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Green Politics and Spiritual Concerns

Carl Davidson
Christchurch

We can't solve our political problems without explicitly addressing our spiritual ones
Charlene Spretnak, 1986:18

Many commentators have noted that Green politics involves an important 'spiritual' element (for instance: Porritt, 1989; Porritt and Winner, 1988; Tokar, 1987; Spretnak, 1986; Commoner, 1973; Reich, 1970) and 'few writers on Green matters... have failed to deal with [this] spiritual dimension in one way or another' (Porritt and Winner, 1988:234). The presence of this 'spiritual dimension' means Green politics resembles 'a secular religion or form of ethical life [rather] than [a collection of] competing political ideologies' (*The Press*, 16.6.90). In this paper, we will explore this 'spiritual dimension' by seeing how the various environmental problems, which different threads of the Green movement rose around, are traced to a deeper crisis in the way humans relate to the non-human world. We will see how 'spiritual', in this usage, refers to a rejection of anthropocentric metaphysical assumptions and the adoption of a position denoted as 'ecocentric'. This distinction will be used to illustrate the commonly used 'deep ecology' versus 'shallow ecology' division in the Green movement. The paper will then examine the role of 'spiritual' concerns and motivations for Germany's Die Grunen and New Zealand's Values Party to illustrate their significance to Green politics. The paper ends by examining the

theoretical consequences that accepting this 'spiritual' dimension has for the study of Green politics.

Introduction

On first impressions, the 'Green' movement appears to be a loose collection of interest groups, each representing responses to separate ecological, political, economic or social problems. However, a more considered analysis reveals that descriptions of the Green movement as this diffuse collection of interest groups overlooks perhaps the most important point of all. That point, which brings unity to the movement, is that *each of those ecological, political, economic and social problems actually stems from the basic 'premises by which we live'* (Reich, 1970:13). Instead of being perceived as a *collection* of unrelated environmental, industrial, economic, social and political problems, the Green movement recognises that each of these problems are actually manifestations of a much deeper problem - a problem of the values underlying the relationship of humans to humans and to the non-human world. Elsewhere, I have argued that, although the Green movement has seemingly eclectic roots, the unity of these many threads can be found in a 'common source of concerns they each arose around... a recognition that *meaning* and *value* were lacking within certain aspects of the societies these people had inherited' (Davidson, 1992:12). Others have called that 'common source' a belief that 'something didn't quite fit' in the world their members found unfolding around them (Tokar, 1987:35). It is because of this shared belief that Reich (1970) labelled the Green movement a 'revolution by consciousness'. It is

also a 'source' of motivation which makes the 'spiritual' dimension central to Green politics.

The Creation of the Crisis

Before we examine the link to the political expression of the Green movement, we need to briefly examine those developments which led to the 'meaning' being taken out of human relationships to the non-human world. If Green politics is really about addressing a 'spiritual crisis', then where did this crisis come from ?

The ecological and social destruction of the modern world (which motivated the emergence of the Green movement) is a recent consequence of the Western world's dominant *weltanschauung*[1]. This is a way of perceiving and relating to the world which, through imposition or export, has been adopted throughout the globe. Yet if we wish to pinpoint the roots of the ecological crisis within this culture, we find it is the cumulative product of 'a series of wrong decisions - large and small, individual and collective - made over a considerable period of time' (Parkin, 1984:18).

Lynn White (1967:1203-7), in a prominent paper published in *Science*, argued that the source of the current environmental crisis could be traced to Christianity's victory over paganism as a way of conceptualising

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[1] A 'philosophical survey of the world' (Concise Oxford). A 'worldview' or 'paradigm' for conceptualising and interpreting the world.

people's relationship to nature. White called this victory 'the greatest psychic revolution in the history of our [Western] culture' (White, 1970:20) because it led to an anthropocentric interpretation of religion and to ideas about the 'purpose' of creation. Whereas paganism and Eastern religions stressed a monism of people and the natural order, Christianity (in its dominant expression[2]) taught a dualism where humans stood apart from the natural order. The early Roman Christians institutionalised a disavowal of direct spiritual experience, invested all spiritual power in the Church hierarchy, and violently suppressed traditional forms of spirituality grounded in direct experience of the Earth's powers as 'pagan' (Tokar, 1987:18). By destroying pagan animism, 'Christianity made it possible to exploit nature in a mood of indifference to the feelings of natural objects' (White, 1970:21) and justified that exploitation as 'God's will'. White argued that, consequently, we would continue to see a worsening ecological crisis until we rejected the central Christian doctrine that nature existed solely to serve humans (see Porritt and Winner, 1988:241).

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[2] While the majority of Christian teachings have always been anthropocentric, it is also true that there is a minority historical tradition of ecocentric Christian teachings, and there is a growing modern ecocentric movement. The historical tradition covers the teachings of figures such as St Francis of Assisi, and the modern movement covers the stewardship school seen in the work of Thomas Berry, Mathew Fox and Sean MacDonagh.

Along with orthodox Christian metaphysics, a key factor in the creation of the ecological crisis was the influence of pre-Christian Greek traditions of philosophy about the nature of thought and reality. The teachings of these Greek philosophers, which have shaped all Western philosophy since[3], introduced the notion of a *dualistic* worldview. Plato first recorded this perspective and introduced rigid distinctions between 'mind and body, reason and emotion [and] the real and ideal' (Tokar, 1987:17). Aristotle built on Plato's dualism and gave birth to a reductionist approach for analysing reality that became the cornerstone of Western science. A consequence of this worldview was the belief that *everything* was ultimately knowable. The worldview the West inherited from the Greeks, and the science it generated, brought what nobel laureate Konrad Lorenz called a 'tragic over-estimation' of our capabilities and our worth, and set us as 'adversaries and opponents of all the rest of nature' (Lorenz, 1987:231).

The rational-sequential-logical and reductionist *weltanschauung* the West inherited from the Greeks was endorsed by Christianity as a means for 'decoding' the

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[3] Recall Whitehead's dictum that all western philosophy is 'mere footnotes to Plato'. Here I am talking about the *dominant* Greek philosophical school of the Socratics, and in particular the works of Plato and Aristotle. It should be noted that many of the pre-Socratic Sophists and pre-Sophist Cosmologists were themselves monists, and that although our dualist-reductionist perspective comes from the Greeks, not all Greeks supported its legitimacy.

many cryptic secrets they believed God had hidden in the natural world and which, once decoded, would 'reveal the divine mentality' (White, 1970:17). For centuries, 'science' was even called 'natural theology', reflecting the belief that revealing divine mentality was the central purpose of such enquiry. From the Thirteenth Century 'up to and including Leibnitz and Newton, every major scientist... explained his motivations in religious terms' (Tokar,1987:21) and 'the consistency with which scientists during long formative centuries of Western science said the task of the scientist was 'to think God's thoughts after him' leads one to believe that this was their real motivation' (White, 1970:21-2). It would take until the middle of the Eighteenth Century before Western scientists would feel comfortable echoing Laplace's views of God, that God had 'no need of this hypotheses' (in Davies, 1987:25).

Even before God was removed entirely from scientific theorising, the role of God shifted from one of a cosmic caretaker intimately involved in the everyday running of the universe to one of a brilliant engineer who had created mechanisms that were now running without need for God's intimate involvement. From the start of the Seventeenth Century, and the onset of the 'Scientific Revolution', scientists began to believe that the universe acted like a giant clockwork machine. Descartes claimed that 'God had set the universe in motion according to fixed mathematical laws [and] science existed to discover those laws and understand the elements of nature in sufficient detail' (Tokar, 1987:21). But while God's involvement in the natural world was becoming increasingly indirect, the anthropocentric 'purpose' of creation remained. Descartes believed that the purpose of

understanding nature was so that humans could 'employ these entities for all the purposes for which they are suited, and so make ourselves masters and possessors of nature' (Toker, 1987:21). Francis Bacon was even more explicit, demanding that *understanding* nature was not enough and that the destiny of humans was to 'literally enslave nature, to 'conquer and subdue her, to shake her to her foundations'' (see Tokar, 1987:21). With the rise of mechanistic theories in physics, chemistry and biology, 'God' was, somewhat ironically, displaced as an explanatory hypothesis. The universe became a collection of blind forces operating according to probabilities described by statistical laws. However, mechanistic science preserved the human-centred assumptions that underpinned traditional Christian beliefs and justified human destruction of the non-human world at the same time as it increased the ability of humans to do so dramatically.

The Greek notions of duality, along with the anthropocentric aspects infused with moral worth and superiority by the Christian Church, created the preconditions for the present ecological and social crises. With the industrial revolution came the tools for humans to seriously begin to 'enslave, conquer and subdue' the natural world. Industrialism is rooted in a philosophy that says securing economic goals through the destruction of the natural environment is both tolerable and desirable. It sought the total dominance of nature and built on the assumption that it had *no intrinsic worth* (Worster, 1988:17). The rationale of industrialism saw the natural world as existing only to supply an endless line of consumer goods or absorb the by-products of its industrial processes as waste and pollution. What had

'worth' or 'value' would be dictated by the market and, by definition, ignored the human dependence on the natural order (Schumacher, 1975:46). Economists such as Keynes were explicit that ethical considerations were not merely irrelevant but actually a hinderance because markets dictated that 'the foul is useful and [the] fair is not' (in Schumacher, 1975:25). Keynes also believed there was little point in considering the future consequences of such actions as 'in the long run we [are] all dead' (in Swift, 1987:5).

The sum total of all of these developments has been the creation of a societal order described as a 'Technocratic system' (Lorenz, 1987) or 'Technocracy' (Reich, 1970), where economics and technology have combined to establish themselves as a 'tyrant over mankind' (Lorenz, 1987:172). In this modern technocratic system, 'economic values dominate the deliberations and decisions of our democracy [where] human [and] non-material, values are readily sacrificed in the pursuit of material power' (Porritt, 1989:19). Under the rationale of this system 'when something becomes technically possible it is regarded as a duty... to realise this possibility' (Reich, 1970:19). The historian Frederick Turber noted that the creation of such a system was an inevitable consequence of removing the sense of divinity from the natural world, for it established a 'spiritually barren world where the only outlet for the urge to life is the restless drive onwards' (Tokar, 1987:19). This system now 'rumbles along unguided and therefore indifferent to human ends' (Reich, 1970:20), consuming everything in its path. When attention is drawn to the damage being created in the name of such 'progress', the response is that 'it is necessary and acceptable to ravage the landscape [and our psyches] in the pursuit of

maximum economic production' (Worster, 1988:16). As a consequence of perceiving the world this way, most people have 'suppressed that link between themselves and the Earth [so that] the natural world remains something alien, something to be mechanically exploited by science and technology' (Porritt, 1989:106). Again, it is for these very reasons that Greens such as Rachel Carson (1962) demand that what the environmental crisis needs is not bigger and better technical solutions but rather a thorough rethinking of humanity's most basic assumptions about its place in the larger scheme of creation.

In summary, the Western world's linear economic systems and its reductionist sciences can be justifiably seen as the source of the present global ecological crisis. These are both endeavours whose destructiveness was (and *is*) justified by an anthropocentric worldview, created by the dominant schools of Greek philosophy, legitimised by the Christian Church, and eventually supported by scientific theories which could find nothing but 'blind forces' and 'probabilities' operating in the natural world. The combination of these developments has created an approach to nature that attempts to 'beat it into submission' (E.B. White, quoted in Carson, 1962).

The Spiritual Dimension

It is obvious that any *weltanschauung* which attributes nature its own inherent worth could never have given birth to a societal order that exploits nature and destroys the natural environment. The Taoists, for example, see nature not as a storehouse of *resources* created to be used

by humans in the fulfilment of a divine plan but as an essential part of that interconnected divinity. The *Tao te Ching* tells us: 'if you destroy unity, you destroy yourself' (Hoff, 1981:37). The native North American Indians expressed a similar regard for the unity of the natural order, claiming: 'we are part of the Earth and the Earth is part of us...whatever befalls the Earth befalls the sons of the Earth...the Earth does not belong to man, man belongs to the Earth' (from Chief Seattle's address to Congress, 1854). Chief Seattle perfectly captured the Western approach to nature when he said: 'the Earth is not his brother but his enemy, and when he has conquered it he moves on... his appetite will devour the Earth and leave behind only desert'. The Hopi Indian have a term for the conditions the dominant industrial-materialist-scientific world view has created; it is *aan Koyaanisqatsi* which means 'life out of balance' or 'way of life that calls for another way of living'.

Central to the Green movement is the belief that the dominant Western 'technocratic' way of living now clearly demands 'another way of living' based on a reintroduction of meaning. At its heart, the Green movement is a protest 'not at the stripping of natural resources but the stripping of earthly meaning... environmentalism actually constitutes a defence of meaning' (Porritt and Winner, 1988:234). It is this desire to reintroduce meaning that has seen the Green movement described as a spiritual phenomenon (Spretnak, 1986). Here 'spiritual' means a 'move from partial, fragmented, compartmentalized living towards completeness and holistic living [which] put[s] back what our dominant, industrial-materialist-scientific world view leaves out. That omitted area is what [Greens] mean by

spiritual' (Scwarz and Scwarz, 1987, cited in Porritt and Winner, 1988:233). It is fundamentally a recognition of interconnectedness and interdependence, and is based on the religious experience of unity central to the sages of all great religions (see Bucke, 1969). Roszak (1972:xx), in *Where the Wasteland Ends*, says: 'I mean religion in its perennial sense. The old Gnosis. Vision born of transcendent knowledge... the essential religious impulse'.

The Green Movement and the 'New Age'

Here we should note that the 'spiritual' dimension of the Green movement is not the same as the New Age movement, although the two clearly have much in common. One of the most significant aspects of the New Age movement is its holistic approach to spirituality, with its encompassing of 'ecology and... alternative medicines, hi-tech science, Eastern religion, quantum physics and feminism in an attempt to look at society in a unified way' (Howard, 1989:174). What consensus exists between these groups seems to be in the belief that 'we are all part of the whole, and if you want to change the whole, you have to start on yourself' (Vidal, in Porritt and Winner, 1988:248). The movement has also been described as a 'revolution of ideas' (Porritt and Winner, 1988). It is important to understand that for many 'new agers', the movement is about a way of being, and 'we can forget the new age of channels, crystals, and charisma, and get on with discovering and co-creating a harmonious world that will nourish and empower ourselves' (Spangler, in Porritt and Winner, 1988:249). The connection to the Green movement seems to be in the acknowledgement that any genuine transformation of society requires a synthesis of

religion, science and art, 'and the spiritual concepts and principles applied to these disciplines' (Howard, 1989:174). The New Age movement is also important to the Green movement because the various spiritual ideals expressed are gradually filtering through to the wider society and creating 'subtle changes in the way ordinary people look at their planet and their fellow human beings' (Howard, 1989:175). Interestingly, in a 1989 Gallup Poll, 59 percent of Americans complained that their traditional churches or synagogues were 'too concerned with organisational as opposed to theological or spiritual issues', and college-educated people were especially critical of a 'lack of spiritual nurturing' (Naisbitt and Aburdene, 1989:296).

Spirituality and Science

As well as the teachings of many traditional Eastern and indigenous religions, the notions of interconnectedness and interdependence advocated by Greens are gaining support from modern science itself. For instance, James Lovelock's famous book, *Gaia: A New Look at Life on Earth*, proposed the hypothesis that the Earth constituted a single system, created and managed by living organisms for their own convenience. The delicate balances which allow life to exist on Earth, Lovelock argued, do not occur by chance but are maintained by the processes of life themselves. Lovelock's work, proposed as a rigorous scientific hypothesis, has become increasingly accepted (however begrudgingly) by the scientific establishment as many of the natural cycles and processes in the biosphere are found to behave as the hypothesis predicts. Lovelock is clear that Gaia, for him, is a strict scientific hypothesis, and 'not to be adulterated by the metaphysical meanderings of a bunch of latter-day hippies' (Porritt and

Winner, 1988:250). Despite Lovelock's reluctance, it is hard not to draw parallels between his theory and the once universal belief in the Earth as a divine being, as 'Mother Earth' or 'Mother Nature'. The ancient Greeks, for example, believed they were children of the Earth and that the Earth was a living organism whose 'natural laws' rewarded those who treated her well and destroyed those who harmed her (see Porritt, 1989:207). Lovelock seems to be suggesting something remarkably similar to such beliefs.

As well as Lovelock's Gaia hypothesis, Greens also point to modern science's emerging 'systems view' of the world as a validation of their spiritual beliefs. Capra (1985) writes: 'modern science is leading us to a new ecological worldview [which] ties in well with the Eastern [religious] tradition... the evolving paradigm is ecological, holistic, and based on the systems approach' (Capra and van Steenbergen, 1985:529). Capra adds: 'I think... the next step in the development of the systems approach will [be] to develop a scientific model that will include such matters as spirituality and consciousness' (Capra and van Steenbergen, 1985:531). While the Greens' commitment to a holistic way of looking at the world demands that no version of science can ever provide a total explanation, I mention these examples to show that their notion of spirituality is not anti-scientific.

Spirituality and 'Deep Ecology'

Incorporating a spiritual dimension into ecology means moving beyond notions of *conserving* or *preserving* the

natural *environment*[4] to a position known as 'deep ecology'. 'Deep' ecology (also known as 'Transpersonal Ecology') means many different things to different writers (see Fox, 1990) but essentially reflects the perception that ecology is more a 'defence of the cosmos than a defence of nature'. Originally the work of the Norwegian philosopher Arne Naess, it is an idea developed by Bill Devall and George Sessions in the United States and by Warwick Fox in Australia. Among the principles of Deep Ecology are the beliefs that:

1. The well-being and flourishing of non-human life on Earth have value in themselves, independent of the *usefulness* of the non-human world for human purposes;

2. Present human interference with the non-human world is excessive [that is, it has gone far beyond what is necessary to meet our own *vital* needs] and the situation is rapidly worsening;

3. Policies must therefore be changed. These policies affect basic economic, technological and ideological structures. The resulting state of affairs would be different from the present;

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[4] Note that 'environment' by definition means 'that which surrounds' (*Concise Oxford*) and itself reflects anthropocentric assumptions about the centrality of humans to the natural order.

4. The ideological change is mainly that of appreciating the quality of life rather than adhering to an increasingly higher standard of living (Porritt and Winner, 1988:235).

As this brief list should make clear, Deep Ecology is 'spiritual in its very essence' (Capra and Spretnak, 1986:53). Its notion of embeddedness in nature and the interconnectedness of all phenomena parallels the principles of Native American, pre-Christian Pagan European, Taoist and Buddhist traditions. Deep Ecology's rejection of anthropocentric assumptions about the place of humans in the non-human world creates a qualitatively different approach to ecology than more conventional perspectives. These more conventional approaches (which are perhaps the most common form of popular 'environmental' concern) draw attention to the exploitation by human's of the non-human world but argue for its conservation and preservation from anthropocentric positions. These people argue that the non-human world should be *preserved* because of its value to humans (be it scientific, recreational or aesthetic value) rather than for any intrinsic worth (Fox, 1990:10). These people 'continue to perpetuate, however unwittingly, the arrogant assumption that we humans are central to the cosmic drama; that, essentially, the world is for us' (Fox, 1990:11). Capra summarises the differences between the two approaches as: 'the new view of reality is an ecological vision [which] goes far beyond the immediate concerns with environmental protection... whereas shallow environmentalism is concerned with more efficient control and management of the natural environment for the benefit of 'man', the deep ecology movement recognizes that ecological balance will require profound changes in

our perception of the role of human beings in the planetary ecosystem... in short it will require a new philosophical and religious basis' (Capra, 1982:411-12). It is this deep ecology position that is repeatedly referred to as providing the philosophical and spiritual ground for Green politics (see Fox, 1990; Capra and Spretnak, 1986).

At the heart of Deep Ecology is the rejection of anthropocentrism and the adoption of a position denoted as 'ecocentrism'. Anthropocentrism is rejected by the Deep Ecologists for five general reasons:

1. Where we have been able to check anthropocentric assumptions against reality, we have discovered 'again and again that these views... have been empirically wrong' (Fox, 1990:14). For instance, we do not live at the centre of the universe and we are not biologically unrelated to other species.

2. Anthropocentric arguments have proved disastrous in practice and, has been argued here, are at the root of the present ecological crisis.

3. Anthropocentrism is not a logically consistent perspective because 'it is not possible to specify any reasonable, morally relevant characteristic that includes all humans but excludes all non-humans' (Fox, 1990:16).

4. An increasing number of moral philosophers are concluding that anthropocentrism is morally objectionable. This is different from the 'logically inconsistent' argument in that it argues *even if* it

was possible to specify a 'reasonable, morally relevant characteristic' that included all humans but excluded all non-humans, the 'kinds of criteria that *ought* to be accepted are such as to include not only humans but many other kinds of entities as well' (Fox, 1990:17).

5. Anthropocentric views, according to what Fox calls 'a number of apparently highly perceptive people (such as religious sages)', simply do not accord with 'an open experience of reality' (Fox, 1990:17).

Fox summarises the arguments against anthropocentrism by claiming 'it is empirically bankrupt and theoretically disastrous, practically disastrous, logically inconsistent, morally objectionable, and incongruent with a genuinely open approach to experience... that doesn't leave much to recommend it !' (Fox, 1990:19). However, as Fox notes, the fact that anthropocentric assumptions are convenient and self-serving means they have become 'deeply embedded in our culture and consciousness' (Fox, 1990:19). As a consequence, any challenge to them is met with resistance and criticism. While Deep Ecology is a perspective that is gaining in influence, particularly in the United States (Porritt and Winner, 1988:236), it is also one that has attracted increasing (and increasingly vitriolic) criticism from those suspicious of its tenets. Murray Bookchin, a social ecologist, described deep ecology as 'a vague, formless, self-contradictory, invertebrate thing [which] has parachuted into our midst from the sun-belt's bizarre mix of Hollywood and Disneyland, re-born Christianity, spiced homilies from Taoism, Buddhism, spirituality and so on' (Boochkin, 1987). On examination, Boochkin's

conflict with deep ecology seems to be specifically with its overt spiritual dimension. 'What really bothers Bookchin is what he refers to as 'ecolala', by which he means 'all that nebulous nature-worship with its suspicious bouquet of wood-sprites and fertility rites, its animist, shamanistic figures and post-industrialist paganism' (Porritt and Winner, 1988:239). Bookchin dismisses anyone who believes there is such a spiritual dimension as 'flaky spiritualists'.

Boochkin's attack on the deep ecologists reflects the conflict within the Green movement between those who come from intellectual/Marxist backgrounds and those Greens coming out of a 'holistic' or 'new age' perspective. The intellectual/Marxist Greens reject the supernatural perspective of the holistic/new age Greens who, in turn, find the polemical, super-intellectual approach of the Marxists anathema. This conflict could be seen clearly in Germany, where one of the deepest divisions in Die Grunen was between 'those who see themselves on the ex-Marxist Left, and those who feel themselves inspired by a more visionary, spiritual understanding of what it is to be Green' (Porritt and Winner, 1988:240). Having said that, Porritt and Winner (1988:240) add: 'most Greens... would still insist that without some understanding of the spiritual dimension, it will always be a rather lifeless, insipid shade of Green that we are dealing with'.

While there is widespread acknowledgement of a spiritual dimension to Green politics, it is important to realise that the Green movement is not suggesting the creation of a new, ecologically pure, religion. Instead, it is fundamentally concerned with creating a metaphysical reconstruction by rediscovering the ecological wisdom

contained in all existing religious and spiritual traditions (see Porritt and Winner, 1988:241). The Greens acknowledge that the specifics of this 'metaphysical reconstruction' will mean different things to different people, and the movement 'enthusiastically embrace[s] a pluralistic Green ecumenism' (Porritt and Winner, 1988:240). This commitment to reconstruction has seen Green politics described as 'the rediscovery of old wisdom made relevant in a very different age [because] opposition to this dominant world view cannot possibly be articulated through any of the major parties, for they and their ideologies are part of the problem. Green politics challenges the integrity of those ideologies, questions the philosophy that underlies them, and fundamentally disputes the generally accepted notions of rationality' (Kelly, in Porritt, 1989:x-xi).

