

This special issue of the *New Zealand Journal of Media Studies* focuses on issues of biculturalism, multiculturalism and indigeneity. The intentions of the editors, Sue Abel and Ian Stuart, were:

- to indicate the importance of these issues in Media Studies
- to provide an incentive and vehicle for new work in this area. Accordingly, the Call for Papers was sent out to Māori Studies, Pacific Studies, and Asian Studies programmes, as well as the usual Media Studies and Film Studies circuits.

The issue opens (appropriately) with a challenge by Ian **Stuart**. Stuart sees Media Studies as “a product of western cultures in its forms of communication, its theories, its explanations and interpretations”. His main challenge to the discipline is to first become more bicultural, then multicultural. While such an aim might be contested by those who argue that these two processes should occur contemporaneously, Stuart is not so much explicitly prioritising biculturalism as arguing that once biculturalism has been achieved, it is a small step to open the discipline to other cultural approaches. What will emerge, he suggests, is not a Media Studies partitioned off into a Māori section, a Pacific section, Asian sections and a Pākehā section, but rather a discipline in which these different strands together create one New Zealand Media Studies.

The first step in this process is to decide the conventions of the debate. Stuart provides a potential model through his use of a whaikwrero format combined with elements of western-derived forms. We then, he argues, need to examine and change the current academic forms and methodologies, and from this new platform institute a New Zealand research programme using epistemologies and methodologies drawn from all cultures in Aotearoa New Zealand. Such a research programme would examine, among other things, the cultural interactions of our developing multicultural mass communication system. Stuart suggests some topics for such research. These include, for example: How does Pacific Island radio interact with New Zealand-living Pacific Island lifeworlds? Does Māori radio offer a site of resistance to the dominant New Zealand culture? How do our different culturally-contexted mass media systems interact with each other?

Stuart acknowledges that scholarship done to date using European-derived theories and methodologies has produced useful information, analysis and perspectives – as he

acknowledges, he himself has used such analysis and approaches to investigate Māori media. But he emphasises again that “a truly bicultural and multicultural discipline will only arise when other culturally-based approaches are used”.

Stuart’s paper also raises other issues, and Alice **Te Punga Somerville** engages with some of these in relation to both content and form, while at the same time issuing her own challenge to Media Studies practitioners. Te Punga Somerville initially allows Media Studies some slack by recognising the possibility/probability that the wider institutions within which Media Studies is located are themselves always monocultural. But she goes on to insist that a discipline (and by implication Media Studies) is able to stay monocultural as long as it refuses to acknowledge the body of indigenous scholarship already produced and continually being produced. She writes:

Our bibliographies ... should be thick and fat with the names of Māori and other indigenous scholars, and if they do not currently brim in this way then it is our job to go out and hunt this work down and bring it into view... Scholars within Media Studies should be embarrassed by the range and depth of Māori, Pasifika and other Other scholarship, and then reflect on the extent to which they have participated in the marginalisation of these scholars, and the extent to which their own work has suffered from not engaging with this scholarship.

Te Punga Somerville goes further than characterising disciplines/Media Studies as monocultural – she also charges that disciplines don’t mind being seen as monocultural, because then their sins are those of omission. If, however, the charge is that a discipline is “limited, blind, disengaged, restricted, out-of-date”, then the sins become those of commission such as the suppression of vital scholarship and scholars. Indigenous scholars within these disciplines and institutions, then, need to work against their own invisibilisation and, rather than referring predominantly to the Western tradition of scholarship and/or writing in a form that minimises citations and footnotes, should rigorously engage with existing scholarship by Māori and allied scholars in order to foreground it and make a statement about both its presence and its contribution to scholarly activity.

Here Te Punga Somerville is also critiquing Stuart’s intervention into the monoculturalism of tertiary institutions in Aotearoa/New Zealand. She goes on to take issue with what she argues is a limited adoption of the whaikōrero format, asking a range of critical questions about the stakes and parameters of the whaikōrero form, and how these might be incorporated in a written form.

These two opening salvos raise important, and huge, and difficult questions for many Media Studies academics. How do we engage with the arguments set out by, and between, Stuart and Te Punga Somerville if we have not acquired the necessary cultural capital? Te Punga's response, cited in her paper, of 'Do your reading' does not enable many of us to replicate what has been learnt from years of lived experience in te ao Māori and indeed, of living in a minority culture.

