ACCESS ◭

BOOK REVIEW

Family, School and Community: Perspectives on the Sociology of New Zealand Education. Edited by D.K. Ramsay, Sydney: George Allen & Unwin, 1984, 340 pp.

This review was written by staff and students from paper 14.326, Political Economy of Education, Auckland University, 1985. Authors (in alphabetical order): Carol Briggs, Cheryl Hamilton, Loi Iupati, Alison Jones, Nicholas Judge, Ripeka Parata, Peter Roberts.

Ramsay's *Family School and Community* (FSC) is a collection of articles written as introductory material for N. Z. university students and student teachers, especially in sociology and education. It is a difficult task - to reduce a huge and complex field of study in an edited collection of articles to an introductory overview, without becoming simplistic. It's an important task though; as an introductory text this book commands a particularly powerful position - it helps "define the field" of sociology of education. This becomes the role, if not the intention, of introductory textbooks. Students with little or no knowledge of the fields of education or sociology may approach *Family School and Community* to find out what both (and especially a combination of these) might entail.

It worries me what they might find out, since Ramsay does not entirely escape the trap of providing a simplistic, and misleading, picture of some centrally important theoretical points. Ramsay takes on the task of drawing out some theoretical "considerations and issues" which define current sociology of education. His articles act as theoretical 'interludes' which attempt to connect the rather unrelated and variable contributions by other writers. Particularly in his first 'preliminary considerations' chapter, Ramsay provides the student with some now out-dated and simplistic ideas. After discussing 'the social component of sociology', under the heading "the scientific component of sociology", Ramsay turns to "the important matter of the relationship between sociology and values" (FSC: 7). Ramsay narrowly defines the nature and function of value judgements as prescribing "what we should do", which he distinguishes from "factual-type statements" which "describe situations". Facts and values, he says, are "distinct" (FSC: 7). This discussion, and Ramsay's statement that "sociologists should, as sociologists, … take care to avoid confusing their personal value judgements as 'facts'" (FSC: 7), sets the field back more than ten years. (Indeed, this part of this chapter was written ten years ago for *The Family and the School in New Zealand Society* (Ramsay, 1975), and not modified). It ignores the huge body of scholarly literature in the fields of education, sociology, philosophy (as well as physics!) which have argued for the 'value-laden' nature of facts and knowledge. These writers have argued that facts only become facts and items of knowledge when they are distinguished by perspectives and values which order, observations and thought about the world. Unlike Ramsay, Spoonley et al in *New Zealand: Sociological Perspectives* state "few sociologist today would wish to argue that their subject is, or should be, totally objective or value free" (Spoonley, et al, 1982: 7). In the light of the arguments in the sociology of knowledge they might have added that "few … would argue that it can be objective." But at least they are not hung up on a mythical objectivity which (still) preoccupies Ramsay. Discussing the role of values in making recommendations from research may be another matter; but Ramsay confuses values in this sense with values as assumptions and perspectives which inform and make possible knowledge (and facts).

Ramsay does conclude that sociological researchers probably will have some "predispositions" or values, but he suggests that, to preserve as much neutrality as possible, these values should be spelled out in their research reports (FSC: 7-8). Unfortunately, Ramsay does not take his own advice in his writing. For example, he uncritically adopts a structural-functionalist metaphor of a 'transport system' to define the nature of 'society' which, like a transport system, is an ordered activity involving shared knowledge of rules and roles and so on. His description of a 'society' is breath-takingly simplistic:

> A society, then, may be more specifically defined as being composed of a group of people who normally live in a common geographical area, who are able to communicate with each other, and who are aware of certain accepted norms of behaviour " (FSC: 3).

Well-established competing notions which describe society as consisting of groups with conflicting interests and different amounts of power, do not get a look in.

Ramsay's infatuation with the transport system metaphor leads him into an even worse situation. He recognises that societies are not merely culturally homogenous, and describes the heterogeneous nature of a multi-cultural society in these, 'transport-system', terms.