The Greens

A brief examination of the history of the global Green Movement reveals that it has *always* been concerned with the reassessment of meaning. For instance, the Green movement's real origins lie in the post-war social transformations which first emerged in the United States such as the 'Beatniks'. During the 1950s, these were a loosely knit collection of young people who coalesced to protest against what they saw as 'madness' in the society developing around them. A common thread was the movement's opposition to the 'threat of nuclear destruction and the corruption of society' (Papadakis, 1984:5). Papadakis (1984:6) mentions the beatniks's addition of an 'existential dimension to politics' as their legacy to the modern Green movement. In Europe (where

the beats emerged shortly after the American experience), the beats took part in demonstrations against nuclear power stations, the overt militarism that was developing in post-war Europe, and created forums for the discussions about 'norms, values and ways of life because of their rejection of the ethics of work, achievement and consumption' (Papadakis, 1984:6). By demonstrating workable alternatives to society's dominant values (of conformity and unquestioning acceptance of the 'status quo'), the beats had created the seeds of a new consciousness.

By the mid-1960s, the feelings of discontentment which had fuelled the beat generation had become far more widespread among the youth of America (and, a little later, Europe too). This discontentment generated widespread cultural, social and artistic experimentation which was 'the beginning of an *awakening* to the idea that the established routines of the twentieth century were not the only way [and] that it was possible to create new ways of living that could allow people to more fully realise themselves' (Tokar, 1987:35). The emergence of this consciousness could be seen in the civil rights, peace and student movements, and later by the re-emergence of feminism and a widespread environmental sensitivity. By 1966 or 1967, 'a genuine counter-culture had emerged, which was to shake the foundations of the values America had come to take for granted' (Tokar, 1987:34). The importance of this movement for the modern Greens comes because the majority of that 'counter-culture' were not simply 'dropping out', as the above should have made clear, but were attempting to leave it behind through the creation of a new set of values. These youth-based movements fundamentally believed that 'the

economic and political behaviour of those in power [was leading] to spoilage and ruin' (Lorenz, 1987:207).

These patterns were repeated outside North America: in 1968, students and workers went on strike in France to protest at the 'regimentation and stultifying patterns of everyday life' (Tokar, 1987:37); in Eastern Europe, there was the Prague Spring; and throughout the Western world, people protested at their country's involvement in Vietnam. A unifying theme throughout these occurrences seemed to be the recognition that 'sweeping, revolutionary changes were necessary to transform a system which thrived on war, poverty, and oppression' (Tokar, 1987:37).

It is significant that those feelings of discontentment and a desire for change did not vanish in the 1980s during a decade that has otherwise been described as a 'new era of complacency, materialism and an acceptance of selfish, competitive values' (Tokar, 1987:135). For many budding Greens, the growth of conspicuous consumption and its attendant worship of materialism were clear expressions of how unbalanced our society had become, and a clarion call to action. Brunt (1973:79) described this as 'a depression which arises not from a lack of affluence but almost too much of it'. Those concerned at these developments claimed society was disregarding essential dimensions to the 'quality of life' such as acknowledging one's responsibility to other peoples and the non-human world. The consequence of these concerns, Tokar notes, was the creation of 'a time of searching and a time of vision... a new spiritual yearning reached segments of our society that seemed unaffected by the changes of the sixties and seventies [and, now] many people are seeking

a new spiritual underpinning for their lives' (Tokar, 1987:135). Given the continual inability of conventional politics to address such issues, Tokar argues that it was 'necessary for peace-loving and ecologically minded people to articulate not just a new politics but a new ethics and a new earth-centred moral sensibility' (Tokar, 1987:136). It is the argument of this paper that Green politics serves both ends. This can be seen illustrated by both the New Zealand Values Party of the 1970s and West Germany's Die Grunen in the 1980s.

New Zealand's Values Party

The Values Party was 'a true Green party long before the ideas were fashionable, emphasizing not only environmental issues but also values and spirituality' (Capra and Spretnak, 1986:172). The real purpose of the Values Party was clearly reflected in the choice of the party's name. Writing in 1973, the Party's founder, Tony Brunt, described the social climate of New Zealand as 'in the grip of a new depression... *a depression of human values*, a downturn not in the national economy but its *national spirit*' (Brunt, 1973:79). He called the national frustration 'a spiritual epidemic' and disparaged the existing government for 'acting to all the world as if an expanding gross national product, booming exports, colour television and a motor mower in every refrigerator could compensate for the aimlessness and social malaise that had spread over the land' (Brunt, 1973:81). Brunt's disillusionment with the seeming impotence of the existing political system moved him to form a new party to redress that 'spiritual epidemic'. Brunt believed the time was right to act for two main reasons -

(i) a realisation was growing that 'too much political and social effort was being devoted to the needs of the 'system' instead of the needs of the people. Overwhelming forces of bureaucracy, technology and production were coming to dominate man and accommodate him to their needs... *machine values were replacing human values'* (Brunt, 1973:86). Brunt argued that the *central problem* of society was not any of the concerns of class politics or economic conflicts but that the members of society had surrendered control to 'impersonal forces [the 'system'] that were completely indifferent to class interests' (Brunt, 1973:87).

(ii) there was an increasing awareness of the cogency of *non-material needs*. In a society of general affluence, post-economic desires were becoming paramount in what Brunt identified as 'a natural qualitative progression up Abraham Maslow's 'Hierarchy of Needs'' (Brunt, *Ibid*:87).

These two key threads gave rise to most of the Values Party policies, encapsulated by their campaign expressions 'human values' and 'quality of life'. Colin James noted that, whereas 'the Labour Party is principally a party of economics, Values [was] one of the spirit' (see Rainbow, 1989:184). This idealism was reflected in the support the party attracted, as 'competition, consumption, prestige, power and financial gain did not figure in the priorities of the keenest supporters' (Brunt, 1973:93).

In Stuart McVarish's (1992) book, *The Greening of New Zealand*, both Christine Dann and Stephen Rainbow

discuss how this spiritual dimension is very much alive in the New Zealand Green Party in the 1990s.[5] Dann, spokesperson for the Green Party since 1990, says 'the point of spiritual experience... is to know everything is one, [that] the sin behind all sins is separateness - and then go back into the world to proliferate that connection' (McVarish, 1992:25). Rainbow, elected a Green Party Councillor for Wellington in 1989 and a Green Party candidate for Wellington Central in the 1990 Election, says that 'one of my greatest pleasures in life is finding connections between things that formerly seemed disparate. Nothing can be separated... Spiritually, I am aware of the interconnection of everything' (McVarish, 1992:30). Both Dann and Rainbow are clear that the Green Party is about the reassessment of society's relationship to the non-human world, fundamentally based on a rejection of the notion that we have to destroy the world in order to live (Moore, 1990).

West Germany's Die Grunen

The same 'spiritual' dimension can also be found at the heart of the West German Greens, Die Grunen, although here references to it are initially harder to uncover. Spretnak (1986), writing of her experiences with Die Grunen members, notes: 'I was much intrigued by the occasional mention in their publications of 'the spiritual impoverishment of modern society' or of 'an

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[5] The Values Party changed its name to The Green Party of Aotearoa in 1989, and returned from its then political obscurity to become a renewed force in New Zealand politics by the 1990 General Election.

industrialised society' [and] I thought 'aha ! they have found an antidote - and they have integrated it with the new politics' (Spretnak, 1986:21). From her experience with the members of Die Grunen, Spretnak (1986:22) reported that 'nearly all of them' affirmed that there was an important spiritual dimension to their politics, although little overt attention was explicitly paid to it. When Spretnak pointed out this seeming inconsistency, the German Greens would 'look down or out of the window [before] finally explaining that because the Nazis manipulated religion, especially a pre-christian nature-based religion (the Nordic myths about the 'sacred' soil of Germany), it is practically *verboten* to bring religious impulses into German politics today' (Spretnak, 1986:22). Petra Kelly noted that 'a problem in the *Realpolitik* of West Germany is that any time you mention spirituality people accuse you of talking about something perverted - because it was perverted by the Nazis' (from Capra and Spretnak, 1986:53). Spretnak also discovered that those German Greens who had come from a Marxist background squelched talk of spiritual values and a feeling of reverence for nature...' in short [she] learned that the spiritual dimension of Green politics is unlikely to come out of Germany, even though it provides motivation for many German Greens' (Spretnak, 1986:26). Because of both the influence of the Marxists and the legacy of the Nazis, most Greens 'recalled the spiritual impulse was stronger in the days before the movement became a party' (Capra and Spretnak, 1986:54). Nevertheless, the former general manager of Die Grunen, Lukas Beckman, has noted that at heart, the German Greens 'are a spiritual movement' (Capra and Spretnak, 1986:55).

The spiritual dimension to Die Grunen can be seen in both the motivations behind the party and in its politics. Rudolf Bahro identified the Greens' source of motivation in the recognition that 'human beings do not live to produce, or rather the fact they do is precisely the reason for their destruction' (Bahro, 1986:188). Bahro has spoken out frequently about 'the political need for spiritual transformation' (Capra and Spretnak, 1986:55). He encapsulated the purpose of Green politics when he said that 'contrary to all appearances, what ecological politics means is precisely; away with the safety belt, away with all the arms we bear - then we shall live. The idol is already tottering, it will also fall' (Capra and Spretnak, 1986:55).

The politics of Die Grunen are founded on four basic principles to guide their long term vision - ecology, social responsibility, grassroots democracy and nonviolence. 'Ecology' here is used in a fundamentally 'deep ecology' sense and goes far beyond conservation or restoration of the environmental status quo (Capra and Spretnak, 1986:30). Deep ecology, as we have seen, rejects anthropocentric assumptions about the non-human natural world and adopts an ecocentric approach which has major implications for 'our politics, our economy, our social structures, our educational system, our healthcare, our cultural expressions and our spirituality' (Capra and Spretnak, 1986:30). This expression of the embeddedness of humans in nature and an interrelation to other phenomena (the central tenets of Deep Ecology) is fundamentally spiritual. As Petra Kelly (in Capra and Spretnak, 1986:55) said: 'with the holistic sense of spirituality, one's personal life is truly political and one's political life is truly personal. Anyone who does not

comprehend within him- or herself this essential unity cannot achieve political change on a deep level and cannot strive for the true ideals of the Greens'

Some Methodological and Theoretical Consequences

Spiritual concerns, which have been shown here to be central to Green politics and the wider Green movement, involve a call for the reassessment of the values upon which our society is based. It is a reassessment of the most elementary kind, which 'embraces *every* dimension of human experience and *all* life on Earth' (Porritt, 1989:215). This has led some commentators to note: 'it goes a great deal further in terms of political comprehensiveness than any other political persuasion or ideology has ever gone before' (Porritt, 1989:216). This comprehensiveness creates considerable problems for the conceptualisation and analysis of such politics.

Perhaps the most obvious of these problems has to do with operationalisation of the motivations here understood as 'spiritual'. Porritt and Winner (1988:234) noted that this spiritual dimension 'is difficult to pin down [and if you] dogmatize that kind of feeling, try and classify it, try and pigeon-hole it by putting a bit of pretentious polysyllabic nomenclature to it [then] it just blows away'. This spiritual dimension also demands an analytical framework which 'allow consideration of *qualitative* factors such as attitude, ideals and values which may not be so easy to substantiate empirically' (Rainbow, 1989:184, emphasis added).

Acknowledging the centrality of the 'spiritual-ecocentric' dimension to Green politics also helps shift the emphasis of study *away* from European experiences. In a paper published in *Political Studies,* Hay and Haward (1988) argue that 'some of the most important insights to be gained into the essentials of Green politics and the nature of the challenge it poses to conventional political forces are to be found beyond Europe, particularly in North America and Australasia, [and] that a failure to take these factors into account leads to an inadequate understanding of the Green phenomenon' (Hay and Haward, 1988:433). The factors that Hay and Haward believe a Euro-centric understanding of Green politics particularly miss is that outside of Europe, Green movements encapsulate a wilderness dimension which 'involves notably the notion that moral standing is not an exclusively human quality, but that non-human nature is also morally 'considerable' (a position denoted as bio- or ecocentrism)' (Hay and Haward, 1988:434). Whereas Rudig and Lowe (1986) point to the catalytic role of the anti-nuclear movement for Green politics in Western Europe, Hay and Haward (1988:437) point out that 'the theoretical wellspring shaping Green theory in North America and Australia was... the contemporary experience of the wilderness, and reactions to its imminent demise at the hands of one imperialist species assuming the right to dispose the non-human world in its own interests'. This wilderness-inspired Green commitment is 'qualitatively different' from an anti-nuclear derived position, because 'to defend wilderness as having its own justification for being in and of itself - that is, without reference to its use value to humans - requires the asking of some very fundamental questions' (Hay and Haward, 1988:437). As we have seen, the belief that the natural world is primarily perceived as

a resource that can be used by humans is 'a hitherto unquestioned axiom of Western history and the economic and technological system woven into that history. The impulse to defend the existential rights of wilderness in precedence over human use rights... constitutes nothing less than a challenge to the homocentric assumptions that are at the heart of Western value systems, and which are common to *all* major traditions of Western political thought' (Hay and Haward, 1988:438). Green politics is thus at its most radical where it is most ecocentric.

From a theoretical perspective, this spiritual dimension means Green politics moves 'beyond humanism, modernity, and patriarchy' (Spretnak, 1986:26). The spiritual dimension of Green Politics rejects the anthropocentric assumptions of humanism which claims 'humans have the ability to confront and solve the many problems we face by applying human reason and by rearranging the natural world...so that human life will prosper' (Spretnak, 1986:27). As well as rejecting the assumptions of humanism Green politics also fundamentally rejects the values of modernity. Modern culture, Spretnak (1986:29) argues, is premised on the control of human and non-human systems, and responsible for creating 'rootless cosmopolitanism, nationalistic chauvinism, sterile secularism and monoculture shaped by mass media'. This opposition to modernity is not based on a desire to return to an arcadian pre-industrial past or about 'dropping out' but about creating a new basis for future development based on human-scale, self-reliance, self-determination, non-violence and mutual support (Porritt, 1989:205). What the Greens demand we need is 'the maturity to value freedom *and* tradition, the individual *and* the community, science

and Nature, men *and* women' (Spretnak, 1986:30). Green politics is also opposed to patriarchal values both in the narrow sense of the male domination and exploitation of women, *and* the broader cultural sense reflected in a 'love of hierarchical structure and competition, love of dominance-or-submission modes of relating, alienation from Nature, [and] suppression of empathy and other emotions' (Spretnak, 1986:30). By rejecting the humanistic, modernist and patriarchal assumptions behind the current industrial world order, Green politics is by definition a post-humanist, post-modern and post-patriarchal phenomenon.

Finally, and perhaps most seriously, are the protests raised by those for whom any mention of 'spirituality' or a 'revolution by consciousness' is tainted with totalitarian overtones. This is not simply for the abuses meted out by the Nazi regime, in particular, but also because liberal democracy is built on the distinction of the personal from the political. This means, in such a democracy, that the 'spiritual' element of Green politics needs to arise from individuals, and raises important questions about how particular groups can effect a cultural transformation. Basically, how do you turn the vast majority of the populace onto the new ideals? There are some within the Green movement who are prepared to sacrifice anything in what they see as their bid to save the world, including the tenets of democracy and personal liberty. Understandably, this perspective is met with disdain by many others in the Green movement, as well as many outside observers and commentators (see Rainbow, 1993). They counter, sensibly, that the Green challenge is built around asking fundamental questions about the kind of

society we want to live in, and replacing an ecological dystopia with a social one completely misses the point.

I am not among those who believe we can, or should, sacrifice anything in the pursuit of ecological sanity. The examples cited throughout the paper are of those who have come to the 'spiritual' dimension of the Green movement through personal revelation, religious experiences or other insights attained on an individual basis. While Rainbow (1993:48) believes that 'change at the level of the individual will not be the basis of a cultural transformation', I follow Bahro in believing that change *will* come from the transformed (see Bahro, 1986:104). Optimistically, I echo Bohm and Peat's sentiments that 'all great changes have begun to manifest themselves in a few people at first, but these were only the 'seeds' of something greater to come' (1987:271).

Conclusion

This paper has argued that 'spiritual' concerns are fundamental to Green politics and bring unity to the wider Green movement. While there are - and probably always will be - components of the Green movement which are simply expressions of 'shallow' environmental concerns, the more significant Green position is the one which sees the collection of ecological, political, social and economic problems as systemic manifestations of a deeper, metaphysical problem. Essentially, we have forgotten how to live in harmony with the natural world or with ourselves.

Recognising this as the primary source of current collection of problems, these Greens demand that the logical solution is through a reassessment of our relationship with the natural world. This reassessment, or 'metaphysical reconstruction', is what is meant by 'the spiritual dimension' of Green politics. Without internalising a spiritual dimension to rethink the basic premises by which we live, Green politics would otherwise be merely 'environmental tinkering' and doomed to fail simply because it could not 'address the underlying causes of the ecological crisis' (Stewart, 1990).

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Problematic Characteristics of the Public Deliberation on Core Health Services–Accountability and Moral Authority

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Abstract

Defining the core health services is an important part of the National Government's restructuring of the health services. This definition is essentially a rationing exercise – the 'core' will determine which services are to be publicly funded and which are not. Public participation in determining the core may be best for establishing the consensus and moral authority needed for these decisions. The process by which the public participates and the accountability of the Government to the public's input are of particular concern to determining the 'core'. Two models of public participation from democratic theory are offered: (1) representative and (2) participatory.

Defining the core health services for which the State will be responsible is an essential part of the National Government's restructuring of state-funded and provided health care. The core health services deliberation is essentially a rationing exercise. Literature on the rationing of health care suggests that the most difficult aspects of rationing are the specification of health 'needs', high consumer expectations (Upton, 1991) and the surging expense of medical technology, the existence of which breaks new ethical and moral ground (Blank, 1988). As will be discussed, each of these aspects is an important

factor in New Zealand's deliberation on core services. These themes are consistently repeated throughout the publications on health reforms and particularly the 'core'.

In *The Core Debate–Stage One: How We Define the Core* (May, 1991) the then Minister of Health Simon Upton establishes a framework for determining this list of core health services. Two broad issues that need to be considered are:

- the needs and preferences of the community as a whole must be balanced with the needs and preferences we have as individual users of health services–there is a trade-off between a well-defined core and consumer choice

- we need to strike a balance between public consultation, individual choice and expert input into the decision-making process

  The Core Debate–Stage One: How We Define the Core (p.4)

It is too simplistic to describe the task of defining 'core health services' as determining what Upton (1991) calls 'an adequate minimum level of health care' for all New Zealanders. Society is being asked to strike what Pellegrino (1985:9) terms a 'morally defensible balance' between the good of the individual and the good of society. It is this balance that is truly the fundamental undertaking of New Zealand's core health services deliberation.

The government's call for public input

As Blank (1988:84) reminds us, the 'relevant question' today is not whether there should be rationing; it is over who should shoulder the prime responsibility of rationing decisions. In *Your Health and the Public Health* Upton (1991) suggests that New Zealand's 'informal' rationing has occurred without public scrutiny or control. He calls for explicitly defining core health services to 'ensure that the services *the public believes to be the most important* will be provided' (emphasis in original). Although as will be shown in this article the government's commitment to public input may be more illusory than real, government documents and actions to date indicate an awareness that any process ignoring public input will be insufficient for supplying a final and appropriate list of core health services.

In addition to the question of whom should make the decisions, at issue in the core services debate is how the decisions will be made and what ethical guidelines will be followed. An exploration of these questions can be introduced by examining central documents of the core deliberation, including *The Core Debate – Stage One: How We Define the Core: Review of Submissions*, the Terms of Reference for the National Advisory Committee on Core Health and Disability Support Services (NACCHDSS), NACCHDSS's first report to the Minister and the *Health and Disability Services Act 1992*.

The first indication of the Herculean nature of answering the questions posed above can be found in *The Core Debate–Stage One: How We Define the Core: Review of Submissions* (Bridgeport Group, 1992). Central to the

discomfort shown by the submissions is the repeated theme that 'the idea of ranking...one person's health above that of others is repugnant...'(p.8). Many submissions speak of the need for an appropriate ethical framework which would enable understanding and acceptance of the decisions of rationing and prioritising. Submissions also express concern over the process by which public input will be sought and how as well as who will be making the final decisions. These two key considerations – the process and the participants – are inherently difficult structural concerns of any process of determining public priorities.

The first report of the National Advisory Committee on Core Health and Disability Support Services was submitted to the Minister of Health in October, 1992. The report summarises health care services currently available in New Zealand and *generally* identifies 'community priorities.' The NACCHDSS report concludes that the 'health and disability support services that we fund from our taxes today are, in effect, our 'core'.' This report addresses few of the tough questions of the core services debate. Chairperson Crosbie (Laracy, 1992:5) reports that many of the 'really thorny clinical and ethical questions' will be the subject of the next round of consultations and the NACCHDSS's 1994 report to the Minister. In its discussion document *Seeking Consensus* (NACCHDSS, 1993), Crosbie warns that the 'very difficult area' of deciding which service areas are to receive how much public monies is the next task before the public. Put another way, the public is being asked to decide who of

the sick should receive services and to what extent and who should not.[1]

Until the introduction to Parliament of what was to become the *Health and Disability Services Act 1992*, the public documents and actions related to the core debate implied a strong commitment by the Government for an open, participatory process. The *Health and Disability Services Act 1992*, however, offers little in the way of a methodology for defining the core. Section 5 formally establishes the National Advisory Committee on Core Health and Disability Support Services (NACCHDSS) which is appointed by the Minister to advise on 'the kinds, and relative priorities, of personal health services and disability services that should, in the Committee's opinion, be funded by the Crown...'. The requirement for public consultation by the NACCHDSS is limited to 'such members of the public, persons involved in the provision of health services and disability services, and other persons as the Committee considers appropriate.' With this wording, any formal, legislated requirement for the NACCHDSS to consult *widely* with the public has been lost.

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1 At the risk of simplification, the 'public' appears at this stage to include mainly health professionals and organisations, lay experts, special interest groups and members of the general population who are motivated to participate by making submissions or by attending public meetings specifically held for that purpose.

Although the Terms of Reference for the NACCHDSS include seeking public input, the Act's language directs the NACCHDSS only to seek input from sources it deems appropriate. In addition to its weak requirements for public consultation, the Act is not specific in its requirement for the NACCHDSS to include the results of its consultations in its advice to the Minister. Perhaps most telling, the Act does not require the Minister to act upon the advice of the NACCHDSS. The amount of public input is therefore left to the strength of the commitment of the individual members appointed to the NACCHDSS and the political expediency of the exercise.[2]

The wording in the Act does not inspire confidence in the Government's, or its appointed agents', real and ongoing commitment to continuing public consensus about core health services.[3] In fact, nowhere in the Act or the

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2 The Act is equally weak in its requirements for consultation by the Regional Health Authorities (the absence of the word 'public' is noticeable). Section 22 directs the Regional Health Authorities 'on a regular basis' to consult with consumers and providers of health and disability services in the communities served by it 'as the authority considers appropriate...'.

3 The wording and language of the documents of the health reforms indicate more than a questionable commitment to public participation in the core health services deliberation. As one reviewer of this article pointed out, changes in language are central to the strategies of the National Government's

NACCHDSS Terms of Reference is there specific mention of the accountability of government to finalise the core health services based on the principles and values obtained through such an exercise.

Establishing an optimal level of health care--ethics, equity and fairness

Upton's stated intention for the core was to ensure 'an adequate minimum level of health care for all New Zealanders'. This can be looked upon as a 'floor' under which no one will fall (Crosbie, 1992). Ashton (1992) observes the dangers of this approach, noting New Zealand's traditionally egalitarian approach to health services. With increasing pressures of higher utilisation of health services, Ashton cites the possibilities of extending user charges or *'restricting coverage through a redefinition of core services'* (p.148, emphasis added).

