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THE BUSINESS OF THE OTHER: REPRESENTING THE NON-WEST IN MANAGEMENT AND MEDIA

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Abstract

This thesis explores current facets of the business of the other in western management and business media discourses. It identifies the shaping of these facets through continuities between imperial colonisation and contemporary neocolonialism in ways that mainstream management discourses marginalise or ignore. In establishing marginalisation and neglect, and opening up some of the consequences, the thesis draws on conceptual frameworks from indigenous, feminist, postcolonial, and subaltern studies. In addition, it argues that this ongoing incorporation of colonial concepts and practices into contemporary neocolonialism not only needs to be acknowledged but needs to be challenged by the reconceptualisation of current approaches to the other across a number of business fields.

After analysing the process of othering in the mainstream media through a study of the New Zealand press, the thesis focuses its four main lines of inquiry on the fields of business journalism, public relations, diversity management, and intercultural communication. In particular, it looks at aspects of western control involved in the 'globalisation' campaigns of the western media; the theoretical formulation of 'requisite variety' in public relations; the rhetoric of 'managing diversity' in organisations; and the formulation of 'intercultural communication' in education.

For the first line of inquiry, the thesis analyses how western business journalism texts exercise control over the other by updating Orientalist or Eurocentric ideologies as a discursive underpinning of, and accompaniment to, neocolonial economic expansion. Its second inquiry leads to a critique of the outwardly egalitarian concept of requisite variety in public relations literature. The thesis finds that, although this concept has allowed public relations to take note of the cultural other, it has, in a largely ethnocentric field, done little to shift the balance of power away from dominant western elites. Instead, it shows how the field operates to support those who already hold privileged positions and keep those on the margin marginalised.

In the third and fourth lines of inquiry, into discourses of diversity management and intercultural communication, similar consolidations of western neocolonial power are evident. While acknowledging attempts by these fields to incorporate the other into the larger organisational frame, the thesis tracks a systematic tendency to avoid or sideline issues of socio-political power in representations of diversity. It further contends that these benign-looking discourses of diversity align with the neocolonial west's strategies to retain power in a world where major demographic shifts are reducing western populations to a numerical minority.

The thesis also attempts, by introducing my lived experience as an other, to synthesise subjective observations with academic analysis. This integration of lived experience with the legitimacy of theory has been crucial to the project of the thesis as a whole. That project aims to resist sites of control entrenched in western worldviews and, in the face of persistent denials that they exist, to acknowledge racism and other potent discursive and material traces of imperialism.

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Postscript

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Through the subject's eye: Situating the other¹ in discourses of diversity

The genesis of this thesis was in my own circumstances in 1996, soon after I left the security of a senior journalist's position in India to come and live in New Zealand. With this move, I not only crossed physical borders but social, political, cultural, and emotional ones as well. The hymns of a borderless world sung by the minstrels of globalisation may sound melodious to many. But, for those of us who come from the shadow zones outside the periphery of a western² worldview, transcending the barriers of nation, race and class is too often fraught with difficulties. Yet such difficulties are rarely acknowledged because of an implicit belief in the larger society that equality of opportunity is there for those who seek it. The plight of the doctors from India, China, and the former Yugoslavia who were forced to re-train as nurses in New Zealand because their qualifications were not seen to be good enough (Quaintance, 1996) is

¹ In postcolonial theory, the word 'other' with a small 'o' refers to the 'colonized others who are marginalized by imperial discourse' (Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin, 1998, p. 170).

² I use the terms 'west' and 'western' with a small 'w' throughout the thesis for two reasons. In the first, I wish to emphasise that these terms reflect ideological concepts rather than geographical location (see chapter 3). In the second, I seek to suppress the grandeur associated with the capitalisation of the terms in colonial and neocolonial discourses.

only one of the many tales of woe that frustrated immigrant professionals tell.

Like these immigrants, my qualifications and work experience, too, were never good enough to translate into job interviews. Unable to find employment, I decided to become a student once again. As someone situated at the margins of power in a western setting, I chose to do a research project on how the non-western other is constructed and positioned at the peripheries of power circles, initially in media but more substantially in management. In particular, I decided to examine media and management discourses of plurality, track levels of power imbalances in them, and observe patterns of conflation between the narratives of colonialism and neocolonialism.

While not all would agree with Jameson's (1991) assessment that the 'whole global . . . culture is the internal and superstructural expression of a whole new wave of American military and economic domination throughout the world' (p. 5) and that the 'underside' of this culture is 'blood, torture, death, and terror' (p. 5), there are clear affinities between the old imperial colonialism and the current neocolonial globalism. Tracing the exact linkage is beyond the scope of this thesis, but it is undergirded by a similar, if less extreme, assessment. This thesis also borrows analytical tools from postcolonial studies. It uses the postcolonial perspective that imperial discourses characterise colonised subjects as

the other 'as a means of establishing the binary separation of the colonizer and the colonized and asserting the naturalness and primacy of the colonizing culture and world view' (Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin, 1998, p. 169). The 'systematic discipline' (Said, 1978, p. 3), with which the west portrayed the Orient as an object it could shape and control, is an example of the construction of the other in imperial discourses, including literature and art. The 'imaginative examination of things Oriental was based more or less exclusively upon a sovereign Western consciousness out of whose unchallenged centrality, an Oriental world emerged' (Said, 1978, p. 8). In other words, the west systematically constructed an image of the Orient by exercising its power of representation. This image produced, as Hall (1997) points out, 'a certain way of knowing the Orient – as the "mysterious, exotic and eroticized Orient"' (p. 260). As a result, the lopsided projection of the Orient created a form of 'racialized knowledge of the other (Orientalism)' that was 'deeply implicated in the operations of power (imperialism)' (Hall, 1997, p. 260).

Marked out as different from the reference point of the west, the Orient was classified as the other. Postcolonial scholars such as Spivak and the scholars of the Subaltern Studies Collective such as Guha (1988) examine the process of marking out the other by looking at the way in which 'colonialist discourse renders the experience of the subaltern, or colonial subject, as irrelevant as it is outside the system of normality and convention' (Sim, 1999, p. 366). This thesis argues that the process of

constructing the other continues in contemporary neocolonial discourses and examines how it is being redesigned by new strategies of western control. My first step in documenting the shape, direction, and magnitude of this neocolonial process of constructing the other was towards charting the media coverage of the highly volatile immigration issue in New Zealand in 1996.

Barbed wires in a borderless world: Media, politics, and the immigrant other

Immigration surfaced as a major issue of public concern in 1996, the year I came to New Zealand. But, interestingly, the topic discussed in public fora was never immigration, but *Asian* immigration. Evidently, immigration was the norm, but Asian immigration was different. Although Britain continued to be the top source country for immigrants ("Fewer given residence", 1996; "Residence approvals", 1996), the media, in particular, continued to highlight the pluses and minuses of Asian immigration (see e. g., Roger, 1996; Riordan, 1996). One question that remained unanswered was why Asians were grouped together when Europeans were not. After all, an Asian from Afghanistan had as little in common with an Asian from Korea as a European from Ireland had with a European from Spain. One possible explanation was that all Asians, no matter where they were from, were seen to be farthest from the perceived norm of an average New Zealander.

For Asians in New Zealand, 1996 was a particularly traumatic year. As politicians debated the immigration issue, racist skinheads spewed venom on hapless new immigrants. As I walked home from the University, in the Hamilton suburb of Hillcrest, one night, I was followed by a group of boys yelling anti-Asian epithets. Another night, a car nearly mounted the pavement to run me down. Even as I grappled with racism for the first time in my life, I was assured by many otherwise well-informed New Zealanders that racism was a new phenomenon in New Zealand. They suggested that I should not pay too much attention to isolated incidents. I wondered if indeed I was making too much of it until I delved deep into the history of racism against other non-western immigrants in the country.

Research soon revealed that immigration legislation in New Zealand had a history of institutionalised racism (Chen, 1993) and it was not until 1964 that racially-based laws were repealed in the country. Before the turn of the century, prominent politicians such as Richard Seddon and William Pember Reeves were responsible for pushing through legislation aimed at restricting immigrants who were not of European, or more specifically British, stock (Brooking & Rabel, 1995). While the 'Asiatic Restriction Act', promoted by Seddon in 1896, was officially described as 'an act to prevent the influx into New Zealand of persons of alien race who are likely to be hurtful to the public welfare' (Brooking & Rabel, 1995, p. 25), Reeves tried to exclude Asians and coloured persons, along with the disabled and the mentally ill, in his Undesirable Immigrants Bill of 1894 (Brooking &

Rabel, 1995). Even after racially-discriminatory laws were done away with in New Zealand under the Immigration Amendment Act of 1964, politicians sustained disharmony among the people by playing on racial prejudices still in existence in society.

Given this background, the physical and emotional attack on Asians and Africans during the election campaign-driven immigration debate of 1996 was hardly surprising. According to the Race Relations Conciliator, Dr Rajen Prasad, 'reports of letter boxes being attacked, children being accosted and recent arrivals being harassed had risen with the debate on immigration' ("Conciliator sees", 1996, p. 2).

In the midst of the great debate, my wife and I met with extraordinary hostility for challenging, in a newspaper article, a columnist's call to 'recolonise Africa' (Hames, 1996, p. A 13). All we did was to point out that the 'images of horror' (Hames, 1996, p. A 13) from black Africa that baulked the columnist were, in large part, a legacy of the colonial destruction of the physical, cultural, and spiritual wealth of that formerly colonised world. We also reminded the commentator that western self-righteousness at the 'long line of grisly spectres to be thrown up by black Africa' (Hames, 1996, p. A 13) was hypocritical, given the history of the genocide of Native Americans in the American continents, the enslavement of Africans by European powers, and the marginalisation and deprivations faced by aboriginal peoples in the Australian continent (Munshi & Kurian, 1996). Instead of responding directly to the editor, a large number of people attacked us with a volley of personal hate mail,

some even asking us to get out of the country. The racist attacks on us and other others in 1996 were compounded by the fact that there was very little acknowledgement of a race problem in New Zealand. As Pountney (1999) points out, 'individual prejudice against others who are different . . . is much more common in New Zealand than we like to admit' (p. A 13). Marking out the other is a key practice in consolidating such prejudice.

With the Asianisation of the immigration debate in 1996, the discourse had, of course, been injected with a lethal dose of race. But, ironic as it may seem, by accepting the terms of reference for the debate, those tolerant of Asian migrants contributed to this racist discourse as well as those who were openly xenophobic. By marking out Asians as a category different from the norm, Asians were clearly situated as alien.

Walls of difference: Structuring the 'norm' to shut out the other

This framework of difference was highlighted to me during a conversation I had with a librarian at the Hamilton public library in late 1996. In the middle of our conversation, the librarian interrupted me with an exclamation: 'Oh, you speak such good English don't you?' 'So do *you*,' I replied politely. The library official was taken aback. 'But I have spoken English all my life,' he protested. 'So have I,' I said, and went on to ask him why he was so surprised at my ability to speak the language. He

responded by saying that foreigners were usually not very good with English.

Not in a mood to call it quits, I asked him what made him think I was a foreigner. 'Well, you look like one,' he told me. 'What are foreigners supposed to look like?' I persisted. 'Well, different . . . you know.' The operative word, quite clearly, was 'different'. I was *different* from what he saw as the *norm*. But what is the norm? And who gets to shape this norm?

Shortly after I arrived in New Zealand in February 1996, the immigration officials wanted me to sit for an elementary English test despite the fact that I had grown up speaking, reading, and writing English. It didn't matter to the officials that I had a degree in English literature or that I had worked all my life for a major English language daily. Neither did it matter to the officials that I was speaking to them not in Hindi, Bengali, or Swahili, but in English. The only thing that did matter to them was that I was an Asian, and, therefore, a person earmarked to sit for this test. In the eyes of the policy makers, I was the *other*, a person who was *different* from the presumed *norm* and I had to officially prove myself to be normal.

Such framing was not just a personal matter. The highly polarised immigration debate in New Zealand was itself ethnocentric because it put ethnic minorities outside the realm of the norm as Blommaert and Verschueren (1998) point out in their critique of debating diversity in the

context of Belgium. In following the discourse of the immigration debate through the local media, I noted how Asians were consistently slotted into the category of the other by those who were for immigration as well as those who were against it. Chapter 2 of my thesis provides a more detailed snapshot of how the mediatised political debate on the immigration issue in New Zealand was Asianised.