There are also serious issues for Pākehā academics researching in this area. I use my own experience as an example. My first research looked at how "mainstream" television news covered Waitangi Day and related issues, and demonstrated many ways in which it was monocultural. I was aware, however, that because I was not immersed in or deeply knowledgeable about te ao Māori and Māori tikanga, I was only skimming the surface of that monoculturalism. I relied to a considerable extent on information from Māori informants to enable me to see what had been omitted from the news, and the extent to which gatekeeping and framing marginalised and even positioned as deviant those taking an active stand for Māori rights. Aware of the argument about Western researchers who have utilised research on and about indigenous peoples to benefit their academic careers, I justified (and continue to justify) my position on the grounds that my work, in demonstrating how monoculturalism is enshrined into much of the news, contributes to a movement for social justice. And yet challenges such as the one below leave me feeling uneasy:

When working in collaborative ways and working with indigenous people to establish indigenous paradigms, non-indigenous professionals need to be careful not to engage in disempowering practices. Their well-intended help and theories are sometimes elevated as "The Indigenous Way". Although it appears positive and supportive to the indigenous community, it may be a new form of assimilation whereby indigenous people serve as the vehicle for having the non-indigenous person's intellectual, emotional and political needs fulfilled. (Glover et al, 2005)

The remaining essays in this issue build on and extend existing scholarship on 'race', ethnicity and the media in Aotearoa/New Zealand (and, in one case, Australia). Two essays come from Māori scholars, and demonstrate how a critical engagement with media texts which is firmly grounded in te ao Māori not only offers non-Māori new ways of reading texts, but also offers insights into kawa and tikanga. Although neither Ocean Mercier nor Brendan Hokowhitu make reference to Barry Barclay's important distinction between 'talking in' and 'talking out' in film (Barclay 1990), their essays in this issue suggest and discuss variations of this model for categorising and analysing film from Aotearoa New Zealand.

Ocean **Mercier** uses theories from Kaupapa Māori to create another important distinction, this time within a framework emphasising the importance of marae custom and practice. Within this 'marae paradigm' Mercier suggests two new interpretive frameworks. The Rongomatāne (or wharenuī) category is similar to Barclay's 'talking in' in that it describes "insider stories", including "films made by Māori, about Māori, for Māori". The Tūmataenga (or paepae) category, on the other hand, refers to the situation on the marae-ātea, where ritual encounters take place. Here Mercier groups "encounter situations in which a negotiation of a new relationship is a central theme of the film, for instance those between Māori and Pakeha, or different iwi, or any other group". Such films emphasise the nature of interaction, rather than the ethnic or racial nature of character, cast or crew.

Mercier's categories, then, not only broaden the interpretation of what is generally known as 'Māori film', but can also be applied to other Aotearoa New Zealand films. Mercier demonstrates how the categories work through an analysis of Taika Waititi's short films *Two Cars, One Night* (a Tūmataenga (paepae) situation where primary encounter is negotiated) and *Tama Tu* (a Rongomatāne (wharenuī) situation where "all have a voice"), before discussing briefly how the marae paradigm might be applied more widely to films such as *Whale Rider*, *River Queen* and *Utu*.

Where Mercier looks at film in Aotearoa New Zealand from the inside, Brendan **Hokowhitu** is concerned with the problematics of indigenous films in an age of globalisation, and uses *Whale Rider* as his case study. Although many Māori have championed *Whale Rider*, the film has been critiqued by Barry Barclay (2003) and Kylie Message (2003) among others, and Hokowhitu here adds his own challenge. He sees *Whale Rider* as part of a transnational culture, arguing that it "did not come from an alternative world view (which would have been largely incomprehensible to the western viewer); it was not an indigenous culture, but rather a 'third' culture oriented beyond national boundaries and made instantly recognisable to a western audience". Hokowhitu discusses the market logic which leads to an emphasis on transnational themes. This market logic, of course, affects other cultural products from Aotearoa New Zealand. What is distinct about cultural products such as *Whale Rider*, however, is that "the market logic described here demands production of humanistic films that simplify and misrepresent indigenous culture by reproducing a perverse version of the western Self with an exotic aroma". Hokowhitu suggests that Whangara is an imagined landscape and community – a community which is represented as being oppressed by its own primitive traditions, rather than by colonial imperialism. He writes: "In this imagined community, a traditional Māori nation is reinvented and enlightened through a neo-colonial gaze, which serves to create a simulacrum that justifies continued suppression".

Much of the first scholarship on issues of ethnicity, 'race' and the media in Aotearoa New Zealand focused on the analysis of "mainstream" news coverage (or lack of coverage) of te ao Māori. The research report *Portrayal of Māori and Te Ao Māori in Broadcasting: the foreshore and seabed issue(2005)* commissioned by the Broadcasting Standards Authority has an excellent literature review which lists and summarises this material. Two essays in this special issue of the *New Zealand Journal of Media Studies* are concerned with "mainstream" news coverage of Māori, but in different ways to previous research in this area.

Shiloh **Groot** et al examine news coverage of the Meningococcal B vaccination campaign aimed at Māori, arguing that (in accordance with international trends) the coverage is biomedical in approach, placing emphasis on 'individual biological processes' rather than broader socioeconomic factors such as low household budgets and poor housing conditions, so that Māori are (yet again) divided into 'good Māori' (those who favour vaccination) and 'bad Māori' (those who do not comply with the advice of health professionals). But the essay is more than being a variation on the 'standard story' of news coverage of Māori. Groot et al have chosen to analyse two community newspapers which serve Māori communities, and the Māori Television Service's television news – the first time that analysis of this news service has been analysed.