Although specifying core services seems like a reasonable exercise, the nature and characteristics of health and health care make the 'core' nearly impossible to define. One of the key difficulties in finding acceptable definitions for the debate is found in the inexact nature of health itself. Doyle and Gough (1991) illustrate the difficulty in determining a universal basis for defining health need,

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reforms. Its carefully chosen language emphasising choice, consultation, individual responsibility and community-based services announce a marked shift in political ideology of welfare services in New Zealand.

suggesting avoidance of serious harm and impaired social participation as two preconditions of a universalisable definition. Further describing these two preconditions, however, forces us into a dilemma. The determination of serious harm and the impairment of social participation must be judged against the pursuit of goals deemed valuable by the individual. In this sense, we are led back to a concept of need that is relative to the experiences and life goals of the individual.

Even if we agree we can isolate some level of serious harm and impaired ability 'which must be satisfied to some degree before actors can effectively participate in their form of life' (Doyle and Gough, 1991:54), we are faced with the dilemma of deciding the degree. What exactly is an objective definition of 'harm?' Is there a level of impairment which is shared by all individuals in society which disable them from social participation? The difficulty is compounded because even if these needs are identified and satisfied, as Doyle and Gough (1991:55) point out, 'the satisfaction of these needs does not guarantee *successful* participation'.

Attempting to remove ourselves from a relativistic notion of health and health need, we could turn to a definition of health in biomedical terms, namely 'the absence of disease'. We can all agree that a child with measles is in need of more biomedical care than one without. Even if we accept this definition of health, however, we cannot entirely resolve our dilemma. Why is it that one child will recuperate more quickly than another? The answer Doyle and Gough (1991:59) offer is that 'people are more than the deterministic relationships between their bodily components'.

No matter how we attempt to clarify and define health and health need, it would appear the life experiences and goals of the individual must be taken into account. Eyles and Donovan (1990:12) agree with this assessment, maintaining that the use of health care services is dependent not only on resource allocation but on 'people's own assessment of their health and their needs. What people think of their health and what causes and cures illness are, therefore, vital elements in the process of seeking help and should so be seen in the formulation of policy'. From these perspectives, we could conclude as Doyle and Gough (1991:70) have suggested, 'once one moves beyond the most minimal preconditions for participation in social life, it seems that human needs remain hopelessly relative'.

Defining an 'appropriate' level of health care is further complicated because the priorities we, as individuals, set against our own health needs are likely to be different than those we set for society. If a government had unlimited funds with which to devote to health care, these priorities would not conflict. We would simply treat all individuals equally regardless of their health or financial circumstances. Equity, in the sense used here, concerns everyone's reasonable ability to seek health care regardless of ability to pay. The government does not, however, have unlimited funds to devote to health care. The core health services formula also needs to address the measure of the tax burden on those most able to subsidise health care for those least able to pay. Herein lies the dilemma of solving the problem of equity in health care; equity considerations often may be at the expense of fairness considerations to tax payers and vice versa. This juxtaposition of *equity* in access and *fairness* of the tax

burden implies that the optimal levels of health care would be different for the individual and for society.

In discussing a socially optimal level of health care, welfare economists traditionally cite the social benefits of a healthy society, particularly the increased productive capacity available from healthy workers (Fuchs, 1972). With this in mind, one measure of a socially optimal level of health care is that level at which society's economic machinery operates without interruption and provides an acceptable level of economic growth. Such traditional analysis might be challenged in a state of advanced capitalism. A contemporary Marxist analysis might charge that high levels of unemployment and the consequent number of surplus workers are responsible for the increasingly lower levels of state provision of health care, perhaps indicating decreasing socially optimum levels. Given this analysis, the gap between individual and societal needs for health care widens.

It has become increasingly clear that the traditional tools provided by economics, medicine, social policy and other academic disciplines are inadequate for the task of determining the 'morally defensible balance' between society and the individual. If the methodology provided by such sciences offer analysts no solid framework for defining an adequate level of health care, what else is left? With no demonstrable protocol or ethical framework from which to make such decisions, how does government resolve health rationing questions? How does the government control the backlash from the withdrawal of public provision? One strategy currently being used by governments is to focus the public's attention away from

the decisions and to the decision-making process by appearing to secure the public's input.

Public values, moral choices and rational decisions

Veatch (1985:10) cautions us that 'to choose the decision-maker is to choose the value system upon which decisions will be made'. The public (of whatever that is comprised) has been asked to incorporate its *values* to make *moral choices* regarding health care rationing. The difficulties with an ethic based on the values of the public are similar to those of defining an adequate minimum level of health. Values are individual, personal and tend to greatly vary among society's members, even in a relatively small country like New Zealand.

Goodman (1991:179) argues that an individual is precluded from making a socially rational decision by what he terms 'social distance'. He maintains that asking members of society to render a hypothetical decision is different from the personal one demanded when a loved one is actually ill. The decision-makers touched by this situation, he concludes, are 'necessarily limited in their rationality'.

In a market economy individuals are assumed to be 'rational' consumers, acting out of a desire to maximise their own self-interest. Health care, however, is unlike other market goods. Since health need can be infinite, rational consumers, if not faced with considerations of price, are likely to go on infinitely demanding health care (Cooper, 1975). This unbridled rationality may fuel the

'high consumer expectations' often used as one of the justifications for the health reforms.

It is this very rationality of the health care consumer that causes the tension between collective provision by the state and individual need. Given the impact of health care services on individuals' or their loved ones' own mortality and morbidity, an understanding of Goodman's warning is crucial to the core health debate. If Goodman's concept of social distance is valid, individuals defining the core health services may give more weight to individually optimal need than to socially optimal levels, leaving the conflict between society and the individual largely unresolved. Striking that 'morally defensible balance' becomes very difficult indeed.

It becomes clear why politicians and bureaucrats have begun to address these questions by directing them to the public for clarification. Governments and politicians have much to lose and very little to gain from making these decisions themselves. With the problems of defining need and with no ethical framework, requiring the public to join in making these decisions and form a 'new consensus' provides an avenue for politicians and bureaucrats to divorce themselves from questions of need.

Crosbie (1992) spoke of a 'consensus for change' in her introductory address at public consultation meetings conducted by the NACCHDSS. The success of governments depends on citizens' satisfaction that their needs are being met. If decisions are made that do not represent the 'consensus' of the public, the result is the demise of the government in power. Faced with a nearly impossible task, in the guise of supporting democratic

discourse governments can defend themselves by arguing that they have only carried out the will of the public from which the definitions of 'need' have been formulated. Public debate arriving at a semblance of consensus then becomes quite expedient for the government.

But under what conditions does public consensus alone provide the moral authority for health rationing decisions? If we accept that consensus *is* a precondition for moral authority, the *process* established to obtain consensus becomes an important focus of the debate. Jennings (1991:451) contends that 'if a (moral) conclusion represents a consensus of the members of the moral community, then consensus alone gives a powerful (if not decisive) justifying reason for the conclusion, quite independent of the content or consequences of the conclusion'. Consensus, if not spoiled by the process through which it is obtained, may be the best line of defence in devising a morally defensible balance in the core services deliberation.

Pellegrino (1985) warns us that health policies are rarely derived from explicit and systematic analysis of the moral values that underpin them. Yet this is the exercise supposedly now before the New Zealand public. Recognising the difficulties inherent in any form of public debate, how might public input be structured in order to provide the greatest opportunity to achieve consensus that lends the necessary moral authority? Two possible types of discourse, drawn from democratic theory, are offered in the following section.

Two models of democratic decision-making

The importance of public input and consultation has been a major theme in the documents addressing the core debate. Because the mechanism chosen to select those services which the public considers to be a 'basic package' of health care is essentially a political one, the process inherently requires lengthy, continuing consultation and negotiation with different elements of society.

Two general methodologies for obtaining public input could be employed: (1) a representational process deriving its authority from representative democracy, or (2) a truly consensual process founded in participatory democracy. Each method carries its own advantages and disadvantages. Representational decision-making allows greater speed and ease of decision-making, but may be more susceptible to special interest groups. Participatory decision-making may impart greater moral authority in decision-making, but can be very difficult to construct properly.

Representative democracy is a process by which 'representatives' are chosen by the politic through voting. These representatives then make the decisions for the electorate, depending on the fact of their election to provide the necessary authority for doing so. Representative democracy inherently supplies an accountability of the elected to the electorate by virtue of the fact that the electorate can vote for other representatives if dissatisfied with their current representation (Macpherson, 1977). This accountability, according to Macpherson, is critically important to the representative model.

At this point, it would appear that the process chosen by the National Government is more representative than participatory. If representational decision-making is the choice for ultimately determining the core health services, what are the likely ramifications of the process upon the results?

Hovenkamp (1990) suggests that in this model various interest groups, rather than the electorate themselves, determine policy. He concludes, however, that money, influence and argument flow more or less in proportion to the *economic* interest at stake, resulting in a 'relatively *efficient*' decision. For example, health professionals certainly have an economic interest in the results of the core services deliberati on. They are also advantaged by their superior knowledge, resources, status and organisation. While these attributes may provide them certain advantages over the less organised consumers of health care, those same characteristics can be used to analyse the *value for money* objectives of the core debate.[4] Without health care professional's experience of the efficacy of specific treatments, debate may drift more heavily in the direction of values instead of cost-

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4 One example of the impact and involvement of various interest groups on the core services deliberation is the NACCHDSS 'consensus development conferences'. These conferences, comprised of health professionals and lay experts, gave NACCHDSS advice on 11 separate health topics including joint replacements and early detection of breast cancer. See NACCHDSS (1993) for a summary of the results of those conferences.

containment. If cost-containment and value for money are not to be a part of the debate, Upton's criteria for a health service's *value to justify its costs* (Upton, 1991) may remain unmet.

If Hovenkamp's assumption of the *efficiency* of representational democracy has substance, what can representational decision-making offer in terms of moral authority? The moral authority of such decision-making can only be provided by the commitment of the Committee to seek out *and promote* views from all segments of the population.

Perhaps the greatest weakness in deriving consensus for the core debate from a representative model is the lack of accountability of the representatives. It is the electorate's ability to replace their representatives that 'protects them from tyranny' (Macpherson, 1977:78) and provides legitimation for representative democracy. The NACCHDSS is appointed by a Minister of Health and is only responsible to the Minister. The Minister, of course, is elected to Parliament but is distanced from the public in the core debate by virtue of the existence of the NACCHDSS. The Minister is also only one Parliamentarian. Without a dramatic shift in the ruling ideology, even if one Parliamentarian is not returned to office (or as in the case of Mr Upton, the ruling party replaces the Minister with another) it is likely that a like-minded individual would be chosen as Minister of Health. The path for the electorate to rid itself of representatives inadequately reflecting the newly formed consensus is a long one indeed.

In addition to the problem with accountability, it could be argued that the present form of deciding societal values and obtaining input for the core is not wholly democratic. A more democratic version of the representative model, and one more likely to have the necessary authority from the politic, would be popularly elected representatives for the NACCHDSS, not unlike the old structure of electing members to the Area Health Boards.

A preference for representational decision-making lies not so much in the advantages it offers but in the disadvantages of a participatory model. In addition to the difficulties inherent in obtaining true participation in a purely participatory model, the expected outcome might not maximise the net utility of society but the net number of 'gainers', a phenomenon known as 'democratic bias'. Even in its purest form, the values likely to emerge from consensus would reflect those individuals with the most to gain from the process. Participatory decision-making, on the other hand, eliminates the problem of accountability inherent in the representative model.

The tendency for 'democratic bias' of a consensual process coupled with the problematic characteristics inherent in the participatory model make it unlikely that a truly consensual process will be followed in seeking public input on society's values. The justification for seeking a participatory model lies in the authority it lends to consensus. Eyles and Donovan (1990:118) in their study Britain's health policy argue that 'policy does not only allocate resources but also shapes consciousness'. From their evidence, they emphasise that 'policy-making must resonate with the experiences of those that its

implementation is meant to affect' (p.122). Jennings (1991:461) claims that:

> ...putting ordinary citizens into a significant, carefully structured situation of important moral decision making, and then giving weight to what they decide, has an independent moral and social value to us. It affirms something important about who we are as a community and about our continuing faith in the broad distribution of common sense and the capacity, under the right circumstances, for responsible moral deliberation and judgment.

Jennings (1991:462) warns, however, that 'consensus should enjoy moral weight in decision making only when we are satisfied that consensus reflects a healthy community of open, *inclusive* moral discovery and growth' (emphasis added). Since it has been postulated that there is a critical need for a new authority and ethical framework, the most appropriate strategy for making public moral decisions may be that of a participation model.

Participation, for the core debate, could mean a pro-active role for the NACCHDSS in seeking out the views of the unrepresented and underrepresented segments of society. This requires a commitment to carefully evaluate the nature of the attendance at public meetings. It also requires the placement of certain structures that enable more active participation by those less mobile or who have children, such as a creche at every public meeting and the availability of appropriate transportation for the disabled. It may also mean the expansion of the debate

to include local authorities of every village, town or region.

Macpherson's warning (1977:93) that 'low participation and social inequity are so bound up with each other that a more equitable and humane society requires a more participatory political system' is extremely pertinent for establishing the ethical framework and providing the moral authority needed for New Zealand's core health services deliberation.

Deliberations on health rationing have really only just begun. Specific rationing decisions remain unanswered and at this point have been left to covert historical devices such as doctors' opinions and waiting lists. In addition, expensive life-saving and life-giving technologies will continue to be offered and demanded, impacting New Zealand's health care budget. These technologies will need to be evaluated in the continuing and evolving deliberation over New Zealand's core health services.

Conclusion

If the issues were not so complex and the decisions so ground-breaking, representational decision-making might be more appropriate than a participatory model in determining the core health services. Even with its inherent structural difficulties, however, consensus decisions formed by the closest approximation of participatory decision-making have more appeal for the core than those derived through representation as offered by the current process.

A true consensus may be the only way in which a new ethical framework for rationing health care resources can be forged. The submissions to *The Core Debate* resonate the public's awareness of the necessity for a model of decision-making that provides the moral authority for making these decisions.

Lack of accountability is perhaps the most serious difficulty in the core health debate. In no document which regulates the behaviour of Parliament, the Department of Health, the Minister of Health or the NACCHDSS is there any *obligation* to incorporate public input into the final list of core health services. The Minister is under no obligation to act upon the advice of the NACCHDSS and the NACCHDSS is only under an implied obligation to act according to the preferences of the public.

With no specific obligation or protection that public input *will* be incorporated into the final list for the core health services, the public (as well as the NACCHDSS) may discover that their input and effort have been in vain. The decision for New Zealand in this first public debate about consensus is whether the established framework for determining consensus is sufficient or whether a new framework must be forged. The fact that the National Government has begun a time- and money-consuming process to determine the country's values and priorities would indicate that the established framework has already proven insufficient for such a task.

We are all touched by illness and death. Death and taxes, it is said, are the only certainties of the human condition. The core health debate is really about both of these

certainties. 'Who decides?' is not only the first question to be answered; it is perhaps the most important in that it will inform the answers we obtain.

Although it can be rightfully argued that being so touched by illness and death we cannot achieve what Goodman calls the 'social distance' necessary to make a socially rational decision, each one of us, whether a private citizen or a public figure, shares the same impediment. If the members of this society agree to participate in such a difficult exercise, and the exercise is structured to reduce the problematic characteristics of the process, the public should be rewarded for its efforts by an assurance that the decisions made cannot be refuted or amended at the whim or expediency of government.

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Television Texts and Their Contextual Flow: Three Episodes of Families "Watching" Television

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Introduction

This paper should be seen against the background of a larger study which was completed in 1992 (see Zwaga, 1992a). This study argued the case that television viewing as a social practice can be best understood when it is conceptualised as an everyday family activity (also see Morley, 1986). This understanding was operationalised through the discussion of daily viewing routines of the eight families that participated in this study. The analysis of everyday family television practices included the contextual features of the domestic use of television. The main contextual features were identified as the ecology and politics of family television viewing processes. The in-depth analysis of these family contexts facilitated an understanding of the ways in which families or individual family members use television as part of their daily routines.

The fieldwork research, on which the following analysis is based, combined recorded observations of family viewing contexts with post-observational family interviews. It consisted of monitoring families for seven consecutive days using a custom-made in-home observation cabinet which contained a 21" television set, a low-light camcorder and several video cassette recorders. This equipment provided a video-recording of the persons present in the room whenever the television

set was switched on. The video-taped recording also provided a small insert showing the television programming actually being screened at the time. The recordings were followed up with post-observational interviews to further explore whether the 'moments of television' (see Fiske, 1989) or 'observed idiosyncracies' corresponded to the generally perceived patterns of viewing within each family.

The specific aim of this paper is to 'match' - in a way uniquely facilitated by the technology of the in-home observation cabinet described above - different television texts (or programmes) to the actual family contexts in which these are consumed. While the concern of the family viewing context provides the major focus for analysis, this paper will also analyse the extent to which television texts may act as repositories of meaning for family members. In other words, the question under investigation is whether the characteristics of 'discrete' television texts can explain the various ways in which family members use television within the domestic context. The family context plays an important role for the television text being actually realised as meaning. Yet, the television text is a crucial part of the television viewing context and in this capacity alone also warrants consideration.

The difficulties of establishing how viewers engage with television are compounded by the privacy of television usage, yet the critical analysis of the television text is often based on the assumption of a particular form of engagement by the viewer, usually a sustained, continuous, and disciplined viewing of a specific programme. Undoubtedly, television viewers at times do

choose to watch specific programmes, but it is also clear that a television set may be turned on for a variety of other purposes - to see what is on, for company, or as background. Furthermore, as Morley (1990:7) has pointed out, 'having the set on is, for many people, simply an index of 'being at home': they don't necessarily have any intention of watching it.' Likewise, television viewing practices may be episodic, interrupted, casual and generally lacking in attentive concentration. The viewing practices of family members during the commercial breaks serve as a cogent reminder of the various modes of viewing within the 'erratic' family viewing context (see Zwaga, 1992b).

Brunsdon (1989:122) further reiterates the point that viewers watch television in extremely heterogeneous ways - they watch alone, with other family members, with friends and with strangers. The everyday routines of television viewing practices lie at the heart of this heterogeneity of television viewing experiences. Furthermore, Brunsdon (1989:122) argues that the notion of televisual flow is made less harmonious by practices such as channel switching, and thus it needs to be supplemented by an account of the way the audience is 'present-for-the-text'. In other words, the need to specify the viewing context - and the modes of viewing within that context - is significant, for this may determine more than any other factor, how the text is experienced by viewers. Accordingly, textual analysis, while a central part of television criticism, does not necessarily constitute the text as recognised by viewers. Not only do the television texts present themselves in different forms from the film text through the property of television flow, but the latter difference is further accentuated by the domestic

contextual flow in which television is normally consumed. The domestic mode of consumption is thus markedly different from the 'spectorial' mode of consumption in which films are viewed in the cinema.

The following discussion will thus be concerned with exploring how both the text (or programme) and the context (the family viewing environment) interact with each other. In doing so, this chapter concurs with Fiske's (1989:74) call for further research in the text-context problematic:

> What is needed is the investigation of instances that are no more and no less typical than other instances. And the emphasis should be not on what people do, not on what their social behaviour is, but on how they make sense of it. Their recorded words and behaviours are not data giving us their reactions and meanings, but instances of the sense-making process that we call culture, clues of how this process works and can be actualized.

Thus, in what follows, the analysis of family viewing practices will be expanded to consider how television programmes (television as text) reflect the family viewing context. This analysis will thus attempt to chart the 'rhetorical relations between television texts and readers in specific temporal and spatial contexts' (Moores, 1990:24). To address these empirical concerns, a brief textual analysis of three television programmes will be combined with the analysis of the family viewing contexts. To this effect, the following three television programmes have been chosen: *Sale of the Century* - a daily half hour quiz show; *Foreign Correspondent* - a

weekly one hour documentary and current affairs show; *One World of Sport: Nissan Rugby Special* - a weekend afternoon sport show, which in this particular example screened a 1990 rugby test match between New Zealand and Scotland.

Three Family Television Viewing Episodes

The Allens Watching *Sale of the Century*

Sale of the Century screens five times a week, Monday to Friday, at 7:00pm on TV One. The programme belongs to the populist quiz/game show genre and employs a number of separate discourses associated with education, capitalism, gambling and sex (Bassett, 1989:31-38). The analysis of the text reveals an educational discourse which focuses on the immediate material rewards to be obtained as a result of educational achievement and possession of the requisite cultural capital. Economic advantage is interpreted as the result of educational success, in this case by knowing the correct answers to questions posed by the quiz/schoolmaster. 'Right' answers are ultimately rewarded with prizes of various consumer items and, at times, hard cash as well. In this way consumerism is linked to educational achievement.

In a capitalist society material success is also said to be symbolically connected with sexual potency - as such sexual energy and the possession of material goods are equated (see Bassett, 1989; Davies, 1984; Fiske, 1984). In *Sale of the Century*, this sexual discourse is represented by the glamorous models who display the consumer items and drape themselves over cars and boats. As Conrad (1982:107) suggests, sexual desire is transposed into desire

for consumer products. However, it is the educational discourse which dominates the show and reconstructs an 'examination experience' under the constraints of time. The positive value of education is transferred to the economic domain in forms which further legitimate the less acceptable elements of avarice and self-interest associated with capitalism. At the same time, a meritocratic ideology is reinforced through the elements of luck and chance which are woven into the show (Tulloch, 1976).

The Allens (John [F], Alice [M], Andrew [12], Eric [6] and their student-boarder, Carol) have usually finished their meal during *One Network News* and *Holmes*, the latter a 'personality-driven' current affairs show. During this news hour, the Allens normally have dinner in front of the television and this 'dinner time' thus represents one of the few instances that the family watches television together. *Sale of the Century* immediately follows the news hour and is often the final programme the children get to see during a typical viewing day. As such, this programme functions as a kind of temporal boundary between children's and adults' viewing hours, a boundary which is reinforced by the television usually being turned off at the conclusion of the programme.

When *Sale of the Century* begins and the contestants are being introduced, John, Andrew and Carol, occupying the seats which are placed in a half-circle around the television set, are engaged in conversation while Eric, the youngest son, lies on the floor in front of the set waving his feet in the air. Alice, the mother, is not in the living room at the time. The mother's absence from the immediate vicinity of the television is characteristic of this

family as is the relatively fixed seating arrangement which, for instance, sees the father occupying the most prominent chair.

While still in the introductory part of the programme, John and Carol leave the room carrying the empty dinner plates with them. Carol returns with an apple and sits down in the chair she previously occupied while John talks to his oldest son, Andrew. Meanwhile Eric has left the room and Andrew stands on his chair and walks over the furniture to John's chair via the coffee table. Eric returns to the room with an apple and moves to the chair previously occupied by his brother. When John returns, he finds his chair occupied by Andrew. A short exchange - similar to 'musical chairs' - takes place, before Andrew moves to another seat while John re-occupies his chair. Eric loses his seat to Andrew and has to return to the floor where he settles down right in front of the television set. These activities (such as carrying away plates and restoring the 'natural' seating order) are an indication of the contextual flow in which the family 'gets ready' to watch the programme. Even though *Sale of the Century* has started, the introduction by the programme's hosts is more or less ignored, almost as if this part of the programme is not worth watching and that the real pleasure lies in the competitive question-and-answer section.

