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Poverty

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Women's Studies Journal

Volume 7 Number 2 November 1991

Important Notice

From the next issue (Volume 8 Number 1), the *Women's Studies Journal* will be based in Dunedin.

The *Women's Studies Journal* welcomes contributions from a wide range of feminist positions and disciplinary backgrounds. It has a primary, but not exclusive, focus on women's studies in New Zealand. We encourage papers which address women's experience, explore gender as a category of analysis, and further feminist theory and debate.

All manuscripts will be sent out for anonymous reviewing with the aim of providing the author with feedback and constructive suggestions.

Enquiries about the *Journal* and contributions only should be sent to:

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University of Otago
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Please send two double-spaced copies, with generous margins. A separate title page should include the title and the author's name and address. Since contributions will not be returned authors should retain a copy of their work. A style sheet is available on request.

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WOMEN'S STUDIES ASSOCIATION (NZ) (Inc.)

This Association is a feminist organisation formed to promote radical social change through the medium of women's studies. We believe that a feminist perspective necessarily acknowledges oppression on the grounds of race, sexuality and class as well as sex.
We acknowledge the Maori people as the tangata whenua of Aotearoa. This means we have a particular responsibility to address their oppression among our work and activities.

Full membership of the Association is open to all women. Other individuals may become associate members. Annual subscription: $16.50 or hardship: $5.50 (both include GST).

Enquiries to: PO Box 5067, Auckland, New Zealand.

Annual Conference: The Association holds an annual conference where members present the latest feminist research and discussion papers, and workshops explore issues important to women. The *Conference Papers* are published annually. Members receive a discount for the conference and the *Conference Papers*.

Newsletter: A quarterly *Newsletter* containing local and overseas news, book reviews, conference reports etc. is sent to all members.

Editorial

This is the last issue of the *Women's Studies Journal* to be edited by members of the Wellington Women's Studies Association; Dunedin is to take over from us in 1992, starting with Volume 8 Number 1.

Like the other issues we have produced, this one brings together articles emerging out of a wide variety of contexts. Viv Porzsolt's interview with Nori Parata, discussing the Maori Women's Housing Research Project, took place when both were based at the Housing Corporation; Susan St John, an economist well known for her work on benefits, women and families, wrote on the implications of the 1991 Budget at our request, despite her exceptionally heavy workload at the time; Jennifer Dixon's article arose out of her professional experience as a practising planner, her academic work in geography, her involvement in women's studies, and her concern for battered women.

This sample illustrates the continuing breadth of women's studies. Not only do the practitioners come from a great variety of backgrounds and are to be found in many different places, but it is thoroughly interdisciplinary. The cover of the very first issue underlines this: it featured Meatworkers, Mansfield and Motherhood.

The Index to Volumes 1 to 7, included with this issue, shows recurring themes. Work, both paid and unpaid, is of major importance; and besides the special issue to mark the centenary of Mansfield's birth, a considerable number of articles on other women writers and artists have appeared. The first issue to be produced from Wellington looked also at health, another theme common from the beginning.

Although we have revisited the same themes and concerns over the seven years the *Journal* has been in existence, all contributors have had something new to say, exploring different aspects of a huge area of feminist knowledge and analysis.

Jennifer Dixon's article in this issue stands as something of a model for women's studies. First, it documents not only the results achieved, but also the obstacles encountered, by a group of women struggling to establish and maintain an effective refuge for battered women in Hamilton. Secondly, it analyses what happened in a way which promotes understanding of how and why it happened, and makes its significance clearer. Thus it provides a record which can be of use to other women facing similar situations, albeit under altered laws and regulations. But it also examines the underlying and conflicting assumptions of the various agents involved — the Hamilton City Council, the local residents, the women who use the refuge and those who run it — and therefore illuminates the position of women in an even broader context.

Women's studies is often concerned with the way in which feminist theory develops out of experience and activisrn. Feminist theory can be defined simply as a set of ideas which seeks to explain the origins and operations of systems of male dominance. A constant dialogue between activism and reflection is integral and necessary; it is what women are constantly doing in their meetings and conversations.

To us the *Journal* is like an extended, public conversation in which many can share. To publish is more powerful than to speak privately. Margot Roth, in her editorial for the first issue, said that the aim in publishing the *Journal* was to provide an alternative for women to what popular culture had to offer. Taking this further, we would say that it is to provide women with a more authentic representation and interpretation of the world.

Under the Wellington collective's editorial control the *Journal* has carried a higher proportion of articles on women's history. This partly reflects the interests of the collective members; but it also emphasises the importance of women's history to feminist analysis. It is essential to consider where we have come from. Bronwyn Labrum on suffrage in nineteenth century Wanganui, Jacquie Matthews and Megan Cook on the equal pay debate in the 1920s, Mary Boyd on women historians in the

1940s, or Helen May interviewing Beverley Morris on the early post-war years — all these demonstrate women's resistance as well as their oppression.

We have also published a considerable number of articles on social policy— for example, those by Prue Hyman, Robin McKinlay, Anne Meade, and Nori Parata in this issue. This is related partly to being based in Wellington, where policy is developed, but also to the fact that the last four years have seen such massive, fundamental review and revision of social policy. Women have been heavily involved in this process, as politicians, public servants, active community members and recipients.

Since the *Journal* first appeared the political scene has changed rapidly, drastically affecting both New Zealand society and the position of women within it. The 'second wave' of the women's movement has had complex and far-reaching effects. The *Journal* continues to provide a much-needed space for feminists to document and analyse these changes.

The dominant climate in New Zealand in 1991 is not conducive to ideas and perspectives which advance women's interests. Benefit cuts, the dismembering of the public health service, and the threats to public education are all justified by the repeated invocation of TINA — 'There Is No Alternative'. That only makes the continued publication and dissemination of feminist alternatives, in every area of enquiry, all the more important.

The Wellington Collective

Current members of the collective are: Anne Else, editor; Ali Carew, subscriptions and finance; Ann Calhoun, Beryl Hughes, Bronwyn Labrum, Charlotte Macdonald, Jacquie Matthews, Janet McCallum.
Previous members and helpers include: Joy Bickley, Viv Porzsolt, Elizabeth Rawlings, Felicity Rawlings, Thea Roorda, Gay Simpkin.

Particular thanks go to Cheryl Mayne, for her typing, typesetting and layout of all but one of the Wellington issues; and to Barbara Gibb for the cover.

Thanks also to the Stout Research Centre for the Study of New Zealand Society, History and Culture, Victoria University of Wellington, for providing a meeting venue, storage space, and other assistance.

The Core Family Unit

The Implications of the 1991 Budget for Women

Susan St John

The 1991 budget placed the use of the *core family unit* at the centre of some far reaching proposals for the complete overhaul of benefits and other social provisions. As a logical consequence we may be moving towards adoption of 'the couple' or 'the family' as the unit for taxes as well as benefits. While the use of a family account for the assessment of all benefits, social provision and perhaps ultimately taxation is logically consistent, this direction is retrograde for women.

Taxes and benefits: opposite sides to the same coin?

New Zealand has a tax system that is fully neutral to marriage. The tax liabilities of two people do not increase or decrease on marriage. The individual is the unit for tax purposes, and only where there are dependent children is aggregate parental income used to determine the size of any tax credit (family support). There is no presumption of dependence of women on their husbands, as would be implied by the use of measures such as a spouse's rebate. The income of any children is also taxed in their own right as individuals.

In contrast to the tax system, the benefit system in New Zealand has

traditionally used the couple as the unit for those who are married or in marriage-like relationships. Thus ordinary social security benefits, such as the sickness, unemployment and invalid's benefits, have been assessed according to joint income. The measure of income is not necessarily the same as taxable income, as the social security system uses a broader definition, including such items as maintenance payments. It may also inquire into other aspects of beneficiaries' affairs, such as whether loans or gifts have been made or bonus bonds purchased.

Accident Compensation and National Superannuation have so far been two exceptions. They are both paid without regard to the income of the other spouse: accident compensation is earnings-related and taxable, while National Superannuation has been flat-rate and taxable with a surcharge applying, over an exempt amount, to the individual's own taxable income.

There is a false dichotomy between taxes and benefits, as it can be argued that one is simply the other side of the coin to the other. Ability to pay determines the liability to pay tax, and lack of ability to pay determines the level of benefits received. A consistent definition of ability to pay in both cases would seem the logical outcome of this recognition. A common unit of assessment would also provide logical consistency, more integration and administrative convenience.

In this regard, the Change Team on Targeting, which was set up in December 1990 to advise the government on how best to implement the targeting of social provision, reported some concerns that:

> ... there may be increased recognition of the inconsistency of using the core family for social assistance purposes when the core family is not overtly recognised by the income tax system (Report of the Change Team, 1991: D5 p.7).

They noted that the use of the individual for tax purposes and the core family for social provision purposes would work

> .... for so long as the tax scale remained relatively flat (and accordingly avoided high effective marginal tax rates) (Report of the Change Team, 1991: D5 p.7).

Given that their very recommendations for targeting would inevitably involve high effective marginal tax rates, it may be inferred that they were uncomfortable with the inconsistency of retaining the individual as the unit for the tax system.

Social security and the use of the individual as the unit

Ordinary social welfare benefits in New Zealand have been based on the notion that husband and wife are one unit in terms of determining any

need for state support. When this system was first introduced, most married women did not work outside the home. By the 1970s this had changed markedly, with the majority of women aged 30-59 being in the paid workforce. Women argued that because they pay tax as individuals, they should also qualify for income support as individuals when they are unemployed or sick.

In 1975, in recognition of social change, the sickness benefit became payable on an individual basis for up to three months. Unfortunately, this policy was abandoned for cost savings reasons in 1983. Nevertheless, the principle had wide support. When National Superannuation became an income-tested benefit through the introduction of the surcharge, the use of the individual as the unit was retained. A generous feature was that couples could amalgamate their exemptions for the income test where appropriate. In the meantime, other social security provisions remained subject to the joint income test, with the exemption for a married couple the same in dollar terms as for a single individual.

The rate of a social security benefit for a married person is lower than the rate for a single person. While it may be cheaper for two people to live together, rather than for each to live separately, the rates do not depend on living arrangements. A married couple gets less than two single people who flat together. There is some implicit assumption that the mutual interdependence implied by the marital condition produces extra economies in living costs. Inconsistently, these economies are not assumed in the tax system.

The income test for benefits

A sharp abatement of a social security benefit paid to a couple applies where joint income is over $80 per week, with a less sharp abatement applying to joint income between $50 (or $60 where there are children) and $80. The same income exemptions apply to an individual as to a couple, reflecting the view that marriage somehow creates a single entity. The combined effect of taxes and abatement of a social security benefit for income above $80 per week results in an effective marginal tax rate of 98 percent. This comes about because an extra dollar earned means a loss to tax of 28 cents and a loss of net benefit of 70 cents. Thus earning additional income above the exempt level becomes extremely unattractive, as only 2 cents are retained for each extra dollar earned. Once the costs associated with work are taken into account, a family may well be considerably poorer as a result of this extra income.

Although men can also be affected, the impact of the joint income test is likely to affect more women. Invalids and those on the domestic purposes benefit lose their independent source of income if they marry

some one who earns anything over a modest amount. The result is a benefit system that is anything but neutral to marriage. For a couple entitled to a married benefit, extra income from $4,160 to around $23,500 is virtually confiscated. Contributions to the household's finances from part-time work may thus be rendered worthless.

National Superannuation (called the Guaranteed Retirement Income in 1990) has been subject to a gentle income test since 1985 through the surcharge. The rate of surcharge is 20 percent and is applied to other income over an exemption of $6,006 for each married person. Not only is each married person entitled to an exemption, but there are provisions for amalgamation of the exemption where one spouse has not used his or her share. The surcharge applies until all of the net superannuation payment is eliminated. For a married couple where additional income is equally split, all of the state payment is not clawed back until the couple has other income of $71,000.

Review of the unit

The issue of the appropriate unit for benefits was debated by the Budget '85 Task Force which was set up to review benefits and taxes. But apart from the introduction of family support as a tax credit for children, to be equally divided between the parents in the two parent household, there were few changes of any significance as a result of this review. From 1986, however, social security benefits for married couples were paid separately, one half to each spouse. The issue of the unit of assessment was referred to the Royal Commission on Social Policy for further study. The Royal Commission, reporting in 1988, noted the following difficulties associated with joint income testing:

- The definition of who is and who is not in a marriage-like arrangement is very tricky.
- The presumption of sharing within marital relationships is not always valid.
- Women need to be treated as individuals in their own right rather than regarded as dependants.

They also queried whether it was appropriate any more to assume that a married couple has greater economies in living costs than two individuals who may live together. They suggested that the benefit system should, where possible, and as conditions permit, move towards using the individual more ideally, and that there should be a uniform rate of benefit for all persons, with an extra allowance for those who live alone.

The Labour Government was reluctant to move towards a wider use of the individual. The case against taking the individual as the unit for benefit purposes has usually been made on the grounds of greatly

increased costs. Clearly this is a serious issue, as the simple adoption of the individual as the unit might see state benefits paid into high income households. But the same argument can just as validly be raised with respect to taxation. Aggregation of the couple's income for tax purposes would result in a bigger tax take for government than would arise from using the income of each individual. At least this conclusion is true if the tax structure is progressive. The more progressive it is, the bigger the potential gains from using the couple as the basis.

It was the Royal Commission's view that despite the cost, there should be movement in the direction of individual entitlement rather than away from it. The Royal Commission also suggested that it might be necessary to apportion investment income between marriage partners in a way that reflected the half ownership of joint marital assets implied by the Matrimonial Property Act.

The tax system

In 1987, Roger Douglas expressed concern that under progressive tax rates, couples might be persuaded to arrange their affairs so as to split their incomes. He talked also about the inequity of the tax burden between the one-earner and the two-earner household. Under progressive taxation, he argued, the one-earner family is penalised. But there are many instances where income splitting is fair, and recognises the contribution that a wife makes to the earning ability of her husband. There are also controversies concerning whether the two-earner household is in the same position as the single-earner household on the same gross income. Where the dual income household contributes more total hours to the workforce, it enjoys less leisure and home production than the single-earner household.

Leaving aside doubts about the theoretical justification for the concerns that Douglas expressed, there were two possible ways of addressing the problem, as he saw it. The use of the 'family' or the couple as the unit for tax purposes would have, in principle, solved the problem. Instead he proposed a flat tax.

Under a flat personal income tax, the tax liability of a couple would be the same whether the individual was the tax unit, or whether incomes were aggregated taking the couple as the unit, or split equally between the two partners. There would be no advantage in diverting income through the use of trusts or other devices from high income earning family members to low income earning members.

A single flat rate of tax was finally rejected, but the tax scale was substantially flattened, with the adoption of two statutory rates of tax: 24 percent up to $30,875, and 33 percent above this. The intentions of flat

tax (or flatter tax) are not as readily realisable as its proponents would make out. The need to introduce complex offsetting measures to protect those at the lower end of the income scale may result in high effective marginal tax rates over quite long income ranges. This occurs where tax rebates are abated against income, as is the case for family support and the low income earner's rebate.

The interface between taxes and benefits

When the tax scale was flattened, higher income people gained considerably more disposable income, although they were also affected by base broadening measures which saw more of their income fall within the tax net. A flatter tax and a low top rate led to pressures for further targeted measures to be implemented outside of the tax system. By this means, those on low incomes gain while those on high incomes lose, thus reintroducing a higher degree of overall progressivity. Thus in 1990, student allowances for tertiary students became income tested against parental income. The parental income test is based on the previous year's income and administered by the particular tertiary institutions. Housing assistance is another example where income is used to assess entitlement, but the income test is administered outside of the tax system.

By removing the income test from the tax system, the effect of the abatement of educational subsidies on effective marginal tax rates has been disguised. In a study for the Ministry of Education (St John, 1990), it was shown that the effect of the targeting could be severe. For a family in the income rage of $30,000-$38,000 with several children, especially where there were two (or more) at tertiary institutions, there was scarcely any advantage to having $38,000 rather than $30,000. In some cases the effective marginal tax rate could exceed 100 percent. Such high rates become possible when there is an overlap between the abatement of family support and the abatement of student allowances, or when there are two or more student allowances to be abated.

The literature shows that 'secondary' income earners, who are usually women, are particularly affected by high marginal tax rates. They may work only part-time, and thus face more flexibility in work hours than full-time workers, so they may more readily reduce the supply of their labour. They usually face high opportunity costs in forgone home activities, and their fixed costs, such as those of travel and clothing, tend to be higher relative to earnings than for full-time workers. Thus many women may simply decide that their contribution to the workforce is not worth it.