Extending research: Sources of othering

For me, scrutinising media texts on the immigration debate turned out to be a pilot for a larger project on an examination of the discourses of diversity, not just in the media but in the larger areas of business communication and management. The study of the print media coverage of the immigration issue in New Zealand turned out to be too limited to provide answers to my fundamental question: Whose norms or standards are followed in framing the terms of reference for discussions on diversity? Accordingly, I extended my search to a wide range of texts, including a selection of reports on the other in the business media, theoretical work on the concept of requisite variety in public relations, the literature on 'managing diversity' in organisations, and texts on intercultural communication.

As A. Prasad (1997) shows in a path-breaking essay, the 'discourse of workplace diversity is inextricably (and fatally) linked with the discourse of colonialism' (p. 305). As in the colonial enterprise, he points out that

‘immigrants and people of color . . . provide one of the principal dimensions of the diversity phenomenon’ (pp. 286-287) and that their treatment resembles that of the colonised others in the hands of colonisers. In A. Prasad’s (1997) terms, most diversity management scholars and practitioners overlook the power dynamics in motion in the industry when they ignore ‘colonialism as a sense-making framework’ (p. 286).

In studying the diverse range of texts on diversity, I not only use colonialism as a ‘sense-making framework’ but also go beyond it to train the spotlight on the strategies of managerialism as a covert, and often overt, tool of neocolonialism. In doing so, I show how the neocolonial biases of dominant elites that direct diversity management align with the managerial and administrative biases of the same elites. In other words, the process of constructing and controlling the other goes hand in hand with the process of constructing and controlling the employee.

The literature on managing diversity revolves around the strategies a ‘senior manager’ needs to adopt to solve ‘the new challenges (read: problems) associated with an increasingly diverse workforce’ (Orbe, 1998, p. 230). According to those seeking to manage diversity in public relations, ‘the diversity of ideas and viewpoints within a manager’s self-regulating system should equal diversity of the environment (Culbertson, Jeffers, Stone, & Terrell, 1993, p. 23). This emphasis on ‘the managerial

processes of control and coordination' that 'can direct the inputs of diverse people toward a common goal' (Walck, 1995, p. 119) cements the colonial approach to issues of diversity inside the walls of workplaces.

Diversity management and managing the other

In an increasingly multicultural world, diversity is a major organisational issue (see e. g., Carr-Ruffino, 1996; Gardenswartz & Rowe, 1998; Kossek & Lobel, 1996; Thomas Jr., 1991; Weiss, 1996). Yet, despite the decreasing population ratio of the west, the subject of diversity remains, more often than not, constructed through western eyes. For this dominant faction, diversity is viewed as something that needs to be 'managed' (see Chapter 7 for an analysis of the literature on 'managing diversity').

'Management is always in the hands of the powerful', Blommaert and Verschueren (1998) say, 'and the management of diversity is not an exception' (p. 15). The theory and practice of the management of diversity are guided by the terms of reference framed by powerful Anglo-American and other Eurocentric policy makers to keep the non-western other under control. Within this context, discussions on diversity become manifestations of neocolonial attempts to construct and control the other.

Neocolonialism, as the Ghanaian leader Kwame Nkrumah articulated in 1965, involves power and clout that former colonial powers, as well as new economic powers, wield over the rest of the world through lending regimes of international financial institutions, price fixing mechanisms of

world markets, and policies of multinational corporations as well as educational institutions (cited in Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin, 1998). This overwhelming exercise of control by a largely Euro-American elite is reflected in approaches to issues of diversity.

The act of 'managing' diversity has a distinct power hierarchy in which the one who manages is superior to the one managed. This, of course, gives rise to several questions: First, who are the managers? Second, what is it that gives the managers the authority to 'manage' others? Third, whose norms or standards are followed in this management? Answers to these questions suggest that a system of domination is at work. As in most large organisations, as Hamel and Prahalad (1994) point out in their much-cited work, *Competing for the Future*, there is a 'dominant managerial frame' that puts into place an administrative system that reinforces 'certain perspectives and biases' at the cost of others (pp. 54-55).

The 'dominant managerial frame' parallels the dominant ethnic frame and both set the agenda for discussions on diversity. As a result, the agenda foregrounds debate on what to do about people who are outside the dominant frame. In this debate, there are two main opposing camps. One is the overtly insular and racist one that opposes the presence of ethnic minorities in predominantly white societies. This camp is variously represented in different countries: In the U.S., champions of Proposition 187 sought to bar so-called illegal immigrants in California from receiving

welfare, education, or health benefits, in 1994 (van Dijk, 1995); in Europe, French authorities broke into the church of St. Bernard de la Chapelle in Paris in 1996 to round up immigrants from former French colonies in Africa (see e. g., 'Shadow of Dreyfus', 1996); and in Australia, followers of politician Pauline Hanson propped up their anti-immigration campaign by hitting out not only at Asians but the first peoples of the land, the aborigines, as well (see e. g., Fitzgerald, 1996).

The other camp includes those who preach tolerance. On the surface, this camp appears democratic and progressive. But, as Blommaert and Verschueren (1998) have argued, this group is no less damaging because of its drive for a rehomogenisation based on the integration, or the removal, of disturbing differences. This group, too, creates what van Dijk (1995) calls 'majority discourses about minorities' (p. 147). What binds the two opposing groups is their common approach to marking difference, a process described by postcolonial scholars as 'othering', a 'term coined by Gayatri Spivak for the process by which imperial discourse creates its "others"' (Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin, 1998, p. 171). Irrespective of the monocultural or multicultural positions taken by people on issues of diversity, what remains static are dominant assumptions constructed around neocolonial, Eurocentric norms.

This dominant frame, representing a largely western elitist worldview, controls the ground rules, and often double standards, for managing

diversity. In adopting an apparently benevolent frame, diversity management's neocolonial tendencies have remained largely unchallenged in organisational management, public relations, and the business media. These fields largely ignore scholarly work in areas sensitive to the less benevolent frames of colonialism exposed by postcolonial, feminist, aboriginal/indigenous studies, and subaltern historiography. Postcolonial writing 'resists colonialism in all its forms' (Sim, 1999, p. 337); feminist economics exposes the imbalances of power inherent in neocolonial processes of globalisation (see e. g., Marchand, 1996); aboriginal/indigenous studies documents the 'destructive social outcomes of racialised inequalities' (Morris & Cowlshaw, 1997, p. 3); and subaltern historiography shows how 'the colonial subject is "muted" owing to its being constructed within a disabling master discourse' (Sim, 1999, p. 366).

The other view: Fitting postcolonial lenses on management cameras

In this thesis, I attempt to open the shutters of management to these postcolonial fields of study. While management has traditionally looked at issues of diversity from a dominant core, my thesis reverses the direction of the viewfinder and takes a look at such issues from the perspective of the other. Drawing extensively on theoretical work in postcolonial studies, Chapter 3 prepares a canvas for painting less distorted pictures of nurturing diversity in the area of management.

By interpolating theoretical work from other fields into management and organisational studies in this way, I attempt to push out layers of romantic rhetoric in the discourses of diversity to examine their core function of control in relation to the other.

My four-pronged inquiry into the business of the other involves business journalism, public relations, diversity management in organisations, and intercultural communication. I begin by analysing western media texts on business-related subjects on India. Having been a journalist in India for nearly 15 years before embarking on this academic project, I could easily identify the distortions in the images of the country of my birth in the western business media. In exposing a total lack of awareness of postcolonial critiques in the business media discourses surrounding developing countries such as India, Chapter 4 shows how these texts lay less emphasis on business than they do on Orientalist or Eurocentric ideologies. In addition, I make the argument that the contemporary remobilisation of such racist ideologies acts as a discursive accompaniment to western economic expansion and exposes globalisation as a mask for a reincarnated western imperialism.

It is this western neoimperialism that is masked by the seemingly egalitarian concept of requisite variety in public relations as well. While requisite variety does acknowledge the need to provide the cultural other a place in the organisational framework, the concept does little to shift the

balance of power away from the model of western management-centred dominance. Seen from a postcolonial and subaltern studies perspective, the use of requisite variety in public relations merely accommodates diversity within the larger organisational structure as a part of a strategic marketing plan. As a result, requisite variety in public relations, like diversity projects in the scientific areas of human and plant genetics, ends up abetting the process of appropriating the other. Chapters 5 and 6 propose the liberation of requisite variety from imperialist notions of control.

Like the rhetoric of requisite variety in public relations, discourses of diversity management in organisations talk of expanding plurality. Yet, ironically, these discourses are contradictory in that they are mainly about repositioning groups of people who are outside the circle of the dominant western worldview into circumscribed spaces quite clearly on the periphery of power. Chapters 7 and 8 look at selected texts in the areas of managing diversity and intercultural communication to analyse how these texts offer distinct corporate parallels to the former imperial apparatus. In an attempt to reformat that core to create more equitable spaces, I also explore sources of alternative discursive formations. These formations, derived from postcolonial fields, aim to build actively multicultural organisations. Such organisations would be based on constructive interplay and dialogues rather than monologues of managing diversity scripted by a neocolonial elite of managers.

Resisting colonial methodologies: Research in the context of lived experience

As qualitative research is essentially a social process (Altheide, 1996, p. 4), any search for answers to questions about the dynamics of power in issues of diversity needs to be firmly rooted in the social context of the researcher. Such grounding can be direct or indirect, explicit or implicit, acknowledged or denied. My analysis of a variety of texts dealing with issues of diversity is inextricably tied up with my own social and political experiences and is, therefore, subjective. Texts, as Denzin (1992) says, cannot be seen under the 'hegemonic system of naturalistic realism' for life is not unidimensional but is:

lived through the subject's eye, and that eye, like a camera's, is always reflexive, nonlinear, subjective, filled with flashbacks, after-images, dream sequences, faces merging into one another, masks dropping, and new masks being put on. In this world called reality, where we are forced to react, and life leaks in everywhere, we have nothing to hold on to but our own being. (p. 27)

I, too, hold on to my own being as I write this thesis in a style that may appear to some as being non-traditional. The conventional third-person-passive-voice style goes behind the curtain now and then while the emotional persona of the researcher takes centre stage. In line with other openly subjective-influenced researchers such as Richardson (1992), I

believe that lived experience and personal observations need to be articulated not just in appendices, footnotes, or margins but in the body of the text as well.

Like many academics, I began this research project on a conventional note, analysing print media texts on the immigration issue in New Zealand. The project was on track and a part of my findings was even published in a refereed academic journal. But it did not feed my passionate quest for answers to questions on the management of diversity in a globalised world, where the dominant centre seemed to be pushing the margins further away instead of pulling them in. Around the time I was getting bogged down by the shackles of traditional research methods, I was liberated by the inter-disciplinary vision and zeal of a new first supervisor, David McKie. He encouraged me to broaden my horizons and allowed my project to evolve philosophically rather than get mired in rigid structures. He injected life into my project by showing me how I could draw on my experiences to look for answers to my questions and also how I could build bridges between the field of management studies and other disciplines. To help me get a better handle on issues of diversity in the era of glib globalism, he took my research out from the narrow confines of the print media to a broader field of human communication that encompassed the business media, public relations, and organisational communication. In short, he not only changed the course of my research but made it more meaningful as well.

My journey of discovery was further enriched when I found a generous second supervisor in George Cheney, a leading scholar in the area of organisational communication. As a visiting professor at the University of Waikato, and later as an adjunct professor, George helped crystallise my key arguments. He encouraged me to draw on a multiplicity of perspectives to construct my theoretical formulations. He also helped synthesise my personal experiences, contemporary popular ideas and trends, and the scholarly literature on the subject of diversity at work. Meaningful research is never an individual pursuit. It is the collective effort of the researcher and all the people whose names are usually found in the acknowledgment section of a thesis. My thesis has drawn so much from the vision and thoughts of David and George that mentioning them merely in the acknowledgment section would not adequately chart the evolutionary path of this thesis.

Evolving theory: In search of flexibility of thought

This thesis has evolved over nearly four years. Answers to questions in each phase of research have led to further questions. The evolutionary nature of the project is particularly evident in the way the thesis has been structured. The following chapter retains the style and character of the traditional manner in which I had started my doctoral research on the intersections of media and politics in the Asianisation of the immigration

debate in New Zealand. The methods used in that phase of the research are documented in the chapter.

The principal issue of how and why Asians were marked out in the discussions on immigration in the chapter opened up more fundamental questions about how issues of race and ethnicity are intricately tied up with some of the basic assumptions about human diversity. To look for answers to these questions, I had to look beyond spools of microfilm and stacks of newspapers in the archives. I broadened the field of my study, first to sections of the business media, and then on to public relations and, finally, to the literature on diversity management.

