparison of resolute thinkers. However,there is no reason why a comparer cannot dwell upon the impact and continuation of the thinkers' ideas. In this respect it is worth citing what P.Q. Hirst (1975: 1) says of his comparison of Bernard and Durkheim: 'These two studies have an "ulterior motive", their object is not Claude Bernard or Émile Durkheim *per se*, it is to question and to challenge the dominant conceptions of epistemology in sociology'. Incidentally, Munz's book is one of the few comparisons of resolute thinkers - another is Steiner's of Tolstoy and Dostoevsky - to have an 'or' in the title. Practically all of the others contain an 'and'. But the word 'or' was no doubt used because Munz and Steiner see their subjects as having diametrically opposite viewpoints.

issues, the picture we have provided of the problems of comparing resolute thinkers must change. So far the thinkers themselves have occupied the foreground: We have concentrated on the requirements of comparing them, on *their* social positions and situations, and on the dialogue between *their* commensurable or incommensurable discourses. To be sure, in presenting the requirement of cultural relevance and in drawing attention to the preferences of comparers, the latter had to be brought forward from the background. But they must be placed along side the resolute thinkers in the foreground of our picture when, in Part II of this article, we turn to the problems of comparers as mediators.

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The challenges of making New Zealand agriculture more sustainable

Kenneth A. Dahlberg, Department of Political Science
Western Michigan University.

Abstract

An examination of New Zealand agriculture offers a number of insights into the strengths and weaknesses of modern industrial agriculture. The need for an adaptable, more resilient, and more sustainable/regenerative agriculture to cope with the various global economic, resource, and climatic uncertainties facing all industrial countries is particularly visible there. The types of policies, research, and management needed at different levels for New Zealand to move in this direction are discussed. Particular emphasis is placed on the importance of the longer-term health of those supporting systems (natural and social) which help to maintain a viable rural sector, and thereby a sustainable agriculture. It is argued that much broader evaluative criteria than those based upon economics and the "user pays" principle are needed to foster sustainable and regenerative systems.[1]

Introduction

The purpose of this essay is to discuss the various measures needed to make New Zealand's agriculture more sustainable and regenerative. It is based upon a recent research conducted in New Zealand, both at Massey University and with the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries (MAF).[2] The framework developed in my previous work on sustainable and regenerative agricultural systems (Dahlberg, 1986 and 1988) is used to organise the results.

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1 This paper is an expanded and revised version of a paper 'Rural resources and sustainable agricultural systems: challenges and opportunities facing New Zealand', which was presented at the New Zealand Institute of Agricultural Sciences meeting at the University of Otago, August 16, 1989.

2 I would like to acknowledge the support received from the C. Alma Baker Trust and from MAFTech - which made my visit to, and travel within New Zealand possible. Welcome institutional support was also received from Massey University. Particulr thanks are due to the initiator and host for my visit, Professor Errol W. Hewett, Dept. of Horticultural Science, for all that he did to make my visit a valuable and memorable one. In addition, my local MAFTech liaison, Godfrey Gloyn, was most helpful in arranging my visits to the four regional research centres of MAF and to the Ministry headquarters in Wellington.

New Zealand's agriculture presents a striking set of contrasts - some of which are unique and some of which offer valuable insights into the problems of industrial agriculture generally.[3] New Zealand is a highly urbanised country, with approximately 84% of its population of 3.3 million living in urban areas (with over one-third of those in Auckland) (New Zealand Official Yearbook, 1987). At the same time it derives over 65% of its export earnings from the primary production of its pastures, orchards, forests, and fisheries, although this figure is down from 88% in 1960 (Le Heron, 1988). It has more than twenty times as many sheep, cattle, goats, and domesticated deer as people. The political economy of the country, and especially agriculture, has been radically transformed by a curious anomaly - the monetarist economic policies of the Labour Government that came into power in 1984. Heavy commodity production supports, land-clearing subsidies, fixed exchange rates, and a wide range of tariffs and quotas were done away with in short order. Throughout the economy, the "user pays" principle has been wielded by Treasury officials to "rationalise" both private and public enterprises. These, and other measures, have shifted New Zealand agriculture from one of the most protected and subsidised to one of the most open and unprotected agricultural sectors in the industrial world. At the same time, cutbacks have seriously weakened the rural sector and its quality of life by reducing rural services and supports.[4]

Rather than seeking to describe all the changes that have occurred, this essay takes New Zealand agriculture where it is today and explores how to make it more sustainable and regenerative.[5] It focuses upon the mutual interactions between the long-term health of agriculture and the rural economy (and its supporting systems). This means that I have not addressed a number of other

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3 For a useful summary of the current domestic and international setting, see *Situation and Outlook for New Zealand Agriculture* (MAFTech, 1989). For a fascinating study of the impact of both Maori and European colonization of New Zealand from an ecological perspective, see Crosby (1986), Chapter 10.

4 The postal, electric, and phone services have all been converted into state owned enterprises which are expected to be self-supporting. Thus, many rural post offices (with baking facilities) have been closed. Rates for other services have increased. Also, government support for rural hospitals, transportation, and extra incentives for rural teachers have been drastically reduced. Also, to reduce the national debt, the government has been seeking to sell off the state-owned forest lands and many large irrigation sytems.

5 The focus is thus rather different than a study of the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries (MAF) and the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture are conducting. The study, edited by Ron Sandrey and Russell Reynolds and to be titled, "Economic Liberalization and New Zealand Agriculture: Reforms, Consequences, Lessons," will be marketed by MAFCorp when completed.

urban/rural issues and linkages in the political economy of New Zealand agriculture - for example port reform, rationalisation of the meat packing industry, or current debates regarding the future direction of the various marketing boards, particularly the Meat Board (NZMP, 1989). The paper is concise and in an outline form, the main purpose being to give an overview of the challenges and opportunities facing New Zealand agriculture.

The Framework for Analysis

The overall framework is what I have termed "contextual analysis" (Dahlberg, 1979). It is similar to what ecologists call "hierarchy theory," the main difference being that in addition to examining natural systems at each level of analysis, I also include social and technological systems.

A Systems Approach

A systems approach is fundamental to this and involves a shift away from linear and reductionist models (seeing them more as a special case involving closed systems) to open systems evolving over a longer time horizon. There is a comparable shift in the methodologies: from the bivariate statistical approaches of classical experiment station research to the systems dynamics approaches of the ecologists (Conway, 1985).

Hierarchical Analysis

This is used to determine what are the key processes and structures of a system at one level of analysis and how that system is influenced by the systems above and below it - which have their own distinct processes and structures (each requiring other concepts and measures). This is in contrast to conventional assumptions that there are universal concepts which cut across time, space, and levels. The latter risk falsely "projecting" what may be useful concepts and measures at one level of analysis to other levels. Because of Western cultural and industrial biases, they also tend to neglect and undervalue natural, rural, and informal systems (Dahlberg, 1988).

Concepts of Regeneration and Sustainability

While there is no consensus on what *sustainability* means, all definitions involve a systems approach and a longer time horizon that is typical. Conventional approaches to agriculture tend to be disciplinary based, reductionist, and employ narrow economic or production/productivity criteria to measure their "success." Sustainable (or regenerative) approaches include

economics, but stress three other "e's": ecology, ethics, and equity. These correspond to the three definitions that Douglass (1984) identifies: 1) Sustainability as long-term food sufficiency; i.e., food systems which are more ecologically based and which do not destroy their natural resource base. 2) Sustainability as stewardship; i.e., food systems that are based on a conscious ethic regarding humankind's relationship to other species and to future generations. 3) Sustainability as community; i.e. food systems that are equitable or socially just. As the turmoil in Central America demonstrates, there can be no sustainable food system if there are gross maldistributions of land, wealth, and power.

Beyond these broader evaluative criteria, there is a concern with the structure of the different sub-systems. In natural systems, a diverse structure (that is, an ecosystem with many distinct species widely distributed in space) offer more resilience and adaptiveness. One of my concerns regarding current social and technological trends in industrial food systems is that they are leading us in unsustainable directions with their emphasis on simplification and standardisation. While monocultural systems can be quite productive over the shorter term, they are neither resilient nor adaptive.

Also, their complicated (as distinct from complex) structure makes them vulnerable to disruptions or macro changes. The simplification of agricultural and rural systems has been facilitated by the massive use of fossil fuels, something that also undermines surrounding ecosystems and generates pollution.

Global Challenges

These apply to all societies, both industrial and developing. Historically, the various "externalities" of industrial development have been pushed into lesser-used regions (marginal lands, rivers, the oceans, the atmosphere, etc.). We are now reaching the point where these "externalities" threaten rapid and negative feedback (in both senses) from the global level downwards. A prudent response to any one of the following threats - which may indeed act synergistically one with the other - would be to move towards more diverse and resilient systems. Internationally, this will require a new "global bargain" between the rich and poor countries to more equitably share the biosphere's resources without undermining their viability, something that can be achieved only by restructuring development efforts to make them sustainable (WCED,

1987). This means that the goals of economic growth will have to be reinterpreted in terms of the other goals and criteria outlined above. Finally, the energy and production systems of industrial countries will need to shift from linear "through-put" systems to systems based on the recycling of materials and the regeneration of biological systems.

Economic Uncertainties

There are many economic uncertainties, one of the most important being the "Third World debt crisis." A default by any manor debtor country could provoke major economic disruptions, perhaps even a major international depression. Another involves the centralisation of world financial systems into very complicated, but structurally simple systems with little redundancy. These new patterns, which link countries financially through telecommunications and computers, present major risks and uncertainties which were previewed in the stock market crash of 1987.

Resource Uncertainties

There are unprecedented resource uncertainties regarding the basic resources underpinning industrial society, particularly fossil fuels. Since they are the energy base upon which industrial societies have been built, uncertainties regarding their availability and price in the future are significant. At some point - the timing of which depends upon the degree to which energy efficiency programs are pursued - they will become too expensive for many current uses, suggesting the need to turn to renewable resource systems. Ironically, however, current fossil fuel uses are undermining many of the latter, either through simplification, pollution, or destruction. The other major concern regarding fossil fuels is their impact on climate. Levels of greenhouse gas emissions are alarming and climatologists recommending a 20% reduction in carbon dioxide emissions by the year 2005.

Another uncertainty is how long we can destroy the biosphere's genetic and biological diversity before we suffer disastrous consequences. In a fundamental sense, genetic and biological diversity is not a resource; rather it is the *source* of the regenerative capacity of the renewable resource systems upon which we will become progressively more dependent (Wilson, 1988). Unfortunately, while loss of species and habitat is recognised as important, it is not seen by most scientists or policy makers as *fundamental* and demanding a financial and program commitment comparable to that dealing with climate

change. Both these global threats suggest a redefinition of "national security" and a resulting shift in budgetary and program allocations (Dahlberg, 1987). Within agriculture there has been concern regarding crop and livestock germplasm, but is long-term conservation is not a top priority in most ministries of agriculture.

Climate Uncertainties

These have led to many conferences and research programs. In spite of different assumptions, all models suggest increasing variability in the temperate zones. This is most significant for agriculture. Any increase in variability is likely to have overall negative impacts since most agricultural systems are based upon historic levels of variation. Any significant change in temperature and/or moisture patterns or in the frequency or location of damaging storms - such as Cyclone Bola - will produce overall negative effects.[6] Also, changes in PH and/or ultraviolet radiation levels may differentially affect the reproductive rates of different species - from micro-organisms on up, changing the basic population and community dynamics of agricultural production systems.

At some point, the aggregate modelling done at the global and national levels needs to be converted into regional impact studies that map the real space/time distribution of impacts. This is because averages are inadequate guides. As every farmer knows, two years with the same average precipitation can result in very different production levels. To go beyond averages requires many people with detailed contextual knowledge of the different aspects of a region to discuss together the feed-through effects of various changes. Given the magnitude and range of possible impacts, a general preventative strategy, backed up with a flexible "disaster response capability," would be much better then trying to develop detailed plans for one or two possible events - whose actual likelihood of occurrence would be low. Preventative measures need to be based upon reducing greenhouse gases through energy efficiency and recycling programs. Creating these as well as a flexible response capability will require significant changes in our institutions to make them more flexible

6 Cyclone Bola was a tropical storm which was blown much farther South an usual. Between March 7-9, 1988, it unleashed rains ranging from 299mm at Gisborne to 900mm in the Tanwhareparea area. One to two meters of run-off silt from the steep, overexposed, and highly erodible surrounding pasture lands were deposited on low lying areas. Relief and recovery costs have been high and demonstrate the long-term costs of overcutting the native forest and insufficient funding for soil conservation measures.

and responsive.

National Challenges

These need to be addressed from a perspective of how to move towards more sustainable and regenerative systems given the global uncertainties outlined above. The first step is to try to describe (if only in an impressionistic way, here) the basic factors which influence the responsiveness of New Zealand agricultural systems (see Table 1). As can be seen, this "mapping" of capabilities and limitations is focused on basic structural characteristics. As emphasised above, adaptive responses to macro changes will be possible only if more diverse, flexible, and resilient institutions are created.

Policy, Research, and Management Needs

There are a number of shifts needed to move from current approaches towards more sustainable systems. Some changes have already resulted from the elimination of production subsidies. There has been: 1) a shift from maximising production to a greater concern with productivity - something that includes a watchful eye on inputs; 2) an increasing awareness of the advantage that higher quality products yield in an export market context; 3) a modest shift from specialised scientific research towards systems or problems oriented work (this being particularly visible in the work on plant protection and organics).

However, research questions still tend to be defined narrowly and focused on particular commodities, crops, or breeds.[7] Also, other than climate, there is little systematic analysis of the larger uncertainties outlined above.

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7 The creation of an "organics" research unit at each of the four regional MAF research centres is an interesting indicator of the strong export orientation of MAF. These units were created in expectation that there may be an increasing market abroad for organic products and that New Zealand might well be able to combine its emphasis on quality export products with its overseas image of being "clean and green." The New Zealand organic farming and horticulture movement is fairly small and, as in the U.S., has been seen by many production-oriented scientists as being based either on outmoded traditional practices or ritualistic wishful thinking (in the case of the biodynamic school). MAF officials, since their decision to explore this option, have met both with local organic growers and with IFOAM (International Federation of Organic Agricultural Movements) representatives to discuss how to develop certification standards. Once concern of some MAF officials is that if there is a specific organic label, the implication will be that "regular" New Zealand produce is not as "pure" or "safe" as that with the organic label. The four MAF organic research groups are engaged in discussions on how and what to research as well as the degree to which they should try to offer extension advice to farmers wishing to convert to organics. My own view is that it is the systems based and more integrated and interdisciplinary research methods and models that are required for organic research (as well as integrated pest management) that will be the most valuable and lasting result of these new efforts.

Table 1: Factors Influencing the Responsiveness of New Zealand Agricultural Systems to Global Uncertainties

Economic Uncertainties	Resource Uncertainties	Climate Uncertainties
Strengths		
National		
Agricultural industries export oriented and niche sensitive. Adaptable.	Renewable resource endowments: - great hydro-power capacity. - extensive pastures; forests; fisheries - overall good air, soil and water.	Moderately diverse farm structure
Regional		
Reasonable diversity between regions	Rainfall well distributed in most regions.	Existing regional climatic diversity makes adaptation easier.
Farm		
Farmers export and niche oriented		
Weaknesses		
National		
Agriculture and national economy export dependent. Thus, high impacts if an international depression.	Few liquid fossil fuels. No national energy policy based on renewable resources and energy efficiency.	Risks of more cyclones; costly given over-pasturing and high down-stream costs.
Long lead times for change in agricultural production.	Imbalance in renewable resources systems thru separate development of agriculture and forestry.	Hard to diversify given export and market pressures for specialisation, standardisation and large-scale marketing.
Little research or awareness of linkages between health of agriculture and rural sectors.	Genetic and biologic diversity - agriculture and forestry dependent on a few species; few "banks" or "reserves" esp. in livestock and horticulture.	
Regional		
All regions largely dependent on livestock.		
Farm		
Farmers dependent on others for prices (distributors and middle men); market access (Boards); and interest and exchange rates (general economy)		

To address the national implications of these various uncertainties, organisations and programs promoting a greater contextuality and a greater conditionality will be needed. These will have to be based on asking what is the appropriate mix of goals and values, what the relevant systems are, and what the appropriate time horizons and levels of analysis are for determining the long-term health and resilience of the various interacting systems. The shift in basic criteria from production/productivity to the longer-term health of systems is particularly significant and has major implications for policy, research, and management.