Thus while New Zealand appears to have a simple tax structure with

two statutory rates, the operation of abating rebates and other assistance targeted according to income has meant that in practice, overall it is anything but simple. Certainly many people face high and variable marginal tax rates rather than a low flat tax. Measures to ensure progressivity overall are not always administered directly by the Inland Revenue Department, so the visibility of the resulting high effective marginal tax rates is lowered.

The benefit system on the whole uses the couple as the unit, and usually takes a wider definition of income than that taken in the tax system. Family support is a curious hybrid. It is based on a wider definition of income than that taken in the tax system, and from 1990 has been paid only to the parent directly responsible for the care-giving. It is subject to an end of year reconciliation, so that any additional unexpected income creates an obligation for repayment. The question of who repays any such overpayment may be contentious within marriages.

The 1991 budget and 'Welfare that Works' proposals

The changes that were announced in the budget and the changes proposed in the budget document, 'Welfare that Works', to take place over the next few years, as the welfare state is progressively transformed, should alarm women.

The basis of the reforms lies in an integrated approach using the concept of the 'core family'. This unit is defined to be any of the following:

- single adult with no dependent children
- sole parent with children
- a couple with no dependent children
- a couple with children.

Each core family is a single entity, although some allowance may be made for family size in setting the level of social provision. The innovation, apart from the wide application of targeting using the core family, is that targeting is to be integrated, and the old problem of overlapping income tests will be eliminated. This is to be achieved through the aggregation of certain kinds of social provision, and its uniform abatement against family income.

It seems that the tensions within the benefit system will be resolved by adopting a common unit for all benefits (ACC remains largely outside this in the meantime). Thus while national superannuation is still to be paid to each married person, the basis of assessment is to be joint income rather than individual income. An income test for national superannuation which is slightly less adverse than the traditional social security benefit income test will apply from 1 April 1992. The effective

marginal tax rate implied by this test is 93 percent, above the uniform exemption of $4,160. For a couple, all national superannuation is abated when other income reaches $23,740. The Kiwicard, which gives entitlements for health subsidies, is also based on the income of the core family unit.

There are new responsibilities to be added to the family. The abolition of the unemployment benefit for those aged 16-17 took place in April 1991. At the same time, youth rates were extended from the age of 18 to 25. In the meantime, such unemployment benefits remain free of a parental income test; but from 1992, student offspring up to the age of 25 at tertiary institutions will receive an allowance fully determined by parental income. Previously only those aged 16-17 had a fully targeted allowance and those aged 18-19 had a partially targeted allowance.

In 1992, the extension of parental income tests will be very cumbersome and difficult to administer. As indicated in the document 'Welfare that Works', a global system of aggregation of social provision and uniform abatement against family income is the ultimate intention.

The idea is to use family accounts. While the detail is woefully inadequate, it is clear that more and more of those things that the government has hitherto provided, paid for by progressive taxation, are now only to be provided if income is sufficiently low. Overall progressivity will come from abatement of social provision, rather than from higher taxes on the better-off. The incorporation of child care subsidies and health premiums for core health services into the aggregated social provision is still open for debate. In the case of family support and student allowances, it appears that global abatement will inevitably proceed.

> Introducing new categories where people are expected to contribute to the cost of their services, such as health for example, would have a significant impact on a household budget. The larger the number of social services included in the scheme, the more important it is to be able to consider the impact of all the schemes together in a global sense.
>
> The government has decided the administrative rules of the global arrangement will apply to family support and tertiary allowances. It has also decided any other targeted schemes will also run in line with these global arrangements. For example, the chapter on education explains that it is possible that targeted assistance may be developed for early childhood education. If this is introduced it would be part of this global system (Shipley, 1991:46).

For those confronted with only the detail in the budget, there are many unanswered questions. It is unclear exactly what definition of income will be taken. Will it be the same as joint taxable income, or will a wider definition such as applies for family support or for income-tested benefits be considered more appropriate? If a wider definition is used, there will be an intrusion into the parents' private affairs on a scale never before attempted. It is unclear what will happen when income changes, or where two individuals marry, divorce or separate during the year. It is not explained whether there will be a reconciliation at the end of the year, so that entitlement is based on current income, or whether the previous year's income will be used. In the case of families with older children receiving student allowances, it is unclear whether the income of the students themselves is to be counted in family income.

Women who are the secondary earners in a family will face high effective marginal tax rates when they attempt to augment family finances. These high rates discourage work efforts and make it less likely that women will keep their marketable skills. Even if high rates of abatement for family and student allowances are chosen, abatement will occur over a long income range. Under the scenario of a 50 percent abatement of social provision (a rate most favoured by the Change Team), the effective marginal tax rate faced by women re-entering the workforce on a part-time basis will be between 65 and 78 percent. If aggregation of incomes for tax purposes is also finally adopted, the rates become 78-83 percent. The irony is that the financial pressures on families will increase at the same time as it is made much harder to relieve these by earning more money.

There are some other difficulties associated with the global provisions for family support and student allowances. To date, parental income tests have been based on the past year's income, while family support has been based on the current year's income. This makes integration a tricky question. They have also been operated by different institutions. It would appear that there is no intention to conduct both abatement procedures through the Inland Revenue Department, although this seems the logical way. How then are the tertiary institutions to operate the global abatement procedures, without an enormous duplication of information processing and a major intrusion into parents' private affairs? Are student allowances also to be subject to a reconciliation procedure, as occurs with a current income basis, and if so, who is liable to repay any overpayment? Clearly, a family account for tax and social provision purposes would be convenient, as 'the family' could be debited, leaving the issue of who actually pays to be resolved within the family.

The problems of women affected by the National Superannuation changes are almost too many to enumerate here. It is common for an older retired man to be married to a younger woman who is still working. The husband may not qualify for a state pension because of his wife's income. The robbing of the male of his independent income in such a situation may not only impose intolerable marital pressures, but also reduce the wife's ability to save for her own retirement. Women live longer, earn less and thus already find it far harder to provide for retirement than men.

There are other problems in the National Superannuation reforms, such as the need for a comprehensive definition of income if there is not to be widespread avoidance of the income test. The inevitable intrusion into privacy that this will cause will no doubt discourage many from even applying for the benefit. Perhaps this is also part of the intent. Women predominate in the older age groups, and it is likely that many will have inadequate support in the future. This may be particularly true for those over the age of seventy, when one half of National Superannuation is to be paid without any income test. The danger is that some over-seventy-year-olds will attempt to live on this alone, as they will not be able to face the indignity and worry of the income test for the second half.

There are also pitfalls in the proposal for reconciliation. An end of the year wash-up has been explicitly promised in the case of National Superannuation. If one spouse earns more money than the couple predicted at the beginning of the year, so that both have received too much National Superannuation, who will pay it back? This dilemma is another indication that a family account which can be debited will be needed. Once again, family taxation would seem to be the logical conclusion.

Those people who do not quality for the Kiwicard will face higher health costs from 1 April 1992. For the retired, access to the Kiwicard is based solely on whether any targeted national superannuation is being received. One dollar of other income over $23,740 for a retired couple means that they miss out altogether. The Department of Social Welfare has supplied some average usage figures for health services for retired people which are cited in 'Welfare that Works'. Based on these estimates, a retired couple could pay $600 more for health care than a couple with the card. It is unclear what happens if, at the end of the year, the couple find that they were not entitled to the card because one of them has earned too much. If eligibility for the card is based on the previous year's income, it will not necessarily reflect current need, and any adjustment processes where income rises or falls will be administratively complex.

Rationale for changes

The Change Team on targeting appeared to be aware of the enormous problems associated with the wider use of the family as the unit. But on 8 March the Prime Ministerial Committee had agreed that the concept of the family should be the basis on which the team prepared its advice. It was stated:

> ... that spouses do contribute to family resources and it is important for society that sharing responsibility in a family is the right thing to do (Shipley, 1991:18).

The adoption of the family unit is thus based on the assumption that sharing and mutual income support actually takes place within marriage. It is also based on the notion that such family behaviour is morally correct. There is little evidence in these ideas of a recognition that society has changed rapidly since the 1950s. One hint of recognition comes however in the Change Team's conclusions:

> It is perhaps sufficient to note that whereas it may have been relatively straightforward to assert inalienable rights to support within a family, and corresponding obligations, when family relationships were not commonly lightly undertaken and were difficult to leave, it is a very different matter to endeavour to recreate that pattern of rights and obligations when the relationships may be fleeting, experimental, unstable and statistically unlikely to last. In these circumstances, any reassertion or development of enforceable obligations is a matter for delicacy. It will require very careful teasing out of the implications (Report of the Change Team, 1991: D5 11).

It may be argued that the Government wants to recreate the family of the past because it would be highly convenient for fiscal savings if families operated as they used to. But there are also some hints that the strong disincentive effects should drive women back into the home in order to achieve labour market goals. Gareth Morgan, an influential Wellington economist, writes of the need to increase the productivity of the household sector, and notes the political gains from keeping women gainfully employed in the home:

> Government should not pursue policies that increase the supply of labour to the market economy at times when there is excess supply. Tax deductibiilty of child care may well be an example of policy with dubious effects on the economic adjustment process New Zealand is currently pursuing (Morgan, 1991:2).

Among the many factors that mitigate against the use of the core family, the Change Team noted that there was insufficient knowledge of how such a shift would affect social structures. There would be intrusion into

private arrangements, as detailed information would need to be collected, and these arrangements would be administratively complex. They also noted the possibility of a lack of sharing among family members, and the lack of enforceability of family responsibility. These factors, they conceded, would provide increased incentives for families to separate. The report is couched in condensed economic language. They write:

> Even without extending the range of enforceable obligations, the atomising effect of use of the core family unit of assessment might be inconsistent. Where the result of collective assessment of the means of family members will disentitle some members to assistance which might otherwise be available to them, all members will have some interest in excluding the members whose means put the family above the threshold. Where natural bonds of affection and duty are weak or non existent or for some other reason the higher income member refuses to pay for the needed support of another member there will be incentives to separate the higher income member from the family (Report of the Change Team, 1991: D5: 21).

In listing the advantages of using the family unit they noted, in a somewhat obscure way, that it might prevent 'a liberating effect' that might, under individual entitlement, 'contribute to changes in family structure'. In other words, individual entitlement may facilitate family breakups. There is no appreciation that individual entitlement is a way of recognising the contribution by women to the paid and unpaid workforce. The attention paid to the effects on women seems superficial, even though they conceded that '... the core family as the unit has deficiencies for women and in terms of its impact on Maori and Pacific Island cultural values' (Report of the Change Team 1991: D5: 13).

Unfortunately in another part of the report they assert: '... there is no evidence that women are disproportionately affected by high effective marginal tax rates which result from targeting' (Report of the Change Team, 1991: D5: 6).

The Change Team's conclusions include a belief that the negative impacts of any targeting regime can be minimised if the social assistance levels are set low enough and the abatement rates are high enough. Under this scenario, the adequacy of provision must surely be called into question.

Conclusion

The stated intent and the outcomes of current policy directions are diametrically opposed. The rhetoric suggests that the family is valued

and will be strengthened with the emphasis on self reliance and responsibility. But the policies which might follow from such a view, such as the provision of a universal child benefit, a carer's allowance, universal entitlement to health and education and superannuation, and the fair sharing of the costs of unemployed young people, are not to eventuate. Instead wide targeting measures are to be progressively introduced. These have the potential to trap women at home. They may deny both men and women the feeling of self-worth that can come from financial independence and from being recognised as an individual, rather than submerged in a marriage relationship. They are also likely to create explosive forces within marriages and families, leading to friction and family breakdown.

And yet we learn from 'Welfare that Works' that the government is seeking to provide an environment '... where New Zealand families are able to take control of their own lives, freed from the dependence on state welfare that currently traps so many of our people' (Shipley, 1991:1). 'Welfare that Works' constitutes an integrated reform package for the welfare state. It is vulnerable in many areas. Perhaps if part of the reform proposals are overturned, as is likely in the superannuation area, the rest of it will also unravel. Women should work to this end.

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The Dilemma of Women's Citizenship

Susan Kell Easting

Citizenship is a familiar concept. To most people, it implies membership of a body politic, or, as we usually think of it, personal membership of a nation state, such as Aotearoa-New Zealand. Such membership, we assume, includes equal rights with other citizens to share the benefits of what the state provides on our behalf, such as protection of ourselves and our property, certain structures which mediate our relationship with other nation states, and a share in the usefulness of internal structures and processes which the state provides to ensure that our daily lives are lived within certain boundaries of dignity and order.

The commonest route to achieving citizenship is to be born here. But what does citizenship really mean, and to women in particular? The above description is of a bland collection of rights and privileges. This article will look much more closely at the meaning of citizenship, as it is experienced by women, and at some of the issues which arise for women when they attempt to exercise their apparent birthright to be 'full' citizens.

The popular understanding of citizenship is that it encompasses a sense of belonging as well as the ability to participate in society. The 1972

Royal Commission of Inquiry on Social Security clearly indicated that the social security system should uphold the values and aims of the community, which are summarised in the terms *subsistence, belonging, equality,* and *continuity* (*Social Security in New Zealand,* 1972: 62). Participation and belonging are described as a goal which will enable any citizen to meet and mix with other New Zealanders, as one of them, as a full member of the community. There are no kinds of different levels of citizenship here. If you are a citizen, you can share equally.

The Royal Commission on Social Policy, in its April Report of 1988, reiterated these principles. The standards of a fair society are set out as dignity and self-determination for individuals, families and communities, and the maintenance of a standard of living sufficient to ensure that everybody can participate in and have a sense of belonging to the community (*The April Report,* 1988, Vol 2:10).

These officially sanctioned statements are expressions of the ideal, rather than of reality. To look at what the status of citizenship for women means in reality, we must look at how it is constructed. Is citizenship an all or nothing concept, or are there different levels of status within? Carole Pateman has provided a great deal of insight in two works published in 1988. The first of these examines the underlying assumption of sexual and political differentiation between women and men which is implicit in, and underpins, the theoretical concept of the social contract (Pateman, 1988a). This differentiation provides the basis of patriarchy. According to Pateman, the social contract only works in theory because the female half of the population is assumed to be governed by nature rather than reason, and therefore women in society are deliberately placed in a category which is subordinate to men. While the theory provides 'citizenship' for women, it is quite clear that this is a special category of citizenship — a sense of belonging derived from association with men, rather than an equal share of the rights and responsibilities in setting up civil society. Women are defined in the theory in a way which renders them incapable of this task. They are relegated to the special world of home and family, where their existence creates and enhances the opportunities for men to pursue their own citizenship.

The other work referred to above is an essay concerning the influence of the welfare state on the development of democracy (Pateman, 1988b). In this work, the patriarchal nature of the welfare state is fully explored, and the dilemmas which face women in their pursuit of full citizenship are presented. I shall outline this discussion in some detail.

Pateman points out that most democratic theorists have not recognised the influence of patriarchy in the construction and operation of the

welfare state, or the significantly different ways in which women and men have been incorporated into the welfare state as citizens. Most of the discussion has concentrated on the notion of class, rather than looking at differences between men and women. Attributes of class, race and gender all intersect with the welfare state, but of the three, only class has received much theoretical attention. The political significance of the sexual division of labour, necessary for the welfare state to function, has been ignored by most democratic theorists, according to Pateman. The welfare state has confined women to a role which in fact prevents them from participating in society as independent individuals. Although women have formal status as citizens, they cannot gain access to full citizenship because of their economic dependence on men, legitimated and enforced in some areas by the welfare state.

Personal independence, which has been necessary at a theoretical level as well as historically for individuals to enjoy citizenship, incorporates three elements which are, as Pateman notes, related to the masculine capacity for self-protection. They are the capacity to bear arms; the capacity to own property; and the capacity for self-government. The social contract theorists defined women in a way which rendered them incapable of any of these capacities. In recent times, however, some inroads have been made by women into these masculine preserves. Women have now gained access to combat positions in the armed forces of a number of welfare states. In this country, at least, women are now deemed to own the sexual property of their own bodies, since marital rape has been recognised as an illegal act. Women can participate in the process of government, albeit hampered by lack of economic power and access to resources.

But the major source of unequal access to personal independence lies in another area of personal property ownership — the power to sell one's labour. Pateman points to employment as the modern key to the acquisition of full citizenship. The breadwinner-dependants model of the family co-opted and promoted by the welfare state recognises the products of men's and women's labour differently. Men work for wages, but women's traditional domestic and caring work, which underpins the welfare state, is either unpaid, or carried out for low pay in a labour market which is still structured to women's disadvantage. Low pay, lack of equal pay for work of equal value, and sex-segregated occupational groupings are all features of a labour market developed on the assumption that women are really dependants, not individuals. Individuals are male.