In the section on the business media, I apply Fairclough's (1995) critical discourse analysis to a range of relevant western media texts. Although selected for diversity and currency, these business journalism texts relate to one Asian nation for a sustained focus. I chose India as that nation because I know more about it first hand. As I move on to the area of public relations, I critically examine the ways in which public relations theory deals with issues of diversity. In particular, I examine all the theoretical texts that talk of the concept of requisite variety, a term used by public relations scholars to incorporate issues of diversity. In analysing the ways in which the dominant managerial frame in diversity management constructs the other and glosses over issues of race and ethnicity, I draw

on readings (discussed in Chapter 3) in postcolonial studies and subaltern historiography as well as indigenous and feminist studies.

The theoretical approaches I draw from postcolonial criticism or subaltern historiography are reflected in the methodology of this thesis as well. The thesis does not seek the legitimacy of the canonical western research methodology. In fact, on the lines of Smith's (1998) pursuit, it embarks on a mission of 'decolonizing methodologies' since traditional research has been:

one of the ways in which the underlying code of imperialism and colonialism is both regulated and realized. It is regulated through the formal rules of individual scholarly disciplines and scientific paradigms, and the institutions that support them (including the state). It is realized in the myriad of representations and ideological constructions of the Other in scholarly and 'popular' works, and in the principles which help to select and recontextualize those constructions in such things as the media, official histories and school curricula. (Smith, 1998, p. 8)

Decolonising approaches: Looking beyond western concepts

In decolonising research methodologies, I have tried to challenge the methodological rigidity that can sometimes become a barrier in the path of

discovery. I have also confronted, as Smith (1998) puts it, the assumption of imperial research that 'western ideas about the most fundamental things are the only ideas possible to hold . . . the only ideas which can make sense of the world, of reality, of social life' (p. 56).

I do not indict all western research but, like Smith and subaltern studies scholars, I question the way western philosophers and thinkers ignorant of non-western cultures have, for generations, constructed theories of social science that supposedly embrace all of humanity (Chakrabarty, 1996). In resisting the privileged western canons of research, I undertake a subjective process of deconstructing dominant theories of diversity in management and media. Like any traditional research exercise, I have my research questions, I reference others and I place my work in context. But I am not constrained by the rigidity of structures. My research is an interpretative exercise that seeks an understanding of issues by placing them in their socio-political context. In my thesis, I examine the discourses of diversity in the context of the neocolonialism of a large Eurocentric or Anglo-American elite for which globalisation serves to maintain, and extend, western commercial interests and ideological supremacy. From a postcolonial perspective, globalisation, as Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin (1998) point out, 'has a history embedded in the history of imperialism' and demonstrates 'the transmutation of imperialism into the supra-national operations of economics, communications, and culture (p. 112). Despite its democratic veneer, globalisation is based on principles of imperial

dominance. Its rhetoric of a unified global community obscures the huge disparities in wealth, living conditions, and power among nations.

Besides, its market-centred formulations often seek to maintain the gap between the haves and the have-nots by concentrating on technology-driven network cultures to which only industrialised countries have easy access.

As postcolonial theorists have pointed out, the characterisation of colonised subjects as the other is the first step in 'establishing the binary separation of the colonizer and the colonized and asserting the naturalness and primacy of the colonizing culture and world view' (Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin, 1998, p. 169). In the following chapter, I provide a glimpse of the process of othering in media practice by showing how a debate on the issue of immigration in New Zealand was racialised by the media. The chapter contends that the Asian tag to the immigration issue created Asians as a group markedly different from the assumed norm of European immigrants.

The other immigrant: Asianisation of a socio-political issue in the New Zealand media¹

Nowhere is the dominant frame representing an elitist, neocolonial worldview more prominent than in the criss-crossing discourses on globalisation and immigration. The very regimes in the largely western developed world that publicise a new global order of borderless trade and capital flows are often the first to restrict the flow of human beings from one part of the world to another. As Sassen (1998) says:

while the new conditions of transnational economies are being produced and implemented by governments and economic actors in highly developed countries, immigration policy in those same countries remains centred in older conceptions about control and regulation. (pp. 6-7)

Structuring debates: The ‘problem’ of immigration

This chapter contends that crucial to these conceptions of control and regulation is the process of delineating which groups of immigrants fit the norms of the dominant elite (and are, therefore, welcome), and those

¹ An earlier version of this chapter was published in the *Australian Journal of Communication* (see Munshi, 1998).

which do not (and, therefore, are not welcome). Through an analysis of media discourses around the immigration issue in New Zealand, the chapter argues that this process of delineation, overt or covert, is based on the marking of ethnic and racial difference.

Immigration was a subject of public debate in New Zealand in 1996. Significantly, the major newspapers in the country ended up discussing it as an *Asian* immigration issue and throughout the year featured a wide range of stories about the pros and cons of Asian immigration. Media commentators spoke out for, or against, Asian immigrants and not immigration *per se*. Some felt that immigrants from Asia were having a 'free ride' in New Zealand (Roger, 1996, p. 6). Those at the other end of the scale argued that fewer Asian migrants would 'hurt the country's economy' (Riordan, 1996, p. D 1).

The unasked question was: Why was there a preoccupation with Asians when large numbers of immigrants were coming in from Britain, other parts of Europe, and South Africa as well? According to Heeringa (1996), the largest number of 77,563 long-term arrivals in New Zealand between 1993 and 1995 were either returning New Zealanders (23,273) or people from the United Kingdom (14,382) and Australia (12,894). Residency approval figures for 1996, the year under review, revealed that there were almost as many immigrants from Britain (5371) as there were from Taiwan (5634), the two biggest source countries in the year ("Residence approvals drop", 1997). A monthly break-up of the figures, in fact, showed that towards the end of the year, Britain had assumed its traditional position as the biggest contributor of immigrants to New Zealand with 513

residency approvals in September and 389 in October, ahead of China with 433 and 383 approvals, respectively, ("Fewer given residence", 1996; "Residence approvals", 1996).

In fact, in reporting on what became a contentious issue in 1996, the media appeared to function more like 'fun house mirrors' (Gitlin, 1980, p. 109), at once constricting and expanding, shortening and lengthening the picture of the immigration statistics in the country. The hands that held these 'fun house mirrors' were often political leaders who, on one side, made a lopsided use of the statistics either to hit out at the arrival of immigrants from Asia or, on the other side, to praise the contribution of Asians towards a healthy New Zealand economy (see e. g., "Peters: NZ scared", 1996; Young, 1996c). In all the positive and negative discussion on Asian immigration, which arose, at least partly, out of the reproduction of the views of politicians, what remained out of sight was the fact that the social, economic, or political impact of the number of people coming in from different countries in Asia was far from momentous. As demographic scholars such as Bedford and Pool (1996, p. 16) have pointed out, the net gain of people in 1995 from Australia, Europe, North America, and South Africa was larger than those from the principal Asian countries. Besides, although the gain of 'Asians' was the same as the net loss of New Zealand citizens that year, there wasn't as much discussion on the "exodus" of New Zealanders' (Bedford & Pool, 1996, p. 16).

Perhaps the media concentrated on Asians because, as Greif (1995) points out, their numbers were 'starting to make a dent on the self-declared perception' (p. 10) of *what a New Zealander is*. The self-declared

perception, shaped by the dominant elite of the nation, frames the point of reference against which the other immigrant is judged. It is probably this point of reference that the library official referred to in chapter 1 used when he insisted on calling me a foreigner. By his own admission, I appeared to be different from what he perceived to be the constructed norm of what a New Zealander ought to look like.

Furthermore, the Asian angle of the media coverage of the immigration issue relied, to a large extent, on the clubbing together of immigrants from diverse countries in Asia into one large homogeneous body. That body was constructed as different from the conventional understanding of what constituted a New Zealander. Counted together, immigrants from Asia did form a large group of new residents in 1995 but the use of a collective label like 'Asian' for individuals and families from scores of different countries 'obscures more than it reveals' because it 'fosters a belief in an illusory homogeneity and separateness' (McKinnon, 1996, p. 56). Asia, in fact, 'represents a far greater diversity based on race, religion, culture, language and ways and values of life than Europe' (Vasil & Yoon, 1996, p. 5).

This chapter argues that the emphasis on the 'Asian' component of the immigration issue derailed a potentially healthy discussion on the country's demography. Instead, the emphasis injected a lethal dose of race into the debate and polarised the nation, not only on whether immigration (read 'Asian' immigration) was good for the country, but also on whether it was useful for New Zealand to have links with Asia at all. To adapt a phrase of Bennett (1996), to the local context, 'the deluge of

simplistic but politically expedient' (p. xv) positive-negative reports on Asian immigration in New Zealand drowned out the voices needed to provide a more searching discussion on the issue of immigration in general.

Media discourses and social practices

The mediatised immigration debate in New Zealand confirms van Dijk's (1988) observation that 'the macrodimensions of social structure, history, or culture are enacted or translated at the microlevel of news discourse and its processing' (p. 182). News reports on immigration have to be seen in the context of the sociocultural as well as historical background of New Zealand, a country where immigration legislation has been marked by institutionalised racism (Chen, 1993) and where politicians have periodically raised the issue for electoral gain. In mapping the textual and contextual elements of the media discourse on the immigration issue in New Zealand, I have taken bearings from discourse analysis as charted by Fairclough (1995). This involves a line of analysis 'that can be understood as an attempt to show systematic links between texts, discourse practices, and sociocultural practices' (p. 16). Such an analysis not only examines texts but also studies discourse practices, or the manner in which journalists produce texts, in the context of the sociocultural dimensions of the issue being discussed.

The textual dimension of this analysis has been charted through an examination of the content of about 250 news reports on the immigration issue published in three major newspapers in New Zealand in 1996. Although any study of the media should ideally include an analysis of both

print and audio-visual media, I scrutinised only a select sample of the print media for this chapter. The decision to exclude radio and television was partly practical -- the research resources required were beyond the scope of the project -- and also took into consideration the fact that newspapers are important initiators and indicators of media trends on their own. Despite periodic claims that newspapers were 'destined to become fossils, there is still no sign that this is occurring' (Conley, 1997, p. 31). New Zealanders, in particular, are still 'hooked on the printed word' (Ovens & Tucker, 1999, p. 21). The three newspapers I chose for my study were: (1) *The New Zealand Herald*, a morning daily published from Auckland, the city on which the immigration debate was primarily focussed in 1996, and the newspaper with the largest circulation in New Zealand (226,702 copies, according to the *Summary of Audited Circulations*, 1996); (2) *The Dominion* (66,767 copies), the largest newspaper published from Wellington, the capital of the country, which houses the nation's parliament; and (3) the *Sunday Star-Times* (191,945 copies), a weekly newspaper with a national reach.

Guided in a large measure by *Newzindex* (1996), I manually searched the newspaper files in the University of Waikato library to identify reports on the immigration issue in the three publications. I read all these reports on the subject and examined the ways in which the immigration issue was covered by the newspapers. In reading the reports, I searched, in particular, for answers to questions on whether immigration was treated as a general demographic issue or as an ethnic issue and, also, whether the coverage was influenced by politicians. I also tried to place the reports in

the larger context of the sociocultural history of New Zealand in order to analyse them from a discourse analysis perspective.

Reading the texts (1): Interplay of media and politics

Being the vehicles of much of today's political discourse, the media have a close relationship with politics. So conscious are politicians of this relationship that speeches delivered by them in public meetings are very often tailored for the media. This trend, so aptly categorised as 'mediatised politics' by Fairclough (1995, pp. 184-200), was in evidence in 1996 in New Zealand, where politicians repeatedly made effective use of the media to propagate their political ideologies on the immigration issue to the public. These kinds of ideological positions not only cloud a debate but, as Paul Diesing (1982) says, 'produce distorted communication, allowing some concepts to be communicated but blocking and distorting others' (p. 5). Given the reach of the media and its ability to set the agenda for political issues (Rogers & Dearing, 1988), the spread of such distorted and simplistically polarised discourses can often have a predominantly emotional impact on the reading public. At worst, it can lead to the drowning out of substantive parts of an issue under a deluge of personal prejudices.