> For example, a particular bus driver may perhaps cross himself or recite passages from the Koran before leaving the bus depot. Such behaviour would probably cause raised eyebrows, but it would be tolerated by most people who would deem it to be in the area of personal freedom. In some societies, minority groups co-exist with the majority culture, with each group accepting differing behaviour patterns by the others in certain places and at certain times (FSC: 3).

Cultural differences are caricatured as an odd quirk added onto other 'normal' social interactions in which everyone participates. If this is where years of attempts by Maori people (and others) to educate sociologists and other academics about monoculturalism and power have led, I can only feel deep despair. Cultural values embodied in the whole depth and breadth of, for example, taha Maori, and the Pakeha resistance to their expression, cannot be reduced to "an area of personal freedom .... tolerated by most people." Ramsay's language here defines an impotent sociology unable to even begin to describe or analyse the nature and complexity of NZ society; or the political nature of any society.

Marijke Robinson's article provides a good example of this kind of sociological impotence. From the title "Social Background and Educational Achievement" (Reading I) a student might, in 1985, hope to get some new information about inequality in N.Z. society. But Robinson's approach is based in the 1960s, when inequality research was fashionable (her research is based on research by Coleman carried in the U.S.A. in the early '60s).

At that time, in an attempt to discover the causes of unequal educational achievement, researchers collected a number of statistical dimensions of students' homes to test their correlation with school success. The question, "Why educational inequality?", was 'answered' in terms of these dimensions; members of 'lower status' groups failed because of some deficiency in the values and life style of those groups.

Robinson collected her data on 'background' using a questionnaire in two N.Z. secondary schools. She divided the students into "manual" and "non-manual" groups, depending on their fathers' occupation. In general terms, she found that low school achievement and low academic aspirations were related to: having a manual worker rather; having parents with low school achievement; not often talking to parents about school work; not being read to as a child; not having many books in the home.

None of this is surprising; mapping inequality is relatively easy, but explaining it is the challenge for sociologists. To explain her findings, Robinson seems left with the weak suggestions that the higher education of "non-manual" parents meant that they could help their children at school more, and that, financially, "manual" children cannot afford to remain at school. Neither of these suggestions is tested by her research.

Casting about for more substantial conclusions Robinson repeats Bernstein's arguments about class differences in language patterning. Putting much store by the students' self-report of the number of books at home, Robinson suggests that "manual" children are "linguistically disadvantaged" (p. 193) in that they come from an environment which, through its restricted language forms (reflected in lack of books, and conversation about school work?), deprives them of the opportunity to learn to think with abstract concepts - a skill needed for school success.

Again, these suggestions about the causes of educational inequality are not tested by Robinson's research, and her data is far too thin to provide any support for Bernstein's work.

Robinson's research is based on the assumption of deficiency in the home of manual workers, and she alights on poor language patterns as the deficiency to be corrected for the achievement of school success. Then, apparently unaware of the spectacular failure of such overseas programmes, she suggests "working class" children need to be given compensatory language programmes.

Her paper perpetuates a myopia which focusses on the deficiencies of the victims' of the education system and the economy, without turning to look for the causes of educational failure in the structural operation of a society based on inequalities.

Because it is one of the few 'research reports' in the book, many tertiary students will probably read it, wanting "the facts, not more theory." These students, particularly the "non-manual" ones, might gain comfort from knowing there's something 'wrong' with the 'others' who are not sharing the benefits and privileges of further education, and that New Zealand is an egalitarian society which reasonably rewards those with ability (linguistic and otherwise). Robinson's research might give comfort too, to complacent Teachers' College students; she does not suggest that the education system needs to be examined; that formal education itself, rather than the 'background' of the failing student mights be one of the contributors to unequal educational achievement. One of Robinson's conclusions is that "the families into which (the students) were born apparently exerted a greater influence on their educational achievement than the schools they attended'' (FSC: 191). This conclusion is based on her finding that "manual" students' achievement was not higher at the "middle class" school than the "working class" school. She misses the obvious point that all schools might negatively 'influence' "manual" students' school achievement - but her apparent determination to 'prove' working class family deficiency blinds her to such a perspective.