The central importance of employment as a prerequisite for full citizenship is highlighted by the predicament of people who become

unemployed. Employment confers a sense of moral worth as well as economic power, and the recognition of an individual as a citizen of equal worth to other citizens is lacking when a worker is unemployed. The welfare state was constructed in order to preserve the moral worth of workers when they cannot sell their labour power for a living wage, by supporting them financially. But the patriarchal construction of the welfare state is such that it is the *male* worker whose interests are protected by the welfare state in this way. A woman who is unemployed can receive an unemployment benefit or a domestic purposes benefit in this country only if her living arrangement is independent of a man. If a woman's male spouse is also unemployed, then the couple receive a benefit at the married rate, but this is by virtue of *his* unemployment, not hers. The welfare state is built on a gendered division of labour, but it is only men's paid employment which provides access to the support of the state if they cannot find someone to work for.

The concept of 'market citizenship' has been discussed by Anna Yeatman, who summarises the feminist debate on this issue (Yeatman, 1990: 139-148). Market citizenship is the form of citizenship with the highest status. This status is available only to those people who can participate freely in the labour market; that is, to those whose activities are not compromised by domestic responsibilities. Market citizens, in the parlance of the new right, operate in a way which maximises their economic self-interest. Men's citizenship is derived from their participation in the market; women's citizenship is derived from their dependent relationships either on men, or on the state. If market citizenship has the highest status in a hierarchy of different levels of citizenship, then women, because their role is defined and necessitated by the patriarchal welfare state, do not find themselves at the top. Nor will the new right's moves to dismantle the welfare state provide a solution to this limitation on women. One of the major assumptions of the new right position is that 'families', i.e. women in the home, will pick up the caring work abandoned by the state. The new right world is built on the same patriarchal assumptions about the roles of women and men as the welfare state has been (Else, forthcoming).

So what can women do, in order to acquire the highest status of citizenship? Can women's policies advance women's attempts to access the rights and privileges associated with truly belonging to society and being able to participate, as the two Royal Commissions stated to be desirable for *all* people?

Policies which women have promoted in order to achieve equality with men can be divided into two major areas: those policies which have sought to achieve equal opportunities for women in employment,

education, and access to the resources and freedoms available for men; and those policies which have sought recognition for the work which women do in the role which has been prescribed for them, such as unpaid domestic and caring work. The problem is that the simultaneous pursuit of these two objectives puts women in a contradictory position. Pateman calls this political impasse 'Wollstonecraft's dilemma':

> The dilemma is that the two routes towards citizenship that women have pursued are mutually incompatible within the confines of the patriarchal welfare state, and, within that context, they are impossible to achieve. (Pateman, 1988b:252)

One aspect of the centuries-old struggle of women to achieve equality with men has taken the form of a struggle for women to be like men, in order to be equal as individuals with them. The standards of opportunity and achievement are all masculine ones, a point made with some clarity by Eva Cox in her paper 'Is Norm Male?' (Cox, 1991). Putting so much effort into conforming to male standards, however, ignores the contribution women make to society as *women*. The intrinsic value of women's work, as Mary Wollstonecraft insisted, should provide women with access to citizenship, in the same way that men's work provides access to citizenship for them. The dilemma is that in the patriarchal welfare state, women's work is not seen as providing access to full citizenship. Neither is it possible for women to become fully autonomous individuals, since to be an 'individual' is to conform to masculine standards. The twin statuses of 'individual' and 'citizen' are achievable by men only, in a society which is underpinned by the domestic and caring work of women. Women can only achieve citizenship as lesser men.

The practical consequences of Wollstonecraft's dilemma for women's policies have been discussed by Mary Draper (Draper, 1991). The most visible elements of policies to enhance the status of women have been equal opportunity policies, in employment, education, housing and other areas. The other major strand of policy has recognised women as a disadvantaged group, requiring affirmative action or gender specific policies to redress the disadvantage. This two-pronged approach has the merits of diversity and flexibility; but there is the danger that whichever approach is taken, the resulting policy will be vulnerable to criticism for not fulfilling the aspirations of the other approach. An Australian example of this dilemma in action can be found in Victoria, where women-only sessions at a swimming pool and a gymnasium have been banned, under the authority of gender-blind equal opportunity policies. Draper describes this as a clash of logics.

Draper identified four major criticisms of government policies by the

women's movement and women's policy units. The first area of criticism stems from an equal opportunity viewpoint, which sees women as being denied access to citizenship, employment, financial security, etc. This can be countered by removing the barriers to women's access, and policies of this nature have dominated successive governments' understanding of policies for women. The second area of criticism concerns the consequences for women of gender-blind policies which are promoted as gender-neutral, but which presume men's lives and male standards, such as willingness to relocate in order to take up paid employment. The third area concerns the normative assumptions about women's preparedness to do unpaid domestic and caring work. 'Community' care policies fall into this category. The fourth set of criticisms is in a different area, where the state fails to ensure the physical safety of its female citizens.

Although these criticisms open up a complex field of understanding and potential for action, Draper's view is that the equal opportunity approach remains the one which is best understood by governments and the bureaucracy. To pursue this at all times, however, can sometimes run counter to the logic of other approaches. As stated earlier, there are possibilities for conflict between gender-neutral and gender-specific policies. In addition, an issue and its resulting policies can move ground between one approach and another. Draper gives the example of childcare: for strategic reasons, it has moved from the normative policy field, where the shape of the debate was about the merits of some types of childcare vis-a-vis others, to the equal opportunity arena, where women's access to childcare has a much higher profile. Another framework for women's policy is derived from an understanding of inequalities between different groups of women, recognising the dividing forces of class, race and ethnicity, as well as gender.

Wollstonecraft's dilemma, which translates into practice as a clash between gender-neutral policies and gender-specific measures designed to meet women's needs, will remain unresolved until the simultaneous promotion of both types of policy ceases to be a problem. The patriarchal ideology which shapes our society holds in place those measures which provide and promote unequal power relations between women and men. Until this power is shared equally, women will remain in a subordinate position in our experience of citizenship, along with other aspects of our lives.

The welfare state is now facing a major threat from new right policies. The ambivalence of many feminists about the long term merits of the welfare state, despite the strong support of many feminists earlier in this century for its development, has resulted in a lack of feminist defence of

the welfare state (Yeatman, 1990). But what will replace it? Pateman's view is that the notion of citizenship must be the starting point in the development of any alternative to the patriarchal welfare state; she suggests that we need to determine what form democratic citizenship should take if a primary task of all citizens is to ensure that the welfare of each living generation is secured. The need to focus on the nature of society, which is the real issue at stake, rather than just one of society's features (the welfare state), is a strategy which has also been put forward by Zillah Eisenstein (Eisenstein, 1982):

> The problem...is not the welfare state, although that is a problem. The problem is rather the kind of society we live in, which is both patriarchal and capitalist, which would return individuals to self-reliance while maintaining structural barriers related to economic, racial and sexual class that limit and curtail the individual. It is up to feminists of all political persuasions, left-liberals, and leftists to shift the critique from the welfare state to the patriarchal society that creates it. (Eisenstein, 1982:587)

This article has set out the views of Carole Pateman, published in 1988, that the welfare state is essentially patriarchal in its construction and operation. Women's lives are confined in a way which denies equal access with men to the rights and privileges of full citizenship, although women have the formal status of 'citizen'. There is a basic contradiction confronting women's attempts to achieve full citizenship within the confines of a patriarchal welfare state; this lies in the interaction between gender-neutral policies, based on male standards, and gender-specific policies, which address women's needs including their systematic discrimination by the welfare state. Mary Draper provides some discussion, within the Australian context, of this dilemma in action. The way forward for women to achieve full citizenship will be found not through making small adjustments but through a complete re-examination of the concept of citizenship and the nature of society. Only then will the underlying patriarchal ideology which has led to unequal power relations between women and men be exchanged for the collective responsibility of *all* citizens for the welfare of all.

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Forthcoming Conference:

'Suffrage and Beyond'

Call for papers for an international historical conference to commemorate the centenary of women's suffrage in New Zealand, 27, 28, 29 August 1993. The theme of the conference is "Suffrage and Beyond'. The conference will be held at Victoria University of Wellington, Wellington, New Zealand. Anyone wishing to give a paper should submit an abstract for consideration to the suffrage Centenary Conference programme committee via the conference organiser:

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'...for the sake of decent shelter'

An interview with Nori Parata, researcher/ co-ordinator, Maori Women's Housing Research Project

Viv Porzsolt

Viv: Welcome Nori. I'd like to begin by asking you about your personal history.

Nori: Thank you. I am Ngati Porou and Ngai Tahu, born and raised in Ruatoria on the East Coast. I went to high school in Gisborne, but found it to be pretty boring, so I'm what you could consider to be a 'statistical drop out' with no formal school qualifications. After that I did manual and labouring jobs in shearing gangs and a couple of seasons at the freezing works in the South Island. Then I went back to Gisborne with my son and got involved with Kohanga Reo for about three years. About this time, the children from Kohanga were starting to enter the formal school system and the Kohanga whanau were concerned about the lack of support and resources to be able to develop the children's potential. So after discussion with my family and the Kohanga whanau, I went off to do a BA in Maori and Education.

Viv: It sounds as if Kohanga did the same for you as the Play Centre movement does for Pakeha women.
Nori: Yes, in some ways they are parallel; however, Kohanga is concerned with the survival of a culture through language. Kohanga Reo has been a great forum for political awareness and developing skills, but many women have had to leave to get paid employment. I guess I'm one of those, but where and when I can, I still fully support its kaupapa. So to cut a long story short, after Massey I applied for and got the job of researcher/co-ordinator for the Maori Women's Housing Research Project (MWHRP).

Viv: What was the background to the project?
Nori: In 1987 the Housing Corporation, with the help of Women's Affairs, produced a report called 'Women's Views on Housing'. While it was an excellent report, Maori women did not respond well to the submission format, and as a result their views, other than through Te Ohu Whakatupu, were not represented. It is most likely that this is because of the style of contribution being through submissions. Maori people were just about 'submissioned out' by that time. So the MWHRP is a result of an interdepartmental committee which was set up to find ways of documenting the housing needs and experiences of Maori women.

The project is managed by representatives from each of the five sponsoring government agencies — HCNS, DSW, Womens' Affairs and Maori Affairs — and three community representatives from the twelve member Consultative Group. The Consultative Group's role was to ensure that the research accurately reflected the experience of Maori women and to assist me as researcher in gaining access to Maori communities throughout the country.

I started with the project in 1989. It was to be a national project, which presented a few difficulties in the early stages, as the budget and time didn't really allow for an indepth study all over the country. So we decided that it would be best if we used a case study approach first, to identify issues and experiences. Case studies were carried out in South Auckland, Christchurch and the Gisborne East Coast areas. They were chosen because they provided a contrast in the life styles of Maori women.

Viv: Tell me about the methodology that you used to do the research.
Nori: I believed that a qualitative methodology would be the best way of getting the information we wanted. There is already statistical data available, although that is not centrally held — it's dispersed all over the place. However, a qualitative study seemed most appropriate for

identifying the issues. I carried out the case study of the Gisborne East Coast area. Lil Joyce did the South Auckland study and Angela Wallace did Christchurch. The technique we used for the fieldwork involved networking among whanau, hapu, iwi and community groups. Central to this process was making sure that Maori women felt comfortable about participating and that their contribution was valued.

I talked to many people, not only Maori women, but Maori communities as well. Often it was very difficult for people to divorce service delivery from research. At times I was required to help people with their housing problems, and I did. The cultural imperative of reciprocity was always present for us, especially where situations were really desperate. A lot of the women were sick of being researched and told me so over and over; however, I think that because I was dealing with my own people they were prepared to participate.

A lot of the interviews were hui, which really was good, as the group approach meant the women were able to bounce ideas and experiences off each other. I also made sure that they raised what they thought were the issues; consequently we got more information than we might have if they were all interviewed separately, with specific questions to be answered.

Viv: Did you find any difficulties with the methodology?
Nori: No, I feel comfortable with the methodology used, and believe that it was totally appropriate for what we were trying to achieve. After the case studies, I was able to identify a whole range of issues that were similar across all three areas. After this I travelled around the country talking to Maori women about the issues raised. This was a time to verify issues and to include specific regional issues as they were raised. We were able to talk to over 3000 Maori women, and held 105 hui throughout the country.

Viv: What were your general impressions from doing the research?
Nori: First, it was very heartening to see so many Maori women who are strong. They are aware of social and political issues and are working hard in their communities to bring about change. It is my belief that Maori women are the backbone of Maori society. On the other hand, there are many Maori women who are just managing to cope from day to day — but even that takes heaps of strength. I am indebted to the women who took part in the study.

It was also very sad to see that Maori women and children are the survivors of family violence. It is an issue that Maori people are going to have to seriously address. Maori women cannot carry the responsibility for a culture alone.

Viv: What were the major findings of the study?
Nori: That Maori women and their families are living in appalling conditions, particularly in rural communities. The main barriers to adequate shelter are discrimination, lack of information, institutional intimidation, substandard housing, insufficient or inappropriate supply, affordability and overcrowding.

Another issue is the lack of lateral policy development in creating policies that complement the social organisation of Maori society. That is, we have only two options in New Zealand, rental or individual home ownership.

The specific experiences of Maori women are:

1 Substandard housing. Many Maori women are living in atrocious housing conditions — I shouldn't use that word but conditions are often overcrowded, the housing is of poor standard and a lot of people are homeless. People are living in cowsheds and garages.

2 Women are forced to manipulate the system in order to get housing because the system is not meeting their needs. I wouldn't like this used against the women, as it is the responsibility of the departments to change.

3 Racism and discrimination in the private system is still occurring. You know the old situation where a Maori woman rings up about a house and it is available, but when she fronts up and is seen to be Maori, the house is mysteriously not available.

4 Maori women often do not have knowledge of the private market, but would like to be able to get their own homes for security reasons.

5 Substandard *new* homes are a problem. These have been built to cater for the low income market, and the workmanship is very bad and the housing substandard. I don't know how they pass inspection for the local authorities or for their loan. I certainly would not like to see any relaxation in building codes if this sort of thing can happen under current regulations.

6 The hidden costs of home ownership are a problem for families who do not realise that they will have to pay extra for paths, clothes lines, fences, lawyer's fees etc. This is particularly distressing for sole parents who do not have the skills to do the work themselves. So they are left in a bare shell by themselves. Some are just walking out and leaving the houses to mortgagee sales.

7 In almost every town there are Housing Corporation housing areas that tenants describe as ghetto areas. Maori women, especially sole

parents, don't want to move there because of the social problems.

8 Women often don't understand the Housing Corporation's pointing system for allocating houses to those most in need. They would also like to have a say in who is the most needy.

9 In small communities 'outsiders' are being allocated houses where there is already a serious housing need. This causes resentment.

10 There is concern over the future of the housing programmes of the Iwi Transition Agency, especially the rental housing programme on marae for housing Kaumatua.

11 Lack of knowledge of the private market leads to difficulties with access. There is also a large group of women with incomes which put them just above the limits for subsidised loans, but which are too low for them to borrow in the private sector. This leaves them without any access to housing finance.

12 Maori people often want different options for the design of their houses. They often want more open plan living and to go without some things so that they can afford the house. This is not always possible within existing rules, but would help Maori women to meet their housing needs. Whanau mortgages or living in whanau complexes also need to be explored.

13 There seems to be a problem between the intention of a policy and the way in which it is interpreted out there. Departments are often not sensitive to Maori needs and do not seek the views of Maori in a sensitive way.

Viv: What are you hoping that the project will achieve?
Nori: At the time of this interview I have not yet been able to analyse the data and make recommendations. We can't make much difference to the private market, but I hope that we can make recommendations so that departments can get information to people and better meet the housing needs of Maori. I would also like to see better interaction between departments, especially at the local level.

***'.... for the sake of decent shelter',* the report on this project, was released in June 1991. It is available free of charge from:**

Housing Corporation, Head Office
Ministry of Women's Affairs
Iwi Transition Agency
Manatu Maori
Department of Social Welfare.