Another major feature of mediatised politics is the appropriation of public discourses on contemporary issues by politicians as well as media reporters (Fairclough, 1995). In February 1996, the leader of the New Zealand First Party, Winston Peters, catapulted the immigration issue to the front pages of New Zealand's leading dailies. After he made a speech at Howick, an Auckland suburb, about the need to cut immigration 'to the

bone' (Young, 1996a, p. 5), the immigration issue became a focus of attention in the print media in the days, weeks, and months to follow (see e. g., Gregory, 1996; Young; 1996c; Bain, 1996b). Just a day after carrying the report of Peters's Howick speech, *The New Zealand Herald* elevated the politician's remarks on the issue to the status of an eight-column banner lead on the front page ("Peters: NZ scared", 1996). Other newspapers and the audio-visual media were quick to pick up the cue and, going by the flood of stories on immigration, the issue became a major talking point in the country.

The focus on the immigration issue led to a rise in Peters's popularity ratings. One TV 3-CM Research poll projected him as the 'preferred prime minister' of the poll respondents, at least seven percentage points ahead of the incumbent prime minister ("Immigration issue", 1996). I attribute the rising Peters graph to two factors. First, the issue raised by him appealed to many New Zealanders, who saw in the politician's promise of immigration cutbacks a vision of 'somehow ridding the country of all the problems linked in the public mind with people of immigrant origin', to adapt Alec Hargreaves's (1995, p. 1) description from its French context.

The second, and by no means less important, factor relates to the wide coverage given to Peters's views by the media. If Peters's Howick speech, addressed to a handful of party faithfuls, had gone unreported, the issue might never have reared its head in the way it did. But it was a speech the media could not possibly ignore. From the media's point of view, 'news consists of events which can be recognised and interpreted as drama; and for the most part, news is what is made by individuals who are certifiably

newsworthy' (Gitlin, 1980, p. 147). Apart from the fact that Peters had been certified as newsworthy, his stormy relationship with the media notwithstanding, his speech and choice of venue had all the ingredients of drama, particularly when he put his finger on the fears and insecurities of at least a part of the population. For reporters, such as Young (1996a), who covered the speech, the concern expressed by Peters about 'a group of Vietnamese refugees stealing gold jewellery around the country' or about wealthy immigrants 'milking New Zealand's resources' was news (p. 5). It did not seem to matter if there was any basis for Peters's concerns. After all, a stray incident of crime linked to a group of refugees couldn't be attributed to all immigrants, Asian or otherwise. In addition, reporters could have chosen to question his categorisation of all new immigrants as 'wealthy', given that even at its peak in 1995, the business investor category attracted only 1,858 migrants out of a total of 56,260 ("Big money", 1996).

Once the newsworthiness, if not the factualness, of Peters's anti-immigration speeches, was established, the New Zealand First leader's politics were in full media play. Journalists made it a point to be around whenever Peters spoke. Even if he merely repeated his comments about new immigrants, it still made news: 'Peters rejects racist tag, resumes attack' (Ferguson, 1996, p. 3). This mediatisation of his political discourse laid the ground for the building up, and reinforcement, of stereotypes. As far as Peters was concerned, however, if the immigration debate was given an ethnic colour, it was 'the media's fault' (W. Peters, personal communication, September 17, 1996). He maintained that, in his speeches on controlling immigration, he had never mentioned Asians.

Irrespective of whether Peters used the term 'Asians' in his speeches or not, he did start his 1996 political campaign with an anti-immigrant speech at Howick which, as the media were quick to point out, was 'the heart of Auckland's Asian community' (Young, 1996a, p. 5). Soon afterwards, the immigration issue came to revolve around people from a certain geographical region of the world. Whether the nationwide discussion on the subject was constructed by political leaders or the media is debatable, but there is enough evidence to suggest that it was at least partially influenced by both.

Reading the texts (2): A war of words

With Peters's anti-immigration campaign giving his popularity ratings a boost, the ruling National Party jumped into the fray with a counter campaign. Prime Minister Bolger described Peters's speeches as 'grubby and despicable gutter politics' ("PM attacks Peters", 1996, p. 2) and went on to defend his government's immigration policy. That this counter-campaign, too, was lapped up by the media is illustrated by stories such as: 'PM attacks Peters' immigrant talk as grubby and despicable' ("PM attacks Peters", 1996, p. 2) and 'PM defends immigration policy' (Young, 1996b, p. 5).

The setting was perfect for a grand debate on immigration¹. The subject of the debate, however, was not so much the pros and cons of immigration but whether Asian settlers were strengthening the economy of the country with their 'skills and enterprise' or were mere 'parasites' eating off a country not their own (Munshi, 1996, p. 38). Those on the side of the Asian immigrants swore by their competence and strong work ethic. Those

against accused them of bringing social and cultural instability to the country, some even going to the extent of blaming them for the spread of disease and rising road accidents. The tenor of the debate was clearly divisive: Those who called for a reduction in the numbers of immigrants were accused of being racist; and those who supported immigration were said to be selling out the country (Victoria, 1996).

Peters and his supporters claimed that the government's immigration policy had left floodgates open for immigrants to steal the jobs of New Zealanders; Bolger and his cabinet colleagues praised the positive contribution made by immigrants to the economic growth of the country and claimed that New Zealand needed to develop economic ties with Asian countries. The media consistently provided the forum for the spread of the two mutually antagonistic political discourses which ended up polarising the country on an emotive social issue. As the media metaphors establish, it was presented not just as a debate, but as warfare: 'Peters takes immigration war into PM's territory' (Gregory, 1996, p. 5); 'Bolger swoops in on Peters' campaign' (Young, 1996c, p. 3); and 'PM makes furious attack on Peters' (Bain, 1996b, p. 3). The media woke up to the hollowness of these theatrical political discourses later in the year when the political protagonists, who presented the two faces of the immigration debate, teamed up to form a coalition government (Armstrong, 1996) and, in the process, deftly put the immigration issue aside. By the end of the year, the issue had subsided. Media reports on immigration were down to an odd, inconspicuous paragraph or two on the drastic fall in the number of residency approvals and the restoration of Britain to its traditional

position as the principal source of immigrants to New Zealand (“Fewer given residence”, 1996; “Residence approvals”, 1996).

The context (1): Race and the media

The damage to the social fabric, however, had already been done. The focus and tone of the immigration debate created the climate for latent racists to come out in the open. The divisions in the society were evident in the responses to an advertisement campaign, launched by the race relations conciliator, aimed at challenging attitudes towards racism. While the Federation of Ethnic Councils welcomed the campaign as an ‘education’, anti-immigration groups such as the Government Accountability League and political leaders such as Peters described it as a ‘waste of money’ (“Conciliator says”, 1996, p. 2).

The polarisation of the immigration debate continued to skirt the substantive issues of immigration *per se*. Instead, it dragged on as a war of words between those who were for, and those who were against, Asian immigrants. The polarisation was exacerbated by the formation of stereotypes in public as well as private spheres. Stereotyping, a practice born out of the categorisation process, connects with cognitive biases in groups of people (Brown 1995, p. 116). These biases, propped up by media images which categorise all members of a social or ethnic group by an attribute that can be traced to some members of the group, have the potential of developing into deep-rooted prejudices. Scholars (see e. g., Cohen, 1980; van Dijk, 1987) have shown how the formation of prejudices about new immigrants, particularly ones that are racially different from the dominant majority community, are associated with media

images that talk of immigrants 'flooding' or 'invading' the host country. Even a relatively balanced news feature on the immigration debate in an issue of *The Dominion* carried the headline 'Opening the floodgates' (Bain, 1996a, p. 11).

The issue of immigration, seen clinically, relates to the social dimensions of the movement of a large number of people from one geographical location to another. But it has become entwined with issues of race and ethnicity in many parts of the world. This is primarily because of the overtly, as well as covertly, racist immigration policies of governments in nations shaped by immigrants at various times in history, and the consequent socialisation processes of groups of people living in such societies. Immigration as an issue today has much less to do with the study of demography and the movement of people from one part of the world to another than it has to do with race, ethnicity and politics. In Brawley's (1995) succinct summary: The 'restriction and exclusion of Asian migrants were the cornerstones of Australian, New Zealand, Canadian and American immigration policies' for much of the 20th century (p. 327).

It is not surprising, therefore, that studies on media and immigration, in the countries named above (as well as in Britain and much of the western world), have been part of larger studies on media, race, and ethnicity. While the media do keep the people informed about the discrimination suffered by coloured immigrants, they also spread the perception of the coloured population as a problem -- a conception 'more conducive to the development of hostility towards them' (Hartmann & Husband, 1974, p.

112). In a comprehensive study on racism and mass communication, van Dijk (1987) argues that the media, more often than not, echo the attitudes of dominant elite groups like politicians, professionals, and civil servants in presenting formulations about immigrants being a burden on the socio-economic resources of the host country, leading to stereotypical negative images of immigrants. The 'media-induced prejudices' may be sustained by inferences drawn by readers from their own observations of 'foreigners who do get a house, a job, welfare, or other forms of "favorable" treatment' (van Dijk, 1987, p. 365). In other words, the elites provide the general interpretative framework within which the people can confirm or deny this schema by their own observations.

Some scholars (e. g., Betts, 1988; Birrell & Birrell, 1981) have provided a counterpoint to researchers codifying the negative attitude of the media towards immigrants by arguing that the mass media (in the context of Australia) have promoted the immigration 'growth lobby' by concealing or distorting the effects of rapid demographic changes caused by immigration. Over a decade ago, Betts (1988), in fact, made an appeal for the delinking of racial issues from a discussion on immigration but, in doing so, simultaneously acknowledged how entwined the subjects of race and immigration are.

This chapter argues that so much attention was focused on Asian immigrants in New Zealand because the mediatised political campaign of Peters had scratched 'a traditional anti-immigrant itch' in the country (Heeringa, 1996, pp. 55-61). This itch was left behind by old *racial* wounds. Institutionalised racism has a long history in New Zealand (Chen,

1993) and racially-prejudiced laws were repealed in the country as late as in 1964. According to Chen (1993), the race-based laws that were not repealed until 1964 included the Chinese Immigrants Act (No. 47), 1881, which required every Chinese to pay a poll tax; the Chinese Immigrants Amendment Act (No. 79), 1907, which imposed an additional reading test on all Chinese, 'to read "to the satisfaction of customs officials" one hundred words of English picked at random' (p. 15); and the Consolidated Statutes Enactment (Immigration Restriction Act), 1908, which called for all Chinese immigrants to be finger-printed 'since Chinese were all considered to look alike' (p. 15). Even after the promulgation of the Immigration Amendment Act of 1964, politicians have continued to use the 'immigration card' to win votes, no matter what the social consequences. The immigration issue figured prominently, for example, in the 1975 election campaign: 'Elected that year with a perceived mandate to restrict immigration flows, Robert Muldoon's National government moved forcefully to tighten the guidelines for permanent entry into New Zealand' (Brooking & Rabel, 1995, pp. 43-44). The primary targets of the anti-immigrant campaign at that time were Pacific Islanders.

The context (2): Media, immigration, and tagging the other

This historical background of New Zealand provides the template for the mediatised political discourses on immigration in the country. In order to subject the 1996 media coverage on immigration to Fairclough's (1995) critical media literacy, this chapter addresses one of his key questions: 'What wider sociocultural processes is this text a part of, what are its wider social conditions, and what are its likely effects?' (p. 204). The texts on the

immigration issue are part of the larger sociocultural history of the country. In *Racism and Ethnicity*, Spoonley (1988) finds the New Zealand media guilty of institutionalised racism. Focussing, among other issues, on the common media practice of using labels and codes to describe specific groups of people in specific contexts, he confirms that newspapers in this country do promulgate stereotyped images.

Spoonley's (1988) findings can easily be extended to include the media's approach towards issues relating to immigration and immigrants, particularly those from non-European countries. For example, it is a common practice for newspapers to tag some groups of migrants by their places of origin, such as Asia or the Pacific Islands, reinforcing stereotyped images of these groups. Kernot (1990) provides examples from news reports in the New Zealand media which resort to 'irrelevant race-tagging in crime reporting', and which are selective in 'targeting minorities', and accentuating 'their negative aspects' (pp. 53-55). Although New Zealand is essentially an immigrant nation, contemporary discussion on 'problems' relating to immigration in this country has almost always revolved around immigrants of non-Caucasian stock.