In a collection of examples of contemporary ideas and research in sociology of education, Robinson's article might prove useful as an object of criticism. But that does not justify its inclusion.

We need more published NZ research and theory; most writing in the sociology of education in this country still has its theoretical roots in Britain and USA and has made only limited attempts at developing a truly indigenous perspective and analysis. Ramsay's volume, despite the serious problems I 've pointed to, is a valuable collection of NZ work. It is only by more Pakeha, Maori, (there appears to be no Maori contribution to this volume - a serious omission) and other New Zealanders publishing their ideas, research and analysis, and engaging in internal debate and criticism, that the field can develop in New Zealand.

Alison Jones

The opening reading in this collection is entitled ''Nit-picking and Heresy. At the risk of being branded a heretic I wish to engage in some 'nit-picking' of my own with regard to this text.

In the opening paragraph of his Preface, Ramsay states:

> A multiplicity of forces operate in our society to shape the behaviour of people and also to influence what they come to accept as knowledge. It is important for the student of education and schooling to identify these forces, as they are closely related to the learning that goes on in society's institutions (FSC: xii).

Because the knowledge presented in this text by the editor (and major contributor) is presented from a particular perspective, and that perspective is not acknowledged, believe that Ramsay's "...significant contribution to the study of both formal and informal learning..." operates as one of these forces, and that this force is further intensified by the fact that this work masquerades in the guise of exposing those very forces.

I find both the style and the format of the editor's contributions patronising. I respect his "desire to make the book an introductory text", but I object to his treatment of "first-year university and teachers' college students" as secondary school children who need to be led by the hand with stimulation exercises and directed questions for discussion. As an adult student encountering some of the concepts discussed in this text for the first time at Stage 3 level, I also object to his assumption that those reading an introductory text will, in fact, necessarily be first year students straight from school.

While paying lip-service to Maori and women's perspectives, Ramsay makes a significant contribution to a "hidden curriculum" within this text by his adherence to the views of the dominant ideology, which show through his writing in various subtle - and not so subtle - ways. I find the proprietary tone with which he speaks of "my students", "my students' responses", etc. unacceptable. Much better to have referred to "students in my class", or "students responses to my questionnaire" - then we can be clear about who has ownership of what! A more blatant example of the hidden curriculum at work is to be found in the four diagrams/cartoons depicting human figures. In every case the focal character – "Ego", "Me", or "Teacher" - is male - defined and white, and while "Ego's" spouse or "Teacher's" colleagues - never the Inspector or the Principal - might be female, they are also white, and in every instance reinforce the stereotype of woman as subordinate by being depicted as shorter than the male figure she stands beside. Noteworthy in this context, also, is the difference in body language shown by these figures - the male standing square and assertive, hands in pockets, the female often more diffident.

Ramsay also exhibits several examples of value-judgement laden terminology - e.g. "swinger", "Jesus freaks", "a get back to nature jag", the use of "spinster" instead of "single, adult female". I note, with considerable concern, in Chapter 3, the substitution of G.P. Murdoch's educational function of the family with Ramsay's "preferred" term - socialisation. I have to wonder what is Ramsay's intention in exercising this preference and what is the consequence for the reader?

Rather than discussing the work of the invited contributors to this text, I have dealt at some length with the contribution of the editor, and therefore selector, of the contributions. Just as I believe education is a political act so I believe that the production of a text is also political, and the choice of the material included will, therefore, usually reflect much the same ideology as that of the editor. With one or two exceptions the overall effect of this book is not the one of "over-simplification" which Ramsay feared, but more one of a smorgasbord of superficiality - uneven, disconnected and in some instances seemingly chosen to entertain, rather than educate. It is also difficult for me to escape the impression that some articles are included more to serve as 'token' acknowledgement of the existence of different perspectives, rather than to further an understanding of those perspectives.