A Safe Place?
'Planning' A Women's Refuge

Jennifer E. Dixon

Issues concerning the use of women's space gained attention as part of a developing women's studies literature on women and urban environments in the late 1970s and early 1980s (*Feminist Review*, 1981; *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 1978; *Signs*, 1980). Analysis of gender relations in the built environment by women geographers has demonstrated that the construction of institutional arrangements and the use of instruments such as housing policies and zoning provisions affirm dominant patriarchal structures (Johnson, 1989; Little, Peake and Richardson, 1988; Matrix, 1984; Women and Geography Study Group of the IBG, 1984). Revealing the nature of patriarchal practices requires an examination of the way in which policy and planning instruments are formulated by professionals and administrators and used in the context of every day practice.

This paper reviews the experiences of a group of women in the establishment of a safe place for women and their children seeking refuge from domestic violence in Hamilton City. In particular, the paper considers the nature of institutional arrangements and construction of planning policies which have important consequences for how women may live in residential suburbs. The paper also reveals the inherent

conflict between public housing policies which promote a variety of household arrangements, and local planning policies which support the dominance of single family households in residential neighbourhoods. The case provides an opportunity to examine how gendered assumptions are incorporated into administrative practices.

Case of the Women's Refuge

In 1984 a refuge for women escaping from domestic violence was established by the Battered Women's Support Line (BWSL) in a house owned by the Hamilton City Council. The house was zoned as Residential 1. This zone is intended 'to cater for family living with a reasonable amount of open space and to maintain the present open character of the suburban residential areas in Hamilton' (Hamilton City Council, 1981, 12). Planning consent was not sought by the BWSL nor required by Council planners. Two years later the BWSL, with support from Housing Corporation officials, began searching for a larger house. The four bedroomed house was constantly overcrowded. Hamilton has a shortage of large inner city houses such as are found in older, more established cities like Auckland and Wellington, and much of its housing stock is designed for single families. Eventually a much larger house was found in Dinsdale, another suburb in Hamilton.

By this stage a complaint from a neighbour about the operations of the refuge had been received by Council staff. The BWSL were informed by Council planners that they required planning consent and a boarding house licence to continue operating in the Council-owned house. The BWSL sought advice from the City Council staff about whether they would need planning consent for the Dinsdale house. The BWSL lawyer and Council planning staff debated whether the refuge was defined as a 'household' or a 'boarding house'. This argument was critical, as its outcome determined whether a planning application would have to be lodged for either house and publicly notified in the local newspaper for objections.

Initial advice from City Council lawyers was that they did not consider that the proposed use of the Dinsdale house required consent (Swarbrick, Dixon and Partners, 1987a). Two months later, Council lawyers changed their opinion (ibid., 1987b) after the receipt of submissions from the lawyers acting on behalf of the Dinsdale neighbours. BWSL members were informed by Council staff that the refuge *did* require conditional use consent. This meant that the BWSL would have to go through public procedures and a planning hearing to obtain consent to operate the refuge. It also meant that the Council's decision in respect of the Dinsdale house could be challenged by any party and

heard by the Planning Tribunal, a special judicial body. The Tribunal hears cases brought before it by appellants, and in most cases, under the Town and Country Planning Act 1977, issues a final decision. Decisions of the Tribunal can be challenged only on a point of law.

In the midst of this increasingly public debate, the women chose in December 1987 to move into the Dinsdale house without obtaining planning consent. The original Council house was too small to meet the needs of increasing numbers of women and children seeking refuge, and the seven bedroomed house in Dinsdale provided much needed additional space. The consequences of this action posed an administrative dilemma for politicians and officials. Planning officials had already determined that the refuge could not be classified as a 'residential household'. City councillors, under some pressure from the neighbours to act, sought a declaratory judgement from the Planning Tribunal on the interpretation of ordinances in the district planning scheme. The ordinances had been prepared in the 1970s, before refuges and other forms of group housing had emerged as new forms of urban land uses. Thus refuges were not specially provided for in the district scheme, and classification of this use was arguable.

Council planning officials and the lawyer representing the neighbours were of the opinion that the refuge was a conditional use (a use provided for in the residential zone, but identified as a use which required notified planning consent), falling within the category of 'private hospitals, charitable and philanthropic institutions and residential buildings used in connection with them' (Hamilton City Council, 1981, 12). In April 1988 the Planning Tribunal confirmed the view of officials and the neighbours' lawyer. This interpretation of the ordinances was not challenged at the Tribunal hearing. By this time the BWSL was consulting a second legal firm, who advised that they should not contest the Tribunal hearing, but instead proceed to lodge an application for planning consent. The BWSL had little money to support a challenge.

Given the ruling of the Tribunal, the BWSL had little option but to lodge a planning application to legitimise the operations of the refuge at the Dinsdale property. The house is located on a rear site of 750 square metres in area, with access from a right-of-way which is shared with two other houses. The immediate neighbourhood comprises single family dwellings. The site and house have some excellent features for a refuge. It is close to schools, shops, bus services, adjacent to a reserve, and has only one access point into the house. Over 40 objections were on grounds of increased traffic along the right-of-way, noise of playing children, suitability of the site, invasion of residents' privacy, concern

about management of the refuge, and fears of an increased security risk for adjacent neighbours.

Following a planning hearing, the Hamilton City Council granted consent for the refuge for up to twelve persons. Both the neighbours and the BWSL lodged appeals against the Council's decision. The neighbours considered the numbers to be excessive, while the BWSL wanted to be able to accommodate considerably more women and children. The Hamilton office of the Housing Corporation undertook to pay legal costs incurred by the BWSL, as this issue was of national concern to them. This offer meant that the BWSL could afford to proceed with their appeal to a Tribunal hearing. After a six month wait for a hearing, which took place in March 1989, the Planning Tribunal issued its decision: it upheld the Council's decision, with some additional conditions (*M.R. and D L Carlyon and M. J. Edwards v Hamilton City Council*). These included a requirement that a BWSL Collective member live in when six or more persons are staying in the house. When there are fewer than six persons in residence, a BWSL member must be on site each day from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.

The BWSL considered whether to appeal the Tribunal's decision, but received legal opinion that there were insufficient grounds to take a successful challenge to the High Court. Total legal costs incurred by the BWSL to present their case at the two hearings amounted to at least $16,000.

Outcomes

This case had several practical consequences for the BWSL, as well as for politicians and officials involved in policy making. First, the numerous interactions between BWSL members and professionals from various agencies, the public demands of planning processes, the intense neighbourhood opposition and at times conflicting professional advice combined to obscure the overwhelming needs of women and children seeking refuge from domestic violence. Those needs became secondary to the issue of whether the Dinsdale site was suitable for a refuge in land use planning terms, a point which will be taken up later.

Second, the case created significant stress for the BWSL members and women staying in the refuge, as they dealt with numerous officials and professionals and encountered a planning system of which they had no experience. Insensitive behaviour, exemplified by officials arriving at the refuge without notice to carry out site inspections, did little to give BWSL members confidence in the planning processes in which they had reluctantly become engaged. They were forced to accept that public notification of the refuge's address might place women at risk. They

were also confronted with making decisions on what courses of action they should adopt at critical stages during the planning processes. In particular, the consequences of the Council's decision to restrict numbers staying at the refuge to twelve, had to be addressed. The issues they faced were: how to comply with the Council's decision; whether they should move to another property and how they might fund such a move; or whether to lodge an appeal against the Council's decision and, if so, weigh up the likely chances of succeeding. Given that the primary focus of BWSL members is to address the needs of women and children staying in the refuge, the uncertainties of the planning process added additional stress in an already highly stressful environment.

Third, the case attracted national interest because of its potential to set precedents for other local authorities to use when dealing with similar applications. The Tribunal's decision imposed considerable constraints on how the BWSL members could operate the refuge. The dilemma now faced by the BWSL members received considerable attention from central government ministers and officials in the Ministry of Women's Affairs, Ministry for the Environment and Housing Corporation, as well as the Human Rights Commissioner. Given the finality of the Tribunal's decision, there was, however, little which could be done at central government level, other than through administrative policies of the Housing Corporation.

This attention exposed an inherent conflict between the public policies of a central government agency responsible for housing, and those of a local authority. The Housing Corporation has recently introduced a range of policies designed to meet the needs of individuals and groups with particular housing needs, such as older people, people with disabilities, co-operative housing building on Maori land when the land has more than one owner, women's groups and special tenancies. The special tenancy programme enables community-based groups which house people with special needs to make applications for Housing Corporation assistance to purchase properties. Rents range from peppercorn rentals of $NZ10 a year to market rents for tenancies housing people with stable incomes. The Dinsdale property was purchased by the Housing Corporation through the special tenancy programme.

A review of housing policies of local authorities reveals that most authorities place controls on community groups who wish to establish houses and who are perceived to fall outside the usual definition of a residential household. Thus groups being funded through the special tenancy programmes are likely to encounter some difficulties in obtaining planning consent (Descon Group, 1989). Problems of definitions of ordinances and political pressure on councils are resulting in conserva-

tive interpretations by council staff. Thus a situation is developing where planning policies are constraining initiatives taken by a central funding agency to meet community needs. Local planning policies are being reinforced by conservative public reaction to proposals which are seen to threaten the 'single family' neighbourhood.

Land use imperatives

Further analysis of planning practice in this case reveals implicit gender biases in planning methodology, decisions reached by authorities, and the subsequent construction of planning policies. Conditional use criteria (s.72) in the Town and Country Planning Act 1977 require that the issues debated relate to suitability of the site for the proposed use, and effects on neighbouring amenities. Argument focused on how many women and children could be accommodated on site without detrimentally affecting neighbourhood amenity. Issues of noise, traffic generation and analysis of the numbers of women and children staying at the refuge became major considerations. The issue of *need* for a particular land use is only relevant in exceptional circumstances, termed specified departures (s.74), and it had already been determined by the Tribunal that the use was permitted as a conditional use. The pressing need for the refuge was therefore irrelevant in land use planning terms, an administrative convenience for politicians, officials and objectors, and could not be used as an argument to support the application. Thus the nature of the debate was constructed by legal and planning professionals in terms of legislation and planning criteria in the district planning scheme. Expert evidence was therefore presented within the 'technical' context of site suitability and effect on neighbourhood amenity. The social context of the activity was much more difficult to quantify and substantiate in the 'objective' terms of functionalist planning methodology.

It is, however, the construction of policies and planning instruments which needs to be examined more closely. In this case, instruments such as zoning and ordinances have been constructed in such a way as to support the establishment of single family households in residential neighbourhoods. In this way, planning ordinances legitimise social norms in the form of regulations which penetrate everyday life (Clark, 1990).

The Planning Tribunal decision

By the time the Tribunal hearing took place, the refuge had been in operation at the Dinsdale property for about thirteen months. In reaching its decision, the Tribunal relied heavily on the evidence of

neighbours who presented their realities of living next door to the refuge. The Tribunal cited the diary evidence of one former resident about the activities of the refuge. In her diary notes she made constant reference to the noise of children, citing examples of occasions on which she and her family were forced to go out in order to escape the constant noise. Eventually, tiring of the noise, the resident and her family moved elsewhere. Another resident commented on the emotional stress of living next to a refuge, citing constantly changing neighbours, seeing 'visibly battered people', and the apparent lack of supervision of residing children. Other references were made to the purpose of Residential 1 zones being to provide for 'normal' family living comprising 'two parent/two children families' and that uses such as refuge should be provided for in other zones. Other concerns raised were the general invasion of privacy and increase in traffic movement along the right-of-way. The Tribunal concluded that the effects of the operation of the refuge on the amenities of the neighbourhood were 'real' and concurred with the Council's decision to restrict use to twelve persons.

The discourse was constructed by the neighbours in terms that suggested activities at the refuge were aberrant to the 'order' implicit in domestic living arrangements. Thus these activities should be construed as being outside what could be anticipated as 'normal' in single family neighbourhoods. With reference to particular episodes, the neighbours presented evidence which convinced the Tribunal that neighbourhood amenities were detrimentally affected by operations of the refuge.

There are other implications arising from this decision. The Tribunal implicitly upheld the neighbours' views that the purpose of Residential 1 zones was mainly for single family dwellings, despite the fact that a broad range of residential uses (such as churches and rest homes) were explicitly provided for as conditional uses in Residential 1 zones. These uses would undoubtedly generate more environmental effects, such as traffic and pedestrian movement, than the refuge. There are increasing numbers of homes being established in residential areas to provide supportive environments, for example, for adults and children with physical and mental disabilities, or for patients leaving psychiatric institutions, as well as refuges for victims of domestic violence. Changing government policies which have a greater emphasis on community-based care are assisting these trends. The Tribunal's response ignores the changing character of residential neighbourhoods. The neighbours' reaction reflects commonly encountered resistance to changing forms of residential households which are perceived to challenge accepted norms.

The decision of the Tribunal to confirm the restriction to the use of

twelve people assumes that a threshold of neighbourly tolerance can be fixed. No satisfactory justification for the number of twelve (as opposed to other numbers) was presented at either of the hearings, other than that it seemed an appropriate figure for administrative convenience. BWSL members are obliged to turn away women in need if numbers exceed the limit. Evidence of occupancy figures presented at the Tribunal hearing clearly demonstrated that the refuge needed to cater for many more than twelve women and children on any one night. The evidence also indicated that numbers staying at the refuge fluctuate considerably, and that a blanket number which did not differentiate between adults and young children was quite inappropriate as a means of planning control. No subsequent offer was made by the Council to provide an additional house for the BWSL, given the planning constraints imposed on the operation of the refuge. However, more recently Housing Corporation officials have purchased an additional house under their special tenancy policies. This has alleviated the situation considerably for BWSL members.

Finally, and most importantly, the decision to impose a condition requiring overnight supervision, should numbers exceed six persons, reflected patriarchal decision-making at its worst. No evidence was presented at the hearing of any need for overnight supervision. There have been no instances of intruders to substantiate any fears held by neighbours. This condition assumed that adult women who are responsible for managing their own households suddenly require overnight supervision at the refuge. It also imposed additional responsibilities on BWSL members who operate on a voluntary basis outside weekly working hours.

Implicit in the decision of the Tribunal to impose a condition requiring overnight supervision is criticism of the management of the refuge. Tribunal members asked several questions during the hearing about the training and qualifications of the refuge collective worker for dealing with the victims of domestic violence. They were clearly not satisfied by explanations of 'grassroots experience'. The serious vast underfunding of crisis services such as women's refuges (Haines, 1989) already exacerbates conditions of high stress and low pay for refuge workers, and ultimately threatens the effectiveness and the continuation of these services. The Tribunal's criticism of the professionalism of the refuge workers who work under conditions of marginal funding only served to underscore the vulnerability of the refuge operation.

This decision represents the ultimate planning paradox: that in the attempt by BWSL members to provide a safe place for women, the operations of the refuge were severely curtailed by a patriarchal plan-

ning system imposing restrictive conditions on the use of women's space. While women are involved in this process as planners, applicants and objectors, the use of planning instruments and hierarchical arrangements of powerful collective institutions combined to impose this male-constructed agenda.

Construction of planning policies

The cases of the refuge and of another group home for former psychiatric patients have been drawn upon by councillors and officials in preparing a new district scheme for the city. The Town and Country Planning Act 1977 requires that local authorities review their land use plans every five years, and the Hamilton scheme is well overdue for review. In late April 1989 the City Council notified the proposed review for public objection (Hamilton City Council, 1989). The review made specific provision for 'community care housing' in nearly all residential zones as a predominant use for up to twelve people. Groups falling within this definition could establish a home without being required to obtain any form of planning consent. Where there would be more than twelve people residing in the home, the organisation would need to obtain controlled use consent.

Several hundred objections requesting stricter controls than those proposed by the Council were lodged against these proposed provisions when the District Scheme Review was notified for objection in 1989. Following Council hearings in 1990, the Council resolved to maintain the provisions largely as proposed, but to require conditional use consent where more than twelve people will reside in a household which falls within the 'community care' definition. The objections demonstrate a depth of concern about the establishment of these households, and underscore the potential for neighbourhood conflict when applications are made. Several appeals to the Planning Tribunal have subsequently been lodged by some of these objectors against the Council's decision on the 'community care' provisions. It is likely that these appeals will be heard later this year.

The definition of 'community care housing' is an attempt by politicians and planners to generate a new classification of residential household to deal with the 'problem' of households which are perceived to be different from single family households. A 'household' and 'community care housing' have been defined as follows:

> HOUSEHOLD means a person or group of people who maintain a self-contained housekeeping unit, are related or unrelated, reside together and interact on a daily basis to maintain a self-contained housekeeping unit. A household may include an

> extended family or two or more families living together or groups of unrelated people who flat together and live as a family.
>
> COMMUNITY CARE HOUSING means housing managed by any public authority, religious institution or non-profit making organisation for the rehabilitation or care of any group or persons. It includes emergency housing, housing for battered women, housing the disabled, 'half way houses' and therapeutic or convalescent homes for psychiatric or former psychiatric patients (Hamilton City Council, 1989, 50, 54).