National Needs Regarding Resources

These revolve around the need to move towards a society based more on a recycling of materials and the regeneration of biological and social systems (DSIR, 1980). Infrastructures, institutions, and organisations also need to be restructured to become more diverse, complex and resilient (i.e., less centralised and standardised).

Policy challenges and opportunities. These include the need to:

1. Re-examine current biases towards urban development. If, as suggested, renewable resource systems are more fundamental than non-renewable resource based systems and are likely to take on more economic importance as fossil fuels become more expensive, then the health of the rural sector and how it relates to agriculture, forestry, and fisheries needs to be stressed.

2. Establish new institutional frameworks and policies based on the above objectives. Innovation in this direction can be seen in the new frameworks being established under the Resource Management Law Reform.[8] These need to be complemented with new policies and

8 Under the leadership of the new Ministry for the Environment, a significant reform of local and regional government is underway in New Zealand. The Resource Management Law Reform (combined with the Local Government Reforms) will create a series of new regional governments which have the potential for integrating water management, soil conservation, and land use planning. The new structures involve a devolution of national governmental power to the new regions through what might be termed a type of "administrative federalism." The Ministry is seeking to include as a basic part of this legislative package two important new principles: (1) sustainability; and (2) the intrinsic value of nature. These principles are to be made effective by making each level of government legally liable for carrying out its mandated responsibilities. It has been difficult to develop legal language for the principle of sustainability (particularly given the conceptual fuzziness of the term, not to mention its basic contextuality - something difficult to incorporate in universalistic legal language). The concept of intrinsic value has both philosophical aspects and fascinating legal/constitutional dimensions. In New

incentives which will encourage: (a) soil conservation, water quality, and greater integration and interaction between agriculture, forestry, and fisheries; (b) that greater priority be given to rural (and urban) *supporting systems* such as health, education, and research; (c) that greater priority be given to materials recycling, energy efficiency, and renewable energy systems.[9]

Research Needs Research is needed a the national level on each area above topics. In addition, there is a need for:

1. Climate scenario building, plus detailed regional climate impact exercises. It is to be hoped that the current Ministry for the Environment effort will take its useful aggregate work the next step and conduct a series of regional impact exercises to map out particular impacts.

2. Comparable scenarios need to be developed on fossil fuel prices; e.g., what would be the impacts of a 50% or a 100% increase in prices? Or in major supply short-falls? While agricultural production in New Zealand is less energy intensive than in the U.S., the multiplier effect of energy price increases throughout the entire food system (production, processing, marketing, refrigeration, cooking, and waste disposal) can be expected to be very high and to lead to major changes and adjustments domestically, but perhaps even more so in overseas markets. In addition, the type of research done on the long-term health and productivity of pasture systems and how soil erosion seriously affects them (Trustrum and Hawley, 1986) needs to be encouraged and extended to other renewable resource based systems.
3. Developing broader evaluative criteria. As indicated above, there are significant limits to what economic criteria can tell you about the long-

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Zealand, the traditions and beliefs of the Maori have received new recognition in recent judicial interpretations of the Treaty of Waitangi (the 1840 treaty establishing peace between the British and the Maori and guaranteeing various land and resource use rights for the Maoris). It is conceivable that upcoming cases will legally recognize traditional Maori beliefs regarding the sanctity and intrinsic value of nature and extend them to all of New Zealand through the treaty. This would be a most interesting "greening" of the law through judicial interpretation of a treaty rather than through legislation.

9 Innovative research on waste management systems - both agricultural and industrial - is being conducted at the MAF Invermae Centre, Mosgiel.

term health of systems. Research on both natural and social indicators needs to be encouraged if we are to have a better reading of the real-world balance sheet in agriculture. Such work needs to relate to all of the "externalities" which are not addressed by economic criteria: the continued availability and quality of basic natural resources (air, water, and soil; genetic and biological diversity) (Craig, 1989); the health costs of agricultural production systems, both to natural systems and to farmers and consumers; and the social costs of technological change. Overall, this would require more support for social scientists and public health analysts interested in rural and agricultural matters. Unlike the USA, there is no tradition in New Zealand of including rural sociologists and home economists in agricultural faculties nor in either the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries (MAF) or the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research (DSIR).

Management Needs. These will revolve around finding ways to encourage interdisciplinary and inter ministerial work, particularly that which involves longer-term research efforts. New cooperative programs need to be developed between MAF, DSIR, and the universities. The funding systems proposed along with the new Ministry of Research, Science and Technology and its companion Foundation offer some potential in this regard.[10] However, those concerned about agricultural and rural affairs need to try to ensure that urban and industrial interests do not predominate in the choice of personnel, priorities, and programs for these new institutions.

Regional Resource Needs

These include the implementation of new policies based on the various national needs identified above, plus the development of regionally adapted policies and research to conserve the regenerate the *supporting systems* (natural and social) within each region.

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10 In the next fiscal year, 10% of the budgets of MAF and DSIR will be reallocated to the new Foundation for competitive research grants - where innovative and cross disciplinary work will receive priority. In each of the following two years, another 20% will be reallocated, thus leaving them three years hence with only 50% of their current budgets as base budgets, the rest being allocated through the Foundation - and not necessarily only to MAF and DSIR. One controversy involves what will happen to university research funds and whether they will also go into the Foundation pool - and if so, how much. Another involves the question of whether it is wise to force bench scientists to spend a good protion of their time writing grant proposals rather than doing research.

Policy Challenges and Opportunities. In terms of policy, the new frameworks set up under the Natural Resource Law Reform offer an important capability to meet the following challenges:

1. To integrate soil conservation with water quality programs and land use planning. An important part of this should be to maintain and enhance both the genetic and biological diversity in a region and the landscape diversity throughout a region.

2. To think about how to regenerate farm families. At a minimum, a healthy rural structure with good supporting rural services in terms of education, health, transport, and communications is required. Yet there is little systematic work on how a healthy agriculture depends upon a healthy rural sector (as well as healthy natural resource systems). Another aspect here is the need to be aware of the great value of the indigenous contextual knowledge that farmers and other rural residents have about their regions. This knowledge, gained over decades through careful observation, can be lost if it is not passed on to the next generation.

3. To develop new production support systems (resource, energy and waste disposal systems) based upon recycling rather than one time through-put and which facilitate the diversification and intermingling of agricultural, forestry, and fishery systems.

Regional Research Needs. These include:

1. Better understand the linkages between the various *supporting systems* (air and water quality; soil conservation; health, education, and basic research) and the *production systems*. In the past, the emphasis has clearly been upon production systems.

2. Develop and apply broader criteria of evaluation. While visible at the national level as well, it is at the regional level where the limits of the "user pays" principle becomes most obvious. The nature of each of the various supporting systems is such that there is no single user and no single beneficiary from their maintenance and regeneration. The fact that one can neither precisely measure their longer-term processes, nor fully diagnose what keeps them healthy does not reduce their

fundamental importance. Rather than ignoring them because one's tools and techniques cannot measure them, one should recognise the limits of the "user pays" concepts and methodologies. To do otherwise is rather like suggesting the Lilliputians should have ignored Gulliver because their yardsticks couldn't measure him. It is the health and vitality of these supporting systems that enables the sustainable operation of production systems, and that is the fundamental point from which policy and research must begin and should flow.

3. Include more research by rural sociologists, social anthropologists, geographers, historians, etc. on how changes in rural structures, services, and communities affect regional agricultural patterns (Wallace and Lattimore, 1987; Willis, 1988).

Regional Management Needs. What is needed here is more inter institutional and interdisciplinary work at the regional level. As at the national level, there is the challenge of ensuring that long term strategic research does not get lost in the shorter-term time orientations that have been encouraged by recent re-organisations and the greater application of the user pays principle.

Landscape/Watershed Needs

This level needs particular attention since it is a crucial one for actually maintaining the regenerative capacities of natural supporting systems.

Policy Challenges and Opportunities. While it is not suggested that specific policy-making organisations be set up at this level, it is important that regional and national policy makers develop specific sets of policies and operational capabilities for this level. An example here would be the National Land Capability Study, which despite its great potential for contributing to work at this level (as well as others), is under budgetary pressure since it has no single set of "clients." The integrated research and conservation measures needed at this level require precisely the data acquisition and analysis systems it provides. To let an already well-developed system wither makes little sense from any longer-term perspective.

Research Needs. Research here would focus primarily upon habitats and how to strengthen long-term conservation efforts. Landscape ecology (broadened to include agricultural land use patterns) can be used to increase the genetic and biological diversity of local habitats.

Management Needs. In terms of management, the basic question is how to develop delivery systems for these areas, whose naturally defined boundaries rarely coincide with historic administrative boundaries. There are no easy answers, but it is increasingly clear that administrative convenience must yield to the need to maintain and upgrade these natural support systems.

Farm Level Needs
These are often dealt with by national and regional bodies, but also need specific definition and focus.

Research Needs The different areas of research discussed below all need an underpinning of basic research, some of it long-term. As suggested above, there is a need for more systems oriented research, something that is not facilitated by current models and administrative structures. A conditional - if/then - type of research offers great potential here. Rather than making the typical assumption that the goal is to increase production/productivity, researchers need to be able to provide answers to questions based on the quite varied goals of different farmers. *If* the goal is to conserve soil (or water, or energy), *then* .... *If* the goal is to provide a secure inheritance for a farm family's children, *then* .... *If* the goal is to make the farm more resilient to climate changes, *then*..... Such an approach will not only complement systems oriented approaches (in terms of helping to sort out basic system parameters), but can be an integral part of developing impact assessments on the natural, social, and technological aspects of agriculture. There will be an increasing need for these if current trends in the U.S. are any indication.

1. Research on natural systems need to focus more on populations an community dynamics, rather than individual species or breeds. Research on biological plant protection and on organics clearly is moving in this direction. As indicated above, there is a need to explore interacting agricultural, forestry, and fishery systems - at least as a possibility for various small-scale operations. Permaculture approaches (Mollison, 1988) offer some interesting thinking along these lines. The rotational cropping and grazing patterns involved in organic systems might also be compatible with multi-story approaches or with aqua cultural systems.
   As mentioned above, there is also a need to think about how farm-level systems interact with watershed/landscape level systems, particularly in

terms of biodiversity. A recent workshop in the US between agricultural production researchers and conservation biologists indicates an increasing interest in this area of research.[11]

2. Much more social science research is needed on farm families, households, and their interactions with the rural community. A national survey currently being conducted under sponsorship of the Federation of Rural Women should offer an initial overview of the status and quality of life of farm and rural households. Other research is needed on demographics and basic structural trends in the political economy of food and fibre (for a useful example, see Le Heron, 1988).

3. Two levels of research are needed on technological systems. The first is to think of designing new technologies in terms of the natural and social systems within which they will operate. They should be not only "user-friendly," but "use-friendly" in terms of their environmental impacts. The "bioblade" developed at Massey University offers an example of a technology designed with longer-term conservation objectives in mind and one that will be usable by most farmers (i.e., the technology is scale neutral within industrial country agriculture).[12] Second, research is needed to improve the capacity to do technology assessments.

Management Needs. Just as conditional research is needed, so too is "conditional extension service/" The former should facilitate the latter. It also complements another valuable farm level principle: end use analysis. That is, both research and consulting need to be developed in terms of the end use contemplated. Some extension is already done in this mode, for example, soil testing - which gives the farmer not only knowledge regarding his situation, but a range of options depending upon what his own goals and objectives are.

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11 The "Workshop on Conservation Biology and Agriculture" was held November 20-23, 1988 at the Asilomar Conference Center and sponsored by the University of California - Davis.

12 The "bio-blade" is a seed planter developed jointly by Massey University engineers and soil scientists with the objective of decreasing soil erosion. It can plant directly through existing pasture or crop residues by using a cross slot opener which places seed and fertilizer in a closed underground space. Besides reducing soil disruption and erosion, better seed emergence with lower moisture and fertilizer levels is achieved.

Conclusions

It has been argued that new approaches - conceptual and organisational - are needed if New Zealand agriculture is to have the flexibility and resilience needed to respond to the range of global uncertainties facing it. These challenges also face agriculture in other industrial countries, but are more visible in the New Zealand context. New Zealand has a number of strengths in addressing the challenges outlined above: it has a varied climate, a reasonably diverse farm structure, and farmers who are now much more oriented towards change and the downstream aspects of agriculture. There is also a strong, if somewhat fragmented research base available to facilitate needed changes.

However, there are also weaknesses. Dependence upon external markets affects the whole country, not just agriculture. Perhaps even more than in other industrial countries, there is a lack of systematic understanding of the relationships between the health of the rural sector and agriculture. And as everywhere, there is not enough systems-oriented research and development. Addressing these weaknesses will require new concepts, policies, and structures at a number of levels. It will also require a broader set of evaluative criteria which relate to the longer-term health of rural and agricultural support systems - whether natural or social. Only if their health is maintained will adaptive responses with reasonable economic results be achieved over the longer-term.

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Nga Awangawanga me nga Wawata a te Iwi o te Tai Tokerau:[1] Institutional Racism and the 'Retention' of Maori Secondary School Students in Northland

Michael Peters and James Marshall
Education Department
University of Auckland

'Western thought is often closed by premises of intellectual superiority to radical cross-cultural reflection and thorough-going inquiry, and the process of opening Western knowledge to traditional rationalities has hardly yet begun'.
(Salmond, 1985:260)

Abstract

A questionnaire was administered to a sample of 489 Maori fifth formers in Tai Tokerau (Northland) during November, 1988. It was discovered that while the majority of Maori students wanted to stay on at school to obtain higher qualifications, perceived as necessary to obtain employment, a significant proportion perceived and experienced mainstream schooling in negative terms, and cited reasons of dissatisfaction with some aspect of school life as a major factor contributing to the decision to leave school. Student perceptions of 'victim blaming', and of the lack of cultural understanding and communication are consistent with objective indicators such as high drop-out rates, high levels of underachievement, early school leaving patterns and high rates of school exclusion. Taken together, these data provides evidential grounds for the application of a concept of institutional racism. Finally, the report outlines a set of recommendations for action.

Introduction

Liberal assimilationist ideology, especially in colonial and post-colonial contexts, was aimed at creating a nation-state where one language and culture was dominant. The "one nation, one culture" conception is based upon a set of values and ideals which depict the liberal vision of a modern democracy as a common, national culture in which all individuals, freed from their ethnic origins and traditional beliefs, can participate fully in a modern, technological society.

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1 The Maori title (The Concerns and Aspirations of the People of Tai Tokerau) was given by David Para in consultation with teachers of Maori Language in Tai Tokerau. This report is dedicated to twenty two Maori Access students from Tauwhara Marae, Waimate North. Their reflections on their school experiences constituted the beginnings of the project. We would like to specially acknowledge the assistance of Dave Para and Robert Shaw (the Ministry of Education), and Te Runanga o te Reo o te Tai Tokerau (The Tai Tokerau Whanau of Maori Language Teachers)

In the context of this ideology, the traditionalism of ethnic groups is seen to be inconsistent with the demands of modern society: it promotes "group rights over the right of individuals"; it stresses "historic prejudices, we-they attitudes" and, thereby, promotes cultural conflict; it can also lead to the "Balkanization of the nation-state". Such traditionalism, the liberal argues, will exacerbate rather than diminish 'inequality, racial and ethnic awareness, group favouritism and ethnic stratification' (Banks, 1986:3).