In contrast, Sue Middleton's, Towards a Sociology of Women's Education in New Zealand (Reading B) deserves special mention. Her article is clear, pertinent and wide-ranging in that it places within a briefly sketched historical background each of four broad sets of perspectives on women and education - conservative, liberal, marxist and socialist, and radical feminist. In each case the theory behind the perspective is outlined, that perspective is related to current practices within education in New Zealand, the practical personal and political implications of each perspective are

pointed to, and areas of concern as well as those requiring further research are highlighted. Also included is an extensive and stimulating bibliography. Sue Middleton's article has served not only to clear some of the confusion I have felt as a committed, gut level feminist, confronted by differing strategies and theoretical perspectives within the women's movement, but has also addressed many of the concerns I feel about the consequences, for women, of our participation in the particular pedagogical process within which we are constrained to obtain our education.

Other articles in this text purport to address issues involving different groups in our society - from class differences to minority groups, be they the tangata whenua of the country or of other ethnic origin. Particularly in the area of race the effect has sometimes been to trivialise these issues and a comparison with the 1975 version of this text, *The Family and the School in New Zealand Society*, leaves me the impression that the current text has been 'watered down' in this context to the extent that it has even less impact than before.

Cheryl Hamilton

Reading B: "Towards a Sociology of Women's Education in New Zealand," by Sue Middleton.

Sue Middleton's article gives a number of important perspectives on the role of women in relation to our society's myths, role expectations and economic function. She covers the conservative view that women have decidedly different sociological functions, roles and duties from men. The development of the patriarchal society -that is of male-dominance - sees the woman as a wife and a mother, a 'home-maker' who gives, or ought to give, physical and emotional support to her husband and children.

The educational repercussions of this "conservative" view are that in schools girls are subject to sex-role stereotyping and are encouraged to be docile, obedient, and servile. Boys, by contrast, are expected to be competitive, independent, active, confident and always to act as leaders. Our schools pass on stereotypic attitudes either via the hidden curriculum or overtly. 'Sexual apartheid', Middleton claims, is promoted through poor 1 y equipped girls' schools, and the curriculum. The media, church and family all promote sex-role stereotypes, which make up the hidden curriculum in schools. Middleton then gives us the "liberal feminist" perspective which concentrates on human rights issues and equality of the sexes in New Zealand's mixed capitalist economy. The figures quoted to show the imbalanced distribution of women in the work force from 1978 to 1981 show some change for the better. Nevertheless, there is still a massive imbalance.

Middleton then deals with the Marxist analysis revealing that enslavement of women is an important part of maintaining the capitalist system. Women's unpaid work is seen essentially as necessary to capitalism for the maintenance of the labour force; women do the housework of the capitalist system.

Middleton does justice to both the Marxist and the socialist feminist approaches. A helpful list of references is given to Marxist literature and in relation to the New Zealand experience.

The radical feminist perspective is discussed - perhaps less enthusiastically than its Marxist counterpart - by reference to the philosophies of radicals such as Rich and Firestone. Middleton also refers to the condition of the Maori women in New Zealand society - the so-called 'slave of the slave' - and indicates the discrimination they suffer at the hands of the Education system.

The article, through the four main perspectives, represents well the general position of women in New Zealand and their relationships to education and society.

Middleton tends to deny the merit of the achievements of the various progressive women's movements and the influence they have had for change on the education system. I feel the seeds of change have been planted in our society and will have an important effect on our society and the formal education system.

Nicholas Judge

Reading C: "Multi-culturalism and Multi-cultural Schools", by Richard Harker.

This article has been written in a readable style for the student of sociology of education and is not complicated by a lot of jargon or verbosity. The ideas presented provoke thought on the question of multiculturalism, but are mainly concerned with the Maori and Pakeha situation in New Zealand society.

Harker starts the article by suggesting that everyone assumes that multiculturalism "means something and that everyone knows what that something is." He then attempts to explain what he and other writers believe a multicultural society is and questions whether in fact N.Z. can be classified as a multicultural society. Harker suggests that New Zealand is more accurately described as a 'multi-ethnic' society until alternative political, economic, and legal institutions are available and valued equally.