By this time the introductions have been completed on the programme and the family attend to the screen as the first questions are asked of the contestants. All the family members attempt to answer these questions in a friendly and competitive manner. John does not answer all the questions but when he does respond he is usually first,

quickly followed by his son Andrew. Eric and Carol tend to watch quietly while it is Andrew and his father who compete to give the correct answer. During this sequence of questioning-and-answering, Andrew on a few occasions gets the better of John and throws his arms up in the air with Carol stating 'Only two, so far!' There is some irony in the fact - unnoticed by any of those present in the room - that John rapidly answers a particular question at the same time as the quiz master cautions the studio audience not to think aloud. Except for Eric, who is lounging on the floor, the others have a concentrated gaze almost as if they were in the contestant's chair themselves.

When soon after Eric comments on one of the 'sales' offered in the programme by saying: 'We don't need a video...we've already got one', his father, John, replies 'You can always get another one'. This comment is followed through by Carol who suggests: 'In a few years when you have done lots and lots of study, and you're on this programme, you might be able to win it'. Andrew communicates to John that if 'Dad' were to go on the programme, he would easily win it. John, however, does not respond to this challenge. Another prize-giving causes some hilarity, initiated by Andrew who bursts out laughing, when a male contestant wins a year's subscription to a 'homemaker' magazine. The somewhat wry and embarrassing smile of the male contestant seems to add to the hilarity fed by sex-role stereotypes: 'What is *he* going to do with it?', wonders Andrew rhetorically.

As the quiz master reads out the 'homeviewer's question', Andrew shouts 'What a pathetic question!' Both John and Carol smile. Apparently fancying that he is being addressed as a 'homeviewer', Andrew feels that the rigour

of competition has been compromised by a 'soft' question. The 'homeviewer's question' is but one example of how quiz shows produce active, participatory viewers (see Fiske, 1987:272-273). With a certain sense of anticipation that he is being positioned as an 'active' homeviewer, Andrew is visibly disappointed by the rather weak challenge offered to him. When the commercial break appears on screen, everybody stays in the room but John picks up a magazine from the floor and starts reading. The commercial break thus affects the viewing context; for some family members, John in particular, the textual 'break' from the programme is reflected in a break from television in general which may last some minutes into the resumption of the next segment of the programme.

Sale of the Century resumes with Andrew and John attempting to answer the questions. For once, both fail to give the right answer. John combines this activity with reading a magazine and Andrew and Carol are chatting with each other while watching. John involves himself again in the quiz more fully, giving an early answer while Andrew keeps on guessing. The commercial break commences with Eric humming along with the tune of a commercial. Another commercial featuring New Zealand equestrian hero Mark Todd draws a comment from Andrew: 'He's broke...he's bankrupt!' to which John retorts: 'So you keep on telling us, Andrew'. Eric tells the others that the horse is doing all the work anyway. Another ad makes John wonder what they are advertising. 'Chicken, of course', says Andrew. Eric starts to sing loudly with the jingle of this commercial and Andrew joins him laughingly. The commercial break frees up the attention to the programme for some interpersonal exchanges, even though some of them are

directly television-related. Eric, who had been virtually excluded from participating during the quiz, now takes on a more assertive role, either commenting on some of the commercials or singing along with their jingles.

When the programme resumes, Eric is still quite excited, but is told to shut up by Andrew as he is concentrating on answering the questions. Eric cheers when the winner emerges from *Sale of the Century*, while Andrew claims that another contestant ought to have won it. As the programme comes to a close - the successful candidate being led by the host into the prize gallery - John picks up his magazine again. Shortly afterwards, he responds to a question from Carol. Everybody ignores what's on the screen and the television set is turned off with the remote control before *Sale of the Century* has finished.

It is interesting that when the question-and-answer part of the show is finished, the television set is switched off, thus missing the winner's introduction to the various prizes to be won. In many ways it is similar to the family's behaviour during the introductory part of the programme. It would seem that the primary determinant of pleasure for this family on this occasion is the competition during the question-and-answer portions of the programme. It could be argued that the programme itself is a large advertisement. Commercial products, with their company names, are mentioned or displayed throughout the show which culminates when the winning contestant goes 'shopping' for the various consumer prizes. In many ways, then, the response of this family at this point (turning the programme off), corresponds to the way in which the family generally 'watches', or rather avoids 'watching', the commercials by either leaving the

room, reading a magazine or turning off the sound of the television set.

A number of other aspects of the text of the programme were confirmed during the family's viewing of this show. The competitive aspect of the programme was clearly the source of excitement and pleasure for at least Andrew and his father, both of whom competed not only with the contestants on the show but with each other as well. The programme's underlying premise that knowledge and correct answers are potentially a source of power and status was clearly assimilated by the family. For example, the link between educational credentials and consumerism was expressed during the programme when Carol said to Eric: 'In a few years when you have done lots and lots of study, and you're on this programme, you might be able to win it [a video recorder]'. Likewise, Andrew says, that if, 'Dad [John, a PhD candidate] were to go on the programme he would easily win'.

For John, the text of *Sale of the Century* also mediated his reception of the programme when he watched it with his family. During the family interview, he mentioned that he frequently knew all the answers but avoided always speaking them aloud for fear of interfering with the pleasure of other family members. The family viewing context was therefore obviously a factor in deciding how individual family members engaged with the programme. But it was also clear that to some degree they had accepted the ideological premise that right answers were a means to economic success. It could thus be argued that the programme assisted in the socialisation to (or transmission of) values which, conforming to a meritocratic discourse, would reflect the importance in

which education is generally regarded in this family. To that effect, the references made to the youngest child, Eric, were less than subtle attempts to convince Eric of the benefits of study. This aspect of socialisation might come particularly to the fore in families with children, with the television text providing a 'menu' from which specific child-rearing strategies can be highlighted.

As in the wider society, the programme suggests that one's educational attainment can be legitimately employed to further one's economic advantage and that success in such quiz shows is a product of both talent and luck. As Fiske (1984:8) maintains: 'The shows are symbolic re-enactments of the examination system, only here the rewards of success are immediate, not deferred'. Thus in a capitalist society, quiz shows like *Sale of the Century*, are said to symbolically represent the role of education, which is regarded as a commodity for obtaining material rewards in the marketplace. To this effect, the comments of the individual family members reflected their acceptance of the underlying premise which drives the show. Moreover, this meritocratic premise also drives the family context; the process of making sense of *Sale of the Century* is thus grounded in the way education is regarded as a means to get ahead, not only in quiz shows but in life generally.

The Cooks Watching *Foreign Correspondent*

Foreign Correspondent is one of TV One's main current affairs shows which, during 1990, screened on Thursday nights at 8:30pm. As the title of this programme indicates, it focuses mainly on overseas news and current

affairs usually relying on satellite feeds from English-speaking countries such as the United States, Great Britain and Australia. The night that *Foreign Correspondent* was screening to the Cook household, the programme was entirely filled with an Australian documentary from the *Four Corners* team on the topic of 'race relations' in New Zealand. This particular programming decision by TV One's *Foreign Correspondent* editor(s) should be seen in the context of it being 1990 - the year in which New Zealand celebrated the 150th anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi.

With its focus on the Treaty, this particular episode of *Foreign Correspondent* could be categorised as a television documentary, a format which Williamson (1989:89) has defined as follows:

> ...an assemblage of materials - ideas, topics, data, interpretations, and other texts including films and tapes - which do not necessarily originate with, or fit neatly under the control of, those individuals who make the program.

The text of the *Four Corners* documentary on 'race relations' in New Zealand reveals this 'assemblage of materials' by combining interviews with socially prominent New Zealanders (such as public office holders, politicians and Maori leaders) with historical footage of significant events in New Zealand since European contact. The voice-over narration is one of historical and contemporary explication, constructed with predominantly Australian audiences in mind, and this gives it the impression of being an 'unbiased' outsider's view. The documentary conventions which, according to Fiske (1987:30), operate on the assumption that 'the camera has

happened upon a piece of unpremeditated reality which it shows to us objectively and truthfully', are also identifiable in this programme.

The 'authoritative' narrative discourse, furthermore, has a definite neutralising effect which, intentionally or otherwise, tends to diffuse the complexity of the issues under investigation. In doing so, the programme rather specifically positions viewers in an already controversial discourse of 'race relations' in New Zealand because the programme's outsider claim to 'fairness' - as reflected in the programme's narrative discourse - attempts to bring about an 'informative' and sympathetic understanding for the issues presented. One can, however, only speculate about the different ways in which the programme may have been received by New Zealand and Australian audiences respectively. While such generalisations may not be appropriate in the absolute sense, ethnic and or national backgrounds do, of course, impinge on the immediate family viewing context.

For the Cooks (Martin [F], Janet [M], Robert [17] and Paula [13]), a programme like *Foreign Correspondent* would generally be deemed to be 'good television'. In a family that is selective in its use of television, *Foreign Correspondent* represents the type of programme that the Cooks make a point of watching. As Robert, who in this particular viewing episode was the most 'involved', stated in the family interview: '...if it's a reasonable programme, something like *Foreign Correspondent*...I'll watch it' (Robert - The Cooks). For the Cooks generally, 'good television' is represented by programmes such as *Mobil Masterpiece Theatre* in the case of Janet, and for Martin and Robert this

tends to include documentaries, British (situation) comedy and sport.

Just before *Foreign Correspondent* is due to screen, Paula and her father, Martin, are present in the living room. *The Comedy Company* screens on Channel 2. Martin sits in the far right corner chair doing some university work, most of which is spread out on the coffee table directly in front of him. Paula sits on the two-seater couch. When *The Comedy Company* has finished and Channel 2's *News Break* comes on screen she stands up, asking her father 'Do you want the TV off', to which he responds 'Yes, please'. Paula walks towards the set and turns it off before leaving the room. While brief, this 'moment of television' is not insignificant for it reflects the Cooks' viewing context particularly well. After all, television in this family tends to be used on a programme-by-programme basis, Martin not allowing the television to merely screen as background: 'I certainly detest having the television on when nobody is watching it, and when it's just there as part of the background' (Martin - The Cooks). Paula's behaviour suggests that she is aware of this; having finished with television for the day, she turns off the set after checking with her father.

Only a few moments later, however, Robert enters the room and turns on the set. *Tour of Duty* is screening on Channel 2. Robert briefly leaves the room, but when he returns he switches to TV One's *Foreign Correspondent*. Now seated on the couch, Robert operates the remote control to once again flick back to Channel 2's *Tour of Duty* as well as checking out TV 3's *Midnight Caller* before, finally, settling with *Foreign Correspondent*. This programme screens a Waitangi Day speech (February 6,

1990) by the then Prime Minister of New Zealand, Sir Geoffrey Palmer. 'Boring', says Robert and this comment causes Martin to briefly look up to the screen. At this stage, it is not clear whether Robert's comment refers to the overall subject-matter of the programme or the Prime Minister who had a reputation for lacking personal charisma. However, for the first five minutes, *Foreign Correspondent* has Robert's undivided attention after which he temporarily leaves the room to make a hot drink, having asked Martin whether he would like one too. Martin declines, somewhat absent-mindedly, while he concentrates on his work, more or less ignoring the programme.

Meanwhile, the first commercial break within the programme has started. When Robert returns with a hot drink, he immediately switches to Channel 2's *Tour of Duty*, then to TV 3's *Midnight Caller*. He switches back to TV One, but as the commercial break is still in progress, he returns to *Midnight Caller*. A third attempt to switch to TV One proves well-timed because *Foreign Correspondent* has resumed. From the couch Robert proceeds to watch the programme attentively, while Martin is called out of the room by Paula to assist her with the piano. As he sips from his cup, Robert, now the only person present, watches the programme silently for a period of about seven minutes after which he switches to TV 3's *Midnight Caller*. At this point in time, Martin is still out of the room. Robert switches back to TV One where a commercial break has started - so it is briefly back to *Midnight Caller* then Channel 2's *Tour of Duty*. When a commercial break also interrupts this programme, Robert checks with TV One to see whether *Foreign Correspondent* has resumed. This not being the case, he

flicks through the other two channels ending up with *Midnight Caller*. He remains with this programme for about one minute.

With respect to Robert's constant switching of channels, his earlier utterance of 'Boring' becomes more meaningful, especially when it is taken to refer to the public figures being interviewed in the *Four Corners* documentary. While some of the 'zapping' is employed to avoid commercial breaks, Robert also seems to switch channels when there is a 'talking head', usually that of a prominent New Zealander, featuring in the programme. On the other hand, he shows considerably more interest when the programme deals with broader historical themes, often accompanied with old footage. In other words, Robert seems to filter the programme according to what he may consider to be 'informative'. As such, the statements of politicians and other public figures fall outside this category. This dominant mode of viewing is maintained by Robert throughout the programme.

As his mother, Janet, comes home from the secondary school where she teaches, Robert greets her at the same time as he switches back to TV One. For a brief moment, he watches a Cathay Pacific advertisement, but this activity is overtaken by a conversation with his mother about her involvement with school play rehearsals. Meanwhile, although *Foreign Correspondent* has resumed, Janet (sitting on the floor in front of the fire place) and Robert continue their conversation. When Janet stands up and leaves the room, Robert switches momentarily to *Tour of Duty* before returning to *Foreign Correspondent* which he watches attentively for the next five minutes or so. During this period, Robert is alone in the living room.

Initially he switches back for about thirty seconds to *Tour of Duty*, but ends up with *Foreign Correspondent* which he then follows quite closely until the commercials come on screen. Paula briefly enters the room asking Robert 'Where's Mum?', but leaves before her brother has a chance to reply. While Robert watches *Foreign Correspondent*, Paula and Janet return to the room before moving to the kitchen area where (out of view from the camera) they talk amidst a sound of dishes being cleared away. It is not a coincidence that Janet, having arrived home from extra-curricula activities at her school, attends to domestic chores almost immediately. Like most mothers in this study, her loose relationship with television can in part be explained by the call of domestic responsibilities.

As soon as the commercial break comes on screen again, Robert switches to *Tour of Duty*. This programme, however, is also interrupted by a commercial break headed by a programme trailer for the *Sunday Premiere Movie: Greystoke: The Legend of Tarzan, Lord of the Apes*. Robert watches this trailer attentively and is joined in the room by Martin whose interest is also briefly aroused. After greeting Janet by asking how her evening was, Martin sits down in 'his' chair and (while browsing through some papers) starts a conversation with Janet who is in the kitchen area. While this is going on, Robert switches back to TV One where a commercial break is in progress. The next three commercials are quite attentively watched by Robert, one of which, concerning a music compilation featuring Engelbert Humperdinck, amuses Robert who asks his father 'Do you want him, Dad...Engelbert Humperdinck?' 'Oh, no', says Martin, 'I'm not an Engelbert fan'. Robert jokes 'What a name!'

This particular viewing episode is clearly characterised by 'visual flow' rather than 'genre' viewing.

While Martin has once again turned his attention to his work, the television continues to screen *Foreign Correspondent*. Martin's inattention to this documentary reflects what he considers his normal 'viewing' pattern:

> I rarely just sit and watch. I'm either reading a newspaper or I read a book or do some work. And in fact when I think about it...the times we had a [foreign language] video, I got quite frustrated *because you had to sit and watch the screen because of the sub-titles.* (Martin - The Cooks)

Robert's apparent interest and attention to this programme has somewhat diminished as he has turned his eyes away from the screen. From the kitchen area, Janet asks whether Martin and Robert want a hot cross-bun. Both accept Janet's offer. During this exchange, Robert has briefly switched to *Tour of Duty* after which he resumes watching *Foreign Correspondent* with more attention until the next commercial break. Martin, however, completely ignores the programmme, and instead looks over some papers and occasionally exchanges some comments with Janet and Paula. Janet brings in the coffee with the buns, sits down in the far left corner chair across from Martin and both talk about her experiences with the school play. Robert joins this discussion but when the phone rings he leaves to answer it. The latter occurs while the ads are screening. As the ads are about to finish, Robert returns and announces that his father is wanted on the phone. As Martin stands up,

Janet collects the newspaper from the floor and starts reading it.

When *Foreign Correspondent* resumes with Martin out of the room, Robert sighs to Janet 'It's boring, *Foreign Correspondent*...it's all about the Treaty of Waitangi'. Janet, turning her face towards the screen, merely says 'Is it?' Then both watch the programme quietly for a while but Janet's attention returns to the newspaper. When a scene appears in which a Black Power gang performs a haka, Robert says somewhat cynically 'You'd love this, Mum'. Janet only responds with an absent-minded 'What?', as she flicks through the newspaper. Janet's indifference to *Foreign Correspondent* may be explained by the fact that this programme is not really her cup of tea - 'I'm sort of vaguely interested in that programme', Janet stated in the family interview.

When Martin returns, he continues his previous discussion with Janet about her involvement with the school play. Even though he had stated that the programme was 'boring', Robert continues to watch *Foreign Correspondent* attentively while his parents talk. A couple of minutes before the conclusion of the programme, however, it seems that Robert has given up. He stands and, while placing the remote control on the coffee table, announces that he is going to bed. The television continues but Janet and Martin are both fully engaged in their discussion and do not attend closely to the programme. When *Foreign Correspondent* concludes, Martin turns off the television with the remote control whilst talking to Janet.

Various elements of the family ecology of television viewing within the Cook household surface in this episode. Particular television time-use habits are evident in that this family uses television on a programme-by-programme basis. This is not only illustrated by Paula's question to Martin as to whether or not he would like the television off after she had watched *The Comedy Company*, but also by Martin turning off the set at the conclusion of *Foreign Correspondent* only to turn it on again an hour later to watch the late evening news. Furthermore, the spatial organisation and use of the living room enables Martin to do some work while Robert is 'watching' *Foreign Correspondent*.

Robert's reception of the programme is restless and fragmented. Throughout this viewing episode, he switches channels in part to avoid commercial breaks. This 'zapping' may also be explained by the fact that he is not terribly interested in the programme. Robert twice openly admits to being bored, first near the beginning and the second time some three-quarters of the way through the programme in a brief comment to his mother. This in itself is a significant moment as it says something about the text meeting a broader political context. As mentioned earlier, this Australian documentary screened to New Zealand audiences in a year when New Zealand celebrated the 150th anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi. Robert's boredom with the programme could thus possibly be explained by a sense of *déjà vu*, given that the Treaty of Waitangi had been a regular feature of television programming, if not public discussion generally. However, while other viewing options presented themselves in such programmes as *Tour of Duty* and *Midnight Caller*, Robert nevertheless persisted

with *Foreign Correspondent*. Perhaps it was a case of self-censorship with Robert acting on knowledge of his father's aversion to the children watching television 'rubbish'.

On a more specific level, Robert's statement concerning a scene in which a Black Power 'gang' performed a haka could be interpreted as bringing out a certain degree of ethnic prejudice. However, this interpretation needs to be qualified given that this footage (with the editorial assistance of 'extreme close-ups') tends to emphasise a 'threatening' aspect of the gang. Trivialisation through humour could be a response to the actual way in which the Black Power group was portrayed. This contrasts with the next viewing episode (both of television text and viewing context), where the All Blacks were performing a haka and the Fields displayed a different, more enthusiastic, reception.

There are several key themes which are thus presented. The Cook family viewing episode shows that family members consume television programmes with ostensibly 'low' levels of involvement. However, by interpreting the family context, a greater level of understanding can be gained of what are seemingly individual viewing experiences. While the analysis of the television text does not adequately explain apparent boredom with, and lack of involvement with, television programmes, the latter are part of the everyday reality of the family viewing context (see Morley, 1981). Moreover, viewers' expectations of what 'good television' exemplifies - and *Foreign Correspondent* falls in that category according to Martin and his son, Robert - do not guarantee viewers' attention to television genres. Instead, television offers a

visual flow of images in which *Foreign Correspondent* is perhaps the preferred programme, but the latter screens to an otherwise indifferent family context.

The Fields Watching *One World of Sport - Nissan Rugby Special*

According to Dayan and Katz (1988:168), contests such as the Olympic Games, presidential debates, Watergate and perhaps quiz/game shows like *Sale of the Century*:

> ...are ceremonial competitions, miniaturized confrontations, that oppose matched individuals or teams equally worthy of respect, competing in good faith, and in accordance with a shared set of rules. Beyond winner and loser, contests are celebrations of these rules. Their relevance is affirmed no matter who wins.

In other words, following the Durkheimian framework of Dayan and Katz, the media events covering sport contests articulate consensus. Fiske (1987:248) argues, however, that this consensus in fact reflects the dominant ideology of democratic capitalism, in which the sporting male body is an 'active hegemonic agent for patriarchal capitalism' as well. With respect to televised sport's representation of gender, Bassett (1990:8) has pointed to the ceremonial competition of rugby in New Zealand as a prime example of 'gendered' television through which masculinity is celebrated:

> Male-dominated televised sport reflects the prevailing characteristics of manliness within [New Zealand] culture and as such reinforces these qualities as the natural expression of how men are...

In New Zealand, where contest through sport, rugby union in particular, is accorded a high social prominence, Dayan and Katz's viewpoint can be readily applied. Televised test rugby in New Zealand is an anticipated media event with protracted build-ups and after-match analyses. As Dayan and Katz (1988:169-170) have also pointed out, this anticipation of the event is precisely because contests are a 'normal, if not routine part of the functioning of institutions' and thus 'function as *rites de passage*...at infrequent, but repetitive, intervals.'

This sense of anticipation is clearly noticeable for some members in the Field household (Trevor [F], Jane [M], Barbara [15], Sally [13], Karen [9] and Jennifer [5]) on the Saturday afternoon when TV One screened the rugby test between New Zealand and Scotland. When Trevor turns on the television set, the two teams, New Zealand and Scotland, are awaiting the national anthems. Trevor briefly leaves the room for the kitchen, where he collects a bottle of beer. Meanwhile, Jennifer has entered the room and is standing in front of the two-seater couch. As Trevor sits down on the same couch, he exclaims 'Oh there's the pipes', referring to the Scottish national anthem being played. He asks Jennifer to move a small coffee table, to place it in front of the couch so that they can put the drinks and the popcorn on it. Having done so, Jennifer collects a glass from the kitchen and when she returns she grabs hold of the beer bottle saying to Trevor 'I'll pour it', to which her father replies 'Just a little bit,

not a big one'. 'I know', responds Jennifer. However, Trevor takes charge of the bottle saying 'Let me pour it out first because this [bottle] is a full one'.

Jennifer has joined Trevor on the couch. 'Come on, let's sing God Defend New Zealand...listen to the people', says Trevor when the New Zealand national anthem starts to play. 'Look at the crowd', says Trevor again reacting to an aerial shot of Carisbrook, Dunedin where the rugby test is being played. He then moves to the windows and closes the curtains as the afternoon sun enters the living room. When Trevor returns to his seat, Sally and Karen come into the room. Sally sits down on the couch while Karen goes to the kitchen to collect a glass. She returns and pours herself a beer, an act which is carefully supervised by Trevor. 'That's enough', he declares when the glass is half-full. Karen moves to the floor where she sits in front of the television set.

Insofar as televised sport tends to chiefly address men and may act as a vehicle for male-bonding (Fiske, 1987:58), this function takes on a somewhat different meaning in the Field family. With Trevor being the only male in this household, certain elements of male-bonding (in its New Zealand version, 'watching the footy with a couple of beers') are, however, symbolically present in the way Trevor and his three daughters watch the rugby together. The beer and the popcorn are undoubtedly part of this otherwise predominantly male ritual in which Trevor's youngest daughters have a taste of the rugby as well as being granted a taste of its accompanying favourite drink. As Trevor reflected later on: 'It was a Saturday afternoon and the girls and I were sitting down with *our* popcorn and *our* beer...to watch *our* rugby'

(Trevor - The Fields). 'Family-bonding' rather than male-bonding seems to be operative here, even though the way in which family solidarity is enacted reveals traces of the perhaps more exclusive practice of men watching rugby together.

'Here we go', says Trevor after the New Zealand All Blacks have performed the haka. 'What did the other team do', asks Karen and Trevor explains that the Scottish team 'just sang', noting that not many countries do what the All Blacks do before a game. 'Away they go', says Trevor again when the New Zealand team kicks off. Trevor explains the colours of the jerseys belonging to the respective teams as well as pointing out the 'knock-on' rule to Karen who is interjecting the most at this point in time. When the All Blacks 'move out wide' there is general excitement, with Karen in particular spurring on the team to run. There are moments of silence especially when the ball is dead, but when the ball is in play Trevor utters short interjections which almost have the effect of providing a running commentary on the game's main events. 'It's not going to come out there!' and 'Penalty!' are some of Trevor's brief comments during the first five minutes.