One of the principal frames to emerge from the media texts under study is the 'Asianisation' of the immigration issue. Around half of all the reports on the general subject of immigration (including reports on refugees and migration in a wider context) published in the newspapers under review in 1996 had a direct or indirect reference to Asians. Of the 144 reports in *The New Zealand Herald* in 1996, at least 71 were connected to the 'Asian immigration' issue in some form or the other; twelve of them even had the

word 'Asian' in the headline. At least 50 of the 96 reports on the subject published in *The Dominion* referred to the 'Asian immigration' issue, seven of which carried headlines with the word 'Asian' in them. Eight of the 13 reports on immigration in the *Sunday Star-Times* had references to the Asian immigration issue. The headlines of five of them included the word 'Asian'.

The media preoccupation with Asians mirrored the fact that the New Zealand public was far more concerned about Asian immigration than it was about Australians, British, or South Africans coming to the country (Hunt, 1996). In 1983, a major empirical study, concerned exclusively with media and immigration in Australia, had found that 'the frequency of references to Asians in the press was out of all proportion to their actual presence in Australia' (White & White, 1983, p. 47). Media reporting on the immigration issue in New Zealand is clearly not much different. The preoccupation with Asians is lopsided in a country where the population of ethnic groups of Asian origin is marginal. The major Asian ethnic groups resident in New Zealand are the Chinese (1.94 per cent of the population), Indians (1.06 per cent), Koreans (0.35 per cent), Filipinos (0.22 per cent), Cambodians (0.12 per cent), Japanese (0.20 per cent), Sri Lankans (0.13 per cent) and Vietnamese (0.08 per cent) (New Zealand Census, 1996).

According to Bedford and Pool (1996), the reason for the prominence of Asian migration figures in the debate on immigration in New Zealand 'seems to lie in an inability of New Zealanders to cope with large numbers of immigrants of colour' (p.16). The 'muddying' of the issue under discussion by an indiscriminate use of statistics without any exploration

into the complexities of immigration has fanned a debate that has generated 'more heat than light' (Pool, et al., 1996, p. 2). The categorisation of Asian immigration as a phenomenon distinct from immigration in general in media texts has a parallel in academic writing as well. A recent scholarly collection of essays on immigration and national identity in New Zealand highlights issues relating to Asian immigrants, particularly Chinese and South Asians (Greif, 1995). The volume, in fact, makes only cursory references to British and Irish immigrants and almost entirely excludes immigrants from the United States, Canada, and South Africa. Instead, it pays most attention to 'controversial Asian groups' (Greif, 1995, p. 10).

Amplifying deviance: The projection of Asians as the other

Given the 'sociocultural practice which the discourse practice and the text are embedded within' (Fairclough, 1995, p. 205), the media texts on the immigration issue concentrated overwhelmingly on the Asian angle. This concentration was in line with Leitch's (1990) argument that 'news stories define what is normative in society and what is deviant' (p. 88). In this case, Asians were constructed as deviant from the perceived normative in New Zealand society. Irrespective of whether any particular observer believed new Asian migrants to be 'valuable assets' to the country's economy (Ip, 1995, p. 199), or whether one was convinced that the government had been naive 'to open up the country to the rest of the world at a time when the nations of Europe are trying to insulate their borders against outsiders' (Walker, 1996, p. 202), the media labelled Asians as the other. In steering the discussion on immigration towards a narrowly-

focussed debate on whether Asian migrants are good for the country or not, the media contributed to what Ward (1995) calls an 'amplification of deviance' (p. 259). In this process of amplified deviance, Asians were either commodified as chips that could be traded on a stock exchange or set up as identifiable scapegoats to be insulted on the streets.

The process of marking out the other in New Zealand media and politics reflects a concern in the country to deal with a perceived threat to its existing demographic make-up and self-image. In business and management internationally, the dominant western elite makes parallel attempts to consolidate the process of othering to retain its control over a world where its population ratio to people of colour is declining. The following chapter moves out of the specificities of the New Zealand context to look at issues of diversity in the larger arena of international business. It builds the foundation for an examination of the way in which the neocolonial managerial elite uses tactical pluralism to keep the other on the margins of economic and political power. Continuing to restore the absent perspective of othering, the chapter uses the keys of postcolonial, feminist, and aboriginal/indigenous scholarship to unlock some of the dominant western assumptions and treatments of difference hidden in the field of so-called global business management and, its adjunct, the business media.

Theorising the other: Globalisation and the politics of difference

The demographic profile of the world is changing rapidly (Hammond, 1998; Mercer, 1998). Yet, despite the decreasing population ratio of its constituents, western neocolonial elites are not willing to accept a change in the global balance of economic and political power. This chapter identifies responses in the west to the increased diversity thrown up by demographic changes.

The chapter argues that these responses are pushed, consciously or unconsciously, by the fear of a more powerful, resurgent other. This fear is linked to the paranoia about steamrolling Japanese human machines (see e. g., Burstein, 1989), fire-breathing Chinese superdragons (see e. g., Burstein & De Keijzer, 1998), and leaping South-east Asian tigers (see e. g., Cragg, 1993). The essence of this fear is captured by Cragg's (1993) metaphor, which suggests that western businesses must 'join the throng or take the risk that, one day, they might just be eaten' (p. 18). In the Euro-American context, the fear of the other is also related to the ever-shifting dynamics of a world shaped by what Chen and Starosta (1998) list as four major trends: 'technological development', 'globalization of the

economy', 'widespread population migration', and 'the development of multiculturalism' (p. 4).

Leading megatrends writer Naisbitt (1997) has positioned the rise of the east as one of the major forces reshaping the world. Other scenarios, such as the one by Burstein and De Keijzer (1998), predict that, by the second decade of the 21st century, China will be the world's largest producer of, as well as the largest market for, manufactured goods. As the driving forces of the world's economy will have moved to the east by then, several Asian countries will consolidate their place as prominent exporters (Judy & D'Amico, 1997; Naisbitt, 1997). Taking account of these global shifts, this chapter argues that it is time not only 'to fully recognise and accept the east' (Naisbitt, 1997, p. 251), but also to acknowledge the emergence of a multicultural world of business with greater, and more equitable, collaboration. So far, neocolonial business elites have not addressed these more egalitarian expectations. They have, instead, chosen to compose anthems of multiculturalism designed to integrate the other into the dominant frame. This process of enlarging the western frame fails to acknowledge that the 'emergence of a truly global economy does not imply the extension of western values and institutions to the rest of humankind' (Gray, 1998, p. 4).

Shifting the gaze: Examining the west as an ideological concept

In critiquing the assumptions of diversity management, this thesis does not seek to demonise the west. Its purpose is to examine western discourses of management in the context of the hegemonic worldview of the west.

The terms 'west' and 'western' are used to denote the neocolonial thought processes that shape institutions driven by Eurocentric visions of science, culture, business, and development. I recognise that just as there are significant others in the geographical west, there are western models in place in the east as well. In addition, there exists a huge diversity of perspectives within the west. I readily acknowledge that many of the scholars whose works I use for my critique of western neocolonialism live and work in western locations.

Following one of them, Hall (1992), I examine the west as a 'concept' (p. 277) and acknowledge that the use of an apparently unified and homogeneous term like the west can be seen as an over-simplification. But, as Hall (1992) convincingly argues, this simplification itself 'can be used to make a point about discourse' (p. 280) in general, and the discourses of media and management in particular. Hall (1992) explains that

the discourse, as a 'system of representation', represents the world as divided according to a simple dichotomy -- the West/the Rest. That is what makes the discourse of 'the West and the Rest' so destructive -- it draws crude and simplistic distinctions and constructs an over-simplified conception of 'difference'. (p. 280)

In talking of the west, particularly western business institutions and managerial thought processes, I concentrate on neocolonial discourses which rely on an over-simplified conception of difference to consolidate the power of western elites. These elites, in most cases, consist of western, or west-trained, leaders of organisations who dictate global trade, economy, and politics.

Postcolonial scholarship does not claim that global exploitation and inequality are the doing of the west alone. What such scholarship does assert, however, is that the impact of the major knowledge traditions of the west look 'different from the perspective of the lives of the majority of the world's peoples' than from those of the 'lives of advantaged groups in the west and elsewhere' (Harding, 1994, p. 321). In other words, postcolonial criticism challenges the grand narrative of colonialism as the equivalent of universal progress.

In adapting a postcolonial critique to management, this chapter argues that the dominant discourses of diversity in both management and media

are still rooted in colonial ideas of 'civilising' what the neocolonial elite perceives to be an exotic and grotesquely different other. It also suggests that global management needs to recognise diversity issues not just on moral grounds but on economic grounds as well. After all, demographically, it is the Third World, often a loose synonym for the non-western other, that will make up 90 per cent of the world's population in the 21st century (Mercer, 1998).

The managerial elite in the west has yet to wake up to the resulting implications for issues of diversity and power. Its simplistic, albeit harmonious, celebration of pluralism within a dominant frame 'elides serious political and intellectual engagement with the issues' (Hegde, 1998, p. 271) of power imbalances. To go beyond the mere recitation of hollow mantras of diversity, this chapter follows Hegde's (1998) exhortation that 'scholarship in the multicultural context has to open up theoretical spaces that engage politically with difference and not just confirm it descriptively' (p. 272). In the domain of management, the chapter suggests that the first step towards such an engagement would be to look at how other fields of study have done it. On the lines of 'mapping disciplinary change' suggested by Jagtenberg and McKie (1997, p. 28), I seek to relate management studies to theoretical work in areas such as postcolonial, feminist, and aboriginal/indigenous studies. The theories provide a tool kit to understand the dynamics of difference in a less celebratory, and more rigorous, fashion.

The approach taken here has few parallels elsewhere in the management literature. In one rare study of issues surrounding workplace diversity from the perspective of postcolonial theory, A. Prasad (1997) shows how the 'discourse of workplace diversity is inextricably (and fatally) linked with the discourse of colonialism' (p. 305). A. Prasad's thesis suggests that by ignoring 'colonialism as a sense-making framework' (p. 286), diversity management scholars and practitioners overlook the power dynamics in motion in the diversity industry. Nevertheless, although A. Prasad's postcolonial critique of the diversity management industry remains valuable in a field that is still largely unaware of work in other disciplines, I contend that he does not go far enough. This chapter trains the spotlight more directly on managerialism as an aspect of neocolonialism.

Top banners and bottom lines: Diverse strategies for commercial advantage

Under this beam, the strategies of managerialism align more with an imperialising mission than with a vision of equality. In the new empire of western business, organisations are exhorted to 'capitalise on the opportunities presented by a diverse workforce' to get 'bottom-line results and a significant edge over the competition' (Gardenswartz & Rowe, 1998, p. 483). What remains unsaid is that, in the quest for bottom lines and competitive edges, the dominant managerial frame remains ethnocentric. Minority groups whose efforts are 'capitalised' upon remain on the fringes.

Indeed, the privileging of commercial advantage is an example of what Matustik (1998) calls the 'cannibalising' (p. 111) of global diversity.

Marketing diversity for profit globally, western businesses are not only masterminding 'exploitative conquests' but are also charting new 'imperial maps' (Matustik, 1998, p. 112).

The new neoimperial maps of big business follow the geographical contours of rich trading partners spread out across the globe. As many of the lucrative trading posts for the largely west-based developed economies are situated in non-western cultural zones, the managerial, often western, elites make use of diversity management, and its corollary, intercultural communication, to consolidate business supremacy for themselves.

That the mission of diversity management is imperial rather than egalitarian emerges from inconsistencies in the treatises of globalisation. The very champions of an unfettered mobility of financial capital in the so-called global economy are also the ones stridently opposed to the transnational movement of labour. As Sutcliffe (1998) says, 'while market, political, and cultural forces all make for increased migration, there is an unprecedented effort by governments to limit the movement of people' (p. 326). There is, in fact, an exercise of double control. As well as stopping 'aliens' from crossing national borders, those 'aliens' inside the borders are subjected to assimilationist strategies of managed pluralism.

Neocolonialist desires to manage the other are manifest in the free-market doctrine of globalisation which, 'like all other variants of the Enlightenment Utopia of a universal civilization . . . presupposes western supremacy' (Gray, 1998, p. 20). These presuppositions are an inadequate preparation for the west's declining demographic ratio and global shifts of power. As Gray (1998) continues, globalisation:

does not meet the needs of a time in which western institutions and values are no longer universally authoritative. It does not allow the world's manifold cultures to achieve modernizations that are adapted to their histories, circumstances and distinctive needs. (p. 20)

Global management, therefore, is unlikely to be sustainable until organisations become wholly multicultural and cease to view the other as a 'numerical, additive category' (Shiva, 1993, p. 146). Organisations need to recognise that, in a postcolonial world, the huge population bases of the non-western other are a major force in the reshaping of the world economy and cannot be kept on the margins. To address the new conditions, and to guide the larger field of management studies to a less biased understanding of difference and diversity, I draw from the work of postcolonial, indigenous studies, and feminist scholars engaged with issues of globalisation and neoclassical economics.