However, Harker then goes on to discuss why New Zealand could probably never become a multicultural society. He studies in particular the Maori and Pakeha situation. Harker quotes Walker (1980) and Bullivant (1980) to support his view that "bicultural schools can only reflect a bicultural society; they cannot be bicultural unilaterally". In his examination of society's views on cultural difference and school policies towards cultural minorities, he effectively quotes historical material - essentially views of the Maori towards the Pakeha and vice versa. (There is no mention of the Samoan, Chinese and other ethnic groups who reside in New Zealand).

Harker then suggests that nearer the 20th century, an assimilationist type policy was generally accepted by the Maori and Pakeha as a move towards the 'ideology of equality'. He uses Professor Metge's (1979) paper on cultural diversity and Spoonley's (1981) criticisms to support his hypothesis that Maori assimilation is the ultimate objective. (What about assimilation of other-cultures?)

In identifying the problem of assimilation Harker questions the possibility of equality of opportunity in schools for the Maori, and how relevant the curriculum is to a culture, considering the style of pedagogy used. Harker cites Bourdieu's view that education is not an equaliser because its curriculum methods and ethics are derived not from the general culture of a society but from the dominant culture.

Harker then briefly looks at what a 'multicultural' school would be like. He claims that society would have to give equal status and prestige to different value systems and life styles, make alternative institutional structures available; schools would have to operate various knowledge codes, different curricula, a variety of pedagogical systems and alternative modes of evaluation. I think Harker provokes the reader to think this is not possible in the New Zealand context, and that we should question why and how this is.

Harker concludes his article by recognising the dilemmas of multi culturalism. I think Harker has actually concentrated on biculturalism. For example he suggests the Maori lifestyle will no longer be discernible in a few generations if things go on as in the past. He suggests a solution, that the

Maori separate from Pakeha society and re-establish Maori alternatives. Hence Harker did not, in fact, talk about 'multiculturalism'. He could have delved more into the multiculturalism issue, which is probably difficult since so little is really understood about it. He briefly looked at a 'multicultural' school but mainly in terms of the Maori/Pakeha situation.

My overall impression is that Harker has looked at the Maori and Pakeha situation in New Zealand, which he calls a multi-ethnic society. However, I think he has limited his article to biculturalism rather than, as his heading suggests, "multiculturalism and multicultural schools".

Ripeka Parata

Reading M: "Educational Measurement and New Zealand's Ethnic Minorities", by Ross St. George.

This reading is included in a section which attempts to look at some social issues and how they are reflected in schools. In this particular article Ross St. George sets out to review educational testing and measurernent, and to comment on how these are related to New Zealand's ethnic minorities.

The discussion begins with Mehren's and Lehmanns' definition of a 'TEST'. From there the author embarks on an introduction to the types of tests and the whereabouts of their existence in our society. While a TEST is manifestly aimed at general characteristics it invariably "…focuses on [the] cognitive … domain of activity." (p.263).

Since most standardised tests have accompanying data that point at some norm of achievement, who decides what is normal? Is justice served when a child's response to his/her TEST is merely a reflection of his/her social experience and yet is used to grade the level of his/her general ability?

St. George discusses the types of tests conducted in schools, and very clearly points out their distinctive characteristics, drawing the attention of teachers to their implicit structures. He discusses the current argument about the validity of some TESTS like School Certificate and University Entrance and how and why they should be administered in "…a uniform manner and under uniform conditions" (FSC: 264).

But do children or students have uniform home and social backgrounds? Again he reminds us that tests are aimed at specific objectives and must be used only to assess those characteristics. With the S.C. and U.E. exams, one can only assume that these aim at finding out the individual's academic competence in relation to his fellow students. By the nature of their administration they do not consider the human element at all. Therefore since humans are diverse creatures and respond differently under similar circumstances, it implies that they are, as students, no better than polished products sliding off the factory lines.

Furthermore, St. George has overlooked the fact that all students, irrespective of their cognitive level of ability, must work to cover a certain prescribed curriculum within a set time and, given this, that the survival of the fittest becomes the norm.

To St. George's credit he recognises that:

…characteristics of people … are tested … not the people themselves as people (p.265);

and goes on to say that:

Tests … do not reflect the general worth of persons and it is wrong and dangerous to infer that the above procedure can decide such things (FSC: 265).