When an All Black lines up for a penalty, Trevor passes around the bowl with popcorn. The quietness of the Carisbrook crowd is reflected in the silence of the living room. When the penalty is kicked and scores three points for New Zealand, Trevor says 'It's all there'. He then asks where his wife, Jane, is but the children do not seem to know. When the Scots make a promising run, Trevor excitingly exclaims: 'They're almost there' (pointing to the try line) and when in a subsequent move the Scots score

a try, Trevor says 'He's there - what a beautiful try...he's one happy boy.' The action replays of the try are watched quietly, save for some comments from Trevor who appears to talk to himself; his comments, relatively rhetorical, do not draw any responses from his daughters. At this point in time, it seems that Jennifer has more or less had enough of watching the rugby as she somewhat disinterestedly leans against Sally. Jane enters the room and Trevor tells her the score. Jane briefly talks with her daughters, then leaves the room announcing she is going out. A chorus of 'Bye' accompanies her departure.

Soon after, New Zealand scores its first 'try' which is greeted with cheers from Trevor and Karen but not Sally and Jennifer who quietly talk to each other. Jennifer briefly leaves the room when Trevor tells her to put the popcorn she had dropped on the floor in the rubbish. When Karen takes some more beer, Trevor reprimands her by saying 'That's enough, no more'. Attention shifts from the game to a discussion about the evening meal with Trevor attempting to divide his attention between a conversation with Jennifer (who now stands next to him) and the television screen. Talk continues with Karen asking a question about the rugby scrum and Trevor explains as he watches the game.

While Sally, Karen and Trevor watch the game attentively, Jennifer moves around the room somewhat restlessly and ends up talking with Sally, distracting her from viewing. The remainder of the first half of the game is watched in similar fashion: Trevor continues making brief comments as the game progresses; Sally and Karen watch the rugby test relatively quietly; whereas Jennifer becomes a minor source of distraction for those present. When the phone

rings, Jennifer runs out of the room to answer it. She quickly returns but when the phone rings again, Sally jumps off the couch to answer it. She returns and has a brief conversation with Karen (saying that it was somebody ringing the wrong number) while Trevor watches quietly. Interestingly, he does not comment when New Zealand misses a penalty. Sally's and Karen's interest in the game has subsided leaving Trevor the only person in the room attentively following it. As Scotland scores another try, Trevor employs one of his brief comments yet again: 'He's got to be there'. Sally leaves to go to the shops and she is followed out of the room by Karen and Jennifer. Meanwhile, Trevor is quietly watching the game by himself with Jennifer and Karen moving in and out of the room. When the New Zealand team scores its second try, Trevor says 'Well done'. As one of the players receives some treatment on the field, Karen asks 'What happened to him?' and Trevor answers, in a matter-of-fact, if not stoical, way: 'He's got a thump in the ribs'. On occasions he talks to Jennifer and when she moves onto his lap, he asks her to move aside because she is impeding his view.

When the first half of the match concludes, Grant, a colleague/friend of Trevor, pays the family a visit. He comes into the room and sits next to Trevor on the couch. Trevor asks him whether he would like a beer but Grant declines. Nevertheless, Trevor asks Karen to get another bottle of beer from the fridge. As the commercials screen, Trevor and Grant talk about their work, their heads turned away from the screen. Their conversation is interrupted by Jennifer who asks Trevor whether he has seen one of her toys.

The second half of the rugby test has started and once again Trevor asks Karen to get him a bottle of beer. Instead, it is Jennifer who responds, faster than her sister, as she carries in the bottle of beer. A second offer to have a glass of beer is not refused by Grant. Trevor asks Karen to get another glass and Jennifer to fetch the bottle opener. Both girls deliver the goods, and after having tussled with Jennifer to open the bottle together, Trevor pours Grant and himself a drink.

Trevor and Grant turn their attention to the rugby. There is some confusion on Grant's part regarding which team had scored a try (New Zealand is playing in a white outfit and not in their usual 'All Black' attire). This leads Trevor to make some dismissive gestures to his friend after which he explains the matter more fully. Both watch the repeats of the try attentively and both exchange brief comments on the merits of certain players. This is followed up by a conversation about their work as they watch the screen for the next five minutes or so. However, the discussion turns to rugby when an All Black winger is about to score a try. Both excitedly exclaim 'He's there...He's there', with Trevor adding 'It's about time he's there...he has not done much today'. During the action replays, the conversation turns back to the topic of work after a brief period of silence. When Jennifer screams from another part of the house, Trevor asks her to come to the living room. Then both Trevor and Grant continue watching the rugby test quietly, a scene which is interrupted when Karen and Jennifer come into the room.

With Jennifer and Karen crawling over the floor, Trevor and Grant watch the match attentively interspersing it

with comments about work as well as the good rugby weather. They are soon by themselves as Karen and Jennifer leave the room again. Another try to New Zealand draws short, approving comments from both men. Karen enters the room again shortly after. Trevor tells Karen that she is making too much noise and she leaves the room. From the adjoining room, Barbara, the eldest daughter, (who has just arrived home) asks 'Who's winning?' and Trevor jokingly responds 'Scotland'. Jennifer enters and cuddles up to Trevor while he and Grant talk about work. There is a considerable amount of excitement when Scotland are about to score a try but fail to do so. Trevor shouts: 'No, the poor buggers are robbed...Tough luck, Scots'. When Scotland do eventually score, Trevor and Grant are cheering as if New Zealand had scored.

Now standing in the doorway, Barbara comments on the facial looks of one of the rugby players stating 'Yuk, he's so ugly - I think I'll marry a soccer player'. Apart from the fact that she plays soccer herself, Barbara's comment may also be seen in the context of the World Cup soccer series being held in Italy at the time and which featured on television in the form of late night highlights, no doubt focusing upon the 'Adonis-like' players from Europe and Latin America. Anyway, Grant replies with a disclaimer: 'Because you do get ugly when you play rugby, you know. People keep on bouncing off your nose and things like that'. He then announces that he is going - apparently the reason for Grant's visiting Trevor was to discuss 'business'. Barbara again makes the point that a particular player is 'so ugly' but her father reassures her by saying 'Oh, I tell you what, somebody loves him'. Barbara also has difficulty realising that New Zealand

plays in the white jerseys and is duly reminded by both Trevor and Grant. Soon after this exchange, Grant leaves even though the test is still in progress. Barbara leaves the room as well and Trevor is by himself with Jennifer and Karen crawling over the floor, occasionally teasing Trevor to the point where he tells them to be quiet. The game comes to a conclusion with Trevor literally having his hands full with Karen and Jennifer romping with him. Not long after he turns the television off.

Windschuttle (1985:172-173) has argued that sport spectatorship constitutes a 'very active process', largely because of the cultural competencies that (male) audiences bring to a televised sporting contest:

> In the varieties of football, for instance, the spectators are largely composed of men who played in their youth and thus acquired an 'inside' sense of the game and a capacity to distinguish among many levels of excellence, by both individual players and teams as a whole.

Trevor's involved viewing style during the course of the televised rugby test fits the above description well. When watching the rugby together with his daughters, his verbal interjections reveal his knowledge of the finer points of the rugby game. His comments, moreover, take on the nature of a second level commentary on the match - largely for the benefit of his daughters who are not well versed in the rules of the game.

A similar yet somewhat different process is at work when Trevor's friend, Grant, joins the family towards the end of the first half of the test. Grant, initially confused about

the colours of the rugby jerseys the two national teams are wearing, is laughingly dismissed by Trevor. While Grant might be 'excused' for having arrived during the middle of the game, a discriminating rugby fan would perhaps know that when the New Zealand team plays Scotland at 'home', it wears white jerseys in order to be recognisable on the field; the All Black attire of New Zealand would otherwise be difficult to distinguish from the dark marine-blue jerseys donned by the Scots. However, after Grant's initial indiscretion both men watch the test and discuss the merits of the two teams as seasoned observers of the game.

While partisan patriotism is definitely a factor underlying the pleasure of watching the game - New Zealand's point-scoring actions being accompanied with loud cheers - Trevor (and Grant) greeted Scotland's successful tries with a similar enthusiastic reception. Bourdieu (1984:215) has linked such behaviour to a predominant 'bourgeois' disposition towards sport. This behaviour, characterised by a certain form of 'aestheticization' (the focus being on the aspects of *excellence* in sport), is typical for middle-class sport participation as well as spectatorship. Such 'disinterestedness' is, furthermore, guided by what Bourdieu (1984:215) labels the cult of fair play: 'the code of play of those who have the self-control not to get so carried away by the game that they forget that it is 'only a game''. Thus, identifying and subsequently commenting on the excellence of both teams, provides Trevor and Grant with a set of readings which more or less transcend the 'vulgarity of the crowds' (Bourdieu, 1984:215). Although a particular class factor may be operative here, it should also be acknowledged that as the rugby test unfolded, New Zealand's ultimate victory was

never really challenged by Scotland. As Fiske (1987:246) has noted: 'Sport's respect for a "good loser" is part of its celebration of the winner.'

Another dominant theme of this family viewing episode is the way in which the gender factor operative in the text is reflected in the viewing context. Reference has already been made to the manner in which Trevor 'co-opted' his daughters into what has traditionally been the distinctive male domain of New Zealand Rugby Union. He did this by letting them participate in the accompanying adult male ritual of having some beer (albeit little amounts). In fact, the beer and popcorn may well be the only reason for Karen's and Jennifer's presence at the beginning of the game. After all, when Trevor decides that both have had enough beer, their interest in the game markedly decreases.

During the first ten minutes of the test match, Trevor's spouse, Jane, leaves the house - an action which seems to reinforce the notion that watching rugby is predominantly a male preserve. Perhaps like other 'rugby widows' on that particular afternoon, she left for town to do some shopping. Interestingly, Jane's comments regarding the enthusiasm with which sport is followed in her family - 'We are *not* big sport's fans, really' (Jane - The Fields) - seems to downplay the seriousness with which her husband, Trevor, regards sport on television. However, this apparent contradiction might be explained by the fact that Jane may not often be present when her husband watches sport, be it on week-end afternoons or during the week at late evening hours.

Finally, another gender-related theme which is worth mentioning concerns the exchanges between Trevor, Grant and Barbara when the latter enters the room half-way through the second half of the game. Barbara's remarks pertain to the 'ugly' physical appearance of a particular rugby player, apparently comparing his appearance with that of supposedly 'better looking' soccer players. Poynton and Hartley (1990:151-152) have argued that while sport and sex do not mix:

> Feminine infiltration into relations of looking, however, places demands upon the text. The visual element has the potential to be read erotically. For a male audience voyeuristic contemplation implies homo-eroticism. The suggestion that the pursuit of pleasure in footy is associated with...homo-erotic desires is outrageously unacceptable in a society long conditioned to acknowledge heterosexuality as the standard.

The exchange thus brings out a specific sexual discourse about men and sport in which the potential reading of rugby players as 'sex symbols' is brushed aside by Trevor and Grant, with the latter translating the ugliness of the player referred to by Barbara in terms of the rugby game itself: 'People keep on bouncing off your nose and things like that'. The male body is thus read in the display of physical prowess rather than as an objectified sexual icon (Poynton and Hartley, 1990:150). The visual representation of male sport thus brings out a certain degree of sexual ambiguity as women enter the predominantly male viewing context.

Conclusion

This paper analysed the question as to whether television texts can be viewed as *repositories of meaning*. In doing so, the overall aim was to determine whether textual analysis, however modest, can contribute to a fuller explanation of the factors impinging on the family viewing context. The theoretical basis of this investigation lies in the so-called text-context problematic and, more specifically, with a broader theoretical concern which attempts to address the question of how family audiences make sense of television programming in light of their everyday use of the television medium.

It is clear that the meaning produced by this encounter between the viewer and the text, cannot be established on the basis of the textual characteristics of the programme alone. What this paper has shown is that the relationship between the texts of television programmes and the viewing context, constructs a dynamic which impinges in significant ways upon the mode of viewing adopted by individual family members. In the family context, television is watched not as a continuous text, but is more often viewed in discontinuous, fragmented ways according to a variety of forces operating both within the programme and within the family itself. The television text is seldom read as a unified or singular entity, but is subject to a variety of factors operating within the social and spatio-temporal relations within family viewing contexts, and the broader socio-cultural environment. The different levels of viewers' engagement and interaction with television texts, however, tells us more about the family *context* in which the programme is viewed than the *text* of the programme itself. It would thus seem that

from an audience research perspective a concern for context should overrride a complete preoccupation with the text.

Television's textual features have been theorised from various positions. Genre theory, as it emerged within theory of the cinema, has been adapted to television as governing sets of expectations that audiences bring to television programmes. However, it failed to account for television's property of 'flow' by analysing television programmes as discrete texts (see Feuer, 1987). Moreover, while genre theory may account for the meaning processes that 'regulate the production of texts by authors', it does *not* regulate 'the reading of texts by audiences' (see Morley, 1981:10). Not only is the 'visual flow' of television remarkably different from that of film, but so too is the *contextual flow* within domestic settings of television consumption which contributes to the need to differentiate 'watching television' from the more intense 'spectorial' activity associated with watching a film.

This is not to infer that the analysis of television texts is rendered otiose, but that its practical purpose lies in bringing text and context together so as to enable researchers to theorise about how audiences make sense of television texts. The kind of textual analysis which suggests that audiences are 'inscribed' in television programmes may well be meaningless if the analysis of how audiences see themselves 'inscribed' in their daily uses of television is altogether absent. In other words, the family members' interaction with television programmes needs to be placed within the everyday contexts of their lives, and these contexts ought to be a major part of the

explanatory framework for the understanding of television consumption.

The latter has been clearly illustrated by the three 'moments of television' presented in this paper which provide relatively unique 'snapshots' of family life in front of the television set. While the levels of interaction with the three programmes varied enormously within and across the three family settings, the social negotiation of the text invariably reflected the family context in which the television programmes were 'watched'. Three examples drawn from the above family viewing episodes may be used to further illustrate this point. First, the meritocratic discourse of *Sale of the Century* became a vehicle for the Allens to express a similar set of values about the importance of education. Even though the explicit link between educational knowledge and material success was affirmed by the (older) family members present, the main pleasure in watching *Sale of the Century* appeared to lie in the question-and-answer sections of the programme, and the prizes on offer for the candidate with the highest score were ignored. While educational credentials are held in high esteem by this family - the father pursuing yet another academic degree to add to an already impressive list -cultural capital had not yet been converted to economic capital in this modest income family. By ignoring the material paradise, as presented by the show, it seems that the family does not fully subscribe to the meritocratic discourse.

A less obvious level of observable engagement with television programming was evident in the Cooks 'watching' *Foreign Correspondent*. What the discussion of this viewing episode indicated was that while the analysis

of the text may facilitate an understanding of what occurs behind the screen, that which occurs in front of the screen can only be understood in terms of the everyday dynamics that operate within this family. Textual analysis cannot completely anticipate the mode of consumption of television by audiences, whether or not audiences bring a set of expectations to the programme that 'governs' their decisions to watch a television programme in the first place.

Finally, a definite set of expectations governed Trevor Field's decision to watch the rugby test between New Zealand and Scotland. However, the family context mediated his 'spectatorship', turning what was a traditional male domain into a family event; Trevor was the only male present until the arrival of a friend. The presence of his daughters initially became a sort of 'substitute' for male-bonding in front of the television set, with Trevor co-opting them in the New Zealand male ritual of 'watching the footy with a couple of beers'. When he judged that his daughters had had enough beer, they in turn lost interest in the game. When Trevor was joined by his friend, the family event turned into a more traditional 'male' environment until Trevor's eldest daughter entered the room. This changed context had an immediate bearing on the reading of the 'male' text of visualised sport, in which a potential sexual reading, as offered by Barbara, was contested by the two men. The text of televised rugby, combined with its commentary by and for men, was negotiated yet again by the family context.

Thus the process of making meaning, that is making sense of television programmes, appears to be relatively eclectic

insofar as the text on its own is concerned. Television 'genres' may elicit viewers' expectations, but these expectations cannot be divorced from the family context in which these programmes are watched. Furthermore, the actual act of 'watching television programmes' is difficult to separate from everyday family life. This realisation places the onus of explanation on family contexts as the consumption site where meaning is produced about television texts.

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REVIEW SYMPOSIUM (PART I)

EDITORIAL INTRODUCTION

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In August 1993, the opening plenary sessions of the Sociological Association of Aotearoa (NZ) annual conference discussed the issue of 'Directions in New Zealand Sociology'. Two successive panels addressed the topic, the first exploring it generally and the second focusing discussion more specifically around New Zealand sociology. The panels produced lively debates, which then resounded throughout the conference. The editorial board of *New Zealand Sociology* agreed that it would be useful to publish some of the presentations in this (and the next) issue of *New Zealand Sociology*.

Specifying the directions of any discipline often implies 'taking stock' of present accomplishments and current predicaments in order to suggest possible courses that might be taken in the future. In reviewing trends in social theory, that postmodernism is, for many, the centre of attention. In many ways, postmodernism provides a framework that foregrounds, and then deconstructs, the radical collectivism and individual agency championed by earlier positions. On the one hand, the (rather different) structuralist positions of Althusser and Levi-Strauss appeared to crush individual agency (and consciousness) beneath collectivist behemoths. Here, it was only the scientific observer who could rationally grasp the larger patterns against which surface complexities were

silhouetted. On the other hand, one could point to sociological trends that struggled against this collectivist current. The critiques of symbolic interactionists, phenomenologists, ethnomethodologists, cultural studies analysts, and others amassed critical agenda which championed individual agency. Various of these critiques, too, were apposite to the neglected voices which wished to be heard by mainstream sociology: women, non-European ethnic groupings, diverse sexual orientations, the 'challenged' and those spatially marginalised. Postmodernism has to some extent taken up and repackaged some of the points raised by these approaches, although they continue to have points of their own to raise.

Against the search for order, regardless of whether it be a collectivist or individually-based order, postmodern approaches begin with an 'incredulity' towards so-called 'metanarratives' of any kind. Contemporary sociology has been challenged by postmodernism. Breaks of this order have been heralded as profoundly significant across the humanities by some, but their effects upon the practice of sociology are not yet clearly developed. The editors do not believe that postmodern approaches do, or are even likely to, exhaust theoretical work in sociology. But the ideas of postmodernism do seem to have a currency that have found, and will continue to find, their ways into many areas of the discipline. The ensuing papers offer different interpretations of selected issues and topics, but in their diverse way, each tries to open up questions about the directions of sociological analyses.

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The Two Postmodernisms

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I

Today, the catalogues and the classes are full of 'postmodernism'. Perhaps we should say they are 'still' full of postmodernism. After all, it has been around for some time, and although 'it' retains the power to provoke and re-orient, the first flush of excitement and associated paradigm shake-up is certainly now over. How, then, can we best take stock of postmodernism within sociology and related discourses? I will be arguing that in one sense, postmodernism, for all its impact, must be judged a rather spectacular intellectual failure: as a strong theoretical position postmodernism involves exaggerated and implausible claims that virtually no-one is willing to support. Certainly, around the corridors, there are few 'strong' postmodernists, though you can readily find 'weak' or sort-of postmodernists, people who are 'interested' in postmodernist-style 'questions'. Accordingly, probably the dominant tendency in the literature is that postmodernism gets regularly thanked for raising challenging questions, but not for satisfactorily answering them.

However, without elaboration, the 'thanks but no thanks' approach to postmodernism strikes a tokenistic and disingenuous note - a bit like thanking racists for raising difficult but interesting issues of ethnic coexistence. In this contribution, the 'no thanks' response involves taking

postmodernism as a set of clear 'theoretical positions'. The 'thanks' part, however, involves realising that one vital message of postmodernism is that the language and behaviour of taking 'positions' is often very restrictive.

II

Several commentators in the literature have made a distinction between a 'strong' or 'extreme' version of postmodernism, and a 'weak' or 'moderate' version. Here is my variation on this strategy.

Let us begin with a strong postmodernist reading of the sociological classics. In spite of the substantive and ideological differences which separated Marx, Durkheim and Weber, they shared a clearly modernist orientation in their theorising. (This similarity stands out further when we compare this trio of founding fathers with the more 'postmodernist' inclinations of another classic: Simmel).

To be a modernist thinker in this sense is to strive to see society as a ***totality,*** one which develops fairly coherently - if complexly - through time, and to set out some central *structural characteristics* of that social totality. Moreover, it is sociology's task and purpose to study and theorise these central social processes so as to reveal their underlying patterns. That idea of the object of enquiry implies in turn that society can be *rationally* understood and scientifically re-presented to the modernist consciousness. Furthermore, such knowledge should make it possible to *intervene* in social patterns with a view to *improving* the social condition, or accelerating structural tendencies.

Postmodernists thus see the conventional sociological imagination as being committed to the Enlightenment belief that human knowledge is holistic, cumulative and rational. It follows that some kind of 'objective' ideas can be pushed forward to confront and disperse the ranks of ideology and prejudice. A liberal 'take' on this struggle for a better and more Enlightened public will of course be substantively different from a Marxist take; but you can see how there is a kind of theoretical equivalence between the growth of individual freedom and rationality on the one hand, and the achievement of collective liberation on the other. Both scenarios see particular moral and intellectual values being associated with categories of social agents (individuals, workers), and these agents are identified by their key role in the march of Reason through History.

Strong postmodernists want to reject the very form of modernist enquiry. It is time, they say, to stop imposing these powerful but selective storylines (= metanarratives) on the inevitably messy and plural material of sociality. Such narratives are both illusory and coercive, and so the whole modernist sociological quest to rationalise structures and reveal patterns in a totalising fashion should be abandoned. The very conception of sociology is intrinsically 'reductionist'. In that sense, there can be no such thing as sociology after postmodernism. Sociology is dead.

Just as modern society is imagined in terms of big structures (industry, class, the state, bureaucracy, secularisation), so modern sociology has structural ambitions. Just as modern industrial capitalism is conceived as progressively imposing order on the variety

and waywardness of pre-existing and marginal cultures, so sociology seeks to impose its own (invented) order on unruly thoughts and disruptive passions. By contrast, postmodernism accepts the break-up of big structures and big theories alike. Instead of order, dis-order should reign; instead of sameness, difference; instead of looking for the essence of the social totality, we should be exploring the infinity of local logics and discourses. Instead of scientific sociological knowledge, we should be recognising the primacy of rhetoric and affect, will and undecidability.

Some of these definitive oppositions can be summarised in tabular form. Strong postmodernism involves operating a king of 'gestalt shift' from mental set A to mental set B in the table.

A1	Universalism	**B1**	Particularism
A2	Monism	**B2**	Pluralism
A3	Objectivism	**B3**	Relativism
A4	Order/Certainty	**B4**	Ambivalence
A5	Totalization	**B5**	Fragmentation
A6	Epistemology	**B6**	Rhetoric/Discourse

III

By now the problems with the advocacy of set B categories are well known. As a matter for the intellectual record, for one thing, some of the common postmodernist portrayals of the items in mental set A can easily be contested. As shorthand for a longer demonstration, the following assertions should at least trigger some critical reflections.

* With the characteristically modern trends towards professional differentiation and discursive specialisation, the holistic ambitions of the classics have for a long time been steadily undercut in sociology, as in other fields.

* Relativism was one of the key tenets of many 'objectivist' Enlightenment writers themselves.

* The dominant strands of modern epistemology has been predominantly anti-foundationalist (subjectivist and constructivist), not (as is often alleged) foundationalist and essentialist.

* Reflexive, interactionist and hermeneutic themes have frequently overlain and pushed aside contrary 'scientific' aspirations in the human sciences over the past two centuries.