Understanding difference: Postcolonial approaches to global culture

From a postcolonial perspective, an understanding of a global culture cannot be based on the 'exoticism of multiculturalism' (Bhabha, 1994, p. 38). Management needs to recognise that it is not enough to pick up signifiers of cultural diversity which merely represent a range of separate systems of behaviour and values (Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin, 1998; Bhabha, 1994). Efforts to structure issues of diversity around 'such a framework may even continue to suggest that such differences are merely aberrant or exotic, as was implicit in imperialistic ethnographies' (Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin, 1998, p. 60).

These structured oppositions in cultural diversity consolidate the otherness of cultures outside the dominant Eurocentric or Anglo-American frame, and are patterned by implicit hierarchies of superiority and inferiority. As Shohat and Stam (1994) illustrate, these hierarchies talk of '*our* "nations," *their* "tribes"; *our* "religions," *their* "superstitions"; *our* "culture," *their* "folklore"; *our* "art," *their* "artifacts"; *our* "demonstrations," *their* "riots"; *our* "defense," *their* "terrorism"' (p. 2). The distinctions between 'us' and 'them' that underpinned the colonial era can still be identified today, even in the most benevolent discussions on managing diversity. In effect, the Eurocentrism of the colonial times has been remobilised as a

discursive accompaniment to western economic expansion or neo-colonisation.

Colonial discourses and discourses of diversity express similar values. Both sets of values express the missionary zeal to 'civilise' the other. If colonial advertising 'took scenes of empire into every corner' (McClintock, 1995, p. 209) of the world to drive home the benefits of western values, contemporary discourses on managing diversity update the picture of a world unified on western terms. Diversity, seen from a neocolonial perspective, is seen to be the *cause* of organisational problems and is, therefore, sought to be *managed*. Thus the civilising mission of the diversity industry continues the colonial strategy of Orientalism which, as defined by Said (1978), is the 'Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient' (p. 3). Under the western project of Orientalism, 'Europe claims to be a subject able to know the "Orient", the entire non-Western world, as an object, so exercising power over it' (Sim, 1999, p. 329). This power depends on the 'positional superiority' of the west that 'puts the westerner in a whole series of relationships with the Orient without ever losing him [sic] the upper hand' (Said, 1978, p. 7). An example of this positional superiority can be found in the recent public relations campaign of a western multinational company, PriceWaterhouseCoopers, which seeks to project its contribution to the development of Asia. One particular advertisement which forms part of the campaign has a photograph of a group of villagers in India huddled in

front of a community television set (see e. g., *The New Zealand Herald*, April 14, 1999, p. B 6). The caption accompanying the photograph talks of the company's role in building 'new self-esteem for their people' through western developmental strategies such as setting up 'new management teams' and privatising electric power (see e. g., *The New Zealand Herald*, April 14, 1999, p. B 6). In constructing an image of these western strategies to be superior and, therefore, worth aspiring to, the campaign actually attempts to impose western notions of development on the other.

As well as exposing the self-appointed civilising mission of a 'superior' colonial elite over a deliberately 'inferiorised' other, postcolonial scholarship also takes colonial discourses to task for creating compartmentalised entities that leave no room for what Bhabha (1994) calls 'the articulation of hybridity' (p. 38). Postcolonial studies, in fact, represent, in Hegde's (1998) terms, 'a global discourse that emphasizes interdependencies and dialectical interconnections' (p. 283). Studies in management need to recognise this notion of dialectical interconnections and acknowledge Hegde's (1998) distinction between 'heterogeneity and difference that emerge from postcoloniality' and 'urbane multiplicity' (p. 283).

The urbane multiplicity espoused by contemporary organisational strategists mirrors what Bhavnani (1999) calls the "saris, steel bands and samosas" approach to multiculturalism'. Such superficial multiculturalism

is based on pre-determined cultural characteristics of diverse groups: the food they eat; the languages they speak; the music they play; the clothes they wear; and so on. As Miyoshi (1997) puts it, 'in the international bazaar of exportable goods, difference is in style only, as in clothing, cooking, or entertainment' (p. 53). By defining culture as something that is fixed and static, this kind of unidimensional multiculturalism loses sight of the dialectical interconnections between various groups and works to maintain ethnocentric superiority. In essence, it attempts to consolidate hierarchical binaries around an exoticised other. It is precisely these binaries that subaltern historiography seeks to dismantle. This historiography offers what Spivak (1988) calls 'a theory of change' that inaugurates a process of 'politicization for the colonized' (p.3) by giving them the power to represent themselves.

Just as an Oriental other was, and still is, *constructed* by Eurocentric thought processes under such grand projects as 'Orientalism' (Said, 1978), the subaltern was, and continues to be, *recruited* 'to serve in subordinate positions under a determining and defining established authority' (Hawthorn, 1992, p. 97). The project of subaltern studies in postcolonial scholarship looks at the world from the perspective of these subordinated groups and grants them the agency that is denied to them by dominant western historiography. It defines itself

as an attempt to allow the 'people' finally to speak within the jealous pages of elitist historiography and, in doing so, to speak for, or to sound the muted voices of, the truly oppressed

The complex notion of subalternity is pertinent to any academic enterprise which concerns itself with historically determined relationships of dominance and subordination. (Gandhi, 1998, p. 2)

Adopted by Gramsci (1988) to classify people who were subjected to the hegemony of the ruling elite, the term subaltern represents the other, those groups who lie outside the influential inner circle of power. Incorporating the Gramscian thesis that subaltern groups were deliberately excluded or marginalised by the elitist texts of a universalised history, scholars of the subaltern studies collective have gone about documenting the socio-political complexities, the struggles, and the resistance movements of subaltern groups. A major task of these scholars, as Bhabha (1996) says, has been 'to retrieve some trace of the voice' (pp. 14-15) of the subaltern from the state's ventriloquism.

The rhetoric of equality and the indigenous experience

For the discourses of management and media to be serious about listening to the voice of the marginalised other (be it the voice of minority groups of non-western migrants or indigenous people), they would need to re-examine the insistent rhetoric of equality in western models of managing diversity. One way towards such a re-examination would be to

look at the work of indigenous/aboriginal studies scholars who have shown how the 'destructive social outcomes of racialised inequalities and racialised marginality' can be compelling 'despite the national rhetoric of multiculturalism and diversity management' (Morris & Cowlshaw, 1997, p. 3). Their scholarship exposes how managing diversity fails to be truly egalitarian because it sets out to tackle racial consciousness and divisions by race rather than by the 'racialised effects of social and economic inequality' (Morris & Cowlshaw, 1997, p. 3). Nothing illustrates this better than the emphasis of diversity managers on concepts such as 'working with Asian Americans', 'working with African Americans', and 'working with Latino Americans' (see e. g., Carr-Ruffino, 1996). Such concepts consolidate the dominant position of the western elite which is seen to be the pivot around which other marginalised groups are expected to revolve. At a critical level, these ideas appear to make a call for equality but at the same time make sure that the other remains on the periphery.

The equality value that diversity management espouses is egalitarian on the surface. However, as in the case of the treatment of indigenous groups, it conceals the racialised effects of such discourses of equality. Anti-discrimination laws leave 'untouched the ubiquitous and mundane forms of injustice and inequity that resonate with cultural difference' (Cowlshaw, 1997, p. 178). As a result, despite the prevailing discourse of equality, indigenous people continue to face socio-political marginalisation and significantly poorer statistics in areas of education,

employment, and health throughout the western world. In orchestrating their harmonious multicultural pastiche, the dominant neocolonial elite projects the other as an equal, but simultaneously clings to its power to project. The end result casts the other as an entity without an agency of its own. One typical example of this process in practice is in the celebration of the multicultural character of Santa Fe in the U.S. state of New Mexico. An official tourist brochure of the Palace of the Governors, run by the Museum of New Mexico, describes the Native Americans selling their traditional arts and crafts on the porch of the building as a 'living exhibit of the palace' (Palace walks, history talks, 1999). By reducing the first peoples of the land to the status of 'exhibits', the dominant elite effectively retains control in its hands. The other is an 'exhibit' of diversity that the dominant elite can flaunt. It is the exotic dimension of a multiculturalism that is packaged but not embraced, let alone internalised.

When equality is defined from the perspective of the dominant majority, minorities are relegated to the margins of power structures. In such a climate of pseudo-equality, even institutions built to safeguard the interests of minorities end up being appropriated. In New Zealand, for instance, a statutory institution to promote and observe race relations was set up to work as a watch dog against discrimination on grounds of race. Ironically, it is the majority community that has made far greater use of the services of this institution than has any minority group.

The Annual Report of the Office of the Race Relations Conciliator (1997) reveals that the office received more complaints from the majority Pakeha (European New Zealander) group than it did from any of the minority groups. In 89 per cent of the complaints received by the office, the ethnic background of the complainants was made available. Of these, as many as 40 per cent of the complainants were Pakeha while only 27 per cent were Maori. The number of complaints made by Pacific Islanders and Asians were even smaller. The statistical break-up of the number of complaints reveals that even institutions that are, in spirit, meant for the use of minority groups get used by the dominant majority although majority groups have standard legal outlets available to them for redressal of grievances.

Layers of globalisation: Feminist critiques of the economics of multiculturalism

This kind of continued marginalisation of the minorities, in a system which purports to include them, is mirrored in the world of globalising business and industry. As feminist economists point out, globalisation processes are 'embedded in, and refracted through, power structures grounded in ethnicity, race, gender, class, and age' (Marchand, 1996, p. 586). In fact, according to Chang and Ling (cited in Marchand, 1996), there exist two distinct, and often polarised, versions of the globalised world: One is the 'masculinised high-tech world of global finance, production and

technology'; and the other is the 'feminised menial economy of sexualised, racialised service' (p. 586).

Feminist analyses of neoclassical economics show how the male point of view invariably guides seemingly gender neutral notions of market relationships (Bakker, 1994). Workers or entrepreneurs, for example, are overtly gender-neutral terms, but women and men (as indeed members of different cultural groups) have very different experiences as workers or entrepreneurs (Bakker, 1994). In fact, as Elson (cited in Bakker, 1994) points out, a worker or an entrepreneur 'is most often taken to be a man -- creating male bias in both economic analysis and economic policy' (p. 5).

Similar critiques of gender power imbalances inform some organisational studies literature. However, if, as feminist critics argue, inherent social, cultural, and political inequalities reinforce the uneven nature of participation in the market by women -- and the evidence is strong (see e. g., Brodie, 1994; Bakker, 1994) -- then the social, cultural, and political experiences of minority groups face similar racist and sexist organisational structures and thought processes. As a consequence both women and non-westerners become unequal partners in the superficially multicultural, and nominally equitable, marketplace.

Maps without margins: Resisting neocolonial theorising of diversity

Similarly, theories of managing diversity do not challenge but only redraw 'the lines and circles that define insider and outsider' (Willett, 1998, p. 13).

The western intellectual tradition has been consumed by the 'urge to theorize' and it is this compulsive theorising that has undermined 'the otherness of others' (Krippendorff, 1998). The redrawing of lines does not effectively fill the gap between the centre and the margins. Indeed, even the most inclusive and benevolent of theorising in diversity management ends up, at best, leaving the other at the margins. Because of the sheer range of diversity and its limitless contours, multiculturalism, as Willett (1998), points out, 'should never be fully theorized' (p. 14). In other words, multiculturalism needs to be projected as a map without margins.

This thesis attempts to prepare a marginless map of diversity and multiculturalism. As a part of the preparation, I have first tried to identify the centre points and margins drawn by existing writings on diversity in the fields of media and management and then I have sought to erase them. As they are being drawn and redrawn by the neocolonial elites to serve their interests, these lines of demarcation are often invisible to western trained eyes and are often blurred.