However it does not follow that that attitude does not exist in educational circles in relation to both individuals and "identifiable subgroups in society".

The author projects the arguments both for and against the abolition of the S.C. and U.E., and appears to see the sense in both sides. However while the argument for retaining the exams centres on uniformity and fairness, it is not in terms of concern for what happens to the students but, rather, about the nature of conducting exams.

On the other hand, he sees the truth about schools and society and how schools fail to cater for the specific needs of ethnic minorities; but, he argues, even if these exams were abolished it would not mean the end of forces that perpetuate the plight of these ethnic minorities. He suggests that rather than abolishing exams we, as the society, must use the facts evinced by the tests to fashion better ways of teaching and of evaluating the curriculum. Finally he looks into the political implications of the issue and how the status quo persistently survives.

The discussion is well balanced. The language employed is surprisingly light, and was easy to read. As a teacher I would certainly use this article to refresh and remind me of the different facets of TESTS in relation to the students or pupils in the classroom.

Loi Iupati

Reading N: "Computers and Education", by Doug Maclean.

Maclean's argument is essentially this: "that educators ought to be aware of the implications of the new technology that the world is beginning to embrace in an ever-tightening hold…" (FSC: 280). One of the implications of the emergence of computer technology - and the main area of focus for Maclean's paper - is that the new technology may lead to what Maclean calls "the hegemony of technicism" (FSC: 281).

Now, Maclean contends that in a technicist society there is a lack of awareness that "something is wrong" (1984:282). And it is this characteristic which separates the hegemony of technicism from Seligman's (1975) notion of "learned helplessness" (where the individual is aware that something is wrong but feels unable to do anything about it).

With close reference to the work of Stanley (1978) - whose main concern is that technological norms and values can erode non-technical norms and values - Maclean outlines four major themes in critical literature on the interaction of technology and humanity. These are: socio-technical determinism (the idea that technology sets preconditions for patterns of social organisation); technocratic elites (elite technicians and scientists); technological dependence (becoming dependent on decisions made by computers); and metaphorical dominance ("the manipulation of symbols in such a way as to suggest that technology and science have all the answers and that the world should be constantly (and only) viewed through these technicist symbols or metaphors" (FSC: 284).

Finally, Maclean outlines Stanley's ideas on education, and the role of literacy as an answer to the problem of technicism. Maclean concludes that "perhaps it is time for teachers to become educators" (FSC: 286).

Aspects of the argument put forward by Maclean can be seen in the work of writers such as Herbert Marcuse and Paulo Freire. Marcuse's concept of technological rationality (*One Dimensional Man*, 1964), in particular, would appear to be similar to the notion of technicism as used by Stanley (1978) and referred to by Maclean. Marcuse argues that false needs are created and satisifed through

technology. And, like Stanley, Marcuse does not attack technology itself, but rather the way technology is used to control people - to make people comply and yet feel happy about complying (Marcuse, 1964). Comparing this to Stanley's definition of technicism (1978:12) as used by Maclean (FSC: 281), there are definite similarities: ''Essentially, technicism is a state of mind that rests on an act of conceptual misuse, reflected in myriad linguistic ways, of scientific and technological modes of reasoning. This misive results in the illegitimate extension of scientific and technological reasoning to the point of imperial dominance over all other. interpretations of human existence". And of Stanley's view of education Maclean says: "Stanley's view of education and what it means to be educated must be seen not as anti-science or anti-technology but as anti-technicism" (FSC: 285). Maclean also states that "the argument is for sensitive, rational, feeling human beings to be in control of the new technology, not to be controlled by it" (1984: p. 285).

Maclean (FSC: 285) refers to Stanley's (1978) view on literacy by noting that "to be literate in his terms, means to 'attend' to the world around, to 'interpret' what is seen and heard and to 'name' in our own voices (not the voices of others) the conclusions that we are prepared to let inform our conduct". This corresponds closely to Paulo Freire's conception of literacy: "Learning to read and write ought to be an opportunity for men to know what (peaking the word really means: a human act implying reflection and action" Freire, 1970:12. Freire's emphasis).