A second line of critique is this: even if the caricature of modernism did happen to be accurate, this would only serve more clearly to bring out the self-contradictory nature of postmodernism's own argumentative pose. This is because the more illusory, fixated and sad remnants of modernity are presented to be, the brighter the 'truth' of post-enlightenment (the vindicated Other) shines through. The more holistically the epoch of modernity is portrayed, the sharper is the sense that a better, equally wholesale social and intellectual format has succeeded it, even if the new period happens to be characterised by disconnection rather than order. What we see here of course is postmodernism occupying precisely those theoretical modes (linearity, teleology, moralism, holism) that are

supposed to be both quintessentially modernist and irretrievably flawed.

A further problem involves a misdiagnosis of the central features of our times. Postmodernism argues that the scientific-technical world view is at best simply one option amongst many others as a cultural vantage point. But as Gellner in particular has argued, as a major matter of social fact, this is surely not so. On the contrary, the single most obvious and pervasive feature of modern global interaction is the overwhelming success of scientific rationality over cultural competitors. It is not very plausible to hold either that this form of rationality just happened, as a matter of cultural accident, to succeed, or that as a cultural form, techno-scientific rationality must stay forever bound to the European societies from which it emerged. In that context, postmodern campaigns for a thoroughgoing relativism are both sociologically inadequate and politically romantic.

A final, simple point of critique is that strong postmodernism leads to cynicism about knowledge and also to political disinterestedness, given that links between knowledge and action are to be conceived as contrived, rhetorical, contingent and local. Yet, conceivably, the drive to want to 'know' the world, partly in order to change it for the better, is in some sense an absolute good, an indispensable motive for intellectual endeavour of any kind. Without that impulse - ridiculed as it is in strong postmodernism - pursuits such as sociology would simply lack any wider human significance.

IV

As the force of novelty has worn off, people who might once have felt inspired to define postmodernism in something like the strong form just outlined have backed off considerably. One symptom of this is the definite feeling amongst those radicals, socialists, and feminists who are attracted to some of the strong arguments, that the latter do in the end rule out the possibility of taking 'principled positions'; that the necessary boundaries to pluralism threaten to dissolve completely. At that point, a number of 'weak' or moderate postmodernist substitutes appear in place of the exciting but bruised star attraction.

Thus, instead of the claim that postmodernism espouses mental set B *rather than* mental set A, we increasingly hear that in fact the challenge of postmodernism is actually to *overcome* the false polarities between objectivism and relativism, universalism and particularism, and so on. Usually, this sort of argument goes on to state or imply that it is the Enlightenment Project that is mainly responsible for the erection of such disabling dualisms in the first place. This analytical option has the consequence of giving a moral victory to postmodernism without having to take a stance of any committing kind.

Such an argument is certainly worth entertaining. After all, there is something awfully perennial and yet also artificial about the continual polarisation between whole and parts, unity and difference, structure and agency etc in the discourse of social theory. At the same time, it is also clear from countless cases of alleged 'syntheses' and 'advances' in theory that stubborn dualisms are more often restated than completely effaced in the new

articulations. In that sense, the tensions expressed in the able are almost impossible to resolve even-handedly, or to abolish at one fell swoop.

Moreover, we must remember that the characterisation of modernism in somewhat caricatured terms is the logically necessary and dramatic opening salvo of postmodernists: modernism was to that extent *invented* by postmodernism. So it is not quite right that the moral responsibility for fixing our troublesome polarities in stone should be handed to modernism rather than postmodernism - rather the contrary.

A second 'weak' move is to argue that postmodernism is a way of ensuring 'reflexivity' within our potentially coercive discourses. Again, this move is to be applauded. Bauman in particular has been most eloquent on the need to counter the legislative consciousness of modern social theory with a humbler, more interpretative model. He has also pointed to a heightened sense of ambivalence amongst intellectuals in postmodern conditions: we strive in our theories for order and pattern, yet in a sense we also know very well that real life (or, if you really must: 'the unsuturability of the social') cannot adequately be represented in that way. Its energy and passion, tension and torsion always seem to escape the rationalist grasp.

This is a 'weak' argument, not because it is unpersuasive, but because 'ambivalence' cuts both ways. The interpretative mode, that is to say, cannot in the end completely replace the legislative mode, and the evocation of the unrepresentable puts all analytic scribblers out of business. Indeed, Bauman's own approach to postmodernism nicely exemplifies some of the modernist

dualities and preferences he analyses. He wants to affirm postmoder*ity* (a real condition) rather than strong postmodern*ism* (an intellectual fashion). He resists the latter partly because, he says, it lacks the very concept of itself, ie 'postmodernity'. (More generally, I guess it lacks any concepts as such). Bauman also tends to see postmodernity in fairly classical terms: as a social configuration of a distinctive emergent sort.

A third moderate postmodernist move is to accept something of the modal shifts signalled by strong postmodernism, but to regard them as accentuating some deep tendencies already present within the heart of modernity itself. This kind of line is highly attractive too, but also somewhat bland by the standards of strong postmodernism. One is hard pushed, as a result, to regard writers who take this line as being distinctively postmodernist.

A final modification is to say that postmodernism is the impulse to de-absolutise movements and doctrines, to situate them more thoroughly in time and place than many modernist theories are inclined to. Again, a very useful suggestion. However, a danger with postmodernist 'situationism' is that in its emphasis on the centrality to a theory or form of its *historical context*, new forms of reductionism and empiricism might be hatched. Reductionism: the validity and resonance of a theory/form becomes strictly relative to its time and place of birth/use/users. Empiricism: without the creation of potentially cross-contextual concepts, the local and the temporal simply amounts to an infinity of monadic particulars out of which no ranked significance can

emerge. In that sense, all theoretical endeavour is necessarily essentialist.

V

I have been arguing that strong postmodernism fails, and that weak postmodernist strategies, whilst more acceptable, are somewhat bland, and still not entirely problem-free. They are also usually quite compatible with 'modernism'. Overall, it looks like the contest is over and postmodernism has lost. Apparently.

Yet I am uncomfortable with this sentiment standing as the last word. For one thing, it is not as if modernism, as such, has been vindicated; indeed, outside of the perhaps inappropriate terms of challenge and conquest, there seems little need to actually defend something called modernism at all. Moreover, reactive modernists for their part do not hesitate to caricature postmodernism in turn and, boringly, show little interest in exploring what might be valuable in it. With respect to my own critique, then, I want now to ask whether in 'dealing with' the postmodern challenge as a point for point theoretical debate doesn't somehow get the thing wrong in an important sense. For postmodernists are asking us to re-think altogether the narrowly rationalist notion that theory is constituted by a series of demonstrations in an adjudicated contest. Instead, postmodernism asks us to regard theories as cultural judgements, discursive strategies and vocabularies of insight. These will not amount to complete and coherent propositions. They will reflect our creative powers and passionate commitments. They will be couched in terms designed to

motivate and impress a particular sort of audience. Our meanings may take on, or originate in, dimensions of interaction of which we are largely unaware. Our audiences will themselves bring to the exchange a creative and expressive set of concerns. Our thoughts and theories will tend to overlap, suggest and insinuate much more than rationalism ever acknowledges. None of this is wholly *incompatible* with rationalist appraisal, but it provides an agenda for intellectual exchange which is somewhat different in texture - and somewhat richer.

As for the object of our thoughts and theories: these may well include patterned structures, but cultures also consist of unspoken and unconscious pressures, inchoate forms, happenstance associations and unrepresentable currents, and perhaps it is time that sociologists began to accept these for what they are, rather than continually treat them as clear expressions/consequences of some definite structure of society as articulated in the privileged register of Theory. Of course, this warning against rationalism is the old 'Owl of Minerva' argument: the serious grey medium of theory will never truly tap or catch up with the rich fluidity of life. Once again, the postmodern thought is far from new. But so what?

The upshot of this line of thought is that provoked by postmodernism, we need to adopt a much wider notion of intellectual 'success' than whether particular theoretical arguments (including those of postmodernists) are 'valid' or not. For example, as a bard once said, there ain't no success like failure: even an impossible ideal type or theoretical fiction, strong postmodernism stirs the imagination, provokes debate and leads us to examine our conscience, and that is a major kind of success.

Another kind of success is when a theory or movement serves 'functionally' to give a constituency a common set of references and a fresh sense of goals and resources. Alexander has proposed that arguments about the status and relevance of the classics' continually achieve this function for sociological theorists; a similar role is played by all-pervasive contemporary controversies, and 'postmodernism' is the most obvious of these today.

Specific emphases and insights of a postmodernist kind, moreover, have made a lasting impact. For example, the claim that theories and discourses are wholly rhetorical, affective, context-bound, pragmatically derived, ungroundable and undecidable, may well be exaggerated, but it does help us to continually interrogate the idea of a universal, purely cognitive mode of knowing. As a result, the very conduct of debates in sociological theory have become more sensitive to their context and cultural constitution, and there is a greater awareness of the rhetorical and affective strategies within which cognitive claims are aired. Sociology on both those fronts merges with 'cultural studies', and this is a good thing.

In all this, postmodernism has undoubtedly touched a raw nerve in the 'structure of feeling' of the intellectual and political cultures of the liberal democracies. Whatever its pitfalls as a set of propositions, it has the kind of 'psychological validity' that Gramsci identified as the mark of significant cultural forms. You certainly get the sense - with hindsight of course - that postmodernism was a cultural event that was waiting to happen. Sociology and sociological theory would be seriously impoverished if the understanding of such a phenomenon

were to be confined to rationalistic appraisal, indispensable though the latter may be.

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Living With(in) The Crisis: Gouldner and The Postmodern in Sociology

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Not many analysts reflecting on contemporary Western conditions would deny that economic, social and cultural arrangements have changed markedly over the past few decades. There is, however, considerable disagreement on how to interpret such changes. Some argue that they signal the onset of a 'high modern' period that is by and large an extension of the modern (eg. Giddens, 1991). Others see a more momentous shift to 'new times', to a world that has transcended the limits of modernisation, modernity and modernism.[1] From their viewpoint, we

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[1] Following Hebdidge (1989: 49), I use: 'modernisation' to denote 'technological, economic and social innovations associated with the rise of capitalism'; 'modernity' to evoke changing forms of life attendant with capitalism; and, 'modernism' to signal associated 'experimental movements in the arts' and culture. Post-industrialism, postmodernity

have moved into postmodern conditions under which industrialism has been surpassed (post-industrialism), where we are forced to confront the failures of modern emancipatory promises and practises (postmodernity), and where there is a crisis in the ways cultural practices are ordered and thought about (postmodernism). Thus conceived, the postmodern condition portends the rise of a different historical horizon within which the flow of life is to run a course along altered surfaces.

Regardless of how one views these changes, their impact has been important enough to have problematised the very practice of sociology. Even those who depict the contemporary as an extension of modernity acknowledge the need for appropriate adjustments within the discipline. So, for instance, Giddens (1985; 1991) argues that sociologists should take firm account of globalising trends, while others recommend that sociology shift its focus from 'society' to 'social relations' and 'social change' (Tourraine, 1989), or even to 'postmodernity' (Lash, 1990). By contrast, and at the other extreme, Baudrillard (1983) argues that with massive changes in information technologies, the main object of sociological analysis - the 'social' - has died. As such, sociology has become little more than an anachronism without clear relevance to our 'mass' age. Between these positions is Bauman's view which declares that:

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and postmodernism may be seen to respond to each of these (see also Featherstone (1988) and Smart (1992, 1993)).

> if the radical manifestos proclaiming the end of sociology and 'social philosophy' as we know it seem unfounded, equally unconvincing is the pretence that nothing of importance has happened and that there is nothing to stop 'business as usual'...while in no way damned, [sociology] must adjust itself to new conditions in order to self reproduce (Bauman, 1992: 105).

He calls for a 'sociology of postmodernism' which would - *inter alia* - reformulate modern sociology's emancipatory aims and explicitly examine the experience, world views and social systems linked with postmodernity.

In all the above positions, there is a conspicuous (and in Bauman's 1992: 11) case deliberate lack of talk about what a specifically 'postmodern sociology' (as opposed to a sociology of postmodernism) might entail. With the exception of Baudrillard, the absence implies more or less of a commitment to (modern?) sociological practices capable of 'representing' something - in this case 'postmodernism'. As a rhetorical strategy, the oversight provides notable benefits for its advocates: by reflexively assuming the role of detached 'reporters' of postmodernism, or postmodernity, sociologists avoid confronting deconstructive critiques of their own representational practices. Yet if one takes postmodernism (postmodernity) to be more than mere 'object' for modern representations, one is surely obliged to re-examine what postmodern conditions might mean for the practice of sociology. The aim here would be to develop sociological practices through (and not at an artificial distance from) postmodern conditions. In any case, what this does indicate is that the notion of a postmodern sociology is decidedly unelaborated and its

meaning quite undeveloped. As such, one might well wonder whether or not the fervent critiques of postmodernism in sociology are indeed pulling the cart before the horse.

The following paper will not try to accomplish the task of elaborating on what a postmodern sociology might entail, as I have attempted that elsewhere (Pavlich, forthcoming). Instead, I wish here to focus on an important moment in the development of modern sociology where the discursive space for a postmodern sociology was cleared. An early statement on the scale of changes facing sociologists was voiced by C. Wright Mills:

> We are at the ending of what is called the Modern Age...now the Modern Age is being succeeded by a post-modern period (Mills, 1959: 184).

And perhaps it was a recognition of the enormous effects this succession would entail which (re-)engendered an ethos of crisis in sociology. Later, in Gouldner's prescient warnings about a looming crisis in 'academic' (modern) sociology, one detects the rising tide of a scepticism that questions the fundamental assumptions of modern sociology grounding both functionalist and Marxist discourses. I shall argue that in his analysis of three major contradictions in modern sociology, Gouldner was indeed clearing a discursive space in which a postmodern discourse could develop.[2] But to place my interpretation,

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[2] Of course, here we are *using* his text out of context - indeed, his implied 'neo-sociology' seems more an expression of a different time

it is perhaps useful to point to a wider despair with modern thought that has attracted various responses over the past hundred years or so, some of the more recent bearing the name of the postmodern.

A Modern Legitimacy Crisis: the Postmodern Emerges

As one prominent analyst argues, postmodern thought is born out of a profound 'crisis of legitimation' at the heart of modern life (e.g., Lyotard, 1984). For heuristic purposes, and of particular significance to sociology, let us here focus on what I take to be an important element in the modernity-postmodernity debate. Echoing Marx and Berman, Hebdidge notes that:

> If modernity is a condition in which 'all that is solid melts into air' then all the old institutions and centres of authority - from religion to royalty - which guaranteed stability and continuity in earlier epochs...are prone to contestation (Hebdidge, 1989: 49).

Under modern conditions, contests are settled and legitimacy sought by appealing not to the oracles, or the call of ancestral voices, but to 'great metanarratives'

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than a particularly helpful response to the present. His insights provide a useful way of opening our 'language game,' before reflection on how we may 'go on' developing the game (Wittgenstein, 1983).

(Lyotard, 1984).[3] The great metanarratives of the Enlightenment included claims about the absolute authority of science and reason as providers of a truth that holds universally, and of human emancipation/progress. The capacity for reasoning, which drives progress, is vested in the innate abilities of all individual subjects. And it is precisely this faith in science and reason, with the elaborate claims about what it might be expected to achieve, which is contested under postmodern conditions.

In particular, it is possible to point to various questions which call attention to certain profound failures of modern metanarratives. For instance, how can our faith in science be unconditional when amongst its achievements is the creation of weapons of mass destruction? One might marvel at the science behind a SCUD missile directing itself through a city's streets to find its target, but the desecrations of its consequent explosions expose the sheer horror of its destructive capacity. Or, how can reason be heralded as a secular deity when the scourges of such blights as apartheid and the Holocaust have claimed a place amongst the reasoned? Reason is simply too flexible to serve as a homogeneous, Archimedean point that can justly decide between moral contests. It may even be that the very quest for a universal reason to yield uncontestable 'truths' itself involves a certain epistemological imperialism with pernicious effects (Adam

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[3] For more detail on these debates than I can offer here, see, *inter alia*, Smart (1993; 1991), Agger (1991), Brooker (1992), Featherstone (1991; 1988), McGowan (1991), Kelner (1988), Wollin (1984-1985) and Giddens (1991).

and Tiffen, 1990). After all, few today could confidently claim that the attempts to inscribe (instrumental) reason into the fabric of modern society has unfolded social history progressively? Whilst modern images of emancipation from feudal subordination may have been portrayed in the language of progression, equivalent images of freedom are remote for those who continue to bear the brunt of contemporary forms of oppression. And is the purportedly primordial plenitude of the individual subject the basis for freedom, or is it another of the 'subjected sovereignties' of liberal democracies? (Foucault, 1977; Rose, 1990)

These are the kinds of questions which attack the very foundations of modern metanarratives. The effect of such questioning has been described by one commentator thus:

> In contemporary society and culture - postindustrial society, post-modern culture - the question of the legitimacy of knowledge is formulated in different terms. The grand narrative [of modernity] has lost its credibility, regardless of what mode of unification it uses, regardless of whether it is a speculative narrative or a narrative of emancipation" (Lyotard, 1984: 37).

But in the very process of losing its credibility, the narratives of modernity have attracted a number of important and fundamental critiques. Perhaps it is out of such critiques, such as Gouldner's (1971) poignant analysis, that a postmodern sociology could develop.

Gouldner Confronts Modern Metanarratives

> Gouldner's reflexive analysis of modern sociology in the early 1970s exposed certain "powerful contradictions" from which transformations of the discipline could emerge (Gouldner, 1971: 441).

Over and above the influence of young sociologists and Marxism, he identifies three 'inherent contradictions' within sociology. First, he takes issue with modern sociology's quest for 'objectivity' as methodologically desirable for research. He notes that this emphasis on impartiality masks underlying power-knowledge relations that characterise all sociological enquiry, and encourages an unhealthy distance from the dominant values of a society. It signifies a contradictory 'devotion or capitulation' to the *status quo* (Gouldner, 1971: 439). When not in the service of devotees, objectivity is the 'ambivalent ideology' used by the timid and privileged to express their resentment (Gouldner, 1971: 440). Objectivity, that is, it provides a:

> 'sacred' justification to withhold the reflexive loyalty that society demands, while at the same time providing a protective covering for the critical impulses of the timid (Gouldner, 1971: 439).

Gouldner's concerns with 'objectivity' may be read as an attack on one of modern sociology's central legitimating metanarratives: the quest to truthfully 'represent' the world. He rejects the claim to impartial, 'detached' analysis, as though some or other 'objective' methodology might ever procure accurate, impartial textual images of

a priori 'social facts' (see also, Gouldner, 1968). The very idea of social facts as entities *sui generis*, as objects distinguished from others by their absolute essences, could be seen as an extension of the objectivity myth; i.e., as that to which a detached search for absolute truths is directed. As a result, Gouldner feels that sociology should reformulate the nature of its enquiries by developing an explicitly partisan (rather than 'disinterested') research ethos (Gouldner, 1968).

Foreshadowing postmodern concerns, Gouldner here problematises the separation of the sociologist, sociological texts and social reality. He questions the very manner in which modern sociology relates to its discursive *objects*, and seeks to dissolve the model of impartial 'representation.' Gouldner calls instead for a partisan sociologist not to take dominant enunciations of social reality, or even of absolute objects, for granted. Perhaps here we can infer traces of Nietzsche who tells us:

> More strictly: one must admit nothing that has being - because then becoming would lose its value and actually appear meaningless and superfluous. Consequently one must ask how the illusion of being could have arisen (was bound to arise (Nietzsche, 1967: 708).

Like Nietzsche, and indeed some postmodern positions, Gouldner appears to be calling for us to turn away from the illusions of absolute being to the processes by which existence is carved and comes to appear as if it were written in stone.

> Secondly, Gouldner points out a contradiction endemic to the practice of sociological research, in its 'domain assumptions.' He alerts us to the discrepancy between its, *focal* assumption that society makes man, and its *tacit* assumption that man [sic] makes society (Gouldner, 1971: 440).

Notwithstanding, the exclusionary reference to 'man,' he appears to be championing peoples' capacity for agency through a radical sociology which does not treat individuals as passive slaves of social structures. His analysis draws on debates of the time to herald ethnomethodology and hermeneutic sociology against the dominance of macro, structural analyses.

Gouldner's attempts here draw attention to, and even problematise (i.e. by depicting it as a contradiction), the individual-society domain assumption of modern sociology. Despite valuing the transformative capacities of micro (individual) processes, Gouldner's formulation of the 'problem' is profoundly deconstructive to the extent that it questions a central tenet in modern sociology's 'research programme' (Lakatos, 1970). For instance, by exposing the individual-society assumption to direct scrutiny, and by questioning the formative capacities of social structures, Gouldner presages Baudrillard's death of the social. But it also encourages a directed analysis of the individual subject, a move that when combined with poststructural analyses would later question the individual subject's ontological status.

Finally, he examines a contradiction emanating from the links between modern sociology and its major funder -- the welfare state. By focusing narrowly on the 'social'

problems of its sponsor, and by conjuring technocratic solutions to these, sociologists begin to witness firsthand the extremely limited effects of state reforms on the lives of the oppressed. The contradiction he identifies is that while working within the limits of state reformism, sociologists are exposed to its extreme failures. As he graphically put it:

> Even if it is the special business of such sociologists to help clean up the vomit of modern society, they are also sometimes revolted by what they see (Gouldner, 1971: 439).

Retrospectively interpreted, Gouldner's observation here echoes Weber's disillusionment with the (modern) promise that instrumental, technocratic rationality could assure societal progress, or that greater rationality would produce a freer society. There are many sides to modern instrumental reason(s), and some of these cannot be exonerated from certain appalling social atrocities and disasters. In any case, the contradiction that Gouldner raises suggests, at least, that the reasons which belie the 'social problems' of the welfare state, and those of modern sociological 'solutions', do not always coincide with the reasons of those implicated in the 'problem' at hand. The clash between these leaves a residue of failure which exists outside the limits of the reasons behind state reform.

One effect of this line of thinking is to see reason in plural terms: partisans harbour different reasons and patterns of reasoning. Now if such a fragmentation of reason presents a difficulty for modern theorising, it opens up certain possibilities evident in postmodern critiques. For one

thing, it encourages us to reject a certain 'blackmail' which demands that either we accept the precepts of one (Western, liberal, European, male) tradition of reason, or risk falling into the domain of the unreasonable, the irrational, etc. (Foucault, 1984: 43).

In turn, this implies that no one form of reasoning is inherently superior to others. It also suggests that no one form of reason is inherently benevolent, be it technocratic, instrumental, communicative or otherwise. There are no absolute certainties and, perhaps, this requires a 'postmodern imagination' to provide an ongoing critical surveillance of the perils associated with all rationalising processes (Smart, 1993: 103-107). It implies, too, that no rationality is excepted from potentially creating adverse effects when deployed in context.

Conclusion

In short, then, the preceding discussion has examined Gouldner's attempt to 'transcend and subulate' modern academic sociology as clearing the discursive space within which a specifically postmodern sociology might develop (Gouldner, 1971: 443). In particular, his three-pronged critique of modern sociology may have important implications for how to practice sociology under postmodern conditions.

More specifically, by highlighting objectivity as a myth, sociologists could consider how to develop engaged analyses directed at the processes by which an absolute 'social reality' is forged. Here a postmodern repudiation of modern epistemological practices is brought to the

forefront. Secondly, by exposing modern sociology's domain assumption, it becomes possible to think about notions of resistance outside of the individual-society exemplar. Here we confront political strategies and resistance under postmodern conditions directly within sociology (Wickham, 1990; Flynn, 1989; White, 1987/8). Finally, by recognising the plurality of reason, sociology can begin to frame its problems, diagnoses and analyses outside of technocratic, state-inspired limits. It may be appropriate here to shed the view which demands that either sociologists involve themselves in practices that yield 'real' solutions to technocratically defined social problems, or risk not doing sociology at all. Simultaneously it encourages sociological practices beyond these limits, such as those directed at recovering the multiple reasons of those whose voices are unheard. Perhaps, too, the time has come to give expression to a silence imposed by the imperialism of an instrumental reason that has for too long colonised sociological practice.