Looking at diversity in terms of equitably shared power and resources, I have attempted to expose the seemingly benign endeavour of neocolonial

diversity managers who talk of equality but never give up their stranglehold on power. Instead, the ideology of diversity management aligns with the ideology of world trade. Largely western developed nations provide aid and loans to the underdeveloped nations -- the other -- on the condition that they not only buy equipment and services from the west but service the loan debt as well. The advertised mission is to bring equality to the world. In practice, this seeming equality works to the obscenely lopsided advantage of the neocolonial west: As little as '20 per cent of the world's people in the highest-income countries', largely in the west, 'account for 86 per cent of the total private consumption expenditures -- the poorest 20 per cent a miniscule 1.3 per cent' (United Nations Development Programme [UNDP], 1998, p. 2). While the policy-making dominant elite in international funding organisations and trade bodies live in luxury, nearly three-fifths of the 4.4 billion people in developing countries lack basic sanitation, and a third have no access to clean water (UNDP, 1998).

This thesis contends that just as the rhetorics of aid, development, and the globalisation of trade actually end up increasing the gap between the haves and the have-nots, the rhetoric of cultural diversity in management translates into greater access for expansionist neocolonial business elites to wider populations and potential profits without any corresponding payoff for most of the inhabitants of non-western nations. This rhetoric is, essentially, guided by the need of the neocolonial elites to 'capitalise on

the opportunities presented by a diverse workforce' to get 'bottom-line results and a significant edge over the competition' (Gardenswartz & Rowe, 1998, p. 483).

Furthermore, this thesis argues that unless, as the postcolonial physicist, Shiva (1993), puts it, 'diversity is made the logic of production' (p. 146), diversity in the workplace cannot be sustained, nurtured, or preserved. Shiva's (1993) perspective is echoed in organisational studies. Cheney (1998), for example, argues that, unless market-driven organisations stop shaping and directing customers according to the narrowly-defined desires of the elite that runs them, they cannot achieve the goals of positive social change. 'To temper the sweep of marketization', as Cheney (1998) suggests, we may have to 'consider new measures of social satisfaction, happiness, and social progress as alternatives to traditional measures of productivity' (p. 40). We also have to redefine the market in terms of people and not just in terms of business opportunities for a dominant neocolonial elite.

In reformatting the market along these lines, western participants would need to encompass the needs of the vast majority of the world's population that continues to live on the peripheries of power. The lopsidedness of the existing market is illustrated by global consumption patterns. Today, for example, 'each person in the United States uses 45 barrels of oil annually, compared with one barrel of oil for each Indian

citizen' (Porter & Brown, 1996, p. 112). The 'market', as understood by the countries of the developed west (or north), primarily relates to economic gain for the minority elite that controls the majority of the world's resources. Champions of a free market in the developed world are often the first to impose barriers when their interests are affected. For instance, as Porter and Brown (1996) point out:

Subsidies to agricultural exporters in the United States and other OECD countries deprive developing country-producers of markets and depress world prices for those goods, exacerbating trade imbalances and developing-country indebtedness. European beef exporters undercut African producers by massive subsidies, for example, and thus dominate African markets. (p. 111)

This domination is consolidated in management discourses on issues of diversity. For the neocolonial elite, diversity is something that can be marketed and exploited for gain. In this environment of what Martin (1998) calls 'consumerist multiculturalism' (p. 143), the dominant managerial frame makes sure that global society, as indeed global organisations, remain tiered in strata which are differently advantaged and disadvantaged. The biggest of these tiers which represent the vast multitude of impoverished 'others' is kept right at the bottom.

The next chapter considers how western media support the existing binary frame. It analyses how selected business media texts mask neocolonial economic expansion under the garb of a neutral-sounding globalisation in featuring people living outside the dominant frame. It also shows how these texts align with the discourses of business in painting the world in fresh strokes of Orientalism and Eurocentrism.

Marketing the other: Business media, trade imperatives, and a remobilised Orientalism

This chapter analyses western business media discourses and shows how they continue to divide the world into binary hierarchies. Under these hierarchies, the politics, economics, and culture of a dominant west are projected as superior to those of the non-west. In focussing my analysis of such discourses, I look critically at a diverse, yet intricately linked, range of media texts circulating around the India/culture/business nexus. I argue, firstly, that the neocolonial western media in the 1990s have effectively updated racist ideologies like Orientalism (see Said, 1978) and Eurocentrism (see Amin, 1989; Shohat & Stam, 1994) and, secondly, that this contemporary remobilisation acts as a discursive accompaniment to western economic expansion.

Reporting to the dominant elite: Media discourses in a tiered global village

Continuing Eurocentric and Orientalist perspectives into the late 20th century, the west's projection of itself as culturally, socially, politically, and economically superior is intricately linked to the media's belief in the tenets of the theories of the modernisation school of the 1950s and 1960s. In these theories, modernisation entails the transition from a simple, primitive society to a complex, modern one (So, 1990). Although these theories have been described as ethnocentric ideas based on fallacious

assumptions of the Third World as backward, primitive, and in need of a western form of development (Frank, 1978; Amin, 1974), they continue to persist. In media discourses, these modernisation theories form the basis of the portrayal of the west as a *modern* society with an *ideal* economic model of development. Such a society is presented as distinct from the other, which is characterised as the primitive.

In constantly reinforcing Eurocentric views of the world that engender 'a fictitious sense of the innate superiority of European-derived cultures and peoples' (Shohat & Stam, 1994, p. 1), modernisation theories dismiss all that is associated with non-western societies as primitive to demonstrate the so-called progress of the west (Harding, 1993). The contribution of ancient eastern civilisations in India, Egypt, and China, for example, towards shaping modern scientific or intellectual thought is systematically underplayed. The eastern contributions of paper, printing, gunpowder, or the mathematical concept of 'zero', for instance, are taken for granted and rarely acknowledged (Inden, 1996). Neither is there much acknowledgement of the fact that the technological advances of the present era which the developed world likes to claim as its own would hardly have been possible without the 'neocolonial "braindraining" of the "third world"' (Shohat & Stam, 1994, p. 14).

This superiorising of the west in western media tends to structure a simplistic portrayal of the world in 'us' and 'them' terms which, in turn, helps justify the existence of the economic 'haves' and 'have-nots' in an era of globalisation. In rallying behind President Bush to force Saddam Hussain into submission during the Gulf War of 1990-91, for instance,

much of the western media caricatured the conflict as a simplistic struggle between good and evil to establish the moral and cultural superiority of the west. The media in general, and the television screen in particular, were 'mobilised' by the western coalition into constructing 'a collective sense of omnipotence over an alien "monster"' (Robins, 1996, p. 80). In churning out the simple (often propagandist) stories of the good ones crushing the evil ones, the media chose not to talk about the economic dimensions of a war that had more to do with the control of oil than military ethics or morality. This is not to defend the politics of Saddam Hussain in any way, but to point out how the global mass media, overtly or covertly, play a role in consolidating what Childers (1992) calls the 'gross inequities of the continuing, never-reformed imperialist economic system' (p. 237) controlled by neocolonial powers.

Despite the transition from the era of colonisation to globalisation, the imperialist economic system has remained firmly in place. In the colonial days, European domination of the colonies was largely 'mercantilist' in nature where the foreign power 'essentially extracted the resources it required' (Mohammadi, 1995, p. 364). The economic exploitation of that time was usually enforced by a strong military presence. In today's world, the exploitation is far more subtle. It is carried out by transnational conglomerates who own 'two-thirds of the planet's fixed assets and control 70 per cent of the world trade' (Robinson, 1996, p. 20).

Champions of the imperialistic economic system of the neocolonial west invariably reduce developments relating to other peoples to a discussion on whether these developments are good for the west or not (Said, 1994).

In the international media, this desire to determine what is good, in terms of what is economically and strategically beneficial to a 'superior' west, underpins the ground rules of the coverage of many Third World countries. When they refer to the other, media texts constantly map the exploitative hierarchical structures based on the Eurocentric assumptions of cultural, social, political, and economic superiority of the west. These structures, often hidden as simple information-disseminating texts, can be exposed by 'intertextual analysis' (Fairclough, 1995, p. 61). Such an analysis incorporates critical reading, defined by Fairclough (1995) as a kind of 'cultural interpretation' (p. 61), that places a particular text in the social and cultural context in which it is produced.

In order to place some of the neocolonial business media discourses under the contextual microscope, this chapter studies the coverage of the 50th anniversary of India's independence in 1997 by four of the world's most significant international business magazines. Of the chosen magazines, two (*Business Week* and *Fortune*) are from the United States, one (*The Economist*) is from the United Kingdom, and one (*The Far Eastern Economic Review*) is published geographically in Hong Kong but is essentially a western journal as it is wholly owned by the United States-based Dow Jones & Company, publishers of *The Wall Street Journal*. My choice of India as the topic of coverage was dictated by the need for a manageable focus on one country and the fact that I have extensive knowledge of its economy, society, and politics.

Playing the media bourse: Making bulls and bears of tigers and elephants

For the neocolonial business media, an effective device to maintain binary hierarchies in a globalised world is to construct the other in less than human terms. It is this device that consistently deploys animal metaphors to describe the other. The reduction of the other to a sub-human level is done in multiple ways by the use of metaphors which take on positive or negative connotations in different contexts. The deployment makes most sense when viewed as part of the ideological apparatus of the dominant western media.

For example, the *Far Eastern Economic Review* (21 August 1997) had for its cover story on India's independence anniversary a picture of an elephant on an Indian street. It superimposed the picture with a caption that read: 'Call this a tiger?' (appendix A). The *Review* was clearly trying to be disparaging about what it perceived to be the slow pace of economic reforms in India through the use of metaphors of animals which, as Baker (1993) points out, are 'frequently conceived as the archetypal cultural "other"' (p. ix). In this context, not only was the *Review* dehumanising India but also referring, by implication, to the South-east Asian nations as 'tigers', which had become widely acknowledged in business circles as a (relatively) positive animal metaphor. The tiger metaphor, however, also has a negative connotation which was mobilised to fit economic and political purposes. As a statement by a senior American Treasury official, as early as 1987, put it, although the newly industrialised South-east Asian nations 'may be regarded as tigers because they are strong, ferocious traders, the analogy has a darker side (too). Tigers live in the

jungle, and by the law of the jungle' (cited in Bello & Rosenfeld, 1990, p. 9).

In using these animal metaphors, business writers confirm how the west often finds it difficult to look at the non-western other in fully human terms in other areas. In *Moving the Centre*, the postcolonial Kenyan novelist, Thiong'O (1993), talks about how a particular issue of the in-flight journal of a prominent western airline featured Kenya as a 'vast animal landscape, ruled over by elephants, lions and leopards' (p. 133). To the western writer of the article, Kenya was 'completely devoid of human beings' (Thiong'O, 1993, p. 133). This telling observation of the ruthless oppression and silencing of African workers 'so that the hunter for profit can count his coins in peace and then talk about the aids and loans from the "developed" world to the developing countries' (Thiong'O, 1993, p.132) holds true for discourses on India as indeed for much of Asia and the Third World.

Just as Thiong'O's Africa is a safari park for western tourists, India is a hunting ground for western businessmen. In their perspective, *fast-paced* animals such as tigers are more appealing than apparently slothful ones such as elephants. Similarly, the business media privilege the metaphorical tiger over the elephant. In January 1995, *The Economist's* (21 January 1995) 30-page 'Survey of India' saw India, with its 250 million middle class, as a huge emerging market for western financial institutions. Also, given its democracy, the presence of an English-speaking class, and a decent legal system, it looked 'more manageable' than China ("Hello, world," 1995, p. Survey 3). Accordingly, the cover of the survey section

had the picture of a tiger emerging from a dark cave (appendix B). Barely eight months down the line, when the American gas company, Enron, ran into trouble with its power project in Maharashtra, the same journal ran a cover story of an India 'that still says no' ("India that still says no," 1995, cover). Predictably, the cover again featured an elephant (appendix C).

The preoccupation with the animal imagery in stories on India kept surfacing in *The Economist*, once as a headline, 'Tiger or tortoise?' ("Tiger or tortoise," 1996, p. 21) and then as a sub-heading, 'Of tigers and elephants' in the editorial on the 50th anniversary of India's independence ("India's next 50 years," 1997, p. 9). The journal echoed the same annoyance about the slow pace of reforms in an elephantine India as had the *Far Eastern Economic Review*.