Modern schooling systems based on monocultural eurocentric values and infused with the liberal ideology of "equality of opportunity" have been one of the main policy instruments for effecting an assimilationist ethos. Ethnic groups have historically experienced comparatively high exclusion and drop out rates, high levels of under-achievement and youth unemployment, disproportionate social problems of teen-pregnancy, drug abuse, teenage crime and truancy.

Maori of Aotearoa (New Zealand) have much in common with the Black and Hispanic peoples in the United States, and Afro-Caribbeans in Britain. They have not achieved "structural equality". Indeed, some sociologists (eg. Hoffman-Nowothy, 1986) question the liberal assumption that it is possible to create modern, pluralistic and open societies in which ethnic groups can maintain their cultural integrity while at the same time achieving structural (ie., political and economic) equality. They argue that a pluralistic and open society is a contradiction in terms.

Traditionally, in liberal capitalist democracies like New Zealand, schooling systems have been seen as the primary value free means by which a pluralistic and open society can be achieved. The schooling institution allegedly provides the opportunity for all children, irrespective of background, gender or cultural affiliation, to pursue equally an education based upon merit rather than ascription.

This paper reports on a project - *Nga Awangawanga Me Nga Wawata A Te Iwi O Te Tai Tokerau* - which investigated the phenomenon of early school leaving by Maori students in Tai Tokerau (Northland - a province of New Zealand). The project surveyed 489 Maori fifth form (year three) students from 16 Northland secondary schools in the final term of 1988.

It was discovered that while the majority of these students wanted to stay on at school to obtain higher qualifications (perceived as necessary to gain employment), almost one-third of them experienced and perceived mainstream schooling in negative terms. These Maori students cited reasons of dissatisfaction with some aspect of school life as the major factor contributing to the decision to leave school. Student perceptions of "victim blaming", of the lack of cultural understanding and of difficulties in communication with Pakeha teachers are consistent with more objective indicators of high drop-out rates, high rates of underachievement, early school leaving patterns and high rates of exclusion from school.

The data, interpreted and analysed together, provides evidential grounds for the application of a concept of "institutional racism". In the year of New Zealand's 1990 celebrations, allegedly honouring the spirit of the Treaty of Waitangi as the founding document of our nation, it is necessary to take a more critical stance; to look beyond the public relations rhetoric in order to confront the reality of racism in all its forms, and especially as it exists within our institutions.

Background to the Project

The project grew out of an earlier association and friendship with Maori language teachers in Tai Tokerau (Marshall and Peters, 1987). In a community empowerment project which was both bicultural and collaborative, we had developed a strong bond with teachers in Tai Tokerau. The project on Maori student retention proceeded only after consultation with the teachers' whanau (family); indeed, it proceeded with those teachers' participation and support. The whanau vetted and administered the questionnaire to their Maori students, advised and provided guidance on things Maori, made their own submissions on aspects of the problem, gave introductions and provided opportunities for interviews. Without the approval and support of Te Runanga o te Reo o te Tai Tokerau (The Whanau of Maori Language Teachers in Northland Secondary Schools), the project could not have proceeded.

In mid-August of 1988 the researchers were contracted by the, then, Department of Education (Research and Statistics Division) to undertake a research project which focused on the question: "What are the factors/reasons which contribute to the decision by Maori students to leave school?"

In effect, we had only the third school term - a mere three months - in which to investigate the problem of why Maori students (in Tai Tokerau secondary schools) leave school early. By the third term, the majority of school leavers have already dropped out. Given the time constraints dictated by the Department, and the fact that those Maori students whom we wished to contact had already dropped out of school, we addressed ourselves to students still at school in the final term. The implication of this meant our questionnaire reached only a 'captive' Maori student population who, arguably, experience schooling in a more positive light than those who have felt the compulsion to leave early. Our data and findings, we were well aware, would therefore present an optimistic interpretation of the problem of retention.

The research question had its own obvious and immediate educational value in the national policy context: the growing disparity in retention and participation rates between Maori and non-Maori students,especially at senior class levels; high rates of exclusion through expulsions and suspensions; high levels of Maori underachievement; increasing levels of youth unemployment as a result of economic restructuring, especially in provincial areas; the high visibility of Maori truancy and the difficulties of Maori students operating within a monolingual and monocultural, institutional environment. The research question was framed with an explicit agenda: to carry out an empirical investigation at the regional level in such a way as to provide information and a set of practical recommendations to policy makers which would serve to address the issue of *how to encourage Maori students to stay at school longer.*

Our review (Peters and Marshall, 1988a) of the available research evidence, both local and overseas, encouraged us to view the research question and the practical, policy-oriented response it demanded, in the widest terms. In other words, we were concerned to investigate the *complex* reasons as to why Maori secondary students in Tai Tokerau left school early, *not* simply the issues which impinged on the *quality* of schooling for Maori students. In essence, we were concerned with the question of what conditions must prevail in our secondary schools in order that Maori students in general could find some degree of satisfaction and of belonging. It is not enough to design retention strategies which, in effect, only 'tinker' with the system, in order to reduce the Maori drop-out rate in the short term. In our background research paper (Ibid), and on the basis of a review of the relevant literature, we argued that at this point in our history, researchers and policy makers ought to operate on the

presumption that it is the education system and, in particular, our learning institutions which have systematically failed generations of Maori students, rather than vice versa. In adopting this perspective, of course, we are not alone. Our theoretical position is compatible with a long line of Maori critics, with the findings of the Waitangi Tribunal (Durie et al, 1986) and with the conclusions of a growing number of educational researchers (see Benton, 1988, for a review of the literature). The problems of a low retention and underachievement of Maori students is not a product of a 'deficit', or the 'deprivation' of Maori children, their families, their language, or their cultural background -explanations which have been advanced in the 1950s, 60s and 70s. From this perspective, the problems are seen to be the result of a system and its institutions which are based on Pakeha values and interests and which are, and have been, largely hostile to the interests of Maori children.

The Retention of Maori Students

Benton (1988:4) comments that while there are no legal barriers to Maori access to formal education, 'Maori participation rates relative to those of the majority group indicate that there may be hidden obstacles along the way.' National retention rates for non-Maori and Maori secondary school students (1977-87) supplied by the Research and Statistics Division of the Ministry of Education show that while the retention of Maori students has improved at the fifth form level (from .506 in 1974 to .691 in 1987), there is still a vast differential between Maori and non-Maori, and the ratio of the proportion of Maori to the proportion of non-Maori students leaving school after three years has increased markedly. The same pattern is evident from an analysis of retention data for Maori and non-Maori secondary school students in Tai Tokerau. While there has been a relative improvement for Maori at the fifth form level, in the upper forms, the proportional gap between Maori and non-Maori has grown rather than closed.

We obtained raw retention data for Northland secondary schools (1972-1985) from the Ministry of Education under the *Official Information Act*, 1982. Data were presented by ethnic group (Maori/non-Maori), form level and sex.[2] Sex by ethnic group(Maori vs non-Maori) multivariate analyses of variance were

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2 We are indebted to Associate Professor Keri Wilton (Education Department, University of Auckland) who kindly gave of his time and expertise to run analyses of raw retention data.

computed on sets of retention rate data for each form level cohort (5th-7th form).

For all form levels, the multivariate ethnic group main effects were significant but neither the multivariate sex effect nor the group by sex multivariate interaction effect were significant. A summary of the significant multivariate group effects is presented in Table 1. (The results for the remaining multivariate effects are available on request from the authors). Subsequent analyses of univariate group main effects for each of the three form levels revealed a clear pattern of intergroup differences for both 6th and 7th forms - for all survey years the rates of retention were significantly higher for non-Maori students. For the 5th form students, a similar trend was apparent in the means but none of the intergroup differences were statistically significant. Summaries of the univariate analyses of variance are available from the authors.

Table 1
Summary of analyses of variance: Multivariate ethnic group main effects

Form level	F value	df	p less than
Form 5	2.94	14.38	.004
Form 6	11.70	13.32	.0001
Form 7	4.92	12.30	.002

School leaving patterns for Maori and non-Maori reveal similar disparities. In 1987, approximately 30 percent of *all* school leavers obtained no formal academic qualification in comparison to 51.5 percent for Maori. In the same year, only 5.8 percent (17.4) and 17.6 percent (26.7) of all Maori 'school leavers' attained University Bursary and Sixth Form Certificate, respectively. (Figures in brackets are for *all* school leavers).

The very notion of 'retention' used by the Ministry as a basis both for measurement and Maori/non-Maori comparisons is seriously wanting. "Apparent retention rates" do not take into account inter-school mobility or in-school promotion/demotion. As such, the measure tends to underestimate Maori/non-Maori differences for it is common practice for Maori students to be sent to boarding school after attending an area or small country school.

There are also problems with the identification of "Maori" students. Sometimes it is the case that ethnic definitions are based on self-definition (tribal affiliation); at other times, school administrators identify "Maori" students on the basis of their own perceptions.

The notions of "retention" and "retention rates" retain a positive connotation. The American term "drop out" is, perhaps, descriptively more accurate. The term "school leaver", adopted officially in New Zealand as a neutrally descriptive category to overcome the normative aspects of other terms, still masks the "push out" syndrome, from which many Maori students suffer.

Finally, it is important within the larger policy context to recognise that a narrow focus on retention rates could easily obscure the structural and institutional nature of the forms of marginalisation and exclusion experienced by Maori youth and the way the schooling system works to legitimise the social and economic roles to which most are assigned. Retention should not be viewed in a narrow, short-term, economistic sense as a basis for simply keeping students at school and thereby decreasing employment statistics. Rather, it should be seen as the basis of a set of more enlightened policy initiatives designed to improve life chances for students by providing them with meaningful educational experiences.

The Meeting at Tauwhara Marae

On the 15th September, 1988 we travelled to Tauwhara Marae (Waimate North) at the invitation of Mr Andy and Mrs. Kath Sarich, to meet with ACCESS supervisors, tutors and students. We were welcomed onto the marae by Maori ACCESS[3] students, kaumatua and kuia of Tauwhara Marae. After the mihi (welcome) and whai korero (speech-making), we were given an opportunity to explain the nature and purpose of the research project. In response to our explanation, students and tutors initiated a typical Maori process, where each member of the ACCESS scheme stood up, in turn, to speak and reflect on the nature of their schooling experience. We were impressed at the forthrightness, and frankness with which students spoke about their schooling experiences. The atmosphere was emotionally charged: one student cried as she recollected her schooling past and others were visibly upset telling their 'story". This whanau proved to be warm and supportive,

3 ACCESS is a state-funded training programme, started in April 1987, as a response to high levels of youth unemployment in New Zealand: see Gordon, (1989).

and to provide a safe "environment" in which this particular group of ACCESS students could candidly share some very painful episodes.

All of these students (17 in total) had dropped out of secondary school before attaining School Certificate or completing their third year. In some cases, students had been expelled. Many of them had shifted schools a number of times, some had experienced as many as six different schools at secondary level. They talked openly of the "racism" of some teachers of, "getting into trouble", being unjustly "blamed" for things, and "wagging" school. Most mentioned in their case histories how the were often punished for their "misbehaviour", how they "got bored" with school work and were unable to "keep up", and how they were put in special classes (e.g. work transition classes). Significantly, the majority mentioned that along with sporting activities and cultural exchanges with other schools, the subjects or activities they enjoyed the most were Maori language (if it was offered) and Maori culture club.

A typical example of a case history (abridged) given by one of the group is reproduced from the researchers notes:

> Michelle had attended 'three different primary schools, two intermediates and two colleges. At primary school she said 'some teachers were okay, some were racist'. She talked of getting into trouble at primary school for 'throwing chalk and dusters around the room'. At college there were 'a lot of racist teachers ... [we] couldn't help but give them a hard time'. She recounted how she 'wagged' classes in forms 2 to 4 and finished school half way through the fifth form year. She said she had 'enjoyed some school' mentioning sport and Maori culture club, but indicated very strongly she had felt unjustly blamed for things she was not responsible for: 'I could get on with Maori teachers. I felt they could understand me'.

The majority of these Maori ACCESS students gave similar accounts of their schooling experiences. We, as Pakeha researchers and ex teachers, were overwhelmed at the obvious distress many students felt recounting and reflecting upon their schooling.

The Design and Distribution of the Student Questionnaire

The reflections of these Maori Access students on their schooling experiences, and the international literature, provided a framework for the questions we constructed. We were concerned to include questions which:

a) tested subject preferences, especially in relation to Maori language and culture (students at Tauwhara Marae mentioned Maori language and culture along with sport and art as subjects they most enjoyed);
b) focused on exclusionary practices of schools (eg. expulsions, suspensions);
c) gave an opportunity for respondents to openly declare their attitudes to school;
d) attempted to probe the reasons of why and why not respondents elected to take Maori language as a School Certificate subject.

Other questions were designed to "test out", in a variety of ways, the reasons fifth form Maori students would leave or stay at school. Given the time constraint on the research project, we had to focus on students still at school, although we attempted to offset this bias in our sample by asking the students questions concerning the reasons why their brothers/sisters and friends had left school.

A draft questionnaire was circulated to Mr Andy and Mrs. Kath Sarich at Tauwhara Marae/Okaihau College, Mr Dave Para (then Maori Adviser, Department of Education) and Mr Robert Shaw, (Qualifications and Assessment Directorate, Department of Education) for comment and appraisal and changes were made as a result of their advice. Approval was also given by the Human Subjects Ethical Committee, University of Auckland.

Questionnaires were distributed by post to secondary school principals. Letters were also posted out separately to principals and Maori language teachers. These explained the nature of, and established the case for, the research project and gave the necessary background and information on the individual and social costs of 'early school leaving' by Maori students. In addition, the letters presented principals and Maori language teachers with four open questions, viz:

a) what *in-school* factors influence Maori students to leave school early?
b) what *out-of-school* factors influence Maori students to leave school early?
c) what *in-school* measures (programmes, projects) could directly improve retention rates for Maori students?
d) what existing *in-school* and *school-community* innovations currently address the problem?

The letters and questionnaires were posted out with a covering note from Mr. R.J. O'Connor (Assistant Secretary Schools Development, Department of Education). It explained the interest of the Department in "early school leaving" by Maori students and why Maori students decide to leave school.

The collection and administration of the questionnaire took place during the first week of November, 1988. Students were informed by those administering the questionnaire of the aims and nature of the research. In some cases principals or senior staff administered questionnaires; in others, teachers or project staff administered them. It was emphasised to supervisors (in a covering note with instructions) that students had the right to choose whether they wished to complete the questionnaire. The right of students to choose whether or not they wished to participate was also emphasised in a covering page of the questionnaire. No students, to our knowledge, exercised their right of refusal. In fact, students responded enthusiastically and with an astonishing degree of openness.

Analysis and Interpretation of Questionnaire Data

It must be remembered that the questionnaire was administered to Maori fifth form students who had remained at school until November, 1988 and would, in all probability, have sat School Certificate. The results, therefore, do *not* capture those Maori students who left during the year or, indeed, those who may have left during their second year - that is, those students who represent, perhaps, the most alienated, disaffected and "excluded" Maori youth. The researchers have no accurate data on what proportion of the total fifth form Maori school population this group of school leavers comprises but on the basis of Departmental/Ministry school-leaving survey data (March 1st returns), it is estimated that the figure is in the order of 25 per cent.

There was a total of 489 questionnaires returned from 16 secondary schools in Northland. One school returned questionnaires too late to be included in the analysis, although the numbers were small. In terms of ethnic and tribal background, over 70 per cent of students identified themselves as Maori. Of particular concern were the 8 percent who either neglected or were "ashamed" of their Maori background and identified as Pakeha. Some 61 per cent indicated that they had Ngapuhi tribal affiliations. Other Tai Tokerau tribes (Te Aupouri, Te Rarawa, Ngati Whatua, Ngata Kahu) accounted for 20 percent, with 12 percent acknowledging tribal affiliations outside Tai Tokerau.

Approximately 7 per cent did not know their tribal affiliations outside Tai Tokerau.