Maclean's style of writing is clear and concise. There is generally excellent use made of research findings throughout the paper. Paradoxically though, if one were to look for weaknesses in the argument it would be in this area that one would focus one's attention - i.e. on statements made in the text where no evidence is given to support these statements, or where a point is made but not argued for or elaborated upon. For example, Maclean (1984:280) states that "it would be true to say that the great bulk of New Zealand teachers are unaware of, or have ignored the possibility of, utilising computer technology as an aid in teaching". What evidence is there to support this conclusion? Maclean continues (loc. cit.) that "most people ... no longer regard living in a relationship outside conventional marriage as a 'sin'; solo parenting has now become acceptable". But do most people hold this view? To whom has solo parenting become acceptable?

With respect to Maclean's conclusion that "perhaps it is time for teachers to become educators", one might want to ask how this might be achieved, or indeed if it can be achieved.

These are minor 'criticisms' though. The real value of Maclean's paper is that it encourages the reader to think critically about some of the issues involved in the development and application of new technology.

Peter Roberts

Reading O: "Teenagers, Sexuality and Education," by Jan Cameron.

Ms Jan Cameron opens her article with an historical perspective on sexual activity among teenagers, yet she fails to state that the perspective is one of male sexuality – 'Achilles' intrigue with Deidamia ... Juliet was less than 14 when Romeo made love to her ... ". This perspective remains unchallenged throughout the reading, and indeed is a reflection of the fact that a woman's perspective is given serious heed only infrequently throughout the entire text. Perhaps nowhere is this more neglectful and ultimately damaging to analysis than in a reading entitled - "Teenagers, Sexuality, and Education".

This topic has engendered much public discussion in Aotearoa with many radical (and not so radical) voices calling for more emphasis within schools on individual sexuality, rather than the

mechanics of intercourse and the techniques of contraception; and yet this article mentions little in this broader sphere.

The article does not challenge the reader to acknowledge and examine the myriad of opinion that Jan Cameron asserts has led to the tendency for the N.Z. public to view teenage sexuality as a "social problem".

If N.Z. is truly concerned about the number of exnuptial births to teenage women, then sex education must be seen in broader societal terms, where economic and political systems play an integral part in the acceptance of certain types of 'knowledge' within the school curriculum - a curriculum which presently avoids women's sexuality, save for menstruation and breast development within the few sex education programmes currently available in schools.

Jan Cameron's sociological analysis of teenagers, sexuality, and education does not examine the social relations of teenage sexuality and does little to point the reader towards other literature that does. For example if men are consistently reinforced by society with the ideology that women are sexual 'objects ' (as opposed to subjects) to be used and abused (consumed), and if women's sexuality is consistently represented by the family, school, media and Christian churches as being secondary and to be subsumed by men's 'needs', then it is hardly surprising that young men use young women to prove their sexuality, and young women, having accepted the social relations of their sexuality, become pregnant and finally 'realise their full potential as women'.

Family School and Community apologises in the Preface for "inevitable omissions", and states it is a "source book" to supplement the reader's knowledge of a particular field", and asserts that research data in N.Z. is "difficult to find". As a student I find this inadequate. Good research does exist - like Jill Abigail's (1982) writings on the social reality of schooling for girls.

If a movement towards phenomenological studies is apparent in the 'new' sociology of N.Z. education, as Ramsay asserts, then mere documentation is insufficient for a text like this. This book lacks specific readings that show how "a multiplicity of forces operate in our society to shape the behaviour of people and also to influence what they come to accept as knowledge". It is simply not sufficient to state that N.Z. is stratified according to class, and that gender and ethnic inequalities exist and are perpetuated by the system (family, school, community). The chapter "Teenagers, Sexuality, and Education" would have benefited by showing, for example, how schools approach the issues and what the hidden agenda is; instead of a report on the statistics of teenage coitus and exnuptial births before and after 15 years of age.

Carol Briggs

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