Use of the attribute of dependence on 'housing managed by any public authority' as the criterion to differentiate from people who maintain a 'self-contained housekeeping unit' reveals three important assumptions on the part of planners.

First, there is an implicit acknowledgement that power relations exist within the 'self-contained unit'. The use of the concept of 'housing managed by' in the definition of 'community care housing' implies a continued male presence in the management of the 'community care household'. The 'head of the household' is replaced by 'any public authority, religious institution, or non-profit making organisation' in the 'community care household'. Second, the lack of reference in the definition of 'community care housing' to the activity which women contribute to overwhelmingly in the 'self-contained unit' implies that daily household living arrangements will somehow occur differently in these new forms of households. This undervalues the significance of women's work in the daily management of the 'community care household'. Third, the definition of 'community care housing' implies that diverse groups have uniform needs of 'rehabilitation and care'. The purpose of the BWSL refuge is to provide a safe place for women to escape from domestic violence: these women do not require 'rehabilitation and care'. Further, the term 'community care' is misleading, in the sense that for many people, it means the right to live in the community. This highlights the difficulties of attempting to develop a land use category in the context of diverse and conflicting social norms.

The inclusion of these classification into planning ordinances ensures the continuation of male-centred views of household arrangements. Thus the creation of a definition presents a new form of classification which has been developed to deal with household arrangements outside the accepted norms of a 'self-contained housekeeping unit'.

The construction of this classification calls into question the purpose and use of planning instruments such as zoning and ordinances. A primary purpose of planning is to minimise nuisance such as detrimen-

tal environmental effects of land uses. Occupants of the households which fall into the 'community care' definition will not generate significantly different environmental effects (such as traffic and noise) from those generated by people living in 'self-contained housekeeping units'. This raises the question of why these household arrangements need to be treated differently from others. The conclusion is that planning provisions are being used to promote specific concepts of household arrangements, rather than to provide protection for neighbours on the basis of environmental considerations. Implicitly, planning instruments are being created to ensure the continuation of an accepted social order in residential neighbourhoods.

Concluding comment

The goal of the BWSL is to offer safe refuge to the victims of domestic family violence. The cruel irony of this case is that the very offer of such a refuge was itself perceived by the neighbours, in terms of their prevailing ideology, as threatening the single household arrangements established in their neighbourhood. Cases such as the BWSL refuge are likely to be repeated elsewhere where differences of ideology are debated as issues of residential amenity.

The case demonstrates the complexities which arise when issues of social relations become intertwined with concerns of public administration, land use controls, property values and neighbourhood opposition. Male constructed agendas were confirmed in the analysis of institutional outcomes from this case. Planners need to be aware of the subtleties and biases implicit in the creation and use of planning instruments such as zoning and planning ordinances. Revealing assumptions inherent in discourse and text is a step towards the reformulation of planning practice in which practitioners and others challenge established norms and create opportunities for the unrestricted use of women's spaces.

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Biography

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Note

Major reform of New Zealand's resource use and planning laws has culminated in the enactment of the Resource Management Act 1991 on 1 October this year. There is a deliberate shift in emphasis from *regulation* of land use activities, as occurred under the Town and Country Planning Act 1977, to *evaluation* of the environmental effects of resource development. This means that, in the longer term, proposals for women's refuges will be evaluated on the basis of environmental effects, not as specified land uses. This should ensure that debate about the establishment of uses in particular zones becomes irrelevant. What will be important for decision-making is whether proposals can meet the specified environmental standards in district and regional plans.

Feminist Geography and Recreation Research

Karen Bell

Introduction

During the 1970s, questions about women's inequality were first identified as being relevant to geographic enquiry. Since then feminist geographers have sought to make women's experiences visible, showing that differences between men and women are socially constructed, and highlighting examples of male domination. As Bowlby and McDowell (1987: 305) argue, 'gender relations, relations of power between men and women, permeate all areas of social life'. By neglecting gender relations in geographic enquiry, a key structuring element of the division of space and the allocation of resources is left out of the analysis, so the power of existing explanatory frameworks is reduced. Feminism has the potential to contribute significantly to research in geography; and it has.

This paper examines feminist geography in the context of recreation research. It will outline the first attempts to make women more visible in geography, and the development to feminist geography. What is feminist geography, and what is its relevance to research about women's outdoor recreation? The second part of this paper will outline feminist

research in geography which examined why women represent only one-third of trampers (for details see Bell, 1990).

Geography

Geographers are interested in space. Geography is the study of spatial variation and people-land interrelationships. Space, place, environment and landscape are contexts in which we live our daily lives. Geography reflects the ethos of the society in which it is operating. It is a social construction. Geography is typical of the social sciences in that it has been based on and reinforces the perceptions, experiences and beliefs of men, while purporting to be about all people (McDowell, 1989). Feminist geographers argue that 'Geography silently continues to claim universal focus when in content, method and purpose it is primarily concerned with male experience' (Johnson, 1985:161). Things are changing, however, partly in response to developments in the women's movement. Feminists are criticising topics chosen for study, and demanding new ways of doing things, including different approaches to research and assessment of knowledge claims, and a share of power within geography. There have been many developments in geography in the past fifteen years, but some would argue the most important of these has been the evolution of feminist geography. Feminism has become part of geography in a way which cannot be ignored.

Generally, though, geography has resisted incorporating feminist ideologies and practices (Stokes *et al*, 1985). This is well illustrated by Professor Harvey Franklin of Victoria University, when interviewed by *North and South* magazine. In response to a question about feminist geography, he replied 'I deal with the real world... if you interpret geography from a women's point of view I don't know what would happen!' (Coddington, 1990, 82).

Feminist geography

The first attempts at feminist research in geography involved making women visible within the traditional existing analyses. This was clearly an important step, but more recently this approach has been subject to criticism. Focusing on women within a traditional geographic framework suggests that only those activities which men have found it important to study shape social life. Further, by merely adding women to geographical enquiry we are not encouraged to ask how the meaning of certain experiences might be different for men and women. In sum, this 'gender geography' fails to analyse the power relations that result in women's oppression (Johnson, 1985).

More recently, feminist geographers have begun to analyse the

relationship between gender relations and spatial relations. This change marks the difference between gender geography and feminist geography. It is now clear that gender geography did not challenge the social bases of gender relations and the unequal distribution of power between women and men.

Feminist geographers emphasise questions of gender inequality and the oppression of women in virtually all spheres of life (Dooley, 1987; Johnson, 1985, 1990; Stokes, 1985; Bowlby and McDowell, 1987; McDowell, 1988; Larner, 1990; Bell, 1990). Spatial form and layout are shown to be gendered, and as such reinforce assumptions about the 'correct' places for women. For example, it is demonstrated that there is a separation of public and private, work and home, and city and suburb, and that in each case women are conceptually associated with the latter. Feminist geographers also claim that women and men experience spaces very differently. This is best illustrated by work on safe and unsafe places (Valentine, 1989).

Feminist geographers are concerned with the spaces we inhabit and the meanings we give to them. Once recognised, assumptions about the use of space can be challenged and situations changed to the advantage of women. Louise Johnson has been involved with teaching and researching feminist geography in the past five years. She defines feminist geography as applying feminist politics to our sense of space. Space is not neutral, but a reflection of the inequitable society in which we live. For example, when geography students were asked which spaces women commonly inhabit, the first that came to mind were home, community groups, kindergartens, women's rooms. In contrast, those spaces dominated by men were parliament, military, rugby fields; i.e. public spaces and decision-making bodies. Space is both gendered and patriarchal (men's worlds and spaces are given higher status at the expense of women). Looking at gendered space illuminates that women's spaces are rare, and usually bound to their roles as mothers and home-makers. Some of these spaces have negative connotations. Men's spaces, in contrast, are numerous and pervasive and associated with power (both formally and informally). Examining spaces can also illuminate racism as well as sexism. Few people think of race or ethnicity when defining spaces; like women, Maori have few spaces, and those spaces they have are often viewed negatively by the mainstream (see Johnson, 1990).

The main components of feminist geography

There are three important aspects of feminist geography. First, women must be represented in their own terms. Women's experiences, and

their understanding of those experiences, form the basis of feminist geography. Feminist geographers acknowledge that women's experiences vary, depending on race, class, age and cultural identification, and that these variables also need to be considered. Corresponding with developments in feminist theory generally, feminist geographers have moved away from a focus on similarities between women to analysis of their diverse experience.

Secondly, feminist geography goes beyond merely 'adding women in'. Feminist research is not research solely about women, though there has been a tendency to translate gender issues as specific to women (Hall, 1988). Instead, feminist geographers examine the social construction of gender, the way in which unequal gender relations are created and recreated over time and space. The following quotes are instructive in this regard:

> Feminist scholars are not interested solely in women's experiences and behaviour, but in gender relations— by which I mean the ideology, institutions, structures and practices that create and reproduce unequal material conditions and oppressive power relations between women and men (McDowell, 1988, 162).

> We have moved beyond the 'add women and stir' phase of our scholarship to a perspective that is highly critical and challenges the dominant intellectual traditions of our time (Hall, 1988, 338).

Thirdly, feminist research in geography is political, in that it aims at positive change for women. It starts with a critical perspective and aims to reformulate both theory and practice so that they benefit women. This does not necessarily mean having immediately practical results; but ideas as well as actions are a potent force in altering repressive social structures. Commitment to feminism leads to a challenge to conventional methods of working within geography (Johnson, 1985; Stokes et al, 1985; Dooley, 1987; McDowell, 1989; Larner, 1990; Bell 1991b).

Feminist research in recreation

Although the influence of feminist geographers can be identified in many other sub-areas of the discipline, geographers interested in recreation and leisure have not, until now, been challenged by the feminist critique. Feminist geographers have tended to focus until recently on women's position in the labour market, waged and unwaged work, land use and planning, women's access to education, health, housing, and involvement in community politics. Despite the neglect in geographical literature, there have been feminist contributions to the literature on recreation and leisure from other disciplines (Therbege, 1985; Green,

Hebron and Woodward, 1987; Deem, 1988; Hall 1988; and in New Zealand Jones, 1986; Nisbet, 1988 and Thompson, 1988, Simpson, 1987). These studies developed during the 1980s, in response to the inadequacies of mainstream analyses of leisure.

Notions of gender roles and recreation have been considered by many leisure researchers (Burrows, 1985; Thompson, 1988; Simpson, 1990; Henderson, 1990 and Kane, 1990). They argue that the differences in recreational involvement are the result of gender specific patterns of socialisation. Analysis of gender roles provided the basis for a more comprehensive analysis of gender relations. In order to develop a feminist analysis, the study of leisure must be set within the context of an understanding of women's oppression in our society, and the way in which that oppression is manifest in virtually all spheres of life. Deem (1982, 1988), Hall (1988), and Woodward, Green and Hebron (1988) have all argued that this involves considering women's leisure in the context of unequal gender relations.

In their study of women's leisure experiences in Sheffield, Woodward, Green and Hebron (1988) demonstrate how gender relations structure women's access to leisure opportunities. Rather than simply focusing on gender roles as ideological constraints, they examine carefully the cultural, political and economic contexts in which both women and recreation exist. They show how women's fragmented time, lack of available private transport, childcare and domestic responsibilities, and restricted opportunities for paid employment all operate to limit their opportunities.

Distribution of resources within a household, notably money and transport, mean that women are often placed in a position of having to ask for the means to enjoy leisure, especially outside the home, rather than being unambiguously entitled to them. This economic inequality arises because of structural constraints, in particular women's lower rate of pay in the workforce. Economic inequalities are compounded by prevailing cultural and social norms about domestic work and childcare, and notions of greater male entitlement to the opportunity and money for leisure outside the home. Other factors include women's experience in public places away from home (Green, Hebron and Woodward, 1987).

Scraton (1987) identifies another important factor in the structuring of gender relations in her discussion of girls' subcultures in physical activities. She argues that there are clearly identified boundaries for acceptable masculine and feminine behaviour. Her analysis extends the notion of sex role stereotyping by showing how images of sexually appropriate behaviour become institutionalised and legitimated.

Hargreaves' (1989) work on the social production of gender relations in and through sport also draws attention to the wider context of the relationship between social relations and recreation.

The cultural values of our pioneer settlement are interesting in this context. Phillips (1987) suggests that New Zealanders have tended to define themselves through male heroes. He relates this back to a distinctive frontier male culture in nineteenth century New Zealand in which muscular virtues were promoted. Crawford (1987) also discusses the historical basis for New Zealand's self identification as a 'sporting nation'. Crawford (1987) and Phillips (1987) both talk of the conformity of mateship which helped legitimise certain masculine behaviours. They identify the characteristics of national heroes and discuss how these have become institutionalised.

Stereotypes of 'good keen men' are clearly important in explaining who tramps, hunts, climbs and walks in New Zealand. These images have become institutionalised and thus legitimated. 'Through hunting (and climbing) many New Zealanders have been able to live up to the image of the rugged individual. Ease of hunting was taken for granted as part of the New Zealand male's way of life' (Aukerman and Davison, 1980: 30). Deem (1986) has looked critically at how such concepts of masculinity constrain and shape men's leisure and thereby boys' enculturation for future leisure. There are obvious implications for women who wish to pursue active outdoor recreation:

> Our society, which in theory is an open and democratic one with a high level of integration for women and men and a strong current of equal opportunities .... turns out on closer examination to be closer to the opposite (Rodgers, 1988; 257).

***Making Tracks: Gender Relations and Tramping:* an example of feminist research in geography**

As an example of feminist research in geography, my own (1990) study *Making Tracks: Gender Relations and Tramping* focused on gender relations of women's involvements in outdoor recreation. It explored the factors that may explain why women are under-represented in tramping. (Past recreation research consistently reports that only one-third of trampers are likely to be females.) Ninety Christchurch-based trampers were asked about their personal experiences of tramping. An overview of tramping clubs in Christchurch was also included in the analysis. Four aspects of women's participation in tramping were explored. The stereotypical image of a tramper was identified and present-day trampers' responses to this image were considered; trampers' experiences were documented; tramping clubs were analysed in terms of their structures

and practices; and finally, barriers to women's participation were explicitly discussed.

Images and realities: what is a tramper?

This research showed a stereotyped image of a tramper as a young white male. The image is either perpetuated or resisted through various forms of media. The stereotype has historically specific origins, and can be linked to an analysis of male, pakeha culture (Phillips, 1987). While the pervasiveness of the image is acknowledged by many trampers, they point out that the image does not fit the reality. A diverse range of people go tramping. Some are actively resisting the young male stereotype of a tramper. The persistence of the image of the male tramper emphasises the need to develop an analysis that looks beyond the notion of gender roles. Examining only gender stereotypes often fails to uncover the political and social factors that define and constrain women's outdoor recreation. The image reflects ideas about appropriate behaviour for men and women, and is the product of unequal gender relations between them.

Diversity in experience

Trampers have a wide range of expectations about the tramping experience. While most people go tramping for broadly similar reasons — experience of nature, physical exercise, social contact — there are differences in the emphasis placed on reasons for going. Women and older trampers were more likely to emphasise the importance of social contact and experiencing nature — the process — while many of the young men emphasised the physical exertion — the goal achievement. It was demonstrated in this research that recreation studies have tended to adopt a narrow definition of tramping, focusing particularly on overnight stays and more physically oriented trips. Some would argue this is a 'masculine' approach. However, the experiences of trampers showed that many go on day trips. Women and older people are most likely to choose this option. Therefore many women's involvements in tramping are defined out of the analysis to begin with.

The social construction of tramping groups/clubs

The importance of tramping clubs in facilitating people's involvement in outdoor recreation was identified. People from twenty tramping groups/clubs in Christchurch were interviewed to see how the groups were organised, and how the trips actually ran (the structures and practices). There are broadly two types of tramping structures: those with a clear hierarchy (the more traditional clubs), and those organised

through consensus decision-making (the newer groups). In the past ten years a number of clubs have formed primarily to cater for women and older people, for example the Over 40s Tramping Club and Women Walk. There are also many community-based groups with mainly women and retired people as members.

Trampers reported that in the more traditional clubs, women's needs are marginalised. The main difficulty is the exclusion of women from leadership and decision-making roles, both in the way the groups were organised, and in their tramping practices. As a result, some women and older people have begun to organise independently. It is indicative that committee members of the traditional clubs expressed their concern about declining membership. In contrast, the newer clubs reported gaining significant numbers of new members. Two of these clubs have reached their optimum size. The majority of these new members are women and older people, but in particular older women (for more detailed information see Bell, 1991a).

