“Gimme Shelter”: “Othering” in the context of New Zealand Multiculturalism: Pakeha, Maori, Immigrants and Refugees

September 29, 2017

2017年度 青山学院大学国際研究センターセミナー

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Questions to consider

• Who are the ‘others’ in New Zealand (historically and currently)?

• How does ‘othering’ Maori, immigrants and refugees influence how we construct ideas of who ‘we’ are?

• How does Edward Said’s Orientalism speak to the notion of ‘othering’ in the current context?
Multiculturalism

“Multiculturalism can be defined, in very simple terms, as the official and informal recognition that racial and ethnic minorities in a particular nation-state have their own distinct cultures and communities, and that these have to be recognized and appreciated as such. Thus, the idea of multiculturalism implies, in its bare bones, an acknowledgment of the co-existence of multiple cultures and peoples within one space, generally the space of the nation-state. ...
Multiculturalism...

• In this sense, multiculturalism takes the challenge of togetherness in difference seriously. It is multiculturalism’s assumed mode of sharing, however, which is problematic”. (An I. (2001) On not Speaking Chinese: Living between Asia and the West. London: Routledge, p.10)
Multiculturalism...

- As Ien Ang suggests: “...multiculturalism is based on the fantasy that the social challenge of togetherness-in-difference can be addressed by reducing it to an image of living-apart-together.” (2001, p.14)
Multiculturalism...

• Multiculturalism is the policy of maintaining a diversity of ethnic cultures within a community. (Collins English Dictionary)

• Multiculturalism is reflecting cultural pluralism, a co-existence of many cultures in a locality, without any one culture dominating the region. (Columbia University Press)
Biculturalism in New Zealand context

- Implies the existence of two distinct cultural groups, usually of unequal status and power, within a society united by one economic and political structure.

First used in Canada (1963)
Applied to New Zealand (about 1982)
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<tr>
<th>USA</th>
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<th>Canada</th>
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<td>Non-immigrant nation</td>
<td>Immigrant nation</td>
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<td>Based on quotas, started</td>
<td>Immigration of humanitarian grounds, family reunification, historical links with</td>
<td>Traditional destination for highly-skilled immigrants; Points based system 1967: human</td>
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<td>with slavery, focus on</td>
<td>colonies and ex-colonies, seasonal low-skilled workers</td>
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Based on quotas, started with slavery, focus on family; illegal immigration between 200 and 300 K annually, mainly from Mexico; accepting refugees from int’l conflicts US is involved.

Restrictive immigration policies, about immigration.

Traditional destination for highly-skilled immigrants; Points based system 1967: human capital evaluated.

Government support of immigration is very high.

Cultural value: melting pot. Previously assimilation, now more liberal model.

Cultural value: preserve national identity (Old Europe/ Fortress Europe).

Cultural value: mosaic multiculturalism. From “Hotel Canada” easy passports to “The duty of integrate”.
Multiculturalism

- assimilation = “melting pot”
- “salad ball”
- “cultural mosaic”
New Zealand is ‘settler’ nation populated by ‘boat people’
The three stages of immigration to New Zealand according to Spoonley and Bedford (2012, p.51-52)

- The first spans the period from 1840 to 1960 – From the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi that confirmed the status of New Zealand as a British colony, immigration policies reflected the ambition of recreating a country that embodied what were seen as the virtues of Britain and of being British.
**the 2\textsuperscript{nd} phase**

- The second phase, from about 1950s/1960s to the 1980s, produced a new set of ambitions, namely the nation as a single community and a colony of British crown was challenged, with greater recognition of Māori and their rights. During this phase a Labour Prime Minister in the 1970s, Norman Kirk, identified the importance of building our Asia-Pacific connections. Which lead to a more lenient immigration policy for Pacific nations annexed as colonies of the British government then taken over by New Zealand, such as the Cook Islands, Samoa, Niue and Tokelau.
The third phase was marked by major changes to immigration policy from 1986. For the first time, this policy no longer reflected a privileging of ‘white’, specifically British, immigrants.
2013 Census says:

New Zealand

- European: 66%
- Māori: 13%
- Asian: 11%
- Pacific Zealander: 7%
- Others: 2%

Auckland

- European: 54%
- Asian: 21%
- Maori: 10%
- Pacific: 14%
- New Zealander: 1%

Combined Ethnic and Māori population of New Zealand 34%
Auckland 46%
Contracting “us-others” dichotomy

• In relations to the Middle East (Said’s “Orient”) the ideas of power and powerlessness, manifested through the imperial gaze were crucial in defining interiority and exteriority (us-others).

• Following Foucault’s ideas of how power and knowledge are inextricably linked, Said took the argument about otherness one step further, establishing that powerlessness and otherness are also inextricably linked.
New Zealand response to refugees

Non-Jewish applicants are regarded as a more suitable type of immigrant.” (Edwin Dudley Good, Comptroller of Customs in the mid 1930s. Quoted in Beaglehole, A Small Price to Pay, 1988, p. 16)

‘There is a major difficulty of absorbing these people in our cultural life without raising a feeling of antipathy to them.” Walter Nash, Minister of Customs in New Zealand’s first Labour Government which took office in 1936, shared the same view. (Ibid).
Winston Peters, NZ First Leader

"I think we can do better, but we can't do that while we've got mass immigration. And if we're going to do it, let's bring the women and children and tell some of the men to go back and fight for their own country's freedom, like we are." (NZ Herald, Sept, 2015)
Dr Zian Ali, Head of the Islamic Studies Research Unit, UoA

"You are saying to them, 'go and fight for your freedom'. But in Syria at the moment there are, according to the BBC, 1000 different rebel groups - which one do you want them to fight for?" (NZ Herald, Sep 8, 2015)
Philomena Essed:

“Power exists as long as the group stays together against the “others”... Exercising power over other people affects them, through action or inaction...whether or not those who exercise power are aware of the success or consequences of their practices and whether or not the other party is aware of the power being exercised over him or her.”

https://othersociologist.com/otherness-resources/
The study provided a useful definition for positive race relations, ‘as practices which promote a positive social, emotional, and academic development in students from all ethnic backgrounds. The concept encompasses concerns with racism, and issues related to ethnic or cultural diversity; those related to individual development, those related to the social climate of the school’ (1995)
In conclusion

How do we respond to the “difference” of “others”?