The vast majority of Maori fifth formers in the survey (approximately 88 percent) expressed the desire to stay on at school to obtain the necessary qualifications to gain jobs, pursue careers and/or prepare for further education and training. Approximately 66 percent indicated that they wished to stay at school, at least until gaining Sixth Form Certificate. This surprisingly high percentage reflects the high schooling expectations of Maori students and their awareness, within the present climate of economic restructuring, of the difficulty of obtaining jobs without appropriate qualifications or further training. Actual school leaving data, however, suggests that the expectations of most Maori fifth form students in Tai Tokerau are contradicted in reality. In the 1987 school year, only *23.4* percent obtained Sixth Form Certificate or better.

The difference between the expectations of Maori students and actual numbers who obtain school qualifications suggests that most of them in any year are bound to be disappointed and disillusioned. There is, nevertheless, a large reservoir of optimism and goodwill among Maori fifth formers in Tai Tokerau. Most still believe the current ideology emphasising the link between school qualifications and "good" jobs. Official school leaving data demonstrates that approximately half of Maori school-leavers in Tai Tokerau leave school without any formal academic qualification. Despite the difficulties and perceived hostilities experienced by Maori students within mainstream schooling and despite the obvious financial difficulties experienced by many of their families, rarely did these students willingly choose the "dole" option. Only 1.4 percent of the *school* sample saw themselves leaving school to "go on the dole" yet they knew of family and friends on the dole or on ACCESS programmes. A significant number of students - among those most likely to leave, felt that they had no alternative but to stay on even though they disliked school, experienced high levels of dissatisfaction and believed they were 'not learning anything useful', because there were 'no jobs around'.

Staying on at school was perceived as 'better than going on the dole' or 'better than staying at home'. For others, given the financial burden their schooling represented to their family and the loss of potential earnings, only the prospect of receiving some financial payment (a secondary Bursary) would allow them

to stay on. A sample of unsolicited comments by students reflect these understandings:

> I know there are no jobs around for unskilled people, for the economy is bad. I am also too afraid to begin working as I feel I'm not fully mature yet.
>
> So that I can be highly educated and I realise that with the employment situation in New Zealand today it is very hard to find work without qualifications.
>
> Personally I feel that its not fair that those other 16 year olds who get paid the dole for doing nothing. We have to pay for books and the rest, plus my Dad finds it hard now that my Mum has died. [Its] hard staying at school, especially when you see your (younger) mates getting dole money ... and spending most of it on drugs and beer.

In opposition to the prevailing stereotypes concerning Maori students and their early school-leaving pattern, the number of students who expressed aspirations for further education and training is surprising. Almost 30 percent indicated that they wished to pursue their school education at the tertiary level.

While there is a reservoir of optimism and goodwill reflected in the schooling aspirations of Maori fifth form students in Tai Tokerau, it is also important to acknowledge the darker side of this analysis. In particular:

a) the schooling and vocational expectations and aspirations of most Maori students in Tai Tokerau are contradicted in reality;
b) Maori students perceive and experience their schooling in negative terms and are, in fact, "excluded" from school through a variety of strategies;
c) many Maori students are placed in a series of "double binds", facing a set of contradictory attitudes and expectations between teachers and the school on the one hand and parents and families on the other.

The sad fact of the matter is that a large proportion of Maori fifth formers experience the school as culturally hostile to their interests and are "pushed out" of school rather than leaving on voluntary terms. This interpretation has its objective basis in the comparative indicators on Maori/non Maori retention rates, school leaving patterns and achievement rates. Further, it is expressed more generally in high rates of Maori truancy and in the exclusionary practices of schools which expel and/or suspend large numbers of Maori students. The survey data suggests that 19 percent of the sample (ie. of Maori fifth formers

who had stayed on at school until November, 1988) had been either expelled or suspended at least once in their school life. The true figure, (for the Maori school population *beginning* the fifth form year) is probably closer to 30 percent.

In subjective terms, almost one-third of the Maori students surveyed were prepared to state that they experienced their schooling in negative terms. While only 18 percent chose the 'I don't like school' forced-choice option in one question, more than 30 percent (in another question) indicated that they experienced high levels of dissatisfaction with their schooling. An even greater proportion, almost half those surveyed, were prepared to disclose that their brothers and sisters, and friends, who had already left school perceived schooling in negative terms.

The difference in the responses of principals (all except one Pakeha) and Maori language teachers provides an interesting comparison. A preliminary analysis of responses from principals shows that most (with some notable exceptions) focus on traditional "liberal" factors in explaining why Maori students leave school early. Most, for instance, mentioned the fact that Maori students begin secondary school with 'poor learning skills' and because of 'poor attendance', do not 'catch up' with their Pakeha counterparts.

Some principals were also concerned to mention the "unacceptable' or "disruptive" behaviour of Maori students but few sought explanations in terms of differences in cultural values, attitudes or institutions. While a number of principals drew attention to the "cultural insensitivity" of programmes of work or, as one principal put it, 'school structural racism', most tended to emphasise, to the exclusion of the more prominent school-leaving factors, the influence of "peer pressure" against being "successful".

We found no evidence to sustain the view that peer pressure was a major factor in school leaving. Indeed, the peer group (which may well demand a fierce loyalty) was clearly one of the few support networks in schooling available to Maori students whom, on the whole, seem poorly served by monocultural, monolingual schools and teachers.

It was disappointing to discover that a number of principals placed undue weight on 'the easy, dole type life', as one principal explained it. Certainly in

our study, there was no evidence for this view. Indeed, of all Maori students surveyed, only a tiny proportion indicated that they might end up on the dole and, only then as a last resort.

Principals, when asked what *out-of-school* factors influence Maori students to leave school early, focused almost entirely on the lack of parental support, low parental expectations and family problems to the exclusion of more structural concerns within the local community or wider society. Some statements implied a very limited understanding of structural features and, at best, exhibited earlier views based upon Maori as disadvantaged or culturally deficient. It is also true, however, that some principals were well aware of the complex nature of the question and identified a number of overlapping factors which included these wider social dimensions.

In contrast to the responses of the principals to these questions, Maori language teachers displayed, on the whole, a much more sympathetic understanding of the plight of Maori students. While they were prepared to acknowledge the early learning difficulties faced by Maori students and family difficulties (especially financial ones), teachers were more prepared to challenge school structures and systems as being culturally insensitive and inappropriate. A number of teachers, for instance, pointed to the lack of the Maori dimension - of Maori cultural values - in schools and the fact that 'teachers are not trained or qualified to teach Maori students'. In general, Maori language teachers recognised cultural difference as a major factor affecting the performance of Maori students.

Responses to questions inquiring about what *in-school* measures and *school-community* innovations might positively affect Maori retention rates were almost unanimous in suggesting a greater Maori presence and content in school programmes. One (European) principal wrote: 'There is no doubt in my mind that attempts by the school to adopt some Taha Maori has lessened the feeling of alienation that some Maori pupils may have felt in the past'. Other suggestions emphasised the need for a marae on school grounds; the promotion of Maori language programmes; and measures to ensure that such programmes do not clash with other subjects.

Institutional Racism and Exclusionary Practices

The notion of institutional racism was first introduced into the New Zealand context in the early 1970's by Nga Tamatoa, a group of young Maori activists.

Anne Dummett (1973:13) in *A Portrait of English Racism* defines the concept in the following way:

> A racist society has institutions which effectively maintain inequality between members of different groups, in such a way that the open expression of racist doctrine is unnecessary or, where it occurs, superfluous. Racist institutions, even if operated partly by individuals who are not themselves racist in their beliefs, still have the effect of making and perpetuating inequalities.. Although conscious racist attitudes often are influential in determining where black children get placed in our school system, *they need not be present at all* when decisions are taken that are racially discriminating in effect.

While we have some theoretical misgivings concerning concepts of institutional racism and their explanatory power, the notion best captures the reality (both objective and subjective) of Maori schooling in Tai Tokerau.

In the New Zealand context, Spoonley (1988:24) uses the concept of institutional racism, especially for explaining the way in which 'groups are differentially treated by institutions as a result of organised policies and procedures'. He continues:

> A key element in the definition of institutional racism is the acknowledgement that there may not be a conscious intent, either organisationally or in terms of individual members of the institution, to produce such racial disadvantage. *Collectively, or as individuals, they may not be racist in terms of their attitudes.* All that is necessary for institutional racism to be said to exist is to show that whatever the intent, disadvantage is the result.

Spoonley acknowledges that not *all* disadvantage is explainable by ethnic or racial factors. As Maori are disproportionately located in the working class, 'some of the disadvantage they face reflects class considerations and is shared by Pakeha members of the working class'. [Pearson (1990), in contrast, argues that the notion of institutional racism is a catch all phrase which has little analytical precision. In particular, he argues that the notion oversimplifies the problem of ethnic disadvantage.

> It subsumes a complex of historical and current social contingencies under a convenient descriptive and/or prescriptive label. The relationships between racist intent,racist bias and practices and racial discriminatory effects are glossed over and all three are swept together in unproblematic fashion (Pearson,1990:169).

Notwithstanding Pearson's cautions, no alternative concept at present captures sufficiently the reality of structural disadvantage facing Maori in Tai Tokerau.

Associated with institutional racism in education is what we have termed *exclusionary practices.* Such practices not only refer to overt features - to the extent of expulsions, suspensions and the administration of corporal punishment - but also, more implicitly, the way in which Maori language, cultural values and traditions are excluded from the school's operations, in learning/teaching styles, promotion/demotion policies, time tabling and organisation. It is also reflected most clearly in small numbers of Maori teachers and principals, and in poor Maori representation on school boards and management committees. Perhaps, most contentiously, it is reflected in the subjective nature of Maori students' schooling experience - in their perceptions of mainstream schooling. In this latter regard, a significant proportion of the survey sample have clearly indicated the depth of their social and cultural alienation from mainstream Pakeha schooling.

Many Maori students who expressed high levels of dissatisfaction did so not by referring explicitly to "racism" (although a number of students made such allegations) but rather *by attempting to describe their own state of mind.* Self reported descriptions included: 'under two much pressure', 'can't handle it'; 'can't cope'; they had 'had enough'; were 'sick', 'tired', 'fed up', 'bored with' or 'hated' school. Such self-descriptions were applied to school generally and to subject-related areas. More importantly, many such negative comments referred specifically to poor teacher-student relationships. Maori students felt that (Pakeha) teachers did not 'understand' them; that they were unnecessarily 'hassled' by teachers who 'mistreated' them or were 'prejudiced'. Comments by Maori language teachers confirm the great cultural stress experienced by Maori students.

An analysis of the 'offences' committed and self-reported by Maori students in the survey lends further weight to this hypothesis. Two questions in the survey inquired whether students had ever been expelled or suspended during their schooling history. Almost 20 percent of these surveyed (93 out of 489) indicated that they had been expelled or suspended at least once. Typical offences included: smoking, wagging, or running away, fighting, drinking or drug-related charges, and stealing. There is reason to believe that this rate of exclusion is underestimated given the number of students who either did not answer these questions or who replied 'No comment' or 'None of your business'.

Over 34 percent of the 489 Maori students surveyed indicated that they had been caned or strapped, although of that proportion, just over half indicated that such corporal punishment occurred 'Not often'.

Over 20 percent of these self-reported offences represented communicational conflicts resulting in 'swearing at', 'interrupting', 'being cheeky' or 'smart' to the teacher. In short, teachers are perceived by Maori students to often be often be, *disempowering to Maori students.* Poor teacher-student relationships combined with the perceived lack of Maori language and culture within the school and the high level of preference for Maori language/culture programmes by students, indicates a serious cultural conflict in structural and collective terms. This is not to simplistically suggest that the data supports a single factor(i.e., lack of cultural understanding by Pakeha teachers) as the reason for poor teacher/student relationships.

While over 82 percent of the survey indicated that Maori language and culture were 'important' or 'very important' to them, only 32 percent took Maori as a School Certificate subject. This low percentage is due to a complex set of factors. Among the reasons cited for not taking Maori as a School Certificate subject were: timetable clashes, erroneous perceptions concerning Maori language as a qualification for the world of work, the fact that Maori as a school subject had not been taught at earlier form levels and perceptions that the subject was 'too hard'. These factors and unsolicited comments by students expressing regret at not taking Maori seem to provide some evidence for asserting that many more Maori students would elect to take Maori language at fifth form level than is currently the case, if it was organisationally possible and if te reo Maori was promoted in schools. If Hastings (1988) is correct, schools are obliged to make this access to Maori language *effective.*

Whilst we accept that teachers' attitudes can be changed through anti-racist education programmes and the empowerment of Maori students (e.g. Cummins, 1986), this does not necessarily lead to *equity* in terms of achieved equality of educational outcome for ethnic groups. Even if it is a necessary component, it has to confront other deeply embedded cultural attitudes and practices. The greatest immediate gains we believe are to be made by promoting marae as learning institutions (the appropriate cultural context in which to learn Maori), helping to establish themselves as a power base from which teachers of Maori, kaumatua and kuia can negotiate learning exchanges

with schools, transition programmes and re-entry schemes, and promoting Maori language and culture with resources and publicity. This would fit in the expanded non-formal ie. community educational sector envisaged in *Learning for Life* -CLANZ (3.6.5).

Conclusions and Recommendations

The Report (Peters and Marshall, 1989) to the Ministry of Education identified a set of interrelated negative features and exclusionary practices of mainstream schooling for Maori students in Tai Tokerau. These stated in summary form are (often expressed in comparative Maori/non Maori terms):

- low retention rates;
- low achievement levels;
- high early school leaving rates;
- high truancy rates;
- high exclusion rates (ie. expulsion, suspension);
- high levels of corporal punishment;
- high incidence of perceived Maori "behaviour" problems by (Pakeha) teachers and principals;
- poor teacher-student relationships;
- few support systems;
- preference for subjects not in the traditional core curriculum;
- strong student preference for Maori language and culture;
- high levels of expressed personal dissatisfaction with schooling (30 percent);
- perceived lack of importance of Maori language culture to the (Pakeha) school;
- high levels of expressed personal dissatisfaction with schooling by Maori students of brothers/sisters and friends who have left school (47 percent);
- high self-reported levels of psychological (cultural) stress;
- victim blaming and the stereotypical perceptions of Maori students by (Pakeha) teachers/principals;
- a significant set of negative reasons advanced by Maori students (eg. 'no jobs', 'better than the dole') for staying at school;
- Maori student perceptions of school failure in terms of cultural understanding and cross-cultural communication.

These factors, we believe, can be taken as evidence for the presence of institutional racism. The recommendations made to the Ministry of Education

were directed at this notion and in accordance with the espoused principle of equity and the philosophy of iwi and community development.

Our recommendations to the Ministry drew on both the research findings and literature review of our background research paper (Peters and Marshall, 1988), and with our earlier project with Maori language teachers in Tai Tokerau (Peters and Marshall, 1988b).

The recommendations[4] were based on the preference expressed by Maori fifth form students for Maori language and cultural activities; the precarious state of Maori language in Tai Tokerau; the perceived lack of a Maori dimension in mainstream schooling by Maori students and Maori language teachers; and some evidence that greater numbers of Maori students would have elected to take School Certificate Maori had there been the opportunity. Also, they were consistent with Benton (1988) and Spolsky (1987). Spolsky (1987:26) recognises the immediate need for 100 qualified Maori bilingual teachers, and 1000 qualified Maori bilingual teachers within ten years. The recommendations are also consistent with the findings of the Waitangi Tribunal (see Durie et al, 1986) and the provisions of the *Maori Language Act* 1987.