Why are women under-represented in tramping?

Past research indicates that women have less free time for leisure and are involved in fewer organised leisure activities outside the home (Talbot, 1984; Middleton and Tait, 1981; Green, Hebron and Woodward, 1987). Reasons often cited for lack of time relate to responsibilities for domestic work and childcare. These studies tend to assume that all women choose to follow a conventional life cycle that includes marriage and childrearing. For women, a range of material constraints upon recreation are legitimised by gender expectations and practices, which inform not only recreation, but all areas of women's lives. Although the experiences of individual women vary markedly according to age, sexuality, employment and partners' job, social class, marital status, life stage, ethnicity and disability (Deem, 1986), there are also common factors and constraints affecting the leisure of all women. The existence of many of these constraints was confirmed in this research.

Trampers were asked what they saw as barriers to women's involvement in tramping. These may be grouped into material, familial and social constraints, although these interrelate in a complex manner. The reasons for women's under-representation in tramping are summarised in list form below. The potential for developing a non-sexist tramping environment can only be fulfilled if the barriers to women's participation in the activity are fully recognised.

Barriers identified by trampers:

Macho image/male domain/ stereotypes
Lack of physical fitness & experience
Attitudes and perceptions
Huts, facilities, lack of privacy
Family responsibilities
Lack of confidence
Competitiveness, speed and getting to top
Time constraints
Lack of women leaders and role models
Not perceived as safe
No encouragement
Upbringing, socialisation
Women build their own barriers
Finances
No structure/unhappy with available clubs
The media portrays negative images/no women
Lack of established tramping networks
Menstruation and privacy
Health reasons
Body image, having to wear shorts & boots
Psychologically not prepared
Language
Women assumed to have low skill level
Lack of transport

Conclusion

This paper has examined feminist geography in the context of research on women's outdoor recreation. It has illustrated the fundamental importance and centrality of gender relations to geographic inquiry into women's outdoor recreation. To understand why women are underrepresented in tramping, gender relations and spatial relations must be analysed to illustrate the unequal distribution of power.

As an example of feminist geography, this research has represented women's tramping experiences in their own terms and examined the social construction of the ideology, institutions, structures and practices of tramping which create and reproduce unequal conditions and oppressive power relations between men and women in their experience of outdoor recreation. The research is political because it has reformulated geographic theory and practice. Women's outdoor recreation has not been fully considered by feminist geographers, so this research contributes new ground to both feminist literature and geographical literature.

Gender relations structure women's experiences of tramping. It has been illustrated that images of sexually appropriate behaviour have become institutionalised and legitimated. Tramping has been perceived as a male activity in terms of who is expected to take part, and the experiences sought. The concept of the masculinity of tramping has

become institutionalised and legitimated. The structures and practices (the way the trips are run) have created and reproduced unequal conditions and oppressive power relations between women and men. When viewed in this manner, recreation research in geography is seen in a different light. Feminist challenges to geography are profound. Feminist research in geography is demanding a whole new reconceptualisation of the discipline and its practice.

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Trans-sex or Cross-gender?

A critique of Janice Raymond's *The Transsexual Empire*

Sylvia Baynes

> Far from being an expression of natural differences, exclusive gender identity is the suppression of natural similarities. It requires repression: in men, of whatever is the local version of 'feminine' traits; in women, of the local definition of 'masculine' traits. The division of the sexes has the effect of repressing some of the personality characteristics of virtually everyone, men and women.
>
> Gayle Rubin[1]

> Psychological causation theories..measure a transsexual's adjustment or nonadjustment to the gender identity and role of masculinity or femininity. They seldom question the socially engendered norms of masculinity and femininity themselves...
>
> ...a society which generates such rigid stereotypes of masculinity and femininity is itself the primary cause of transsexualism; the 'essence' of masculinity and femininity becomes reified and incarnated in the organs and body of

> the opposite sex. ...within such a society, the transsexual merely exchanges one stereotype for the other, thus reinforcing the fabric by which a sexist society is held together.
>
> Janice Raymond[2]

If we are to understand the nature of transsexuality and cross-gender, it should be emphasised that the term 'sex-change' is a misnomer. At present, there is no way of changing a person's genetic sex. Conversely, it is possible to change one's gender (i.e. the role that society deems appropriate to one's sex). It is also possible to alter a person's body surgically, so that they have the appearance of the opposite sex. Taking hormones may serve to enhance this alteration of appearance.

Perhaps the best known feminist writing on transsexuality is Janice Raymond's book, *The Transsexual Empire.* Her thesis is that gender disphoria is a problem created by patriarchy. ('Disphoria' is a feeling of discontent, the opposite of 'euphoria', a feeling of well-being. Thus 'gender disphoria' is 'a dissatisfaction with one's gender role'.) In fabricating and reinforcing rigid sex roles, and demanding absolute conformity to them, patriarchal ideology is forcing many people who do not feel they belong to opt out. Those males who are unhappy with the 'masculine' male stereotype may feel happier taking on the female gender role. In order to do so they are to be surgically transformed into an approximation of a female, given hormones, and trained into their adopted role.

In Raymond's view, male-to-female transsexuals are embodiments of an ideology which reinforces the image of women created by men. Female-to-male transsexuals are merely tokens who disguise the real nature of the male 'transsexual empire'. Emphasising the fact that there are fewer female-to-male transsexuals, she points out that their 'stereotypes of masculinity' are not 'products of a female-directed culture'; rather they are 'assimilated into...male-defined worlds, institutions, and roles...on male terms.'[3] She contends that male-to-female transsexuals should not be accepted as women, because they are not genetic women, and have not undergone a woman's upbringing and experiences. Male-to-female transsexuals are merely female-like constructions, who invade women's space and appropriate women's energy.

She likens the role of the contemporary male-to-female transsexual to the role played by the eunuch in antiquity. Pointing out that eunuchs were often the guardians of the harem and wardens of women's apartments, she contends: 'Eunuchs were men that other more powerful men used to keep their women in place.' Eunuchs often 'attached themselves to women's spaces and, most frequently, were used to supervise wom-

en's freedom of movement and to harness women's self-centredness and self-government.'[4]

While it may be possible to find parallels between the role of the eunuch in earlier societies, and contemporary transsexuals, there are differences.[5] The eunuch occupied a third gender role; he was not regarded as a woman. Although some eunuchs gained positions of power and authority within their cultures, most did not. Many became slaves and the sexual playthings of wealthy men, taken up and discarded at will. Just as women such as Elizabeth I of England and Catherine the Great of Russia wielded power and influence by virtue of birth, ability or fortune, it did not necessarily follow that the great majority of women were likely to be able to exercise power. So it was with the eunuch. Only a few exercised real power. In this respect, one could liken the role of the eunuch to that of women: moulded, shaped and used for the purposes of patriarchal society.

Disregarding the role of the eunuch in antiquity, Janice Raymond sees transsexualism as a twentieth century Western phenomenon. She fails to perceive that there could be other approaches to understanding and dealing with both intersexual individuals and gender disphoria. Her view divorces transsexualism from its roots, namely from cross-gender behaviour both historic and worldwide.

In the matter of differences between the sexes, she writes: 'there are differences, and ... those differences are important whether they spring from socialisation, from biology, or from the total history of existing as a woman in a patriarchal society.'

> We know that we are women who are born with female hormones and anatomy, and that whether or not we were socialised to be so-called normal women, patriarchy has treated and will treat us like women. Transsexuals have not had this same history. No man can have the history of being born and located in this culture as a woman. He can have the history of wishing to be a woman and of acting like a woman, but this gender experience is that of a transsexual, not of a woman. Surgery may confer the artifacts of outward and inward female organs, but it cannot confer the history of being born a woman in this society.[6]

Janice Raymond reserves a special condemnation for those male-to-female transsexuals who then identify as 'lesbian'. Such a person is regarded by her as a 'psychological and social aggressor' 'who violates women's bodies by taking on the artifactual female organs for himself'. The lesbian-feminist community is a female world created by women for women. The transsexual who intrudes on this world is an invader. 'Transsexually constructed lesbian-feminists challenge women's pre-

serves of autonomous existence. Their existence within the women's community basically attests to the ethic that women should not live without men — or without the "reconstructed man" '.[7] Upon female-to-male transsexuals who identify as 'gay', Janice Raymond has made no comment. Presumably, if one follows her line of reasoning, they must be women who invade male spaces.

Stressing that transsexuals are expected to accept and not to question the existing order of society, she criticises the medico-psychiatric establishment built up around sex changing, which involves surgical mutilation and guidance counselling into the new roles. Such counselling pushes transpeople into stereotyped (i.e. patriarchal established male/female) roles. This merely reinforces the existing order of a sexist society.

She argues that transsexuals should come together to discuss their sense of discontent, raise their awareness and work to change the present arrangement of society, as feminists do. Raymond's assumption is that once the male-dominated hierarchy with its rigid sex roles is abandoned, 'gender disphoria' will cease to exist and there will no longer be any demand for sex change surgery.

Certainly every known human society differentiates between female and male. Each society has some form of gender roles, and rules pertaining to what is considered feminine and what is considered masculine. Thus if 'female' denotes the sex of an individual, then 'feminine' is the adjective generally used to describe her gender role.

However, some individuals within a given society may feel unhappy with the roles assigned to them at birth. Some feel so strongly that they may opt for the gender role of the opposite sex. Thus a woman may take on a masculine role within her society, or a man may take on a feminine role. This may be accompanied by cross-dressing. In contemporary Western society, we generally associate cross-gender behaviour with transsexuals and transvestites. But cross-gender behaviour is both a worldwide and an historic phenomenon. Reports of cross-gender behaviour come from many areas of the world: Africa, the Americas, Asia, Europe and the Pacific. Antiquity also had its share of cross-genderists: The Egyptian woman pharoah, Hatshepsut, sometimes dressed as a man, and the Ancient Greek historian Herodotus writes of 'woman-like men' among the Scythians.

Certainly most would agree that the medico-psychiatric establishment does direct transpeople into stereotyped roles. Further, it is questionable if surgery in itself is likely to solve a person's problems. Transsexual surgery is a modern response to cross-gender. In other cultures, the cross-gender individual may *not* be seen as having made a

complete transformation from one sex to the other. Sometimes the individual may be viewed as occupying a third gender category. This category often became a niche for numbers of non-conformists, people that our society would define as transsexual, transvestite, lesbian, gay, and for those with special talents in the area of religion and ritual.

Janice Raymond has been criticised by other feminist commentators for being an 'essentialist'. This view presupposes innate and unchangeable differences between the sexes. Alice Echols writes: 'Janice Raymond, without any apparent sense of contradiction, finds transsexualism dangerous because of both its countervailing tendencies: it reinforces sex roles and it destroys the boundaries between maleness and femaleness.'[8] Annie Woodhouse continues the same line of argument. If, as Raymond suggests, 'there is something essential about femininity and, by implication, masculinity which cannot be changed..why...argue that transsexuals would do better to fight gender stereotyping?' In Woodhouse's view, Janice Raymond confuses sex and gender: 'gender roles', she asserts, 'must be attacked on all fronts in the interests of bringing about the demise of patriarchy or, as apologists for patriarchy would argue, gender division is just as biologically necessary as sexual differentiation for the survival of the species.'[9]

Birrell and Cole also question her reasoning: 'Raymond's book clearly illuminates the relationship between sex stereotypes and the medical empire's understanding and treatment of transsexuals. But although her argument is based on an understanding of the cultural construction of gender, she contradicts her explanation of the cultural construction of gender identity and transsexualism when she argues that (male-to-female) transsexuals can never be real women because women's biology makes females unique.'[10]

The conclusion of Janice Raymond's thesis, in the view of her critics, is a cultural feminism which would rather keep than eliminate gender differences. Instead of being viewed as radical, her arguments have been seen as conservative. Her critics perceive her 'cultural feminism' as a new name for 'biologism', the old patriarchal contention that men and women are different. To argue along these lines, they maintain, works only to preserve the status quo.

Others have contended that cross-genderists are not so much agents of the transsexual empire as victims of it. Carol Riddell, a male-to-female transsexual, writes: 'Because of our biology, we were, usually, brought up as male children, forced to live as men in order to survive, and therefore developed ideas of what the actuality of women's existence is, that were seen through male identity blinkers. This distorted view was reinforced in many cases, by obligatory sexist counselling in

order to get operations, and demands that we were to conform if we were to get an operation.'[11]

Probably the key to the whole dilemma lies in acceptance. Because our society tends towards intolerance of cross-gender behaviour, individuals who do not fit in find themselves existing in a kind of limbo. Louis Sullivan, a female-to-male transsexual, writes: 'sex reassignment does not change the person inside the body. The female-to-male wakes up every morning as the same person he was before. What does change is his outer appearance to others...what does change is how other people act because they are responding to "him".'[12]

In traditional Polynesian society the 'mahu' (usually a male taking on a feminine gender role) was accorded a place within that culture and was accepted. The Samoan name for mahu was 'fa'a fafine', which means 'acting like a woman'. His contemporaries knew him to be a biological male, but one who carried out tasks usually allotted to women, and he was accepted as such, as were the female and male 'berdache' who adopted the gender roles of the opposite sex in Native American Culture.

Despite her criticism of patriarchy and the strait-jacket of gender roles it imposes, Raymond appears ambivalent about the male-female duality which is its ideological basis. As Birrell and Cole point out, 'meaning is made through implicit and explicit contrast, through antithesis and difference'. They argue that in contemporary Western society, the opposition which 'structures our discourses...is sexual difference. When sex difference is contested the entire ideological enterprise of meaning through difference is shaken...There are no alternative categories for nonconforming subjects to inhabit in the law, medical science, language, or sport. Their order depends upon the maintenance of the familiar binary opposition of male/female.'[13]

Yet in Nature the division of living beings into two sexes is not a hard and fast rule. Some simple organisms reproduce by division, not by sexual congress. Other organisms are hermaphrodite, bearing both female and male organs. Even among humans, some individuals are born neither completely female nor male: hermaphrodites (who may have both sets of sex organs), eunuchs (who may have no sex organs), and those with genetic abnormalities. As with the rationale behind 'sex-changing', little consideration is given to the uniqueness of these people. Instead, in an effort to make them conform physically to our society's principle of duality, they are given surgery and hormones to make them as female-like, or as male-like, as possible. Parents are generally instructed, in the case of children, to bring them up either as female or as male.

The maintenance of traditional, established order then depends upon holding to this duality. 'Sex-changing' by surgery and hormone treatments are our society's response to gender disphoria. The rationale is that if a person wishes to adopt the gender role assigned to the opposite sex, then her/his body must be altered accordingly.

Janice Raymond attacks the rationale behind sex-changing. Yet in dealing with the male/female dichotomy of our culture's patriarchal philosophy, she appears to be in conflict. In religious terms, 'the real Fall', as she sees it:

> may not have been the division into biological sexes but the separation into oppressive sex roles and stereotypes. Such a separation has cleft humanity into two static states of being. What the myths of the Fall from Androgynous humanity into maleness and femaleness may more fully tell us about is humanity's initial loss of the intuition of integrity in which human development has been channelled into a two-track system of masculinity and femininity. Thus 'salvation' is not achieved by the union of the two but by transcending masculinity and femininity. Until those contemplating it come to realise that transsexualism will dislocate the basic sense of unity within themselves...they will continue to settle for false and partial modes of androgyny.[14]

In the light of that statement, her attitude towards the performing of surgery on persons of physically indeterminate sex seems a little paradoxical. She notes that:

> practically all of them are altered shortly after birth to become anatomically male or female and are reared in accordance with the societal gender identity and role that accompanies their bodies. Persons whose sexual ambiguity is discovered later are altered in the direction of what their gender rearing has been (masculine or feminine) up to that point. Thus those who are altered shortly after birth have the history of being practically born as male or female and those who are altered later in life have their body surgically conformed to their history.[15]

These are not terms of disapproval, but rather an acceptance that this is the way things ought to be.

This passage raises a number of questions. Why does she appear to approve, or at least accept, surgery carried out on those of intermediate sex? After all, their presence in our society constitutes a challenge to the notion of duality. Likewise, why should it be considered right to operate on persons of physical ambiguity, but wrong to operate on those who feel a mental ambiguity? Why should she deem it correct to change those whose 'sexual ambiguity' has been 'discovered later...in the direc-

tion of what their gender rearing has been', if she disapproves of oppressive gender roles? Why should children be 'reared in accordance with the societal gender identity and role that accompanies their bodies'? It would appear from this that she does view 'gender', like 'sex', as fixed and immutable.