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Social Science Funding in New Zealand: A Response from the Foundation for Research, Science and Technology

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I am writing in response to the symposium on the *Funding of Social Science Research in New Zealand* which appeared in the November 1993 edition of *New Zealand Sociology*. I am motivated by the fact that the symposium has presented an inaccurate picture of the funding system operated by the Foundation for Research, Science and Technology for the distribution of the Public Good Science Fund (PGSF). In the interests of accuracy and fairness, this should be addressed. I also feel that constructive debate concerning research strategy cannot proceed while such inaccurate information lies unchallenged in the public domain.

The first point I wish to address concerns the question of the overall importance of PGSF funding for social science in New Zealand. Several contributors to the symposium make it clear that the PGSF has not historically been an important funder of social science in New Zealand. As the symposium outlines, 51% of social science in New Zealand is funded directly by universities, 37% by government departments, and only 7% by the PGSF (the remaining 5% comes from the private sector). In passing, it should be noted that even this low figure may overestimate the importance of the PGSF to social science in New Zealand. The figures are drawn from a survey undertaken by the Ministry for Research, Science and

Technology (MoRST) which, as it relies on self-reporting, may underestimate the amount of research undertaken in universities and departments (see *A Profile of Crown-Funded R&D in New Zealand*, MoRST, 1992). Nevertheless, regardless of the exact figure, it is well established that the contribution of the PGSF is comparatively low.

The claim to which I wish to take exception is one made by Peter Enderwick in his contribution to the symposium. He writes that:

> While traditionally the universities have been the principal sponsors of social science research, their entry into the PGSF pool...means that the majority of research funds will be allocated through the PGSF mechanism of contestable funding.

This assertion does not stand up to close examination. The amount of money involved in the transfer from the universities to the PGSF has been known for some time, several years in fact. It was $10.67 million. In 1993/94, approximately $1.3 million of this was spent on social science (this is determined by the universities and their bidding profiles). Simple mathematics will show that the contribution of the PGSF to New Zealand social science will rise from approximately 7% to approximately 11%, and that of universities will drop from 51% to 46%.

This is far from the picture presented by Peter Enderwick and alluded to in other parts of the symposium. The overall impression given to the readers of the journal is that the Foundation has risen like some huge Leviathan to engulf university social science. Perhaps it would be a good thing if this were to happen. The Foundation runs

a highly rigorous and visible system based on extensive peer and merit review. It is not clear that other funding systems operate with a similarly high level of transparency. However, as nothing of the sort is happening, the inference is inaccurate and unjustified.

Inaccuracies continue in the conclusion to the symposium, which is also insulting in its discussion of the Foundation's operations. I feel that the record should be set straight. The conclusion is imbued with the implication that the Foundation is subject to political control and will not fund or promote research which may be damaging or embarrassing to the government of the day. This message is conveyed in highly emotive language and includes the claim that scientists are being forced to act as the 'handmaidens of government'. This claim is misleading and unjustified.

The Foundation is an independent agency with its own Act of Parliament. This Act establishes that the Foundation is free from political control and cannot be directed by the government to fund or not to fund any piece of research. Rather, funding decisions are made via a process that features a high level of involvement from members of the scientific community. Applications are first subjected to peer review by external referees, in the same way that most academic articles are reviewed prior to publication. The applications and the referee reports are then considered by an advisory committee made up of experienced, professional social scientists. This committee makes recommendations for funding based upon the referee reports and the applications themselves. After reading the symposium, readers of *New Zealand Sociology* could be forgiven for thinking that these

decisions are make by members of Cabinet who wield great powers of censorship! This is not the case, and the inference that political concerns lie beneath the decisions made by this committee is *grossly insulting to its members.* The values brought to the committee's deliberations by its members are those of the wider social science community and the decisions made reflect these values.

The same is true of the social science strategy developed by the Foundation during 1993. This strategy was written by a professional sociologist and was based upon widespread consultation. Over one hundred written submissions were considered while many more people concerned with social science contributed orally during meetings. The final document reflects the views expressed.

I am disappointed that the conclusion to the symposium did not discuss the procedures used by the Foundation in a balanced manner. Instead, it presented the PGSF system in a poor light so that its merits were not made apparent to the readers of *New Zealand Sociology*. In this context, I found the writers' claim that 'critical' does not mean 'criticism' to be ironically amusing! This piece of the symposium seems imbued with a sanctimoniousness that does nothing to advance the debate concerning strategy for social science research.

In the interests of redressing the balance, and as it will not have been seen by many of your readers, I would like to quote from an article published in *The Press* on 8 April 1994 written by Dr Michael Carter, Department of Economics, University of Canterbury:

> The funding of specific projects is not determined by 'the Government', as that term is commonly understood... Researchers make application for funding to the Foundation...
>
> These applications are then reviewed by other experts in the field... and written reports obtained. The applications and peer reviews are then considered by an advisory committee of leading researchers in that field who recommend allocations of the limited public funds to the most worthwhile projects...
>
> Research costs money. The contestable research grants scheme is designed to make researchers more accountable for the public money that they spend, and to try to allocate limited research resources to those areas which *a preponderance of experts* think are most likely to be productive (emphasis added).

I understand that the symposium was published in an attempt to generate debate and discussion. As such, many of the comments contained therein may have been presented in a deliberately provocative manner. I welcome the attempt to stimulate discussion on questions relating to research strategy for social science, but feel that such discussion should be based upon accurate information regarding institutions and processes. I hope that this letter will be published so that this may take place.

New Zealand SOCIOLOGY 9 (1) May 1994

Reviews

Judith Davey, **From Birth to Death III**, Wellington Institute of Policy Studies, Victoria University of Wellington, 1993;

Mary Mowbray, **Incomes Monitoring Report, 1981-1991,** Wellington, Social Policy Agency, Department of Social Welfare, 1993;

Social Policy Agency (DSW), **Social Environment Scan**, Wellington, Brief for the Minister of Social Welfare, 1993;

Social Policy Agency, **Social Policy Journal of New Zealand**, 1993;

Statistics New Zealand, **New Zealand Social Trends: Work**, Wellington, Statistics New Zealand, 1994.

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Much of the information current in any society is reproduced from its social bookkeeping apparatus. Not only does the array of welfare state institutions collect much social data, but this is also used to guide their performance and, to a limited extent, is further processed to provide sociologically relevant information. The set of

studies reviewed here constitute the higher quality visible tip of the iceberg aspect of social reporting, and they each contribute data to underpin sociological understandings of New Zealand society. However, despite stereotypes of the uniformity of the state, these four contributions vary considerably in the way they make their contribution. The strength such reports often have is that they are based on very solid data-bases; their limitations flow from the restrictive environment government social researchers are inevitably placed within. But the responsibility for wider use of this material is in the hands of academic social researchers who can place it within wide interpretive frameworks that are so desperately needed. If only they would notice!

Mary Mowbray's study is a clearly and tightly written commentary on data carefully worked up from a high quality data-base, and directly addresses the important topic of what the changing pattern of household incomes in New Zealand has been. A ten-year period of Household Income and Expenditure data is reworked to provide definitive trend-data on household mean and median income, not only for different deciles of incomes, but also for different household types, together with ethnic differences, source of income, age of female 'householder', aggregate hours in paid employment and main source of income. Equivalence scales are used to 'standardise' against different household compositions. The raw data is reported in the tables, and the accompanying interpretation draws on further interpretative percentaging of trends. It is a pity these were not also included in tables as the provision of percentage changes is very helpful.

The 'Social Environmental Scan' shows (at long last) a glimmering interest from the Social Policy Agency in the social environment within which it is responsible for delivering its services. It seems strange that this is provided as part of a set of briefing documents for an incoming Minister, but we must be grateful for any small mercies. The document rushes through analyses of recent trends in the population, household and family arrangements, workforce involvement and income distributions providing a basic layering of information, but more importantly a checklist of assertions about what the key changes are, and some of their concomitants or causes. The report strings together a very definite, although not explicitly developed, picture of the way the demographic structure as affected by its living arrangements operates through both market and other sources of income to generate the changing income distribution. However, the array of particular points are never assembled to draw the whole model together. Moreover, since there is no attempt to measure the social consequences, especially for the standard of living or quality of life, of the trends identified, the report is strangely shorn of its potentially sharp policy advice.

Of recent years, Statistics New Zealand (formerly the Department of Statistics) has been reorganising along 'output' rather than 'input' lines, and an advantage of this is that information from a variety of data-sources can be focused on a particular topic. The latest addition to the small but high quality series of 'Social Trends in New Zealand' reports is a highly useful compilation. A whole series of issues in relation to the workforce and its characteristics are addressed using Census, Household Labour Force and other information. Adequate recognition

of academic social research on these topics is also given. As well as standard descriptions of trends in terms of industries, occupations, geographical patterns, migration, aging, educational levels, unemployment and gender, ethnic and income differentials, attention is directed towards particularly interesting aspects such as work time arrangements, multiple job holding and unpaid work. Although the report does not attempt to provide an overview of trends in work, each of the fairly separate sections is well-written and often provides trenchant commentary as well as the information on which this commentary is based.

As befits its greater distance from the policy apparatus, Judith Davey's summary treatment is the most ambitious of these exercises. The 'grand-child' of 'From Birth to Death', as in the two earlier versions and despite the death of its sponsoring body (the NZ Planning Council), examines information drawn from several life-domains (family, housing, income, employment, caring work, voluntary work, health, education and recreation) across several life-cycle stages, and provides separate information for the three main ethnic groupings. The literature of medical social research and a few major studies such as the Christchurch longitudinal study is trawled for relevant information and appropriately tailored census tables are provided. The information is well presented and the commentary clear.

However, the report fails to ignite or even to be very helpful. The life-cycle stage device often chops up more relevant continuities and the commentary is bland and fails to engage any humanistic concern. It is only with the brief comments of the concluding chapter that some grip

on the complex changes is provided. Perhaps this is a strong hint that switching the emphasis to topics, then subdividing by life-cycle stage, might be a rather more relevant way of organising the material. It is interesting that one consequence of this organisation of the material is that it does focus attention on policy concerns related to life-cycle, most especially children and the elderly. However, we do not know whether the concerns for these ages is driven more by sentiment or hard data: quite an indictment for a study loaded with data, but under-analysed. This under-analysis is aggravated by the very sketchy portrayal of the groupings used throughout the study. These groupings differ in important ways which, when not taken into adequate account, render the data limited and sometime dangerous for its stigmatising possibilities.

The final piece reviewed also promises to be ongoing. The Social Policy Agency has produced a handsomely published volume of work from its own staff. The journal seeks to 'document and analyse the changes going on around us' and to develop 'the quality of social policy debate and advice'. Contributions to the first edition include 'the spread of income based targeting into health sector services, benefits and pension policy, the rights of indigenous peoples ... and appropriate delivery of social services to them, sole parent policy and new approaches to crime prevention and the treatment of young offenders'. A new journal is a welcome addition to the limited span of social science outlets in New Zealand, and potential contributors are invited to submit one or other of the four rather bewilderingly differentiated offerings which include social policy papers, research papers,

reviews of social policy developments and book (or conference) reviews.

One limitation of most of these studies is their highly truncated image of social structure. In most, only gender, ethnic group and family type are ever dealt with. Further, their resolute avoidance of any social meanings becomes stultifying. However, these reports might be complemented by more rounded out contributions from academic social researchers.

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Lois Bryson, **Welfare and The State: Who Benefits?**
Basingstoke, Macmillan Press, 1992.

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It's the subtitle that gives this book its edge. It is a question that could push our confidence in the welfare state over a precipice, but for some reason the question does not appear on the cover. It arrives on the publisher's title page. That is a pity, because it is the question mark that makes this book approachable.

Lois Bryson has taken on an area that has been prolifically debated in British sociology. As an antipodean, it is significant that this book is published as part of a British series, and more so because Bryson's aim is to push the

debate into fields where the traditional concerns, however earnest and elaborate, have been narrow and blinkered.

> The aim of this book is to explore the nature of sociological perspectives in the welfare state and assess their utility for both understanding recent changes and for facilitating the achievement of greater equality. (p.1).

In fact, she is rather modest with this statement and although she restates it a few pages later, the ambition is to push sociological debate on two fronts: first, to adopt a concept of the state that examines *all* intervention (including non-intervention) in order to address the question '*who benefits*?', (p.5) and secondly, to bring into focus inequality, particularly gender issues, that have seldom been incorporated into many of the male publishing careers that have been built around this topic in the northern hemisphere. Two chapters, 'Men's Welfare State' and 'Women's Welfare State', stand as symbols for the analytical drive that makes this book significant.

The book builds to these two beacons by methodically exploring traditional sociological discourse on the welfare state. She examines conventional approaches, and their key words, and considers comparative welfare policy from around the world, always reminding us to ask the question who benefits? Such a broad approach requires assessing and annotating a wide range of literature and for this alone, the book deserves commendation as a text book. It works well as a reference point on concepts and critical authors, and will therefore be a popular book with students. But with this quality is the value of an author prepared to argue her case. It makes the book more

significant as the methodology and the theory integrate into an applied analysis.

Bryson has not written this book as an intellectual exercise. She is keen to influence things, reminding us in the final chapter that the point of sociology, of discovery, and of any theorist of inequality, *'is not merely to understand the world, but to change it* (p.226).

It would be wrong to mistake the accessibility and clarity of this book as over simplification. Too much sociology is written with the density and fertility of granite. The vehicle of discourse analysis allows the language, focus, and bias of previous analyses to be explored. With reference to Raymond Williams, Raymond Plant and Titmuss, she gathers the analytical tools to 'unpack' conventional discourse where words like motherhood, welfare services, community, and participation, for instance, are rarely associated with negatives, and are used in a way which often masks the power and access issues that are invariably behind the warm glow these words evoke. They are ideological in their use and impact, and frequently the principal beneficiary of their usage sits in the chair by the fire, the privileged male. Bryson is very committed to her question, to the point where she could still be asking who benefits even after a feminist welfare state has been established.

Unfortunately, the book does not contain many references to the New Zealand experience. We are identified as having a similar history of welfare policy to Australia (quoting Castles frequently) but little of the recent demolition of welfare provision here is incorporated and few New Zealand commentators are mentioned. Marilyn

Waring's work on the [in]significance of women's work is referred to and Bryson links her research into a wider critique of patriarchy in academic literature.

The book concludes with a brief chapter on the welfare state in the twenty-first century. Where do we go from here? Bryson answers that we need to confront some home truths. 'The momentum of current political economic orthodoxies (suggests) the limits of welfare state development have been reached, temporarily at least' (p.227). Reluctant as we might be to face this prospect, Bryson is prepared to state it, acknowledge that some countries are 'backsliding' faster than others, and to say that the conditions that allowed the welfare state to get as far as it did are unlikely to be created again. Any return to welfare has to come from new analysis, new strategy.

There are global pressures reconstructing the modern nation state, and the new countries of Eastern Europe are honing and asserting the ideology of market liberalism with less welfare, and are cynically looking to maintain the gap between rich and poor to 'foster' individual responsibility and disconnect dependency from the human repertoire. Under such rhetoric, the role of the state appears to diminish as welfare policies become less conspicuous and costly, but although this is cloaked in the words of less intervention, Bryson tells us to be careful. The state is always an interventionist phenomenon. It judiciously, at times openly, at times surreptitiously, chooses to arrange things in a way that intervenes on behalf of particular interests. It's easy to see this benefiting a select group. She encourages us to recognise this is likely to mean male and ethnic advantages.

Having loosened the control of capital under the new economic theory, any move back to a welfare state can be held off by the flow of capital 'out of the state' as business confidence ebbs and flows, that is, exercises its leverage. The absence of action by the state in such circumstances is just as plausibly intervention by the state. The populace are powerless, inequalities more transparent, and the role of sociologist more clear. Her final sentence reads:

> ...we can at least do more to try to ensure that sociological discourses do not collude with this form of domination by failing to address the very general distribution of power and other resources to the privileged (p.234).

This is partly a political statement. Bryson sees the political imperative to rebuild collective political strategy. The statement is also one of professional responsibility showing, by her example with the book, the need for disciplined and literary scholarship. I can actually say I got a lot from this book. It was helpful, accessible and such a lift in an area where turgid prose can kill off any zeal, even political energy. I welcome the book into circulation. It will be useful for students and scholars alike.

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New Zealand SOCIOLOGY 9 (1) May 1994

Maryan Street, **The Scarlet Runners: Women and Industrial Action, 1889-1913**, Wellington, Working Life Communications, in association with the Auckland Working Women's Resource Centre, 1993.

Reviewed by Linda Hill
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University of Canterbury

This small book uncovers a forgotten part of New Zealand's history, that of women's involvement in early industrial action. It is timely, not only because of the Women's Suffrage Centenary celebrations which funded its publication, but this year marks what would have been the centennial of our traditional labour relations system, overturned by the Employment Contracts Act, 1991. The shift from occupational to enterprise bargaining has now deunionised large numbers of women in low paid clerical, retail and service work (NZCTU, 1993) and in February 1993, the Household Labour Force Survey showed the gender pay gap beginning to widen.

New Zealand has traditionally had a highly unionised workforce and, since the end of the 1930s, an equally unionised female workforce. Despite the unusualness of this internationally, our labour history seems to focus entirely on 1890, 1911, 1913 and 1951 - all strikes by miners, watersiders or both. However, Maryan Street's research reveals that even these great events were not just the derring-doing of men. Women were actively involved in early strikes to protect family incomes, as well as taking action on their own behalf. Street picks through union documents, historical collections and published

works to uncover the earliest stories of women and industrial action.

The establishment of the New Zealand Tailoresses Unions flew in the face of assertions that women could not combine in a trade union to protect themselves. In the Long Depression of the 1880s, women endured deplorable conditions of work through 'sweated' contracting in the clothing industry. Apprentices, sometimes working for nothing, were transferred or dismissed before they qualified for full pay. Piece rates were so low they took outwork home after the legal 8-hour in order to earn a living. In 1895, Dunedin's first Trades and Labour Council discussed the situation, but did nothing. Before the Industrial Conciliation & Arbitration (IC&A) Act was passed in 1894, as a later Tailoresses' secretary wrote (p.9):

> Freedom of contract was unfettered. Weak women had absolute freedom - to accept work at starvation rates or starve.

In 1889, the tailoresses took their plight to a Presbyterian minister, then to the newspapers and public meetings. A committee tried to negotiate a tariff of minimum rates with warehousemen and contractors.

> They are afraid of our proposal, because it might reduce the profit side of their balance sheet a little; because they are afraid one might gain a pecuniary advantage over another...We want to set limits to the fierceness of this competition. (p.11)

With the failure of negotiation, the tailoresses formed a union, gaining 564 members within a month. By May

1890, there were tailoresses' unions in Dunedin, Christchurch, Wellington and Auckland with a total of 1672 members. Through public exposure of conditions, strike threats to bring employers into line, financial support from other unions and strikes at the Kaiapoi mills and in Auckland, the tailoresses established logs of union rates in all centres. Under the IC&A Act, these were eventually translated into awards for weekly wages.

The Maritime Strike by Australian and New Zealand seamen, wharf labourers and miners was essentially about the employment of unionised labour and the right of unions to affiliate as the Maritime Council. The issues did not inspire much public sympathy and the season was wrong; coal was not in high demand and farm labourers were available to scab. The defeat of the strike was devastating to the labour unions in particular, and led to the IC&A Act which legitimated unionism but provided an alternative to the public disruption of disputes. Unions which registered under the Act traded their right to strike for the right to arbitration.

Men, not women, were the strikers in the Maritime strike, the Waihi strike and the general strike of 1913, but Street describes how women had a role of their own in each of these disputes. What is interesting about these accounts is that they point up the inadequacy of contemporary ideology about public and private worlds as separate male and female spheres. When men lacked work, women and children starved with them, often considered 'undeserving poor' by Charitable Aid Trusts. They contributed to the duration of strikes by making ends meet and by picketing and political activism. They did so because their standard of living and, at the time of the Maritime strike, their own

political freedom was linked to that of their partners. Street quotes the letter of a 'Striker's Wife' to the *Otago Workman:*

> ...we have as much interest in the strike as our husbands have, as much to lose and as much to gain...On its results depends our condition (will we live) in comfort with recognised rights or as slaves. (p.33)

When a new Liberal-Labour government was brought to power, it introduced some 14 pieces of labour legislation. Opponents argued that the cost to industry of these protective reforms would lead to the flight of capital from New Zealand - familiar words to women campaigning for equal pay in the 1950s and 1960s, or for pay equity in the 1980s. Street reviews the law changes and the organisation of unions around the turn of the century with particular regard to women. Narrow definitions of 'Industrial' under the Act initially precluded the registration of unions covering sales and service jobs, including a Wellington Domestic Workers Union which tried to obtain an award in 1902. Despite the registration of some unions, most low paid service occupations for women were not able to sustain organisation until compulsory unionism was added to arbitration in 1936.

By the time of the Waihi strike, the use of arbitration to control wages was opposed by the 'Red' Federation of Labour. The Waihi miners deregistered and organised with other trades to back negotiations with industrial action, but a dissenting minority of engineers registered a new union to cover their occupation. The fight was then as much one between 'Federationists' and 'arbitrationists' as between workers, employers and 'Massey's

Cossacks', with women active on both sides. Mothers, wives and sweethearts were over a third of the strike committee, negotiated community politics for credit and supplies, picketed with placards and abused scabs and police. The press dubbed them 'Scarlet Runners' in reference not just to beans but to their 'Red' connections and to their unladylike activities. It was not just strikers who were eventually expelled from town, but women and children too.

The historic strikes familiar to us were by male unions that opted out of the arbitration system - or were deregistered - in order to try their luck with industrial muscle. Street shows how women's support was necessary to maintain these strikes. As women themselves became increasingly unionised, the industrial weakness inherent in most service work led them to rely on arbitration, as did most unions representing men. This tension continues to run through collective strategising by the union movement. Historically, alternatives to industrial struggle and possible defeat have been secured through political struggle and legislative remedy. It has also been the strategy most used by women to secure their particular interests as both citizens and workers.

This history of the beginnings of the system of centralised wage bargaining, now ended, is instructive in regard to both the conditions suffered and the effort required to change them. The 'sweating' system Street describes sounds remarkably like the contracting and subcontracting described to me by an Apparel Workers organiser in 1990. The instability of tendering for job lots had totally casualised machinists' employment but, she explained, hourly rates had been protected by the award, binding on

all contractors, which placed a floor under competition between employers. That was before the Employment Contracts Act. Contracting out is now common in low paid service work and is being introduced in health services.

The Employment Contracts Act fragmented national awards into enterprise contracts. Employees have the legal right to collective contracts but their only means of securing these is moral suasion or industrial action. This is exactly the 1880s situation, against a similar background of high unemployment. The papers are full of small strikes and women picketing supermarkets. The encouraging thing about this early women's history is that against all odds, they did take industrial action - and we do. The pity is that we should have to.

References:

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Nick Perry, **The Dominion of Signs: Television, Advertising, and Other New Zealand Fictions,** Auckland, Auckland University Press, 1994.

Reviewed by Geoff Lealand
Film and Television Studies
University of Waikato

Rabbits were the reason I felt a strong empathy with this book when it arrived in early 1994. In his very personal Introduction, 'Does the book stop here?', Nick Perry describes his domestic circumstances, which include an empty rabbit hutch and a lost rabbit. I had just, a day or so before reading Nick's piece, spent a sad morning burying two pet rabbits which had been savaged to death by a dog and two cats respectively (don't let anyone tell me about benevolent Nature!). As it probably was for Nick, these two rabbits had come to mean more to me than to my seven year-old son. I fed them, cared for them and grieved for them more openly.