Groot et al argue that while the good and bad Māori dichotomy is present in all three media in their study, more positive strategies were also employed to promote compliance with the vaccination campaign. They note that in *The Gisborne Herald* and Māori Television Service (MTS) news coverage, overt references were made to Māori world resources such as te reo Māori, Māori customary practices, kohanga reo and kura, and Māori entities such as marae and whanau. They suggest that the use of such Māori resources in framing news items is a positive sign of cultural change. On the other hand, traditional Māori perspectives on health invoke the need to address the broader socio-economics of health, and not merely the immediate response of vaccination. Yet proponents of the wider perspective were too often dismissed as ill-informed, while emphasis was placed on vaccination as the only logical response. Alternative explanations and responses to the threat posed by Meningococcal B were therefore dismissed. In the end, then, in this story at least, news outlets which are sympathetic to te ao Māori (*The Gisborne Herald*) or are operated by Māori in Māori for Māori (MTS) still rely "on distinctions between good Māori who comply with the dictates of Western expectations and bad Māori who dissent and offer alternative perspectives".

Donald **Matheson** summarises the position established by previous research: “there is little evidence of biculturalism in news agendas, but rather a focus – consistent over time – in Māori as problems, criminal, radical, dangerous, exotic, deviant; that is, as a racialised ‘other’ in all the many manifestations of that status”. Matheson then moves beyond the textual analysis that this previous research is based on and interviews seven journalists who all showed some awareness of the shortcomings in their own reporting of what is usually known as ‘Māori affairs’ or ‘race relations’, asking them to reflect on their reporting of Māori. He describes the journalists interviewed as “on the whole, reflective, critical, concerned to be non-racist and dissatisfied”.

We can come back again to the dichotomy of good/bad. There has been a tendency, internationally as well as in Aotearoa New Zealand, for news practitioners and news critics to dig themselves trenches from which to fire shots at each other. Matheson argues that his interviews with journalists suggest that the picture of inadequate reporting of Māori based on repertoires of prejudice is actually more complicated, and “the situation in contemporary Aotearoa New Zealand is not quite one of unacknowledged pervasive racism”. Nevertheless, this research demonstrates that, despite the good will of the journalists, they draw on a limited range of interpretative resources both in talking about what is wrong with current coverage, and what might be done differently.

Matheson sees one of the problems as that of a liberal journalism which acknowledges cultural difference, but sees the way to bridging this as largely a matter of increasing inter-cultural understanding through increasing other people’s knowledge of key Māori concepts and words. He argues that, however well meaning, the Pākehā journalists interviewed had little understanding of the power of the dominant culture (and its media) to favour some ways of knowing over others, and to define other cultures in terms of their difference to the west: “The notion that racialising assumptions appear not just in one story about a moko but throughout a journalism that speaks about a subordinated culture to a dominant culture, in that dominant culture’s language, using its interpretative resources, was not available to these respondents”.

The last two papers move away from issues of biculturalism and indigeneity to focus on ‘multiculturalism’. Kirsten **Zemke-White** and Su’eina **Televave** discuss “ethnic entrepreneurship” as it manifests in the independent development and manufacture of Pacific ‘pop’ musics in Aotearoa/New Zealand/Niu sila. Taking Negus’s argument about the music industry that “industry produces culture and culture produces industry”, and

comparing the local music scene with that of African American music in the United States, they sift through the complex interplay of racism in the industry, issues of democracy in the industry, the politics of the music produced, questions of 'authenticity' and issues of identity that impact on and are in turn affected by independent Pacific music labels. For example, racism as expressed in the marginalisation of hip hop music has, they suggest, "arguably necessitated and fostered the development of specifically Pacific, or ethnically based, record labels to develop hip hop which was popular for Pacific and Māori youth". The expansion of companies such as Dawn Raid (the name itself a reaction to state racism in the 1970s) and the proliferation of small record labels brings in not only more people, but also a more diverse range of wider range of ethnicities, into the industry, so making it more democratic.

Henk **Huijser**, writing from Australia, considers the status of Australia as a postcolonising nation through a discussion and comparison of the reality TV show *Australian Idol* and the Cronulla 'race riots' in 2005. The point of similarity between these seemingly unrelated events is, he argues, that the same youth demographic which votes for the contestants on *Australian Idol* also took part in the Cronulla riots. Huijser suggests that *Australian Idol* with its diversity of contestants and foregrounding of their ethnic and/or cultural identity, might seem to indicate a generational shift in terms of attitudes towards ethnic diversity which is an important moment in the development of Australia as a postcolonising nation. However, there are important qualifications and disclaimers that need to be made if such an argument is to be accepted, such as the lack of any real challenge to structural relations of power on the part of *Australian Idol*, and the important distinction between the 'consumption of difference' and an engagement with difference in everyday contexts. In other words, "diversity as mediated entertainment" is something quite distinct from 'diversity in the workplace' - or indeed on the beach, as 'Cronulla' appeared to indicate. Huijser concludes that because postcolonisation is a complex and often contradictory process, it is possible to argue (provisionally) that *Australian Idol* and 'Cronulla' represent opposite sides of the same postcolonising coin.

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