Other measures which we believe could significantly increase the place and status of Maori language and culture within schools include: proportional representation for Maori on Boards of Trustees as part of School Charters; a joint Ministry of Education/Maori Language Commission promotional campaign for Maori language, at *least* within secondary schools; the mandatory elimination of timetable clashes between Maori language and other subjects, and the availability of Maori language programmes for all Maori

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4 The recommendations of the Report to the Ministry of Education were stated as follows: "Two decades of literature attest to the fact that there is no substitute, in seeking to influence the retention rates of Maori students in Tai Tokerau (or, indeed, in other tribal districts in New Zealand), for increasing the place and status of Maori language and culture within secondary schools and thereby making education for Maori meaningful and effective.
In effect, this means, most immediately: first, increasing the number, type, scope and access to Maori language programmes at all form levels; second, increasing the number of Maori language teachers (in proportion to Maori representation in the school as part of school charters); and third, introducing a full paper in Oral Maori at School Certificate level. Here, this is but one voice amongst the many."

students as part of School Charters; and the development of marae on school campuses as part of the mandatory charter requirements for schools.

Our research also indicates the importance of closer school-marae relationships. In this regard, we believed the development model initiated between Tauwhara Marae and Okaihau College provided the most promising innovation, with an accent on "learning exchanges" between institutions, the sharing of resources, the development of the marae as the appropriate cultural learning context for Maori language and culture, adult re-entry ("second chance") education programmes, and "whanau education". In any such development, consultation with local kaumatua and kuia to increase support and gain approval for joint school-marae approaches to the "dropout problem" of Maori youth would be a crucial factor.

Further, our research indicates that greater Maori parental *participation* in school activities may be achieved through: parent outreach and parent education programmes; an advertised 'open door' policy; the promotion of family or whanau education; family (cultural) counselling and home visitation by Maori staff.

The identification and targeting of resources to "at risk" Maori youth formed the basis for another raft of recommendations. These included: first, the development of school-based diagnostic and assessment techniques for identifying and recording progress of "at risk" students; second, the provision of trained Maori counsellors to develop student and family counselling services, to devise and run substance abuse and teen pregnancy prevention education programmes. Expanded subject opportunities in Maori language, Maori culture, physical education, sport, music and fine arts (including Maori arts and crafts).

In terms of staff development and anti-racist, in-service education, our research leads us to believe that the following measures are necessary: first, the initiation and trial of school-based staff development and training programmes run in conjunction with local marae which specifically focus on the needs of Maori students. Second, the development of anti-racist in-service education programmes - workshops, courses, seminars, etc. - designed to examine school structures and programmes and to enable teachers to meet Maori educational needs. Third, a review of the extent to which current teacher training

provisions meet standards and criteria of a genuine biculturalism in teaching/learning methods, assessment and research.

The results of the questionnaire indicate that a significant proportion of Maori students (perhaps as high as 40 percent) experience school in negative terms and as culturally hostile to their interests. Teacher-related reasons were cited by Maori students as part of the complex of negative factors inducing them to leave school. The significance of teacher-related reasons for leaving school is given further weight in an analysis of self-reported offences involving expulsions, suspensions and the administering of corporal punishment. More generally speaking, there exists what we have termed a set of 'exclusionary school practices' which are part of a "push out syndrome". Cummins (1986) suggest that intervention based on an empowerment framework holds the best promise for changing teacher role definitions (see Peters and Marshall, 1988).

We also addressed ourselves to the development of re-entry programmes for Maori students who had experienced 'failure' and left school. Tauwhara Marae had demonstrated the success of its ACCESS programme in terms of the re-entry of adult students to pursue selected School Certificate subjects. The programme recognised the centrality of te reo Maori and, in particular, passes in School Certificate Oral Maori as the basis for successful re-entry. We would argue that there ought to be provision for adult students to receive some (secondary/tertiary) payment and be granted greater school freedoms. Adult Maori students can provide important role models and support networks for younger students. Further, the provision of child care/creche facilities is an essential ingredient in programmes of this sort. We believe that further research into the development of possible re-entry strategies is necessary. Such research ought to review present education and training policies and programmes as they affect the re-entry of Maori youth and seek to develop a community-based set of initiatives which encourage greater flexibility and co-operation between learning and training institutions. Finally, we suggest that there be greater publicity and a research dissemination programme on dropout prevention programmes and re-entry strategies.

Both our Report and our presentation of the recommendations to Ministry of Education staff were received in an ambiguous fashion. Maori education officers greeted the analysis and the recommendations. Some (Pakeha) education officers accepted the broad thrust of the investigation with

reservations. Others, (including those responsible for reviewing and curtailing the original proposal) criticised the research methodology and, in particular, the suitability of a questionnaire format. The contract for a revised proposal (which was directed away by the Ministry from the original three year bicultural and community empowerment approach) was offered to the University of Auckland on the 12 August, 1988 on a reduced budget. The contract stipulated that the researchers 'supply the Director (Research and statistics) with a full and final report by 28 February 1989 on all aspects of the project' (Clause, 5a) - a mere six and a half months later! We argue that the time and budgetary constraints determined our choice of methodology. We had, effectively, two and a half months during which students were still at school to both design the research, develop the questionnaire and administer it. In these circumstances, a survey methodology employing a questionnaire format which was administered in the main by Maori language teachers, seemed the only realistic alternative.

On reflection, we recognise that our decision to accept the contract under those conditions was shortsighted, and that from a Maori cultural perspective the methodology adopted was inappropriate. The cultural inappropriateness of methodology, however, should not be allowed to obscure either the issues at stake, nor the findings of the investigation.

Since the presentations of findings to the Ministry and Te Runanga o te Reo o te Tai Tokerau, the Report has been circulated to Northland principals by the Ministry. This action was taken by the Ministry without consultation with the researchers or Maori language teachers. The responses of two principals criticised aspects of the research serving to defend 'their' institution or the complexity of the problem rather than openly admitting the problems. The Report, further, has been referred to by the Opposition spokesman on Maori Affairs (Mr Winston Peters) in his efforts to publicise the plight of Maori schooling[5] and it has been raised in the context of a parliamentary debate on Kura Kaupapa Maori. Beyond this, neither the researchers nor the Runanga have received official word concerning the actioning of the recommendations. Indeed, it seems as if the Report and its recommendations has been forgotten, if not "buried".

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5 See 'Woeful Maori Record Threatens Our Future' and 'Survey Reveals "Hostility" To Maori' **Auckland Star**, 7 and 8 August, 1989. See also our report, 'Survey Shows Strains Facing Maori Students', Focus page, **Auckland Star**, 24 August 1989

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Reviews

Erik Olssen, The Red Feds: Revolutionary Industrial Unionism and the New Zealand Federation of Labour 1908-1913, Auckland, Oxford University Press, 1988.

Reviewed by Chris Wilkes
Sociology Department, Massey University

Erik Olssen is a phenomenon. Over a period of what now must be 20 years, Olssen has not only written a considerable body of historical analysis, but has also changed the way in which we write our history. Olssen is particularly significant to sociologists interested in historical transformation, because he has consistently taken sociological concepts seriously.

In the present volume, Olssen adds another component to our understanding of our recent history. In The Red Feds, Olssen takes the crucial years 1908-1913 and examines this decidedly revolutionary phase in union affairs in great detail. The value of this information is that it tells us valuable stories about the pre-history of the Labour Party. Olssen's strategy is to provide a strictly chronological account of the events from the Blackball strike of 1908 to the general strike in 1913. The whole is carefully orchestrated with an excellent set of footnotes, a very detailed bibliography, appendices and an index.

The story begins with the loss of faith in the Arbitration system, specifically sign posted by the famous Blackball strike of 1908. The noted success of direct action meant not merely that the old system had not served working-class interest, but that new alternatives were achieving real political outcomes. The account of the Blackball Strike is followed with a review of the West Coast Federation of miners, the rise of the Federation of Labour, the emergence of the 'mass movement and the Socialist Party, the Canterbury Labourers' Union, Wellington Watersiders and the Manawatu Flax Workers. In the various accounts he gives of the specific unions, Olssen's methodological strategy is to account in detail for the rise of the industry, the specific location of that industry in the broader economic context and the causes of union radicalism. Uncertainty, unreliability and underemployment are common conditions cited by Olssen as the primary reasons for militancy. This all gave rise, according to the author, to a climate sympathetic to socialism.

Olssen's account works in a clear, chronological fashion, identifying both the historical events which affected the lives of working people, as well as the changes in consciousness and political attitudes which accompanied these objective changes. The first half of the book (Parts One and Two) is an account of revolutionary potential; the collapse of the state-run arbitration system left the door open to more radical solutions - increasing awareness of exploitation sowed the seeds of wide discontent among large sections of the working class. In addition the emergence of the Red Feds meant an entirely appropriate vehicle existed to carry such aspirations to the mass-political level.

What happened to all these hopes? Olssen shows, in Parts Three and Four, how the historical developments worked themselves out. First, Olssen outlines the growth of the Federation movement in the North. However increased membership was also tied to industrial defeats, as in the case of the Auckland General Labourers' Union. Than as these difficulties arose, a 'new creed' emerged and the 'Wobblies' (Industrial Workers of the World) started to gain adherents. Foreign unionists were involved in the movement which sought to take over the revolutionary initiative from the Red Feds. While they were not a counter-organisation their argument proposed that the Federation reorganise along 'Wobbly' lives. The Wobbly intervention placed class conflict at the centre of the struggle - direct action at the workplace was the suggested strategy instead of written agreements. Though this was first a predominantly Auckland view, it was a view which gained a hold elsewhere. The key event of the period, was, of course, Waihi. Here was to be a further list of alternative ideas. The debate came to a head at the 1912 conference of the Federation of Labour, where the Federation executive were under extreme pressure from more militant members of the movement. The executive won a victory, but it may have been a pyrrhic one. The scene then moved to Waihi itself and the mine strike. However, the employers were willing to have a showdown over Waihi - unable to make a quick settlement at Waihi, the executive lost face. This led both to a change in the leadership of the Federation and the adoption of a more radical strategy. However, as the Waihi strike went on, the Federation got into difficulty with disaffected membership and a lack of progress at the site of the strike. The executive decided against a general strike, and with the death of the famous Evans, matters came to a head. The Federation was the greater loser in all this.

The next important stage in the sequence of events was the Unity Conference. Here was an attempt to coalesce all the elements of the labour movement with

a single group. A second unity conference followed, and it urged there be set up a Social Democratic Party and a United Federation of Labour, and this was achieved after long debate. But 1913 was a year of significant industrial action. The wharf strike of that year became especially significant, of course, and Massey became very nervous about maintaining law and order. He called for special constables to enlist, sought help from the Royal New Zealand Artillery and the Royal Navy, and asked assistance from 'various athletic clubs'. (p.183)

On the 30th October the first skirmish had occurred in Wellington. There were doubts in the Government's mind as to the loyalty of the police, and by the end of the day, the strikers had gained control of most of the city.

By late afternoon the Artillery had set machine guns up in the street. Undisciplined charges by specials took place, but an uneasy order was maintained. Olssen comments:

> In the next day's edition of *Truth*, Hogg criticised the leaders (of the strike) for missing their chance; they should have marched on Parliament and seized power (p.184)

The balance of power shifted as more and more specials came to Wellington from the countryside. Massey's Cossacks, as they were soon labelled, were followed and harassed by strikers wherever they were. Urgent attempts at negotiation failed on the night of November 4th, and a large confrontation occurred between strikers and various law and order units. When the specials tried to work the wharves on November 5th, further skirmishes took place, though, as Olssen interestingly points out, the battle was largely between the strikers and the specials - the police were left out of it:

> It was the *Sydney Morning Herald* remarked 'a sort of modified civil war between the town and the country.' (p.188)

When scab labour started working the wharves, more trouble broke out. According to some, civil war was nearby. Olssen then takes us to Auckland, where a somewhat distinct general strike was taking shape. As in Wellington, specials were being organised from the countryside, and, on the other side, union after union joined the strike. Some of the Wobblies were arrested. The strike was called off on the 23rd of November. The outcome was a vastly increased awareness in the social consciousness of the urban workers and a considerable development of a sense of social division.

As Olssen reminds us, such revolutionary favour did not grip the entire country. By Christmas, settlements had been reached in all the major workplaces and the strike was over. Olssen points to the ambiguity of defeat. While no-one could argue the strike had achieved massive advances, it also had the effect of creating unity and awaking social concerns. The Red Feds strengthened labour as a political force, and damaged Liberal's chances of ever again representing the mass of the urban working class. Red Fed radicalism forced the split in the Lib-Lab alliance, and it could never be reconstituted. The idea of socialism divided the most moderate of Laborites from the most radical of Liberals. In Olssen's interpretation, the IWW's role is more significant than in other accounts. Some members of the Red Feds faced discrimination and blacklists, some of these lasting several years.

What then was the overall impact of the Red Feds? Certainly as I have indicated above, Olssen argues they changed the political topology in a decided fashion, and served to help carve out a discrete space for Labour. What of the effect on the arbitration system - Olssen suggests it was changed in significant ways, by making unions conscious of the need for national organisation by making it possible to work outside the arbitration structure, and by insisting on the efficacy of industry - based unions. For Olssen, it was not an increasingly conservative arbitration court that gave rise to problems with the arbitration system itself but the changing aspirations of the working class. The period altered the understandings working people had of themselves and how their unions worked. For sociologists, Olssen's excellently written book reminds of a series of important lessons - the historically-specific quality of class relations and their variation over time; the importance of the first years of the twentieth century in New Zealand for the formation of clearly developed classes as social forces, and, perhaps most significantly, the book tells us a good deal about the origins of the Labour Party, a curious ancestor to the present régime, and a source, no doubt, of more books to come.

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Brian Easton (ed), **The Making of Rogernomics**, Auckland, Auckland University Press, 1989. (212 pp.)

Reviewed by Peter Reid,
Department of Economics, Massey University.

In his introduction to this collection of essays, three of them his own, Brian Easton remarks that New Zealand's experience of the 1980's shows how the Westminster system of 'elected dictatorship' (Lord Hailsham's phrase) may impose upon the economy, be Muldoon or Douglas the dictator.

Adherents of the conspiracy theory of history will always suppose that the secondment of Treasury man Doug Andrew to the then Labour Opposition Leader's Office in June 1983 was but one link in some deep laid plot that had placed Douglas as a mole in the Labour Caucus years before. But the "cock up" theory is usually more convincing and is so again. With the credentials of a typical Tory MP, self made business man cum politician, Douglas found himself in the Labour Caucus by the accident of his birth into a family of labour politicians - much like Jim Anderton for instance. And it seems likely that the elitist Douglas and the amusingly articulate Andrew "clicked" more by chance than the design of some scheming even though there is circumstantial evidence of extensive consultation between Douglas and other Treasury men before the 1984 election. And if those Treasury men did rather well out of it, some being promoted while others moved into the private financial sector that their policies had created - at salary hikes reported to average 74% - surely that was talent finding its level rather than a pay off.

The leading essay in this set is a condensation of Hugh Oliver's M.A. Thesis at Massey University, based upon Labour Caucus papers between 1981 and 1984 deposited by Douglas in the Turnbull Library. It makes the important point that the post election situation was one of economic and constitutional crisis; with the discredited Muldoon clinging to the reins during a run on the dollar. Urgent and decisive action was needed - the dollar was devalued 20% and the Treasury's coherent economic advice, embodied in *Economic Management* (EM) (Treasury, August 1984) provided a ready made recipe for action.

Paul Dalgiel's essay on the Economic Summit shows it to have been pure theatre. He shows that some of the parties would have gone along with EM,

had they understood it, but their opinions - crucial in the corporatist approach which the electorate thought it had voted for - were ignored. The elitist Douglas put the unemployment question - the one issue to which all the parties gave priority - off the agenda. Indeed, so far off, that, as Trey Endres remarks in his account of this aspect, the Department of Labour had, by 1986, given up stating in its Annual Report what still is its statutory function, 'to promote and maintain full employment'. In fact they had more important fish to fry and Pat Walsh's description of their partially successful resistance to Treasury advocacy of labour market deregulation provides a hopeful model for the pluralistic formulation policy which is all too easily subverted by misuse of the Westminster system.