As a metaphor, power relationships between parents and children regarding the care of pets says a lot about other, larger relationships. This is what Nick's opening introduction is about; generational differences in expectations, attitudes and consumption of the stuff of everyday life. As Nick deals with his teenage daughters' 'cultural work in progress', I deal with my son wanting to interrupt this particular work in progress, in order to play computer games on the family computer.

I was familiar with these essays as they have, in earlier versions, all appeared in different sites over the past years; in previous collections, such as Novitz and Wilmott

(1989) *Culture and Identity in New Zealand* and journals such as *Sites, Islands* and *Landfall.* 'The Introduction' in *The Dominion of Signs* places all this earlier work within the context of a unified voice and world view. In Nick's words, it has been:

> ...through-written i.e. amended and extended, revised and cannibalised so as to form part of a cumulative and more general argument. The original versions were typically responses to the textual expression of cultural changes as those changes were occurring. In reworking them for present purposes, I have sought to rescue something of what, at the time of writing, was the sense of a still open and indeterminate present, from what is now its relegation and subordination to the established pattern of the past. And rather than acquiescing to that flattening out of the prose which is the stigma of 'sounder' modes of academic practice, I have sought to retain something of these speculative, fluid and combative features which the essay form uniquely permits. (p.13)

This statement answers several potential objections. One criticism could be that the author is focused on cultural events and cultural artifacts that are no longer apt or 'sexy', such as the comedy of Billy T. James or television commercials no longer on air. But this denies the essence of continuity in popular culture production and consumption; or to paraphrase Mighty Mouse, 'Imitation is the sincerest form of popular culture'. So we have re-runs of Billy T. James or not-totally successful attempts to re-run his style of ambiguous humour (*Radio Wha Waho*), and we have endless reinterpretations of rural myths in

New Zealand television advertising (Anchor butter and Mainland cheese campaigns). The subjects may change but the objective of Perry's analysis does not.

Another possible objection could be: is this sociology? Of course it is - but it is also cultural studies, literary analysis, media studies, history and sometimes even poetry. The book cover makes the claim that the book is:

> ...a series of brilliant and provocative essays on contemporary New Zealand culture which cuts across traditional disciplinary distinctions and challenges conventional forms of evaluation.

It is indeed so and an excellent example of what can be accomplished when such 'distinctions' (aka 'self-imposed barriers') are breached. It has always been a puzzle to me why so few New Zealand sociology departments (with the exception of Massey University) pay much attention to contemporary media; whole conferences go by with no papers on television and references in New Zealand journals are scarce (although the forthcoming *New Zealand Journal of Media Studies* may remedy this). This is in marked contrast to other countries (United Kingdom, Australia, the United States) where media sociology thrives and often has a direct impact on policy and public debate. Where were the voices of New Zealand sociologists when they were needed, e.g. in the late 1980s when broadcasting in New Zealand went through unprecedented change (some of it highly undesirable) and the economic rationalists prevailed?

The irony for me is that Nick Perry, in these essays, is a sociologist employing the methods of textual analysis more frequently found in English departments, or in

fledgling film and television courses. He acknowledges this himself in chapter five:

> ...the overriding tendency has been to treat television and advertising texts as relatively inert materials, as available for scrutiny and inspection through a sociological lens. (p.80)

In my own teaching and writing, I typify an opposite tradition, as some-one schooled initially in the humanities (American Studies) but now more interested in teaching and writing about the media in a contextual, quasi-sociological framework. In all my courses, I never start with the text nor dwell on it for long, preferring to talk more about modes of production and consumption; the producer-text-audience nexus; genre and schedule rather than 'programme'. So, more than the rabbits, I respond to these essays as a sort of inverted reflection of what I attempt to do in my own work.

But one hard question remains: who is likely to be interested in this collection? The publishers have obviously already asked the question and provided themselves with a satisfactory answer. This seems to be a very necessary part of contemporary book publishing, in a world where many students cannot afford expensive texts, library budgets are constrained, and academics can no longer charge book purchases against their taxes. Given these pragmatics, the price of this book could disadvantage it, especially for those who have read some or most of the essays in an earlier form (because I assume many have, I have not spoken much about the content of the essays in this review). But it shouldn't deter because this book is a unique collection of ideas that is

unprecedented in New Zealand publishing. The language may sometimes be dense (as in 'complex') but it is never impenetrable; the ideas are free-flowing and open-ended and invite active engagement. In marked contrast to some writing on New Zealand culture, there is fluidity in the construction of concepts like 'cultural identity'. They are neither proscribed nor taken-for-granted. My own response to this last question is that I am already using one essay from this collection, 'Am I Rite? Or Am I Write? Or Am I Write? A New Zealand Reading of *The Singing Detective*', in a 'Narrative in Film & Television' course I teach.

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H. C. Perkins and G. Cushman (eds), **Leisure, Recreation and Tourism**, Auckland, Longman Paul, 1993.

Reviewed by Barry Smart
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There are a number of areas of social life and human experience with which social sciences seem to have particular difficulty and leisure and recreation are amongst them. What happens when you subject phenomena such as leisure and recreation, participation in which might be passionate as opposed to detached, spontaneous rather than calculating, and intrinsic rather than instrumental, to the rigours of analytic investigation? Whilst social scientific analyses of leisure and recreation, and for that matter emotions, humour and art, undoubtedly generate some ideas, if not insights, about

their respective topics there is always a suspicion that they miss, or misrepresent, what it is that constitutes the distinctive feature of their object of investigation, that quality which sets it apart from other practices. As is well known, there are a number of ways in which this issue has been addressed, ranging from the phenomenological call to 'get back to the phenomenon' to poststructuralist influenced references to the unavoidable incommensurability of language games, which leads inexorably to the conclusion that social science analyses of leisure, art, humour etc are always going to have difficulty addressing the experience of leisure, humour, art etc. In the process of translation from one province of meaning to another, something inevitably gets lost. But such matters do not disturb mainstream social science research which all too often proceeds with the tried, but not necessarily trusty, tool of the survey, the unreflexively crafted products of which then provide the reference points for analyses of various kinds. Several of the contributions in the volume edited by Perkins and Cushman provide appropriate examples of this tendency.

The introduction to *Leisure, Recreation and Tourism* describes the field in question as one in which there is growing multi-disciplinary involvement and the collection presented has clearly been organised to serve, in substantial part, as an exemplification. History, psychology, sociology, philosophy, and economics are each represented alongside approaches which may call into question conventional disciplinary boundaries. For example, there are also papers which emphasize the gendered character of leisure and the importance of ethnicity, as well as another which claims to offer a 'social science perspective', albeit undefined, on tourism. In one

way or another, all of the papers focus on New Zealand, although the title of the volume does not make this clear. Given the exclusively local focus, the addition of 'in New Zealand' to the title would have been appropriate.

Edited volumes are not always easy to review. They are not always easy to read either. Perkins and Cushman's volume is clearly designed for a local student market and it will probably serve as a useful resource in that context. It does meet the objective outlined of providing 'a source of ideas, data, references and research pointers for students', but it does not really challenge the reader to think seriously in an *interdisciplinary* or *cross-disciplinary* manner about the pressing social, economic, political and cultural issues which are articulated with leisure, recreation and tourism. We do not encounter or experience leisure, recreation and tourism through the fragmented conceptual grids of discrete social scientific fields. And in an analytic context where the disciplinary boundaries between the social sciences are in any event rapidly dissolving is it really necessary to try to resurrect them? Might students not benefit more from thinking about the ways in which leisure and recreation are being transformed in late modernity; the impact of time-space transformations on leisure and travel; the consequences of changes in the organisation, pattern and availability of waged work on leisure and recreation experiences; and so on? In short, students should be exposed to ongoing local *and* international debates and controversies in the field concerned and *Leisure, Recreation and Tourism* really does not do that because it is too preoccupied with delineating the different idiosyncratic orientations of the various social sciences.

There are papers which do begin to address some of the controversial issues and debates to be found in the field. For example, McGregor and McMath draw attention to the issue of 'diversity within, as well as between, cultures', an important matter in a multicultural society such as New Zealand. Other contributions addressing the question of the diversity of leisure activities and experiences to be found in the various cultures and sub-cultures which constitute contemporary New Zealand would have made an interesting addition to the volume. Development of the interesting issues raised by Volkerling in a discussion of economics, culture and leisure, in particular the emergence of shopping malls and centres as leisure destinations, would also have been appropriate, particularly in view of ongoing wide debates within the social sciences on the development of postmodern cultural forms and post-Fordist forms of capitalist economic activity.

Inevitably some important themes are omitted and some pieces which have been included look a little curious. In terms of omissions, I was surprised to find that none of the contributors tackled the issue of globalisation. New Zealand is exposed to a number of global flows, for example movements of people and cultures, finance, technology, media narratives and images, and so forth, and these have implications for the ways in which leisure, recreation and tourism have developed, and will continue to develop. Consideration of such processes would have provided an appropriate context in which to explore the ways in which local and global factors are articulated in leisure, recreation and tourism in New Zealand.

It terms of inclusions which, to me at least, seem a little curious, there is Cameron's paper on 'The Sociology of Sport'. I have no qualms with the inclusion of a paper which explores the recreational, leisurely, and even tourist aspects of (spectator) sport. But why the sociology of sport? After all, the volume does not offer papers on the economics, psychology, philosophy, etc of sport, although it does for leisure. The paper does not belong in the collection; it is a victim of the disciplinary fetish which is the organizational principle around which the volume has been constructed and which is the source of its limitations. Which in turn leads me to wonder whether it is good for students to be exposed to a text which approaches a potentially interesting and stimulating field in such an unimaginative and inappropriate fashion.

Leisure, recreation and tourism are frequently represented as ways of escape from the routines, responsibilities and requirements of everyday life. You don't need to consult a social scientist to find out that that isn't the case, for 'no sooner do we enter "escape" activities than we feel nagging urges to escape from them' (Rojek, 1993). But we do need to turn to social analysis to determine what is happening to these ways of escape as they are being subject to the radical and complex transformation of modern conditions, and that would constitute an interesting and appropriate focus for a collection of papers on leisure, recreation and tourism.

Reference

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Raymond Harbridge (ed), **Employment Contracts: New Zealand Experiences,** Wellington, Victoria University Press, 1993.

Reviewed by Martin Tolich
Department ofSociology
Massey University

Employment Contracts: New Zealand Experiences is an excellent stocktaking of recent industrial relations legislation in New Zealand. The book, written in three parts - seven chapters of overview of the Employment Contracts Act, three chapters documenting the Act's effects on employers, and four chapters on the Act's effects on unions - is authored by a cast of well-known academics, managers, lawyers, and trade union officials.

I read the book with a view of incorporating all or some of the chapters into my undergraduate sociology of work class. The stand-out chapters in this collection are those written by Boxall, Harbridge and Douglas. Other chapters will be of interest to readers but I suspect this reader will be read selectively by most people. I would use these three authors' chapters in my class to place meat on the bones of sociological theories about the modern workplace. Disappointingly, however, the reader is atheoretical, describing but not explaining the Employment Contracts Act. Let me first detail the meaty bits and then suggest one way of theorising the Act.

Harbridge authors or co-authors three chapters in the reader. In an overview, he contrasts bargaining both before and after the Act. He found what many predicted; a bifurcated labour market has in fact emerged.

Harbridge draws upon a rich data set of Employment Contracts, documenting how industries where unions have traditionally been strong have remained strong. Yet those workers within the secondary labour market (i.e. service) have not gained contracts. Harbridge's second chapter, co-authored with Caisley, is also solid. It provides a content analysis of how wages and conditions have been rewritten within collective employment contracts .

Boxall's chapter on 'Management Strategy and the ECA' is the pick of the litter. Boxall does his best to place the Employment Contracts Act within some context that can explain the demise of organised labour and the ascendency of management within the decentralised bargaining framework.

In 'The ECA and Organising Workers', Douglas gives his analysis of the Employment Contracts Act and when juxtaposed to Boxall's more management perspective gives my students a broad spectrum of ideas about how management and a trade unionist read and experience the Act. Douglas contends the Act has done three things: reasserted authority of management, de-unionised the workforce and created enterprise level bargaining. All three have lowered wages. Boxall's focus is not lowered wages but lowered unit costs, inclusive of both wage levels and employee productivity. The strength of Douglas' chapter is his refocusing of the Act away from lowered wage or unit costs onto an emphasis on quality. How does the Act sustain economic growth, he asks? He argues that nothing has been gained from the lowering of wages when the pre-eminent issue in workplace reform involves quality. Skills training and a consultaive, non-

Taylorist workplace are needed rather than sustained wage cutting. A persuasive argument.

I learned a great deal about recent industrial relations legislation from the book. Yet I plan to extract from the text very selectively. The (well written and documented) article by Walsh and Ryan outlining the making (or drafting) of the Employment Contracts Act engages the reader. It asks 'How is it that an Act which in some respects so profoundly deregulates employment relations in other important respects continues the tradition of state regulation?'. While I would not use the reading myself, a senior Social Policy colleague at Massey University considers the Walsh and Ryan chapter the book's stand-out.

The reader is missing a number of chapters, namely an introduction and a conclusion. Without an initial introductory chapter to guide the reader to either the subject matter or how the contributions fit together/contrast, the text makes the reader feel as if they have been thrown in at the deep end. My undergraduate students could not survive this.

The initial seven chapters under the heading 'overview' do not introduce the text coherently. Nor does the one hundred and eighty word blurb on the back cover suffice as an introduction. Harbridge's third chapter does supply an informative introduction to the Act. The only problem is its situation as Chapter Thirteen.

Another omission concerns the book's lack of theorising or contextualisation. How can the Employment Contracts Act be explained? Why, in 1991, did it develop?

Both Harbridge and Boxall's chapters attempt to contextualise and explain the Act. Harbridge and Caisley (p. 70) write:

> The existence of an unemployment rate in excess of ten percent is a powerful bargaining weapon and there is pretty widespread agreement that the bargaining imbalance of the Employment Contracts Act would never have been implemented in strong economic times, and if unemployment had not been so high. Market forces are the sole determinant of the respective bargaining strengths of the parties.

Boxall's context is similar and of comparable length. These two instances provide insufficient contextualisation of the Act

If the strength of this book is description then its weakness is a failure to explain. Without theoretical explanations an understanding of the Act's effects in New Zealand becomes problematic. In some cases the explanation is over personalised. For example, the claims that industrial relations legislation results from (p.14) "a determined Minister of Labour" or is facilitated by an (uncited, p.15) "change of leadership of Employers' Federation" seem rather trivial. While agency is important, these references lack an awareness of structural change on a global basis.

Without a review of theories of the state or industrial relations underpinning the creation of the Act, issues of causality become the casualty. One useful theory is Burawoy's *Politics of Production* (1985). Burawoy argues that studies of the workplace have tended to under politicise production and over politicise the state. This

reader is guilty of this. Burawoy urges researchers to contextualise the politics of production. Burawoy's book could be a good starting point to theorise the Act. Many of the contributors to the reader mention the production of a bifurcated labour market. I will focus on this because the relation between the Act and the creation of primary and secondary labour markets seems, at best, highly problematic.

The obvious question to ask is could the reverse have happened? Could existing dual labour markets have been one among many factors contributing to the conditions conducive to the Employment Contracts Act? Gordon, Edwards and Reich (1982) have argued that dual labour markets divide and weaken workers powers both at the point of production and at the state legislative level. Did the existence of a dual labour market prior to the passage of the Act facilitate its passage?

Gordon *et al* also makes another point worth noting. They tie the notion of dual market to the concept of long swings. Let me briefly explain. Long economic swings, first noted by Kondratieff, last about fifty years. They begin and end in a simultaneous tumult of economic decay and exploration. As the rate of profit falls and old methods of extracting surplus labour prove less effective, new forms of accumulation are sought to lower wages or unit costs. Does the Employments Contracts Act represent such a strategy? Surely New Zealand, ergo the world, is in such a crisis and in search of new ways of cutting wages.

Employment Contracts: New Zealand Experiences should not forget such general theories as the causality of dual labour markets and long waves. That said, this is an excellent book. I am sure to use it selectively in my classroom and

in my own research. I look forward to the second edition when I hope the contributors will spend as much time describing the experience as explaining it.

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Gillian Bottomley, **From Another Place: Migration and the Politics of Culture**, Oakleigh (Victoria, Australia), Cambridge University Press, 1992.

Reviewed by Andrew D. Trlin
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Massey University

Are you seeking new insights, perspectives and challenges with regard to your knowledge and understanding of migration and immigrant settlement? If so, this book will quickly become a valued source of inspiration and a welcome addition to references for research and teaching.

Arguing for 'an internationalist perspective on migration' (mindful of continuing, significant interaction between places of origin and destination), for a comparative understanding of cultural change and ethnicity (to illuminate both ends of the migration story and diaspora networks), Bottomley is particularly concerned with 'the

relation between definitions of social power (e.g. based on economic, gender and ethnic criteria) and cultural practices'. In general, she sets out to question certainties about migration and settlement, the politics of culture, the constitution and recreation of cultural capital, 'rather than to offer an alternative Truth'. More specifically, her aims and intentions (stated at various points throughout the Preface and Chapter 1) are: 'to interrelate subjective and objective accounts of migration with the experience of difference'; to blur the boundaries between various specialist studies'; 'to emphasise the fluidity of cultural forms', as opposed to static conceptions of such forms; 'to reveal something of the flow of social relations in cultural processes'; and to develop different ways of perceiving and understanding muted modes of expression and communication (poetry, dance, music, short stories, etc.). Taken as a whole these objectives appear to be somewhat ambitious. The fact that they fall comfortably within her reach is a true measure of Bottomley's skills, ability and experience with research in both Australia and Greece.

Emulating the approach of studies such as *Conflict and Solidarity in a Guyanese Plantation* (Jayawardena), *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack* (Gilroy) and *Birds of Passage* (Piore), Bottomley asserts the importance of combining an analysis of structural constraints with the perceptions that people have of these constraints. Her basic framework she describes 'as comparative sociology, derived from anthropology, but seeing the specific instance as "a particular case of the possible"' (pp. 4-5). The key to her perspective is a definition of culture (derived from Raymond Williams) 'as a constitutive process creating specific ways of life' but augmented (from Stuart Hall) to embrace 'both the meanings and

values which arise among distinctive social groups and classes, on the basis of their given historical conditions and relationships, through which they handle and respond to the conditions of existence; and the lived traditions and practices through which those understandings are expressed and in which they are embodied' (pp. 10-11). As people dismantle, rebuild and resist cultural forms in the context of competition for economic and symbolic capital, the cultural process is inherently political. Obviously the influence of Bourdieu looms large in this study, especially his concept of 'habitus', which Bottomley adroitly employs.

In terms of structure, *From Another Place* is divided into three parts, each of which consists of three chapters. No doubt some readers may find Part I (Migration Studies and the Problem of Culture) too conventional, dry, familiar and be tempted to give it only cursory attention. Such a tendency should be studiously avoided for this section sets the scene in considerable detail for the book as a whole. Chapter 1 establishes the aims, arguments, perspectives and salient concepts. The main themes - an internationalist perspective, recognition of class and gender, etc., - are examined with reference to material from the United Kingdom and United States in Chapter 2, while Chapter 3 focuses upon the uses of 'culture' and the politics of culture in studies of migration and ethnicity. If nothing else, we are reminded of two important lessons in the course of reading Chapters 2 and 3: first, that one of the most useful elements of an anthropological approach is that 'it requires detailed contextual analyses of social relations and cultural forms' (p. 35); and second, that 'culture and ethnicity should not be conflated' (p. 50).

Part II (Practising Cultures) I found the most interesting, stimulating and thought-provoking section of the book. In Chapter 4, 'The Politics and Poetics of Ethnicity', Bottomley is concerned with 'poetry and stories written about migration and ethnicity, which ... can reveal a richness of understanding not usually available in sociological studies [and which] can also link the objective and subjective, and crystallise general experiences in the particularities of their subject matter' (pp. 64-65). The discussions of dance and music (Chapter 5) and dowry (Chapter 6) are intriguing for their identification of the operation of aspects of social power in practices often regarded as apolitical, and because they demonstrate features of cultural change in the 'dismantling and re-assembling of cultural forms'. It is here, more so than elsewhere in the volume, that Bottomley's use of over two decades of research among people of Greek origin effectively demonstrates 'particular cases of a range of possibilities', and that her claim to a critical perspective in questioning scholarly treatises and especially 'legitimated ways of understanding and representing the social world' (p. 9) shines through.

I can pay Bottomley no greater or more sincere tribute than to acknowledge her impact upon my own understanding and research in relation to the Croatian/Dalmatian communities in New Zealand. Time and again while reading Part II I found myself scribbling notes for future research, revising my understanding and re-evaluating the importance of particular cultural forms or practices, and sometimes (though too rarely!) congratulating myself for being 'up with or ahead of the play' as in the attention given to poetry and especially short stories (notably those of Amelia Batistich). To

provide a concrete example of this impact, I cite the example of the Kolo dance groups characteristic of most Croatian/Dalmatian communities in New Zealand. What was previously perceived as nothing more than a colourful, lively, somewhat exotic cultural form and practice now emerges as an important focus for research. Questions to be considered in relation to the Kolo dance include: its integrative function for the young and across generations; its role in the formation and maintenance of social networks; power relations with regard to dance instructors, the selection of lead dancers and the status of families with participating dancers; the credentials of instructors, the 'purity' of dance forms and their effect upon the perceived legitimation of clubs or societies, especially where there are rival organisations. This example alone signals the need for a major research exercise.

Part III (Constructing Identities: Gender, Class and Ethnos) opens with a critical examination of the cultural construction of gender in modern Greece, especially the recent representation of gender relations (Chapter 7). Themes introduced earlier - the interrelation of social, economic and political circumstances and cultural practices, the process of social power in defining what is 'imaginable', etc. - are taken up here and ultimately contribute to an understanding of gender construction among Greek-Australians. Chapter 8 focuses upon the 'second generation' and elderly migrants, especially as represented by social scientists and policy makers, again with reference to earlier themes (including a comparative viewpoint, the interweaving of objective and subjective perspectives) but it explores also the concepts of habitus, identity and trajectory. Finally, in Chapter 9, Bottomley

directs attention to intersections of gender, ethnicity and class. Her perspective here 'is mostly structural, demonstrating some of the ways in which people's lives are defined, limited and altered by migration, by economic and employment possibilities, by gender relations and by state policies and practices' (pp. 145-146). While Chapter 8 and to some degree Chapter 9 had the appeal and stimulation of chapters in Part II, I found Part III as a whole less engaging. This should not be read as a criticism of Bottomley's work but as a reflection of differences in the interests of the author on one hand and the reviewer on the other. Quite simply, with regard to my research interests, I lack Bottomley's particular enthusiasm for the topic of gender and lean more toward class and especially state policies and practices.

Overall, a complex, provocative, well written book that deserves to be widely read and recommended for teaching and research at advanced levels (postgraduate and senior undergraduate courses). *From Another Place* is at once a summation of Bottomley's teaching and research experience and a milestone in an ongoing career that one hopes will continue to be productive, to break new ground and to question established wisdom.

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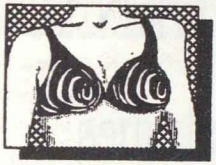
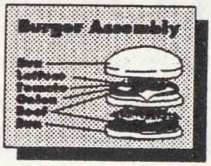
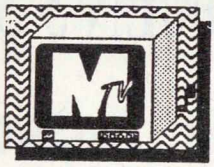
postmodern icons explained







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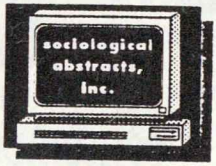

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   Able, P. and Collins, S. 1961. 'Structuralism and the concept of class.' **Journal of Social Class**, 24(3), 138-159.

   Baker, R.S. 1948. **Sociology and Social Change**. London, Charles Publishing Co.

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