According to Raymond, those persons of indeterminate sex who are raised as girls are to be regarded as women when they reach adulthood, because they have a 'history' of being treated as female within their society. Where then does this leave the 'mahu' in Polynesian society? They are males who, from earliest childhood, have been raised as females within their own culture. They have a woman's 'history' in her terms. Does this make them women?

Raymond's thesis also finds the view of androgyny disturbing. While conceding that in its ideal state, 'androgyny represents a partial recognition of an integrity that goes beyond male and female bodies' to a form of unity, in practice she says it has meant 'the incorporation of ...the female principle...within the dominant male ethos'.[16] According to conservative Christian belief, human beings lived in an ideal state in the Garden of Eden until they misbehaved and were forced to leave. The imperfect world that people now inhabit is a punishment for Original Sin. For those who accept this and do not question the order of things, a reward has been promised in heaven. Raymond likewise puts forward the idea that an ideal state of androgyny existed before the Fall, and will exist again after 'salvation', when, presumably in a state of grace, humanity will once again attain 'the basic sense of unity' and 'integrity' —in a spiritual sense, of course. She chides those who would misbehave by chasing after the false, physical gods of 'transsexualism' and 'partial modes of androgyny'.

Thus for her there is little place for androgyny in this world. Certainly one would have to agree with her that too often in practice, the concept of androgyny does mean the subjugation of the female principle by the male. The word 'androgyny' derives from two Greek words: andros (male) and gune (female). It is noteworthy that the male principle comes first. One may well ask why the word is not 'gynandros', with the female principle taking precedence.

The concept of androgyny as we know it is a reflection of our patriarchal culture. This does not mean that the concept, which fuses aspects of the two sexes, is not a valid one. If we have an input into creating the future, surely androgyny's patriarchal overtones can be modified?

Janice Raymond's dismissal of female-to-male transsexuals as 'tokens' again raises a number of problems. Statistics in this area are

notoriously unreliable. Worldwide, a greater amount of male-to-female cross-gender behaviour has been reported than vice versa. However, this may reflect the fact that most anthropologists have been male. In discussing female cross-gender among the Native Americans, Evelyn Blackwood argues: 'Most information on Plains Indian women was transmitted from elder tribesmen to white male ethnographers. But men were excluded from knowledge of much of women's behaviour; In this way much of the data on cross-gender females may have been lost.'[17]

In view of Blackwood's statement, it is interesting to note that most literature on transsexualism concentrates on the male-to-female phenomenon. Probably this can be seen as a reflection of the patriarchal control of the sex-change industry. However, to concentrate studies on one side of the equation, and virtually ignore the other, could very well distort the result. Probably because of their upbringing, female-to-male transsexuals tend to be more reticent about proclaiming themselves. Surgery is also more expensive and many choose the option of simply cross-dressing. Vern Bullough, as cited by Birrell and Cole,[18] suggests that prior to the nineteenth century most transvestites in Europe were female. More in-depth research on the female-to-male gender role may serve to increase our understanding of the nature of transsexuality as a whole.

In largely restricting the scope of her inquiry to male-to-female transsexuals, Janice Raymond may have unconsciously adopted a sexist line of thought. Certainly she appears to have passed up the opportunity to explore a generally disregarded area, where much original material could have been collected.

The essentialist line of thought needs to be addressed. Demonstrably females and males are genetically different, and some female and male experiences are different (i.e. menstruation in women), but does this imply mental differences? As girls and boys are brought up differently in our society, innate differences are extremely difficult to prove or disprove. Too many scholars make assumptions without having any solid data to back up their arguments. Until we have reliable research in this area, the subject of differences between the sexes remains a preserve of varying degrees of fantasy and ignorance.

We should view terms like 'sex-change' and 'being born into the wrong body' as misleading — products of the establishment which Janice Raymond terms the 'transsexual empire', built up to exploit the cross-gender phenomenon. Cross-gender behaviour, by its very nature, is a challenge to existing stereotyped gender roles. The transsexual empire seeks to ensure the conformity of these people by offering to alter their bodies to fit the role they have adopted. Some seek this solution in

the hope of escaping the intolerance they have been subjected to, and finding the acceptance they crave.

Many 'transsexuals' do accept the 'empire's' stereotyped patriarchal views without question, because surgery and hormone treatments are awarded to those who conform. Their upbringing and the counselling they receive also serve to reinforce the stereotypes. Teaching them to conform often prevents them from challenging the system, as Janice Raymond points out. However, her view of male-to-female transsexuals as invaders of women's territory who dupe genetic women into conformity with patriarchal aims is misleading. There are plenty of genetic women already who accept the trivial and narcissistic stereotype, and are quite prepared to parrot the ideology of patriarchal purpose. If anything, the creation of the male-to-female transsexual shows only too blatantly just how women are also shaped and modified to fit the system.

Despite the lengths to which 'the empire' is prepared to go in order to ensure conformity, there are some cross-genderists who have begun to theorise their condition. Mark, a female-to-male transsexual, said in an interview: 'I don't consider that I have fallen into a stereotype..I'm certainly not going to...affect any kind of exaggerated masculinity...I see myself as an ideal person in the middle...At the moment, we don't have an intersex category of humans, and everybody has to be put into boxes, which is ridiculous.'[19]

Rachel, a male-to-female, takes an even more radical view: 'If we keep trying to pretend we are "real" men and women, we are furthering the present iniquitous sex stereotyping of our society... We have to agree with Janice Raymond when she writes that we are *not* women. This does not mean, however, that we have to accept labels as "men", but we do have to be clear about what or who we are... We transsexuals have nothing to gain from our attempts to gain legitimacy and respectability from the medical profession. We confuse ourselves and other people by trying to adopt a false identity, and pretending that we are real women (or men, in the case of female-to-male transsexuals).'[20]

Recently I asked 'Simon', a female-to-male transsexual: 'Do you feel you have taken something from the gender you were born into and combined it with the gender you have chosen?' He replied, 'Yes, although many don't admit it. A lot try to fool themselves into thinking they are women or men and have crossed that divide. But in actual fact we are both. We are both, rather than being not one or the other. ...I don't particularly like this [term] "born into the wrong sex" because this is my body and I'm stuck with it.'[21]

Leoné (a male-to-female) wrote to me: 'I have always said transpeople

are a class on their own. We may want to look and be women some of the time and some of us all the time. But we can never really be entirely the same as genetic females. Too many transpeople will not face this fact. Emotions, male traits (conditioning), lack of female physical organs all impinge upon the whole and our *psyche* is different.'[22]

Thus there are some transsexuals in our society who view themselves as androgynous, rather than actually of changed sex. Others dislike categorisation, arguing that they should be judged for what they are as individuals, rather than accepting labels. They resist categories because categories tend to be divisive.

We need to question notions propagated by the medical 'transsexual empire' and the manipulation of people into stereotyped roles. This is the patriarchal response to cross-gender. We should view cross-gender as a challenge to stereotyped roles. The questions we should be asking are: Do gender roles have any place in modern society? Do notions such as 'feminine' and 'masculine' derive from female and male behaviour respectively, or are they merely social fictions? How do we deal with cross-gender in our society? Do we provide a third gender category, a kind of androgynous zone within our society, as some cultures have done? Do we treat people as individuals, rather than classing them by sex or gender roles? Do we allow transpeople to seek their own terms and definitions?

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Archives:

'Their best aptitudes': Girls' education and the tenth Australasian Medical Congress, 1914

Beryl Hughes

The congresses of the Australasian Medical Association were held triennially and met usually in Australia, occasionally in New Zealand. The high status, both of the congress and of the medical profession, can be seen in the list of patrons of the tenth congress. The patrons included the Governors-General of New Zealand and Australia, the governors of all the Australian states, and Sir Robert Stout, Chancellor of the University of New Zealand. This congress, held in the premises of the YMCA in Auckland from 9-14 February 1914, was the first to meet in New Zealand since 1896 and was clearly considered an important event. It was officially opened on 7 February by the Governor-General, the Earl of Liverpool, at a ceremony attended by the Prime Minister (William Massey), the Minister of Public Health (R. Heaton Rhodes), the Chief Health Officer (Dr T.H. Valintine) and a number of prominent clergymen. Newspapers summarised the less technical papers presented and described enthusiastically the entertainments arranged for members and their wives. (There is no record of any doctors' husbands being present.)[1]

Although many of the papers given were of a strictly medical nature, some of the meetings and papers reflected the obsessions of the day:

eugenics, the birth-rate and the education of girls, matters which were considered to have a sinister relation to each other. The establishment of secondary schools for girls and the movement of women from these schools to universities and the professions had been accompanied by a backlash from societies already alarmed by changes in other areas. The declining birth-rate, linked in Australia and New Zealand with fear of 'the yellow peril', was blamed on the unwillingness of women to bear children on the same scale as their mothers.

Although this unwillingness was sometimes said to be the result of increasing selfishness on the part of women, the new higher education became in many countries the favourite scapegoat for doctors, clergy and educationalists looking for somewhere to lay the blame. Havelock Ellis, the English sexologist, whose seven-volume work *Studies in the Psychology of Sex* was highly influential, claimed that: 'The breeding of men lies largely in the hands of women. That is why the question of Eugenics is to a great extent one with the Woman question.'[2] Part of 'the Woman question' was the kind of education that girls should receive and whether this education would help or hinder their ability and their willingness to bear children.

Several of the papers presented at the congress referred to the education of women. One such was that of Professor (later Sir) Lindo Ferguson, the powerful dean of the medical faculty in the University of Otago. He seems to have been not well-disposed to higher education for women. Frances Preston, a student of his during the First World War, wrote in her autobiography:

> It was obvious to us that he did not like women doctors. He used to make his entrance to the lecture theatre with great dignity, and in silence pace up and down the rostrum several times, before facing the class with a dramatic *'gentlemen'*; completely ignoring the front row which, being feminine, comprised about one-third of our small class membership.[3]

The subject of Ferguson's paper was the effect of irritation of the ovaries on the eyes, which he termed 'an undescribed pupillary reflex'. He said:

> The histories of the cases differ — prolonged or broken engagements, masturbation in unmarried women, and in married women preventive measures; but they are all alike in the presence of the reflex and the existence of ovarian irritation.

Birth control ('preventive measures') figures in several of his case histories.

From a discussion of ovarian problems and the effect of these on vision, Ferguson then made a surprising leap to the education of girls.

He conceded that 'the very wide spread of education here' made it difficult to estimate how much of this nervous instability affecting eyes and ovaries could be attributed to the stress of schoolwork or the age of puberty, but he could say with confidence that 'the class which is not educated beyond the Sixth Standard' did not show this connection between ovarian irritation and problems with seeing.

Ferguson added 'what I have on several occasions said before — that while the strain of our educational system on growing girls does great harm to many of them, the additional strain of preparation for musical examinations is disastrous in its results, and should not be permitted.'[4] (This 'undescribed pupillary reflex' had apparently never been described before. Did anyone except Ferguson ever describe it?)

Dr J.A.G. Hamilton, lecturer in gynaecology in the University of Adelaide, claimed in a paper on dysmenorrhoea that this condition was often caused by

> the highly specialised education of girls at the present day. The question is whether we are not overeducating our girls, to the extent that we are interfering with their general health, their menstrual function in particular, and their chances of being good mothers...a girl at puberty requires special care, and if she is called upon to compete with the other sex in mental and physical work it can only be done, in most cases, at the expense of her sexual development.[5]

The main discussion on girls' education sprang from a lecture, 'Eugenics and Education', given at a special evening meeting by Dr F. Truby King. King was at that time at the height of his power and influence. According to his opening remarks, he had believed until two days earlier that he would be addressing an audience composed entirely of doctors, but was now faced with an audience consisting 'largely of those directly concerned in teaching'. Where, one wonders, had all the doctors gone that evening? Was King's name less of an attraction to them than to teachers? Were they dismayed by the prospect of a largely lay audience?

King moved quickly into a discussion of eugenics and the 'alarming statistics' of the birth-rate, which were

> particularly unsatisfactory with regard to the proportion of children born to people of the best classes. When I speak of the best classes it will be understood that I am not using the term in the conventional way, but as applying to the people in any class who are most capable physically, mentally, and morally... Any investigation showed that the main supply of children was coming from the less capable, and even from the degenerate classes — that

> the families of these people might average six, whereas amongst the more capable classes the number did not amount to more than two or three.

After discussing the importance of environment, King moved to his central point:

> ...in the education of women we want far more rest, far less pressure, and we do not want the total sum of the mental tasks to be any thing like what they are now. Also, by giving due attention to matters which are of special interest and importance to women, and along which many of their best aptitudes go, we should be enormously lessening the strain. In other words, in so far as we can introduce matters connected with home life, and give them a greater interest, we shall be doing an enormous benefit to the women, and prospectively to the race.

King then cited the views of Stanley Hall, at that time a famous American educationalist who, according to King, had originally been an enthusiastic supporter of higher education for women. Hall had changed his mind after seeing statistical evidence that women university graduates were less likely to marry than women in general, and had far fewer children (and those inferior), whom they had difficulty in nursing. Hall now maintained that 'we must turn back on our course, and we must understand with regard to girls that nothing ought to be done during school life that will interfere with the power of and inclination to maternity later on.'

Another American authority, Dr Caroline Hedger of Chicago, was quoted by King as saying, in a lecture he had attended, that she wanted 'to call attention to the widespread and absolute indifference as to the effect of education on the reproductive life of the girl, even in relation to the establishment of a reasonably normal menstruation'. Dr Hedger showed, on the basis of statistics of the marriage and reproductive rates of 4,448 women who had been students at Wellesley College ('one of the largest women's colleges in the United States'), that these highly educated women were not marrying or bearing children in satisfactory numbers: they had produced only 0.07 children per woman for the whole group.

King went on to quote other authorities in support of his argument. These included the feminist Australian doctor, Mary Booth; the formidable Lindo Ferguson, who at a previous Australasian Medical Congress had 'inveighed against the harm that was being done to the eyesight and to the whole nervous organism of girls under our education system'; and a leading Auckland doctor, T. Copeland Savage. According to King, Savage, at a meeting of the British Medical Association two years

menstruation, 'I very much doubt, in view of the pressure of modern education, whether we ought not to keep girls away from school altogether at this developmental period.' It was his custom, in case of irregular periods, to advise that girls be kept away from school for a year.

(Regular menstruation was something of a battle-cry for many doctors. Although few advocated keeping all girls off school for a long stretch of time, as Savage did, many advocated several days off for 'the monthly rest'. If this practice had become general, it would obviously have seriously hindered the education of girls, which was perhaps part of its attraction for these doctors. Failure of girls to observe this monthly rest was said to be one of the causes of the poor reproductive behaviour of educated women. No question concerning the prevalence of monthly rests among the fertile working class ever seems to have been raised.)

King then proposed a motion:

> That the Hon. Dr. Collins, Dr. Gibbs and Dr. Truby King be appointed a Committee to wait on the Minister of Education and represent that in the opinion of this Congress, it is in the highest interests of the whole community that the state should inculcate and bring about as far as feasible an ideal of education for girls, which (to quote the words of Professor Stanley Hall) shall "invert the present maxim that girls should be primarily trained to independence and self-support, and that matrimony and motherhood, if it come, will take care of itself". This Congress feels bound to deprecate any system of education which, under the stress of excessive mental effort, excessive competition, excessive straining after so-called accomplishments &., pays insufficient attention to ensuring normal, well-balanced development, and complete fitness for maternity, and the practical care of a home.
>
> This Congress is satisfied that, broadly speaking, even where marriage does not take place, the education which gives a girl the best all-round equipment in body, mind, morals, and inclination for home life and potential motherhood also gives her the soundest and surest foundations for future health and happiness, and for a sustained power of earning an independent living, if such should prove to be her lot.

This motion was seconded by Dr Reuter Roth of Sydney, who struck a radical note in saying that he could not agree that menstruation was an illness.

One of the chief speakers in the discussion which followed was George George, Director of Auckland Technical College, who said that six years previously a home science course had been introduced into the college:

> But while girls would enter the commercial classes by the score, it was only with the greatest difficulty that [I] could get together a small class for the study of domestic science... To show the tendency of public opinion, [I] might say that a large number of girls would come to the Technical College for a year, and when they found that every girl, even if she was to become a "commercial flapper", was required to devote a considerable number of hours a week to receiving instruction in domestic science or homemaking, those girls would, at the end of the year, go to some private commercial school where they could apply the whole day to receiving instruction in shorthand and typewriting, rather than continue to get a general education.