The Business Round Table and the Treasury had some valid criticisms of the collective bargaining system which the Department of Labour had been administering for over 90 years. But DOL had the experience, the analysis, and the allies to create a network that effectively resisted the root and branch Philistinism that has seen so much that is valuable in New Zealand destroyed by Rogernomics. The upshot of the process is a Labour Relations Act that maintains continuity and which may or may not prove with experience to be an advance. But at least it saw that most bizarre manifestation of the Treasury's poorly grasped understanding of modern (and largely non-operational and/or irrelevant) microeconomic theories - the importation of contestability theory into the labour market - watered down to near ineffectuality. In a brief comparative section, Walsh shows how resistance to Philistinism in the State Sector has been much less effective, with no established framework for consensus making like the Long Term Reform Committee which had been in operation in the private sector since 1982. Furthermore Ministers were judge and jury in their own case as State Sector employers. Indeed so paranoid have they become that legislation on State Service matters is now prepared on contract in Australia, leading to such arbitrary outcomes as the multilateral abrogation of the here-to-fore negotiated Government Superannuation Scheme with policemen marching in protest and prison wardens on strike, surely this is a Government with a death wish.

The State Sector was, however, before the 1988 State Sector Act, well acquainted with rape. The assaults on the Scientific Service and the Universities, like the 'user pays' perversion of social policy go unchronicled. But Brian Easton traces the rise of commercialism, and the concomitant

privatisation of State Owned Enterprises, (SOE's) to an ideological revolution in Treasury thinking which saw the established economic framework of Cost Benefit Analysis (CBA) replaced by the vacuity of commercialism. The Treasury linked the importantly distinct concepts of liberalisation (which can often, depending of circumstances, be justified within the CBA framework) and commercialisation, which Easton states is about maximising the property rights. In practice that means everybody in the public sector wasting enormous amounts of time scrabbling for their job, by drawing up contracts to do things which they were doing already. In concept it was based upon principle - agent theory (a non-operational and highly interesting branch of economic theory which may have something useful to say in five to ten years time) of which its proponents within the Treasury demonstrated a lamentable lack of understanding when they ventured to expose themselves in a correspondence in the NBR. So far as SOE's were concerned it meant that the opportunity for better management that could have been brought about by a well conceived policy for corporatisation (taking management out of Government Departments and reducing the scope for arbitrary Ministerial interventions but retaining a framework for planning and a place for the public service ethic) was lost. Easton puts it down to reaction to the Muldoon era and so do I: in the wake of "Think Big" the Treasury were obsessed with a "never again" mentality that regulated all other considerations to putting structures in place which would prevent a recurrence.

When so much of the concern with Rogernomics has been over macroeconomic management it is surprising that Easton's discussion of Douglas' exchange rate policy is the sole contribution in this area. And it takes the story only six months or so, to the March 1986 decision to float the dollar. Yet that was a relatively unimportant decision, forced upon Douglas by speculative pressures in the foreign exchange market following the critical decision to abolish capital exchange controls. What happened afterwards, the history of monetarist management, high interest rates, high dollar and consequential devastation to New Zealand's tradable goods (export and import substituting) sector is not discussed. It contrasts sharply with the Australian experience where, under Bob Hawke, there has been plurality of economic advice, adequate concern for the tradables sector, and sufficient growth in the economy to satisfy the voter's material expectations. The book's failure to cover the macroeconomic dimension adequately is its major weakness, but one that complements a weakness in much other commentary on Rogernomics which has often dealt with nothing else.

With Labour here and Tories in England trailing in the polls by historic margins, the application of Chicago style economics has suffered the same fate with the two electorates as has its theoretical elaboration within the economics profession. As Jim Bolger and Neil Kinnock prepare themselves for office what can they learn from the experience of their predecessors? For one thing you control quite a lot of the people for quite a long time, especially it you believe your own nonsense. As Oliver describes it, Andrew's brand of extreme marketism infected Douglas' thinking in the latter half of 1983 and fed a latent elitism that saw a response to electors' expectations of improved material standards as irresponsible. 'Fundamentally' to quote Oliver, 'Douglas was of the opinion that the electoral system was the real problem... his concern was to insulate economic policy from democratic influence'. Thus the 'pain now gain later' philosophy was born that saw Labour given a second term in 1987 - a second term that has signally failed to shown any gain, with NZ growth performance near - bottom of the OECD league for year after year.

David Lange eventually saw through it but, to quote Brian Easton's third essay on 'the Unmaking of Roger Douglas', in 'his perhaps unconsciously humorous phrase, the Prime Minister's Office was too small to given him support'. The Auckland alliance that had ousted Bill Rowling after Muldoon's catastrophic third election victory fell apart under the tension between Douglas' elitism and Lange's populism. However Lange had no policy framework to replace Douglas' and David Caygill was too soaked in the tide of Rogernomics to think up new policies, even had he wanted to. Neither of them saw that the tension between re-structuring and corporatism which Oliver describes as dividing the Labour opposition up to the 1984 election is in fact a false dichotomy. It is a false dichotomy because there is an optimal pace of change, and any programme of restructuring that falls foul of corporatist consensus is paying a heavy price. Political leadership should, in a democracy, be just that, not the macho-style imposition of unpopular policies on a resentful and unpersuaded electorate.

In the end Douglas re-entered the Cabinet, along with Richard Prebble, though both in subsidiary roles, whilst Lange left it. Rogernomics, discredited but not dead, sustains the tag end of a government that failed the most fundamental test of democracy - it failed to try to do what the people who voted for it had been led to expect it would try to do (which, at least, is not a charge that can be laid against Mrs. Thatcher).

If Bolger, and Kinnock, learn anything from all this let it be that it matters not only what you do but, if you want to make a lasting and constructive contribution, how you do it. Thatcher and Douglas share an arrogant contempt for everything about the electorate except its vote - a contempt which leads to Lord Hailsham's perversion of the Westminster system. Yet the system does not have to work that way and better leaders - MacMillan and Attlee for instance - knew how to keep their policies attuned to the needs of the electorate. For that the Government must be attuned to opinion from many quarters and, as regards economic policy, break down the huge monopoly over economic advice which lies with the Treasury both in Westminster and Wellington. Jonathan Boston's contribution on 'The Treasury and the Organisation of Economic Advice: Some International Comparisons' provides some useful pointers.

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Dennis Davis, **School to Work: the EHW Factor.** Nelson, Melbourne, 1988.

Kaori Okano, Department of Education,
Massey University, Palmerston North.

Transition from school to employment has been discussed in many studies, since it is still a problematic issue at a practical level and its study has revealed interesting features of young people's learning processes. Davis' book aims to 'evaluate Australian government policy on school to work transition, and to suggest, from the study of Australian and other countries' experience, ways these policies and strategies might be improved' (p.1). The EHW factor, the book's subtitle, is proposed as the specific context for analysing school to work transition policies. The EHW factor is defined as 'the factor or variable describing the degree of tightness, compatibility or harmony between the institutions of education, households and work' (p.13).

The book reviews existing studies and theories on school to work transition, and tries to develop its own while examining Australian policies and practice. It then presents case studies of the transition of different class groups, women, immigrants and Aborigines in Australia (Chapters 4,5,6 and 7, respectively) and of youth in Japan (Chapter 8), West Germany (Chapter 9), Sweden (Chapter 10), the UK (Chapter 11) and the USA (Chapter 12), and attempts to

illustrate different issues in school to work transition which he considers relevant to Australian practice. His main discussion is given in the last two chapters (Chapter 13 and 14).

I see two major theses in the book which are likely to contribute to future studies. First, Davis argues that the tight EHW factor is both a condition for and a measure of the stability of school to work transition. Second, he proposes the introduction of 'the vocational curriculum' and 'social curriculum' in relation to the EHW factor.

The first thesis appeals to our common sense and therefore appears sensible. I value his attention to the *interactive processes* of education, households and work in examining the transition from school to work, and consider it a step forward, an important one, from examining one sector alone and blaming it. It rightly recognises that changes in one of these sectors alone will not bring about significant changes in transition practice. As Davis claims, the book attempts to demonstrate several case studies of effective school to work transition which suggest the existence of this EHW factor. However, after reading through the book, I feel that more reference could have been made to the EHW factor in these case studies, and that the concept of the 'EHW factor' needs further clarification and explanation for it to be a useful concept.

Davis explains the EHW factor in terms of 'values'.

> People don't have to share all the same *cultural values* to have tight EHW relationships, providing there are viable job markets and education systems compatible with their cultures. A nationally tight EHW relationship requires, however, the groups in society share the same *broad values* of the society at large. (preface) (emphasis by me).

While it is clear that sharing values equates to the tight EHW factor, the above does not indicate the extent of values sharing required for the tight EHW factor. Is it at the basic level of, say, 'you need to work to earn income'? The mismatch of values at school and workplace has been discussed elsewhere at two levels. Some studies report the 'broad' differences in expectations at school and workplace - such as the dependent role of the child vs an independent adult role; work as an individual activity vs a collaborative one; working in large and unstable groups vs in small stable ones, etc. - and indicate that they in part contribute to the difficult transition (Bazalgette 1978:52; Husen 1979:128-9). Others report the mismatch of expectations at more

specific levels, emphasising that different kinds of work require different characteristics from workers: those required by the school's dominant culture may be consistent with those required by white collar work, but not necessarily by shop-floor work (Ashton 1973; Carter 1966). For instance, the 'lads' in Willis's study (1977) did not experience difficulties in transition, since the counter culture which they had created at school prepared them for the shop-floor culture. Instead, conformists who entered manual work faced difficulties in adjusting to work, since they had accepted the dominant culture.

Davis's description of the EHW factor ends at a common-sensical level and needs to touch more on controversial issues.

> The family household gives birth to the child, and, in a social economic sense (to a greater or lesser degree), gives her or him as a youth the support and knowledge required for the successful transition into work and the creation of her or his own household. In a modern society, the education sector supplements this process, and the institution of work represents not just an end in itself but a rite of passage to full adulthood and social acceptance. (p.13).

No mention is made of the differences in the support and knowledge given by the household. These differences are extremely important, since they advantage/disadvantage youth making the transition, in part mediated through their performance at school. Those who share expectations at household and school tend to reinforce them and to perform well at school. Whether or not what a youth carries over from household and from school is an advantage depends on what is expected at his/her workplace. The complex interaction of these three sectors deserves more extensive discussion. It seems to me an optimistic view to say that a tight EHW factor results in a 'compatible matching of the jobs on offer with aspirations and choices of jobs the youth make'. It has been well documented that young people's occupational aspirations and choices derive from their past experiences at home and school, and that they are not independent voluntary actions.

Questions also arise from Davis' claim that an effective EHW relationships will get people 'worthwhile jobs, jobs with an intrinsic value' and not 'ones which are simply instrumental to earning money for funding non-work activities'. This as an argument on its own is not persuasive. Some would simply ask if all jobs in our society can offer intrinsic value. If so, how? People's views of work seem to be located on the continuum of 'work as offering an intrinsic value' and 'work as a means to obtain income'. The two

are neither contradictory, nor can the intrinsic satisfaction of the work activity and the extrinsic satisfaction of cash so easily be separated. The relative importance of the two differs, depending on individuals. What are the conditions which enable workers to see more intrinsic goals in their work? Why do some people see more value in work itself rather than in their material income as reward? Two factors in combination seem to contribute: physical working conditions, and how one perceives or interprets work. To be more specific, they are 'the level of remuneration for the work, the constraints that impinge upon the work activity itself, and the ability of workers to separate the meaning of the work activity itself from its constraints and its remuneration' (Corson, 1988:16). The latter, people's attitude to work, obviously has a greater implication for education and thus needs further discussion in relation to Davis' claim.

His second major thesis casts thoughtful and useful light on the long-lived debate over vocational vs general educational curriculum. Davis first divides curriculum into 'the vocational curriculum' and 'the social curriculum', according to its purpose rather than its content. 'The vocational curriculum' is defined as; 'all knowledge required for entry and performance in work within a given EHW structure'. (p.16). Some of the so-called 'general education', i.e. personality traits and knowledge of job markets, are all included in 'the vocational education'. 'The social curriculum' is, in the other hand, knowledge required to be critical of and change the EHW structure. They are both important for a balanced curriculum.

The remaining part of the book presents case studies from 5 industrialised societies: Japan, West Germany, Sweden, the UK and the USA. I see a conventional comparative educationalist's stance in Davis' treatment of these studies. Although Davis attempts his best in concluding each chapter with comments of relevance to Australian readers, his dependence on secondary sources for other countries' experiences inevitably limits the scope and depth of his examination.

For instance, the case study on Japan emphasises 'the extremely tight EHW factor': that school, family and workplace share an interest in education, and in values and structures such as group solidarity and loyalty. While this is an insightful comment, it is a pity that his discussion on the EHW factor does not mention 'the job referral system' (US Dept. of Education OERI, 1987), in

which students obtain employment through an institutional link between school and employers. Gaps do exist in the EHW factor, although their relative magnitude is not certain. Schools which are located at the lower strata of the educational hierarchy and which send many students directly to the work force make an extensive attempt to fill the gap between what students have learned/have not learned at home and at school and what is expected at the workplace. The practice at these schools might offer more valuable implications for Australian schools, rather than a mere average Japanese school. Another concern is Davis' stereotypical description of Japan as 'meritocratic and homogeneous'. Japan is more pluralist than it seems: minorities try to hide their identities often without asserting their rights.

Davis seems to have achieved the purposes initially set out, ending the book with 'lessons for Australia', suggestions for Australian government policy and practice on the school to work transition. The significance of the book, however, lies in his up front proposal of the EHW factor in the study of school to work transition. Nevertheless, it is also the EHW factor where further extended discussion and theorising are most necessary.

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Real Freedom, Auckland: Auckland University Socialist Society, 1990, (40pp, $3) (available from Heather Worth, Department of Sociology, University of Auckland)

Reviewed by Joy Grant, Department of Sociology

Real Freedom sets out to explain the origins of women's oppression and to examine their present situation under capitalism. The booklet does this by using short explanatory sections interspersed with comic strips and photos. There are some 25 sections, beginning with theoretical issues and ending with 'our demands', and covering a very wide range of workplace, domestic and personal issues in-between.

On the whole this format works well. However, there are certain topics which are rather too complex to approach in this way. The section which explains how capitalism works, for example, is likely to confuse a novice to this field.

This highlights one of the few criticisms I have about *Real Freedom*. Although it appears to be intended to appeal to the widest possible audience, sections of the publication assume the sort of prior knowledge of Marxism which is more usual within academic circles. At the same time the booklet is written in such a way that, on the whole, the more informed reader is also likely to be left feeling unsatisfied.

Never-the-less, this booklet goes a long way toward answering the criticism which is sometimes directed at Marxists, that they are too little concerned with issues which specifically affect women. Although *Real Freedom* restates the classic Marxist position, that the capitalist class and not the patriarchy are the ultimate oppressors of women, it does not simply dismiss the struggles of non-Marxist feminists as unimportant. The booklet links the fight for women's liberation to the fight for socialism in a way which recognizes the validity of both.

Those readers who are concerned with issues such as the provision of child-care facilities, the way in which women are portrayed in the media, women's health-care, housing, and education, will find what *Real Freedom* has to say of particular interest. Regrettably, no guide to further reading is offered. However, the booklet is compiled by the women of the Auckland University

Socialist Society and this group may be a useful contact for those readers who wish to know more.

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Picking The Mote From The Treasury's Eye. Review of Middleton, S., Codd, J. and Jones, A. **New Zealand Educational Policy Today**, Wellington Allen and Unwin, 1990.

Reviewed by Roy Nash,
Education Department, Massey University

Almost all books on education in New Zealand are edited collections put together by like-minded people working in rather a hurry. This is exactly such a book. It is not a bad book (and it is a vast improvement on earlier texts on the politics of education) but I do not think that it is a good book. Some of the papers, I would pick out those by Boston, McCulloch, McDonald, May and Irwin, are particularly useful but too much of the rest has been said before (and by these authors themselves) or is really hardly worth saying at all. If I had not trained as an English teacher I might have found Moss's lengthy account of the Beowolf saga of some interest but even then I might have wondered what it was doing in a book on New Zealand educational policy. His simple point about the self-serving concept of community in the Picot report was made by Wanda Korndorffer and myself (in the *PPTA Journal*) soon after it was published. Perhaps I should be more tolerant of this celebration of Anglo-Saxon cultural heritage (have I missed some subtle comment by Moss on 1990 here?), but the whole thing seems self-indulgent. The same can be said of the instant rave contributed by Bates. Grace's paper, based on his inaugural lecture, is also disappointing because flawed by his readiness to ignore the Treasury's actual position in favour of his own characterisation of it as new right philosophy.

