

# Editorial

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This special issue of the *Journal of New Zealand Studies* is the outcome of a seminar series at the Stout Research Centre for New Zealand Studies in 2007. Over a period of two and half months we discussed topics around the task of 'Watching the Kiwis: How Anthropologists Look at New Zealand'. This edition comprises five of the original seminar papers and three additional ones which replace papers which could not be published. I am very pleased with the result, which, I believe, gives inspiring, often humorous, yet scholarly insights into what New Zealand studies and the social sciences are able to achieve; these eight articles point in a direction that I would like to explore much more extensively and, I hope, might also eventually lead to a follow-up series.

All of the authors look at issues around the question of how life in New Zealand is imagined, structured, lived and even materialised. Three main areas are addressed: analysis of identity construction, of media representation of New Zealand topics and of social and cultural codes and behavioural patterns in the everyday life of Kiwis.

The introduction relates back to the original seminar series, tries to sketch out its academic intentions and maps a path into the various scholarly approaches on how to go about 'watching Kiwis'. This is followed by the chapter by Anna Gruner on Kiwi gardening and class, discussing decks, garden ornaments, the meaning and use of lawns and different notions of what beauty means to individual gardeners. The question of 'meaning' runs through many of the following articles. Amanda Gilbertson, for example, looks at the question of what makes a Kiwi or how New Zealanders with an immigrant background discuss issues of defining their 'hyphenated identity' and how they manage to make a home, in symbolic and actual terms.

The question of what New Zealand is and might be, can also be very profitably discussed by analysing self-branding strategies by the New Zealand media and the Tourist Board; Eveline Dürr analyses such self-identification by looking at advertising campaigns and also by examining the symbolic meanings ordinary (white) New Zealanders inscribe into their templates on how to envisage their home country. Issues of class, popular culture and tourism are discussed in Peter Howland's analysis of the rural idyll as a tourist destination. Basing his ethnography on very middle-class Martinborough wine tourists, he draws on recent theories of personhood and self-reflexive behaviour.

With the 'great hip hop grant scandal', Graeme Whimp draws on theories of narrative construction and moral panics to background and analyse the construction of a media and political scandal in 2004. He reviews the

print media coverage associated with the ensuing 'scandal' to explore and analyse the processes and relationships that contributed to the unfolding and problematic public narrative. Mike Lloyd presents us with a case study of the 'good' humour in *Flight of the Conchords*, and, in a sense, lets the details speak for themselves about the issue of how we should frame humour, especially the New Zealand take on it. Aroha Harris considers Māori and government policies of integration in the 1950s and 60s by accessing two concurrent narratives: the narratives of the state embedded in a one-size-fits-all Māori policy, and the narratives of the Māori 'business of life'.

Finally Angela Blachnitzky introduces her artistic project on documenting the ways Kiwis play with interior and outdoor spaces. By using indoor furniture to decorate gardens, decks and verandas, they not only create truly antipodean garden landscapes but also seem to defy the elements, the dampness and the rules of a 'clean aesthetic'.

In conclusion, I would like to thank everybody who took part in the series, helped organise it and supported it by creating a faithful and enthusiastic audience. I must especially thank Gwyn Williams and Jemima Sherpa who did a wonderful job proof reading and editing the articles; Richard Hill and Lydia Wevers for their support and ongoing encouragement; Louise Grenside for organising everything around the actual printing and publishing process; the anonymous referees who helped with valuable comments and overall expertise to transfer seminar presentations into journal articles. And Angela Blachnitzky, who allowed us to use one of her photographs for the cover.

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Wellington, November 2008