The Hon. W.A. Holman, Premier of New South Wales, spoke from the platform in enthusiastic, though very general, support of King. Holman focused on eugenics rather than education; as the husband of a writer of pronounced feminist views (Ada Augusta Holman), he may have felt it wise to say very little about girls' education.

The only opposition to King's proposal recorded in the *Transactions of the Tenth Session of the Australasian Medical Congress* came from Dr Mary De Garis of New South Wales, one of the handful of women doctors present.[6] She pointed out that it was still men who were making decisions about the education of women: no woman was included in the proposed delegation to wait on the Minister of Education. She added that

> great stress had been laid upon the training in domestic science. But training in domestic science was technical training. No man was trained for his trade — and she thought housekeeping could be called a trade — until he had received his general education. Why should a woman's whole education be directed purely to her trade? She had the same need as a man for a wide general training. It was from this point of view that she insisted upon the necessity of bringing women's opinions to bear upon education, and not merely those of their fathers and brothers.

King protested that the idea of intentionally leaving women out of the delegation had not occurred to anyone, that he was the head of a large women's organisation in New Zealand and 'it was a subject of chaff amongst his friends that he was supposed to be a rather special advocate of the cause of women'. He moved that the name of Dr Elizabeth Platts-Mills be added to the delegation.[7] As the mother of three children, Dr Platts-Mills might seem a living refutation of much of his argument, but King must have known of her work in the Plunket Society and felt he could count on her support.[8]

Since this meeting was not a session of congress, King was told by the president that 'it would be necessary that the resolution be treated as a recommendation to Congress'. Accordingly, King brought up the motion for consideration at the final general meeting of the congress on 14 February. He was challenged by Dr Agnes Bennett of Wellington.[9] She had already crossed swords with King. That was in 1909, when she replied in an article in *The Dominion* to a public demand made by Ferdinand Batchelor, a Dunedin obstetrician and gynaecologist, and by King himself, for an education for girls who had reached puberty which would consist chiefly of domestic subjects.[10]

Her actions at the congress have been presented inaccurately by her biographers, Cecil and Celia Manson, who wrote: 'The forcefulness of Dr. Bennett's speech startled her hearers. She was attacking the Man of the Conference, the world-famous man...' The motion, they said, was lost.

In fact, Bennett made no attack on King personally and avoided direct confrontation. The motion was not lost; thanks to Agnes Bennett, it was deferred indefinitely. The Mansons also misrepresent King's actions, claiming that 'the motion had been quietly slipped into the agenda for the last day's meeting by Dr. Truby King. No mention of this motion had been made before.' The motion had already been discussed at the public meeting held two days earlier, when the president had stated that the proper course of action was for it to be brought before the congress. Nor had King, as the Mansons state, 'left the motion to be dealt with by others' and gone home. The *Transactions* make it clear that King was present at the debate and took part in it. (It is possible that he left before the debate was over.)[11]

Bennett began by raising a point of order. She said that the resolution was not carried by any section of congress but by a mixed meeting of medical men (sic) and lay people, at which a large part of the discussion was carried on by lay visitors. Therefore, she submitted that the resolution should not be put to the congress.

The president of the congress, Dr A.C. Purchas of Auckland, said that lay visitors, although invited to the earlier meeting, had been told that they could not take part in the discussion. The minutes read:

> Dr Agnes Bennett: But they voted, sir.
>
> The President said that the voting was done only by members of the Congress.
>
> Dr. Agnes Bennett said that she personally saw some members of the laity vote.
>
> The President said that the gentlemen in question were honorary members of the Congress, having been made so on account of

their special knowledge of such subjects as eugenics.

King had clearly heard comments that the resolution he was sponsoring was ambiguous, so he now offered to shorten it to read:

> That it is in the highest interests of the whole community that the State should inculcate a form of education of girls which would tend to safeguard and foster, and not to frustrate, all-round development.

This shortened form was seconded. Bennett now moved:

> That the passing of the proposed resolution be postponed till it could be further discussed.

She continued (dealing with the original rambling motion, rather than with the abbreviated one):

> Its wordiness rendered it liable to serious misinterpretation and made it unworthy of a place among the well-considered resolutions submitted to Congress as a result of the various sectional discussions. Any meaning might be read into the sentence about "inverting the present maxim." The second part of the resolution was so obviously trite that it would be almost an insult to the Minister of Education to put it before him... It would be unfair for a scientific body such as the Congress to take as proved the statement that the modern education of woman unfitted her for maternity and for the care of a home. The whole trend of Dr. King's address — which although entitled "Eugenics" dealt entirely with the education of women — was in that direction, and if the proposed deputation went to the Minister of Education, it must convey the same meaning to him. Another reason why the consideration of the matter should be postponed was that the Congress was met as an Australasian Medical Congress, and to single out the education system of New Zealand for attention was invidious.

Bennett's motion for postponement was seconded by Dr H.R. Hatherley of Wanganui, outgoing president of the New Zealand branch of the British Medical Association. His speech could be seen as a criticism of King's methods:

> He thought the resolution was too indefinite, and that it did not express the opinion of the whole Congress but only of a small section of it. Everybody knew that Dr. Truby King had the gift of eloquence and was able to infect other people with his own enthusiasm. Such matters should, however, be considered calmly, and a pronouncement of this kind should not go further as the opinion of Congress when it had merely been carried hastily by a small section of the members.

De Garis (the only woman apart from Bennett who is recorded as having taken part in the debate) spoke in support of Bennett's amendment.

After cries of 'Vote' from members possibly tired of the whole matter, including some intent on catching the special train for a final congress jaunt to Rotorua, the question was put. Some doctors may have resented what looks like an attempt on the part of some to give the weight of the congress to a motion introduced first at what was primarily a meeting of laity. Australian doctors, although interested in girls' education, may have felt that the motion was related too much to New Zealand matters to be their concern. For such people, Bennett's amendment would have been highly acceptable. The amendment was carried, but unfortunately no figures for the voting are given.[12]

Bennett's notes for her speech at the debate are to be found in her papers. They are fairly brief and differ little from the report given in the *Transactions* except that they show a tendency to flatter the self-esteem of members.[13] Bennett had skilfully deflected King. She must have realised that members would welcome the compromise that her motion offered, particularly when time was short. Postponing the motion was as good as burying it. There would not be another congress in New Zealand for many years and those held in Australia would not be subject to King's influence. (King did not export well.) As it turned out, there was not another Australasian Medical Congress held in New Zealand until 1927. By that time, although King's creation, the Plunket Society, was still enormously influential, King's views on girls' education would not have attracted much interest. He had ceased to be an all-purpose pundit.[14]

Soon after being appointed Director of Child Welfare in 1920, King ordered the withdrawal from circulation of a pamphlet written by Agnes Bennett on child-rearing, on the grounds that it contained 'a series of very grave errors'. Yet the pamphlet, which had been commissioned by his department in 1907, did not differ much from the information found in contemporary Plunket material. The withdrawal may have been some kind of revenge for the psychological defeat inflicted on him earlier by Bennett.[15] It is interesting to note that his adopted daughter does not mention the congress in her biography of King.[16]

Notes

1 Information about the tenth congress can be found in pp. xi-xxvi of *Transactions of the Tenth Session (1914) of the Australasian Medical Congress*, Wellington, 1916.

2 Cited in Carol Dyhouse, 'Social Darwinistic ideas and the Development of women's education in England, 1880-1920', *History of Education*, vol.5, no.1, February 1976.

3 Frances I. Preston, *Lady Doctor Vintage Model*, Reed, 1974, p. 41.

4 *Transactions*, pp. 594-601.

5 Op. cit., pp. 466-7.

6 Mary De Garis (1881-1963) was the second woman in the state of Victoria to earn the degree of doctor of medicine. She served for many years as the head of the Scottish Women's Hospital for Foreign Service, which was attached to the Serbian Army. After returning to Australia, she practised as an obstetrician.

7 For King's lecture and the other speeches, see *Transactions*, pp. 80-96.

8 Elizabeth Platts-Mills (c. 1875-1956) set up a medical practice in Wellington in 1901 and practised for the next fourteen years. Later, she continued to use her expertise in working with voluntary societies.

9 Agnes Bennett (1872-1960), Australian born, practised medicine in Wellington for many years and was chief medical officer of St Helen's Hospital, Wellington, 1908-1936. In World War I, she worked with the New Zealand Medical Corps in Egypt and then was in charge of a field hospital in Serbia.

10 Margaret Tennant, 'Natural Directions', in Barbara Brookes, Charlotte Macdonald and Margaret Tennant (eds) *Women in History*. Allen and Unwin/Port Nicholson Press, 1986, pp. 94-5.

11 Cecil and Celia Manson, *Dr. Agnes Bennett*, Whitcombe and Tombs, 1960, pp. 68-9. This book gives the date of the congress as 1913. The authors were presumably misled by Bennett who, going through her papers in her eighties, attached the wrong date to material relating to this event. The highly inaccurate (1978) *Herstory Diary* entry for Bennett follows the Manson date.

12 *Transactions*, pp. 42-4.

13 Alexander Turnbull Library, MS Papers no. 1346, Folder 244.

14 People like King who wanted a more domestic education for girls had another weapon in Home Science, which in 1917 became a compulsory course for all girls in their first two years of secondary schooling. This forced many girls to take subjects of no interest and no use to them and in practice also limited their study of physics and chemistry. The requirement, in force for over twenty-five years, was partly responsible for the low standard of science teaching in girls' schools, which lasted a long time. (See Ruth Fry, *It's different for daughters: a history of the curriculum for girls in New Zealand schools, 1900-1975*, New Zealand Council for Educational Research, 1985, p. 51.)

15 Philippa Mein Smith, *Maternity in Dispute: New Zealand 1920-1939*. Historical Publications Branch, Department of Internal Affairs, 1986, p. 19 and p. 125, note 56.

16 Mary King, *Truby King The Man*, Allen and Unwin, 1948.

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Same Difference:
Feminism and Sexual Difference

Carol Lee Bacchi
Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1990

Reviewed by Allanah Ryan

In *Same Difference* Carol Lee Bacchi has tackled one of the most important, and difficult, theoretical problems that plagues feminist analysis. Bacchi addresses the feminist debates about women's supposed 'sameness to' or 'difference from' men, and the resulting political strategies which that poses around pursuing 'equality' with men, or some kind of 'special treatment'. This binary division has long informed feminist politics and analysis and now follows us into the 1990s. Bacchi wants to challenge several aspects of this debate.

First, she rejects the notion that feminists have always been split into two camps on these questions. In an excellent historical section she outlines how early feminists were united in their belief that women were 'equal but different'. Bacchi challenges the position taken by some feminist historians (e.g. Banks, 1981) who argue that the quality vs difference debate has always split the women's movement. She suggests that there has been a tendency among feminists to 'read back' the concerns of today into more distant past times. Some feminists have sought to validate their own theoretical position with recourse to a supposedly stable historical tradition (p. 4). An example of this is the

way that Sheila Jeffreys validates claims about feminist sexual politics with her particular reading of early twentieth century 'social purity' feminists. Jeffreys has been criticised by Margaret Hunt (1990) for 'de-eroticising' women's liberation. Hunt claims that Jeffreys focuses on early feminist concern with women's sexual victimisation to the exclusion of an appreciation of their search for sexual autonomy. Hunt in turn has been accused of her own partial reading of texts in order to support her own particular claims about feminist sexual politics (Bland, 1990). To return to Bacchi: she objects

> to the way in which histories which use a justice/efficiency, equality (sameness)/difference framework oversimplify women's experience. We are left with the impression that the alternative strategies were clear and recognisable and that feminists selected between them. Rather it appears that the arguments were often mixed. A clearer division occurred in the inter-war years but even here particular arguments, invoking 'sameness' or 'difference' for example, were at times employed rhetorically for tactical reasons. The implication that there were two irreconcilable positions is also a misrepresentation when there was, as we will see, a good deal of common ground (p. 4).

Secondly, the author wants to move away from addressing women's disadvantage in terms of women's sameness to or difference from men. She argues that this conceptualisation of women's position and disadvantage 'diverts attention from the inadequacy of social institutions' (p. ix). This tendency to focus on either women's sameness to or their difference from men can be explained as a response to political constraints which suggest that such an approach will help to improve women's lives. However, for Bacchi:

> the question of difference has no meaningful answer. It is an inappropriate way of thinking about important social issues, such as how society is to reproduce itself and the kind of society in which we wish to live. Asking questions about women's sameness to or difference from men only serves to mystify these issues, which in turn may help to explain the ubiquity of the question in popular discourse. If these larger questions about how we should organise our lives can be obscured, they can also be conveniently ignored. The title of this volume is intended to suggest that, if society catered appropriately for all human needs, men and women included, discussions about women's sameness to or difference from men would be of little significance (p. xi).

Bacchi introduces Tonnies' concepts of Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft as a way of thinking through some of the debates about sameness/

difference, and equality/special treatment. She argues that the Gemeinschaft model is status- and gender-based. Family and community relations are uppermost and caring is considered to be women's responsibility. Those early feminists who emphasised women's difference supported a Gemeinschaft model of society and advocated special treatment for women. On the other hand, feminists who endorsed the Gesellschaft values of individualism and rationalism wanted women to have the same opportunity as men to pursue 'their individual self-interest' (p. xiii). However, neither of these alternatives worked very well for women:

> Those who wanted women to be free to pursue self-actualisation tended to be women who had the resources to hire others, often women, to assist with the day-to-day living arrangements which Gesellschaft disregarded. Gemeinschaft on the other hand ignored the fact that many married women had to, or wanted to, participate in paid labour and that the social supports required to allow them to stay home were not forthcoming (p. xiii).

This dilemma still faces women today. It demonstrates the paucity of the binary division between sameness/difference, as a conceptual schema, to explain the social relations that place women in this bind. The equality/special treatment debate forces women to choose between becoming either as competitive as men if they want to succeed in a competitive world, or passive and dependent (p. xiv). Both fail to challenge the notion that women must choose between either a Gesellschaft model, with its emphasis on individuals operating independently of their personal needs in living arrangements, or the Gemeinschaft one that portrays these as women's talent and responsibility. Bacchi's point is that when we work from a sameness/difference dichotomy, unacceptable boundaries are placed around what we can perceive as possibilities for change. When we use the language of sameness and difference, an implicit assumption is made that women are the source of the problem. Instead what we need to address is the inadequate and limited understanding of equality. Bacchi wants to turn the questioning away from women's sameness/difference vis-a-vis men towards questions such as:

> Why should it matter if women are the same as or different from men? Why is pregnancy constituted a disadvantage in our society? Why does the economic system reward competition and penalise caring? (p. xvi)

These kinds of questions turn analysis towards examining how women's 'sex-specific needs' are met, or not, in particular sets of social relations. For example, if we saw pregnancy as a sex-specific character-

istic, we would see it as 'neither a "difference" nor a "problem". It would be one characteristic of some members of the human category "women", a characteristic which must be recognised if our conception of humanity is to be accurate' (p. xviii).

Bacchi divides the book into two parts. In 'The historical dilemma', she provides an analysis of key primary and secondary texts on feminist debates from the nineteenth century to the present day. In part two, she explores in more depth 'Contemporary controversies' about maternity leave, protective legislation, discrimination and affirmative action, divorce, custody and sexuality. For each issue she makes a three-part analysis. First, she demonstrates the ways in which the sameness/difference framework 'mystifies political issues' that need to be identified and deconstructed. Secondly, she explores how feminists have been constrained to argue in the terms of sameness/difference because of the pre-existing language, conceptual systems and range of political alternatives available to us. Finally, she makes an argument that 'genuine reform involves challenging the norm against which women are compared' (p. 107). Each of the case studies is developed through a rich and careful analysis of feminist texts and interviews with feminists in Australia, Britain and the United States. The different ways in which arguments about women's equality with men have developed in these different countries are clearly related to their different histories and particular construction of state intervention and welfare provision. It would be very interesting to see an analysis of these same debates in New Zealand. The few texts we have available to us on the New Zealand women's movement rarely undertake the kind of analysis that furthers discussion of the kinds of theoretical and political questions that Bacchi addresses.

There is something in this book for everyone. Feminist historians should find the discussion in Part One, 'The historical dilemma', of most interest. While Bacchi does not introduce any new evidence, her rereading of key primary and secondary sources casts new light on the issues at stake. In Part Two, the discussions of issues around maternity leave ('equal' vs 'special treatment'), protective legislation, discrimination and affirmative action are of interest not only to feminist scholars, but also to those of us engaged in politics — whether as EEO officers, trade unionists, 'femocrats', or grass-roots activists. We will all find our ideas challenged by the analysis presented here; in addition, it offers some practical guidelines for political action.

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