These authors have discovered (or created) a real bogy of the new right. The new right, they say, emphasises individual choice, posits a limited role for the state in defence of individual liberties and property rights, sees the welfare state as a negative force stifling initiative, and asserts the competitive, acquisitive nature of individuals. Education is seen by the new right primarily in economic terms, for its contribution to a trained labour force and as a

consumption commodity. This identification of the new right (or better still new right discourse) provides a convenient target for left critique but in the debate about educational provision in New Zealand it is, I believe, more of a hindrance than a help. I have argued before that individual choice is not a unique value of the new right, the concept of the minimal ("night watchman") state is an old liberal notion, the view of people as competitive and acquisitive is actually a fundamental premise of all modern economics (although in the real world these characteristics should not be coupled together), and the view of the welfare state as debilitating to individual pride is another feature of classical liberalism. On this last issue it is worth noting that both Irwin and Middleton suggest, as I read them, that the Domestic Purposes Benefit has exactly such an effect on its recipients. It seems to me to be a better practice to examine arguments accurately and to criticise their internal logic rather than label them "new right" and proceed to attack their provenance.

Political and economic critique, especially when it is little more than complaint, is easy but the development of sound alternatives is a more difficult matter altogether. The political economy of those writers who make any attempt to articulate one is unfortunately much less coherent than that of their opponents. Lauder's initial chapter on the New Right Revolution, for example, outlines the economic context of new right social theory ("the prolonged economic crisis in western capitalism") in transparently incoherent syllogisms. First, we are told that the crisis of western capitalism (never mind the fact that eastern communism has the real crisis) is triggered by falling rates of profit (an assertion supported by no evidence and empirically easy to disprove) and that this crisis is triggered by its own exploitative processes. Then, as a concrete illustration of these processes we are told that the strength of the working-class movement raises the social wage and so reduces profitability and produces a crisis of capital accumulation. Yet this central fact that the crisis of capitalism is triggered by its own exploitative processes must be obscured by an ideology. Therefore, Lauder (p. 3) concludes, the right attempts 'to provide a legitimating ideology which can deflect attention away from the real cause of the crisis by placing responsibility for it elsewhere - typically the working class and its organisations and the state.' Marx's own theory of exploitation was tied to his theory of surplus value but Marxist economists abandoned that concept following a burst of critical activity in the 1970s. All that is now left of Marx's theories about the internal contradictions of capitalism is this commonplace observation that workers and capitalists struggle over the distribution of profit.

What Marx and Engels saw as the fundamental breakthrough of Marxist economic science, its discovery of the secret of profit-making in 'the hidden abode of production' (Capital: 154) and its political insistence that exploitation lay in the social relations of the mode of production has been revised away to nothing. And what a crisis this has created for left intellectuals. It is perfectly obvious from Lauder's account of the crisis in western capitalism that the new right (speaking for capital) is perfectly correct to argue that the strength of the working class movement poses a threat to its levels of profit since this is precisely what Lauder says has caused the crisis. There is no irony in noting Lauder's comment that new right social theory can be 'considered as a family of mutually consistent concepts' (p. 3): it is great pity that the same cannot be said of the left's social theory.

According to Lauder 'the rich owe their wealth to the social structures and resources that have allowed them to become wealthy', this seems to be an uninformative tautology, but he glosses the observation further with the assertion that 'under capitalism the poor are poor *because* the rich are rich' (p. 24). The authorities cited in support of this position are Marx and Roemer. But Marx did not argue anything quite so crude and Roemer argues that this is true under any market system of exchange (not only capitalism) where initial inequality of resource provision is in evidence. Roemer's models purport to show that in the process of market exchange those who start off rich get richer at the expense of those who start off poor and is intended to replace Marx's concept of exploitation tied to surplus value. However, the severe abstraction of Roemer's models raises serious questions about their relevance to real political economy and while Wright and other Marxists have embraced them readily enough as a new foundation for an objective theory of exploitation they have not been subjected to any real critical appraisal. It ill becomes writers who castigate Treasury for its allegedly casual approach to scholarship to merely assert the authority of the authors they prefer.

I have generally resisted the temptation to critique the Treasury as advocates of a blatant new right agenda and although I decline to take entirely seriously the disingenuous protestations of Treasury officers that their policy advice and advocacy is uninformed by anything other than the objective advice of disinterested civil servants and members of an honourable profession I can see little to be gained (other than at the level of propaganda) by this form of criticism. The Treasury economists have a point. Economic theory is no longer

dominated by the liberal and welfare state economics of Myrdal, Keynes and Galbraith, from the point of view of the left more the pity no doubt, but such is the case, and if government charges Treasury with the task of exploring ways to limit expenditure, or to investigate ways of determining which areas of public provision should be given priority, one can hardly be surprised if they are influenced by contemporary market theories. The famous (or infamous depending what side one is on) Treasury Briefing on Education (1987) was not, in my view, as far to the right as its characterisation by some its critics would have us believe. It barely mentioned, for example, voucher systems of school provision which the opposition spokeswoman was then publicly exploring. It is not Treasury that deserves the blame for the last six years of monetarism and associated social policies but the Labour government. Moreover, not the least of the reasons for its sharp right turn has been the lack of interest by the left in supporting (capitalist) social democracy. Those contributors to this book who discuss political economy, for example, have nothing to offer social democratic politicians but critique from a Marxist, neo-Marxist or post-Marxist position and this has created an intellectual vacuum which the revisionist dogmas of Lange's Macintosh speech have no difficulty filling. Writers who should have developed a sensible social democratic policy, a defence of the managed mixed-economy, and a conception of welfare which overcomes the negative effects of the traditional welfare state have preferred to indulge themselves with the role of critical intellectual ever anxious to demonstrate how the "crisis of capitalism" is the ultimate cause of all our difficulties. Thus, *New Zealand Education Policy Today* rewards the reader with capsule treatments of eminent critics in this tradition (like Offe and Roemer) and references to friends overseas (like Bates's 'Mike Apple' and 'Herb Gintis'), but rests on no secure foundation in political economy.

Every cabinet minister must surely know in a practical sense all that Offe, for example, has to say about the theoretical relationship between capital and labour and the profound weakness of a state which must support capitalist production (and as to that there really does seem to be no viable alternative). His view of these relationships is, in any case, essentially the same as that developed a decade or more ago by Skocpol and Block. It is not that there are no alternatives within capitalist democracies but we need to be much more precise about what they are. Sweden and the USA are two approximately equally wealthy capitalist democracies and the differences between them in the provision of health, education and welfare services should not be minimised

and, like Lauder, I too would like to see New Zealand move closer to Sweden and further from the USA in these respects. Yet I do not think that attacking Treasury is likely to effect that shift by any perceptible amount. The ideological success of the right (which has been over-estimated in any case) can be explained largely by the retreat of the left into the realm of fantasy. What, to be concrete, is the implicit position of this critical perspective on the funding of education? It is, as far as I can see, that educational provision should be expanded to meet demand at all levels and be totally funded by the state. Any attempt to assess the private and social returns to education should be rejected as an ideological attempt to measure the immeasurable and introduce the manifestly illiberal and anti-humanist concepts of input and output and production functions. Well, that is a point of view and it might have some appeal to the teaching unions but there is not a country in the world rich enough to support such a system - not even Sweden. New Zealand would, in my view, be extremely foolish to allow unrestrained educational expansion and the consequent credential inflation that would follow in its train.

Of all the contributors to this volume who touch on these central issues of policy the only one who comes anywhere near recognising the real constraints on funding education is Jonathon Boston. He acknowledges that Treasury in adopting a welfare economics approach (hardly an invention of the new right) does maintain that equality of educational opportunity is an important social objective (Grace misleadingly asserts that this is not their view) and that the public rate of return to tertiary education is relevant to policy considerations. Boston tries to argue that the Treasury position is contradictory in as much as support for equality of educational opportunity, he says, cannot be reconciled with the view that tertiary education is not a positive right. However, the article he quotes from the United Nations International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, indicates clearly how these views need not be opposed. The article reads (p. 176):

> Higher education shall be made equally accessible to all on the basis of capacity, by every appropriate means, and in particular by the progressive introduction of free education.

It is not clear whether the phrase 'introduction of free education' refers to the pre-tertiary level or should be taken to include tertiary (higher) education itself, but the phrase 'on the basis of capacity' effectively nullifies the entire resolution. A state which decided that only 5 percent of its population had the

capacity for higher education would find it far easier to live with than a state which expanded its provision to 50 percent. The point is that this resolution does not state that tertiary education is a positive right, only that it should be equally accessible to all, that is the Treasury's position and it is not logically incoherent. Boston would prefer, as would I, an increase in the top levels of income tax, to pay for higher education in preference to a loans system. But his suggestion that employers should be taxed for every graduate they employ is novel to me and seems to merit further consideration. There is no doubt in my mind that much of what passes for education in the tertiary sector is basically a consumption good and I suspect that if employers had to pay heavily for the graduates in so-called business studies who have clogged up the universities in the last few years we would see a return to sanity in this area. Boston's paper manages to discuss the funding of tertiary education with a political and economic realism that is seldom matched in this volume.

In his concern 'not to give them an inch' Lauder ties himself in knots on the issue of 'middle class capture' (that is the over-representation of middle-class students attending university) but his own figures show that the Treasury is correct. Incidentally, for some reason Lauder has used the 1976 Elley-Irving revision rather than the most recent 1986 revision in his table showing access to university. His article in *Political Issues in New Zealand Education* gave great emphasis to Brosnan's argument that the proportion of professionally employed workers has expanded greatly in the last 30 years, but in this article Lauder manages to suggest that the proportion has declined from 7 percent in 1955 to 5 percent in 1982/4. Fortunately, adjusting for this leaves his interpretation of the empirical data, that there has been little if any change in the levels of class access to university between these dates, unaffected, but it is nevertheless misleading. Yet the Treasury's argument (and we have heard it voiced by Labour politicians) that because of this over-representation middle-class students should pay more through increased fees is clearly one that can be challenged. It is not exactly a logical deduction. Boston, as I have shown, largely accepts the premise but reaches a different conclusion.

"Standards" is another contested area where Lauder, like other recent commentators, is involved in twisted argument. He asserts that the Treasury believe educational standards have declined in New Zealand but can 'adduce no strong evidence for their claim.' Now, this is a area which one can complicate in various ways but from the point of view of employers who use

national examinations as a form of IQ test signifying relative position in the ability range it is obvious that standards have declined. In the twenty years to 1985 the proportion of students awarded University Entrance doubled from about 1 in 6 to 1 in 3. As many pupils now get Bursary as got University Entrance twenty years ago. This phenomenon is called credential inflation and it once gave sociologists of education some concern (including Willis as Lauder's (p. 24) quotation of his reference to 'meaningless inflated credentials' shows), but now that the so-called new right has discovered it the politically correct position appears to be ignore this evidence of the competitive character of educational systems. It is probable that levels of reading performance in this country have remained little changed in the last couple of decades but it would be no trouble at all to show that the mean tested reading performance of students reaching, say, Form 6 must have fallen markedly. If the 1982 Christchurch School Leaver's survey, carried out by Hughes and Lauder, were to be replicated in a couple of years time we would possess a most useful set of comparative data for this purpose, and there can be little doubt as to the outcome. I would stake a large sum against any odds that the mean reading score of students in Form 6 today is lower than it was 10 years ago. There are plenty of apologists for the educational system spreading propaganda in this area without critical specialists joining in. Linda Braun, principal of Southland Girls' High School, for example, informing readers of the education section of the Dominion Sunday Times (20/5/90) that it is 'time to stress the positive', reports that the proportion of students leaving with School Certificate or better in her school rose from 79 percent to 96 percent between 1979 and 1989. But, of course, this 'startling increase', as she calls it, is probably due to the fact that School Certificate is now passed by every student who attempts the examination (or, if those awarded D are counted as having failed, then passed by 98 percent of all those who sit).

New Zealand Educational Policy Today will be read by a good many education students (because they will have little choice), if it reaches other people involved in the administration of education it will offer them a point of view, and it may, in fact, be politically important in providing an intellectual basis for the opposition to the political reconstruction of educational provision. Nevertheless, and despite the real value of many individual contributions, as a whole the volume is flawed by the editors' decision to combat a social ideology they dislike rather than attempt to examine real arguments on their merits.

Barbara Caine, **Destined To be Wives. The Sisters of Beatrice Webb**, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988. ISBN 0-19-282158-X

Reviewed by Margaret Tennant
History Department, Massey University.

The 'monstrous regiment of women', their brothers-in-law sometimes termed them. Frequent references to themselves as the 'R.P. [Richard Potter] family' indicated their own sense of sisterhood, of belonging to a common unit which, in many ways, dominated their lives. The nine daughters of Richard and Lawrencina Potter are the subjects of this admirable collective biography. Subtitled 'The Sisters of Beatrice Webb', it is as much about Beatrice as her sisters, and draws extensively upon Beatrice's incisive comments upon her family. These are supplemented by an extensive array of family papers and memoirs, letters between the sisters and the recollections of descendants. The result is a study which operates on three levels: at one level the individual lives of the Potter sisters are followed through in *Destined To Be Wives*. A number were remarkable women in their own right, and although Beatrice is the sister whose reputation has lasted longest, at least two others, Kate Courtney and Margaret Hobhouse also made a significant 'public' contribution.

At another level, we can observe the intimate workings of an upper-middle class family, the inter-relationships of the sisters, their parents, husbands and children. This familial context pervades the book, showing how even Beatrice, usually so cool and detached in her observations of her sisters, was nonetheless profoundly influenced by her association with them. Finally, Caine has also linked the Potter sisters into the more general situation of women of their class and time, weaving in material about contemporary prescriptions of behaviour and demographic trends. It is this mixture of the individual and the general which makes *Destined To Be Wives* a fascinating case study for the historian of Victorian and Edwardian women.

Caine has organised her material around stages in the life cycles of upper-middle class women of the nineteenth century. Chapters explore childhood, entry into society, marriage and family life and old age. This can lead to confusion - with nine sisters of widely varying ages marrying and having children, the reader can easily lose any sense of the pattern of individual lives. Underneath the facade of respectable family life (so beautifully illustrated by

photographs included in the book) the Potters experienced a range of tensions and personal crises. Lallie, the eldest, clever, and with exceptional organising ability, devoted herself to her husband and children, only to be neglected and avoided by them all in old age; Rosie, the youngest, who shocked her sisters with her numerous affairs during widowhood but lived, as Beatrice Webb said, to have 'the last laugh on her prudish sisters... Today her free ways are *a la mode*'. Although all the sisters married (unusually for the time) most experienced varying degrees of unhappiness. The marriage of Georgie Meinertzhagen was particularly miserable, her husband showing right from the start a disinclination to share his wife's company. Despite this (and with evident distaste), Georgie went on to bear ten children. Another sister, Blanche Harrison Cripps committed suicide after years of neglect culminated in her husband's blatant display of a younger women as his mistress. Only two of the sisters, Beatrice Webb and Kate Courtney, achieved close and warm marital relationships with men of shared interests and values.

The overall picture painted by Caine is of 'a group of exceptional women bound to lives which did not suit them'. The birth of the oldest sister in 1845 and the death of the youngest after World War Two spanned more than a century. This was a period of immense social and political change but these changes had only a limited impact on the Potter women. Caine concludes that the widening opportunities which historians have identified as opening up by the late nineteenth century were relevant mainly to single women of means. With only a couple of exceptions, most of the Potter sisters remained bound to family-centred lives and did little to move beyond the constraints of late Victorian and Edwardian womanhood.

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Paul Spoonley, David Pearson, Ian Shirley, **New Zealand Society: A Sociological Introduction**. Palmerston North: The Dunmore Press, 1990 (S44.95)

Reviewed by Roy Shuker, Department of Education, Massey University.

This is an extensively revised version of a textbook published in 1982 (*New Zealand: Sociological Perspectives*). The new and old versions provide an interesting index to the current state of sociology in New Zealand. The present

volume aims to introduce students to 'sociological thinking', combining considerations of theory and method with analysis of various aspects of New Zealand society. There is also a conscious effort to be more New Zealand oriented, while extended breadth is provided by new contributions on 'some obvious gaps' in local sociology - rural sociology, sport and leisure, and the media. *New Zealand Society* largely succeeds in meeting these various goals, and, in so doing, seems set to become a standard text for introductory sociology courses in this country.

The 'key institutions' of society, the family and community, both urban and rural, are dealt with in the initial chapters. Then follow specific chapters on class, racism, and gender, though as the editors note: 'These are central concerns of sociology and are addressed to some degree in all chapters.' Next up are the State, and Social Policy, which form a useful backdrop to the subsequent considerations of aspects of policy and practice in areas such as health, education, and crime and deviance. Contributions on Work and Leisure nicely complement one another, while questions of ideology and social reproduction are taken up in chapters on Art and Religion. The final chapter on issues of population, while well-presented, seemed to me to rest uneasily within the general structure of the book, and such questions could perhaps have been usefully subsumed into the rural and urban chapters. Generally, however, the organisation of the material in *New Zealand Society* make it a more coherent volume than most introductory readers. In addition to succinct guides to selected 'further reading', the book includes an extensive (45pp.) bibliography.

The bulk of the contributions follow a fairly standard path. Some general observations are made about the evidence or data in a particular field of inquiry, and the type of sociological questions which need to be utilized in its examination. Various theories prominent in the field are briefly surveyed, with the author's preferences usually made clearly evident. Key issues are then briefly addressed and areas needing further investigation are identified.

David Swain's chapter on 'Family' illustrates this approach. He takes as his starting point the editors introductory observations that sociology is an 'uncomfortable discipline' because it requires a focus on the shared (social) nature of society rather than the individual, and because as a critical discipline it takes little at face value and frequently contradicts 'common sense', taken

for granted assumptions. Accordingly, Swain begins by clarifying the critical perspectives shared by family sociologists in New Zealand, and raises questions about widely held 'natural' concepts of the family. He then surveys the more important 'theoretical perspectives' and 'conceptual frameworks' underpinning competing explanations of families and family life: structural-functionalism; symbolic interactionism; conflict/Marxist; feminist; phenomenological and developmental. The last three are regarded as particularly relevant for family research and analysis in New Zealand, and are considered in terms of their strengths and weaknesses. Discussion then shifts to an overview of recent changes in family structures, and the chapter concludes with a succinct summary of local research on the family. Swain observes that while there is an extensive New Zealand literature on families and family life, 'most of it is of limited value'.

I found this particular chapter a valuable introduction to a topic I knew little about, and it certainly indicated the general state of sociological work on "family". At times however, the discussion became tantalizingly cryptic, particularly in the abbreviated references to the historical dimension of family studies. To be fair, the difficulty of balancing breadth with a fuller consideration of some of the issues covered obviously bedevils efforts in edited volumes of this type, and by and large the balancing acts here are pretty good ones.

Several of the contributions do deviate somewhat from the general patterns Swain exemplifies, though with mixed success. Chris Wilkes uses an initial discussion of stratification (and social class as one form of it) to examine the dominant New Zealand myth of ourselves as a classless society. This critique neatly situates the argument historically and, correctly in my view, uses a dynamic definition of class in relational terms: 'classes only develop *in relation to one another*' (page 77; emphasis in original). Observing that class analysis is a highly contested area, Wilkes elaborates a class-relational model and usefully compares it to Weberian, orthodox-Marxist, and functionalist analysis of class in New Zealand.

Roy Nash begins his examination of education with the administrative upheavals the educational system is currently undergoing, making the crucial point that what we are seeing is a significant shift in the discourse of educational politics. Nash's focus then shifts to consider the bases for

frequently reported differences in educational outcomes of an ethnic, class, and gender character in New Zealand. Here we are treated to a cursory 'brief introduction to the sociology of education', used to foreground the presentation of 'an acceptable theory of social reproduction' drawing on the work of Pierre Bourdieu. My difficulty with all of this is that Nash makes only sparse reference to relevant New Zealand work in the sociology of education,, while asserting that Bourdieu's work - and by implication his own 'realist - materialist' argument - has gained general acceptance amongst sociologists of education in New Zealand. (c.f. Shuker, 1988.)

I have touched on only a few of the contributions to the volume, and there is much of value throughout. Many of the pieces are nicely-written, (e.g. Nicola Armstrong successfully encompasses the enormous body of work on the State), and their accessibility is an obvious advantage in an introductory text. Other writers have usefully opened up previously neglected areas of inquiry and established agendas for future work (e.g. Steve Maharey on media.) Generally, then, *New Zealand Society* suggests that sociology is very much alive and well on the local academic scene. At the same time, however, it is clear from this collection that in almost every topic of inquiry much remains to be done. In summing up the present state of the field, and suggesting future research agendas, the editors and contributors of *New Zealand Society* have performed a very useful service, providing us with a baseline text which should emulate the success of its predecessor.

References

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Two reviews of: Bev. James and Kay Saville-Smith, **Gender, Culture and Power**, Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1989.

Christine Cheyne,
Dept. of Social Policy and Social Work, Massey University

This slim book is a welcome addition to the limited range of New Zealand feminist theoretical publications. It is written, according to the back cover, for tertiary students as an introduction to gender and inequalities. This focus, like any, imposes certain parameters on the scope of the discussion. The major

thesis of this publication is that New Zealand society is a gendered culture, and this thesis is both explained in general terms and documented with valuable historical evidence. The authors claim that their purpose is not to suggest specific tactics for activists, but rather 'to provide a new view of New Zealand which connects the popular concerns of our time with the structural arrangement of our society'. (p.6)

The concept of a gendered culture is used to explain how complex inequalities persist and why it is difficult to formulate adequate strategies to overcome inequalities. In developing the concept of gendered culture, the authors aim to show the links between oppressions without accepting the primacy debate which sets up a hierarchy of oppressions arising out of one that is a more fundamental oppression than all others. For James and Saville-Smith sex, race and class are the 'major lines of exclusion and exploitation' (p.3), but their problem is the nature of the inter-relationships of these three. They employ historical evidence to show that *gendered culture enables hierarchies of sex, race and class to be maintained.*

A gendered culture is defined (pp 7, 11) as

> a culture in which the intimate and structural expressions of social life are divided according to gender. ... Within a gendered culture, there exists distinct male and female cultures which, though integral to each other are rigidly bounded.

The key element of a gendered culture, thus, is a separation of the roles of women and men. However, this is not a sufficient condition, and it requires, in addition, a separation of production from the home. The idea of a gendered culture is complex. Most important to note is that it doesn't require the oppression of women as the most fundamental dynamic in New Zealand society (p.6), or that sexual inequalities are necessarily greater than in societies which are not gendered cultures.

I find somewhat weak the assertion (p.14) that cultures have 'dominant motifs which ultimately structure the practises [sic] associated with different groups'. What gives rise to a dominant motif? Is a dominant motif inevitable and obligatory? What is the range of possible dominant motifs? Are there only the three - namely, race, gender, and class?
The origin of New Zealand's gendered culture is argued to lie in 'the exigencies of Britain's colonisation of Aotearoa' (p.14). It was not imported

from Britain, though ideas of masculinity and femininity undoubtedly were imported. The gendered culture emerged only from about the mid-nineteenth century as a response to the change in the nature of the household.

In the early days of the colonial household, the authors argue, women were participants with men in the household's overall productive capacity. The household was the site of production and reproduction (p.24), and there was evidence of a 'certain balance of power between men and women within it' (p.27). There was a flexible division of labour between the sexes relative to that in households in later periods, particularly after the influence of the cult of domesticity. The introduction of opportunities (mainly for men) for wage labour by the mid 1860s led to men abandoning their familial responsibilities and, for women, a loss of economic power. From this examination of the historical facts, it would appear that a gendered culture is not a feature of society where production and reproduction are located in the household and where there is a fluid separation of the roles of women and men.

One of the strengths of this publication, and of particular value to both theorists and activists (if they can be, or need to be, separated), is the argument that gender differences are social, not natural/biological and immutable. This, of course, is not a new argument, but it is powerfully asserted alongside an examination of the development of gendered culture in New Zealand since the mid-nineteenth century.

Especially cogent are the arguments about the way difference is constructed as natural. This is a critical entry point for theorists/activists seeking to challenge inequalities. As James and Saville-Smith observe (p.7)

> One is not confronted with inequality so much as difference, particularly that difference which New Zealanders like to see as most natural, the differences between men and women.

The discussion about the way gendered culture is maintained by both women themselves (p.54), as well as men, is particularly significant and could usefully be extended and developed further. More than the concept of gendered culture, the emphasis on the *naturalness* of difference in both Maori and Pakeha society is insidious.

The authors identify two female archetypes - the Moral Redemptress and the Dependent Women. Each of these is accompanied with historical and

contemporary documentation of the consequences of these aspects of women's lives. In particular, the Dependent Woman is characterised by her (potential, if not actual) economic impoverishment.

An accompanying major thesis is that gendered culture has massive costs to everyone in this society. The authors document the costs of alcohol abuse, domestic and sexual abuse, psychiatric illness, violence, and road carnage. All these are of contemporary societal concern, but the responses to these in various enquiries are seen as pathetically weak. There is no attempt, according to James and Saville-Smith, to confront the real cause of these problems - the gendered culture endemic to New Zealand society. The irony, which they point out, is that, whereas the gendered culture emerged to promote social order, it now is the source of social *disorder* (p.45).

While the authors initially resisted the opportunity to 'suggest specific tactics for activists', they nevertheless supply some suggestions for changing individual, interpersonal behaviour.

At the conclusion, I felt the need to hear more about where challenges to gendered culture are being successfully made. It is unfortunate that there is such a paucity of contemporary (or, better, longitudinal) data about things such as women's and men's involvement in housework. The data cited are from a study by Fletcher published in 1978. At the same time, other data from more recent research (the Kawerau study, statistics about violence against women, etc.) are used to imply that not much has changed in terms of women's dependency. Is this really so? If so, is there no hope of bringing about changes to our gendered culture - even if a reassertion of traditional femininity is both practical and dangerous (p.60)? There is a fine line between acknowledging the persistence of inequalities and the futility of strategies for change.

That the gendered culture is socially constructed means that it is mutable: it can be changed. But will it? James and Saville-Smith give their attention primarily to *individual* responses and personal commitment by women and men to changing the division of labour between the sexes.

Like the Royal Commission on Social Policy, in *The April Report* (1988), James and Saville-Smith identify two critical areas for change if the gendered culture is to be undermined. These are: (1) domestic labour; and (2) caring

work. These two areas are important because they are a source of a division of labour and of economic inequality between the sexes. Again, arguments against traditional practices will most successfully be made if those traditional practices and the accompanying division of labour between the sexes are seen as socially constructed and not as natural.

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Gender, Culture and Power, Fresh Insights on Old Issues

Pat Shannon
Community Studies Unit, University of Otago.

As a discipline Sociology seems to have an endemic problem of the overproduction of a long winded, turgid and often incomprehensible body of literature. Yet, when I reflect upon the recent sociological writing that I have found most helpful it is the short, clearly written books that stand out. My personal list is, unhappily, rather brief but it contains Johnson (1972) on the professions, Lukes (1974) on power and now, Bev James and Kay Saville-Smith (1989) on **Gender, Culture and Power.**

Part of the explanation for my positive reaction to James, and Saville Smith is certainly the brevity and clarity of their book. The reader will note quite a time gap between 1974 (Lukes) and 1989. Fifteen years of wandering in the byways of impenetrable 'discourse' certainly makes one ready to appreciate something short and clearly written. However, while such considerations might account for my not being able to put the book down and reading it at one sitting (the first time) it does not fully explain my mounting excitement while reading. The reason for that lies in the fresh approach the book provided.

All three books I have listed are ones with new insights into what were for me, at the time, seemingly irresolvable dilemmas. Thus Johnson, with his idea of a profession as being a particular form of occupational control, enabled me to move past a sterile stand off between pro-and anti professionalism positions which each favoured one particular aspect of reality. Similarly, Lukes, with his clear analysis of the three dimensions of power, stimulated movement beyond the impasse of definitions of power focused only on one or other of these dimensions.

James and Saville-Smith have joined this select group because I find in their theories of a 'gendered culture' arising out of the interaction of class, sexist and racist inequalities an insight of similar liberating potential. As with the other two authors they reject a roadblock, here the false 'primacy debate' and the felt need to establish one form of inequality as determining all others, in favour of a perspective which promotes the open ended investigation of how these different forms of inequality interact. Such an insight is fundamentally a conceptual one (as with Johnson and Lukes) and while it does not resolve theoretical problems, it has considerable importance for explanatory progress. As they demonstrate in both the empirical analysis and their comparison of a gendered culture with class cultures, it enables them to focus both on New Zealand as a specific social formation and at the same tie, examine the totality of forces leading to such specificity. Rejection of the primacy issue as a false problem of confusing levels of abstraction teaches an important lesson I, for one, had tended to forget. This is that any general theoretical schema must be both open ended and indeterminate prior to its integration into the realities of specific societies and yet, at the same time, must be able to deal with the totality of the situation.

For me it has led to a fresh look at theory. Tending to espouse a Marxist perspective on, I believe, good grounds, my approach has always looked at sexist and racist inequalities as problems within a theoretically prescribed primacy of class. The result was to postpone these issues as 'to be resolved' without acknowledging the effect of such a strategy on explanation. This was to lose sight of both the holistic perspective and the specificity of New Zealand. In doing so I tended also to distort the theory. In abstract Marxist theory for example, my misconception was the 'class' had to have primacy, so I examined New Zealand phenomena in these terms. In Marxism, of course it is not class which has primacy in explanation but the dynamic of capitalist exploitation structured around two specific classes - proletariat and bourgeoisie. The middle class is thus as much of a problem for the unmediated application of the abstract theory as is sexism or racism. The challenge of a more open ended approach to general theory, it now seems to me, is not to explain away the middle class (contradictory locations?) or sexist and racist inequality but to confront clearly how and why capitalism, in specific situations, has led through specific forms of interaction, to specific total outcomes.

While I find James and Saville-Smith's basic insight valuable however I am not entirely convinced by their main thesis. Just as Johnson and Lukes did not link their fresh conceptual analyses with fully convincing explanations (although Johnson at least has since worked on remedying this [1977]) James and Saville-Smith's overall claim of a gendered society seems to me to be debatable. Their thesis appears to hold most water when applied to that distinctive period of New Zealand's capitalist development from the 1890's to the 1940's. Convincing arguments are advanced for the development of 'the cult of domesticity' at the end of the nineteenth century and for its subsequent dominance. Without being able to argue the case fully here, the claim is less plausible both prior to that period (as they seem to admit) and since. Indeed it could be argued that it was the uncontested dominance of 'gendered culture' during the first half of this century which best fits their argument. The contested position since, along with the renaissance of Maori anti-racist protest (which they do not deal with as effectively), may indicate a lessening of dominance. The continued existence of gender violence and indeed, even its intensification, could be construed as much as a phenomenon of struggle and change as of persistence.

Such quibbles notwithstanding Bev James and Kay Saville-Smith have provided us with an important contribution to the analysis of our society. It raises many questions of theoretical importance, such as the relationship between gendered culture and petty commodity production in New Zealand. Most importantly, however, it provides fresh insight which I have already found most valuable personally in attempting to analyse social policy.

This, I think, is a seminal book and we are in their debt.

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