This use of the elephant has a didactic function in that 'animals are sometimes represented as the Other, the Beast, the Brute, the model of disorder or the way things should not be done' (Tapper cited in Baker, 1993, p. 83). Clustering around the same animal image to depict India, the United States-based *Business Week* (11 August 1997) decided to be creative and avoid photographs of real elephants. It came up with a stylised image of an elephant for its cover story on the anniversary of India's independence (appendix D). The image on the magazine's cover of a caparisoned elephant had one obviously western man on its back, another ensnared in its trunk and yet another flattened by one of its gigantic feet. The caption on the cover explained to the western readership that investing in India meant dealing with 'finicky consumers' and 'bewildering politics' and that it was clearly 'not for the fainthearted'

(“Investing in India,” 1997, cover). Ironically, unlike the image, it is not the western businessman but the average Indian who is actually being flattened by multinational heavyweights. In the era of globalisation, societies which cannot keep pace with the neocolonial demands of the market are the ones that are brutalised. As Lal (1996) says:

The new global order has in fact no use for those who have nothing to sell or buy. They are its outcasts. This fate is reserved not only for individuals but entire nations. Those who have little to sell are also in no position to buy anything and whatever they get by way of loans is soon used up. Their plight is worse than ever before because of a net outflow, in recent years, of capital from poor societies, with their debt repayment obligations, to the rich. (p. 10)

The consistent theme of elephantine India highlighted the difference between it and the South-east Asian tigers. However, in the bid to show India in a comparatively dimmer light, many of the business magazines missed the fact that, although the Indian economy was not as fast-paced as they would have liked it to be, it was more stable than others in Asia. India had foregone the speed of the tigers in holding back the full convertibility of the rupee on the capital account. And, contrary to what many economists believe, this slow path to full convertibility kept India's financial markets stable. In the late 1990s, the South-east Asian economies found themselves in the midst of an acute currency crisis (see e. g., Alexander, 1997). In moments such as this, the financial stability of India does stand out. But, in a key contradiction, the western media, which have since come to blame South-east Asia's 'reckless growth' for its

economic turmoil, continue to describe the economic reforms in India as being too slow. This contradiction is conveniently overlooked by media immersed in the Eurocentric line of economic thinking that entails the opening up of global markets for western interests. The most positive animal imagery the media give to India is *The Economist's* grudging acknowledgement that 'India may be less than a tiger, but is no longer a bumbling centipede' ('India and Pakistan at 50," 1997, p. 17).

Shackling the independent: Neocolonisation in an era of globalisation

The narrow and negative focus on India evident in imagery occurs in economic and political coverage. Accordingly, while the business media pride themselves on global reporting, western interests remain paramount in much of the coverage. This overwhelming emphasis on western neocolonial interests manifests itself in the texts on the 50th anniversary of India's independence in each of the four business magazines under study. A few brief examples illustrate the common emphases. For example, whose bottom line is the bottom line is very clear in *Fortune* (8 September 1997):

The bottom line for foreign investors? Patience, and plenty of it, will remain a crucial characteristic of those who successfully navigate this vast, enticing, and infuriating economy. (Elliott, 1997, p. 47)

Similarly, *Business Week* (11 August 1997) sends a warning aimed at outsiders when cautioning that, although India's 'vast market potential

lures foreign companies . . . many have been tripped up by local consumers and rivals' ("Investing in India," 1997, p. 21).

Ten days further on, the *Far Eastern Economic Review* (21 August 1997) makes its sympathies apparent: 'Bureaucratic hassles are another problem bedeviling foreign investors' (Biers & Sidhva, 1997, p. 72). Finally *The Economist* (16 August 1997) confirms India's familiar lack of 'tigerness':

The economy is only half-reformed. If the government could finish the job by privatising faster, withdrawing support from 'sick units' and deregulating labour markets, India might grow at a tigerish 8 % or 9 % a year. Then the next 50 years, unlike the past 50, would visibly transform the lives not just of a minority but of the mass of the people. ("India's next 50 years," 1997, p. 9)

The references to India's 'vast market potential' but 'infuriating' and 'half-reformed' economy expose the western business media's sense of frustration. In the discourses of the neocolonial media, globalisation is intended to spread the message of western capitalist thought. There is considerable annoyance, therefore, with any country that 'does not measure up to these expectations. Recalcitrant nations are immediately projected as a wayward other (signified effectively by the use of the elephant metaphor). This construction of a wayward other is quite clearly a remobilisation of Said's (1978) Orientalism.

The Orientalist media discourse on India consistently works to inferiorise a complex nation. Driven by the theories of the modernisation school, which delineate the difference between modernised societies and non-modernised ones in both social and economic terms (Levy, 1967), the media indulge in social as well as economic inferiorising. Modernised societies, according to modernisation theorists, were characterised, among other attributes, by 'cultural norms of rationality, universalism, and an emphasis on money circulation and the market' (So, 1990; Levy, 1967). For such theorists, influenced as they were by the functionalist theory of Parsons (1951), modernity was incompatible with tradition.

As the modernisation ideology continues to fall apart in practice and has long been subjected to severe theoretical critiques, the media's continued adherence to the theories of modernisation is anachronistic. Nevertheless, the ideology underpins the continuous media labelling of the other as primitive. One effective means of such labelling is in the consistent branding of India in casteist and religious terms.

Branding parallels: From business media to cultural coverage

The construction of a casteist image of India fits into the creation of binaristic hierarchies by simplistically categorising India as a primitive society. During the visit of the British queen's visit to India on the 50th anniversary of the country's independence in 1997, the international news agency *Reuters* circulated a photograph of Elizabeth II accepting a pot of water from a so-called untouchable woman. The caption anchoring the photograph claimed that the queen's gesture 'broke through India's caste

system' (*Sunday Star-Times*, 19 October 1997, p. A 11). In an attempt to cast India in the stereotyped casteist mould, the western caption writer framed the picture with an assumption of western superiority. In a supreme irony, the picture clearly showed how the hands of the queen, which were supposed to be *touching* an "untouchable", were fully gloved. The caption writer also seemed to be oblivious to the fact that, while commoners could at best aspire to get a glimpse of Buckingham Palace in London as tourists, a person from a once untouchable community, President K. R. Narayanan, occupied Rashtrapati Bhavan (the Presidential Palace) in New Delhi. By describing India in casteist terms, the western media again supplies the west with a 'superiority fix'.

The neocolonial west (and this holds good for contemporary media in the west too) tries to 'understand other cultures by slotting them into a pre-existing code or discourse which renders their (perceived) *oddity* [parenthesis and emphasis added] intelligible' (Turner, 1994, p. 37). Any description of India as a pre-modern country driven by the social dynamics of caste and religion is assumed to be immediately intelligible to a western readership. It feeds into that readership's preconceived notions and prejudices. In a sense, the huge literary success in the west of writers such as the Booker Prize winning sensation of *The God of Small Things* fame, Arundhati Roy (1997), can at least partly be explained by their innate ability to make India 'intelligible' to the Western readership by talking about the deep socio-political divisions in the country along the lines of caste. There can be no doubt about the literary skills of Roy and the felicity with which she uses the English language (which, contrary to popular western perception, is as much an Indian language as Hindi or Marathi or

Tamil or any other). But *The God of Small Things* is 'not oblivious to world-markets' and western readers 'view her with the same admiring gaze that they reserve for beautiful parakeets who, amazingly, can do linguistic imitations as well' (Nair, 1997, p. 6).

For the media, almost every story on the non-western other is slotted into its pre-existing codes. In reporting on the death of Mother Teresa, an internationally-circulated Reuters despatch gushed, in a tone of surprise, about how in "mainly Hindu India" ("World mourns", 1997, p. 1), the Catholic nun was revered as a Mother. In trying to stick to the pre-existing code of India as a 'Hindu nation', the media seemed to forget that India was a secular country which was home to Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Jains, and Buddhists. They also seemed to be oblivious to the fact that Christianity, by which Europe as indeed much of the west defines itself, is 'Oriental in origin' (Amin, 1989, p. 100) and came to India as far back as 52 A.D. (Visvanathan, 1993), much earlier than it became established in Europe.

Inferior reporting: Death, history, and privilege

The coverage of the death of Mother Teresa by the western media was another case of categorising India as a morally inferior other. In an unmistakably superior tone, a despatch on the funeral of the Mother, filed by the American news agency *Associated Press* and published, among others, in *The New Zealand Herald* ("Powerful and poor," 1997), talked of how 'the importance of caste and privilege' is 'inescapable' in India. The despatch talked about politicians and high-ranking bureaucrats who 'roared to the front of the line in big white official cars and strode into the

chapel through a special entrance' ("Powerful and poor," 1997, p. B 3) while ordinary citizens waited outside. Around the same time, television audiences following the funeral of Princess Diana in London could see how heads of state and important dignitaries found a place at the elite funeral mass at Westminster Abbey while commoners spent a night outside to secure a place along the route of the funeral procession. Despite these circumstances, none of the media reports ever described Britain as a place where 'the importance of caste and privilege was inescapable'. The coverage of the funeral of Mother Teresa in Calcutta and that of Princess Diana in London were designed to fit pre-existing codes that defined Britain (the Eurocentric 'Us') as liberal and egalitarian and India (the Oriental 'Them') as casteist and hierarchic.

While casteist and religious tags are useful in Orientalist descriptions of India, they conveniently ignore the fact that it was those harbingers of western modernity, the colonial bureaucracy, which reinforced the institutions of caste and religion in India in the first place. To a substantial extent, as Pollock (1993) points out, 'it was British colonialism that, in cooperation with orientalism, "traditionalized" society in such a way that it took on a form, a hegemonic Sanskritized form, that it may never really have had' (p. 97). While colonialism turned India into what is defined by the modernisation school as a socio-culturally backward country, it also systematically deindustrialised a state whose modes of commerce and production were among the most efficient in the 18th century world (So, 1990; Baran, 1957).

Not much has changed fundamentally in the era of globalisation. It was in the age of colonialism that Eurocentric ideology was born and nurtured. Eurocentrism, as Shohat and Stam (1994) point out, 'first emerged as a discursive rationale for colonialism, a process by which European powers reached positions of hegemony in much of the world' (p. 2). The Eurocentrism of the colonial times, and its modernist successor in late 20th century capitalism, has now been remobilised as a discursive accompaniment to western economic expansion or neocolonisation. An intertextual reading of the media stories on the recent coverage of the 50th anniversary of India's independence from colonial rule, on the lines suggested by Fairclough (1995), reveals the Orientalist or Eurocentric context that underpins the seemingly neutral texts of the stories on death, destruction, corruption, and oppression in India.

Limited independence: Reporting contradictions

The categorisation of India into a pre-existing Orientalist code of a wretched country of hapless souls continues to be the cornerstone of western media coverage. The media certainly built on that foundation to report the golden jubilee of India's independence. That India is a self-sufficient country which produces all the food it needs; manufactures everything from satellites and aircraft to pins and needles; conducts pioneering research in science and technology; and has one of the world's largest pools of skilled technical manpower, including doctors, engineers, and professional managers, does not fit into the code assigned to it by a world that presents itself as superior.

Instead India is pushed into an oriental mould that is far removed from the west. The standard images are, of course, exotic, with tigers, elephants, and cows on city streets, but they co-exist with constructions of the country as reeking with corruption, over-population, and squalor. There is, of course, no denying that there is considerable poverty and illiteracy in India. Nor can it be denied that, notwithstanding all the attempts at getting rid of caste-based social inequities through state-monitored affirmative action programmes, there are casteist tensions in the country. None of this appears to hinder the Fords and the Daewoos, the McDonalds and the Kentucky Fried Chickens, the Coca Colas and the Pepsis from setting up, or expanding, their businesses in the country.

This contradiction in the western worldview on India surfaces constantly in the media. On the one hand, *Fortune* (8 September 1997) describes India as backward:

In a region of emerging economic powerhouses, where countries like Singapore and Malaysia have leaped from Third to First World status in only a few decades, India is by almost all measures a woeful laggard. More than a third of its citizens still live below the poverty line. Less than a third of the population has access to proper sanitation facilities. The state of its infrastructure is awful. The opportunity to get a decent education is nonexistent for many of the poor. And some six years after the government launched a wide-ranging economic liberalization programme, foreign investors eager to do business here still too often run into the kinds of

roadblocks that make them think twice about whether it's worth their trouble. (Elliott, 1997, p. 43)

Yet, on the other hand, the magazine, in its passage cited above, indicates that foreign investors are said to be 'eager to do business' [emphasis mine] in the country. Although this eagerness is projected as some kind of philanthropy, India's burgeoning middle class is seen as such a huge market for western goods that it remains worth their trouble.

In 1991, India launched its economic liberalisation programme -- a massive programme that involved breaking down licence and permit-dominated regulatory mechanisms controlling trade, business, and industry. This opening up of the country's markets to foreign investment and participation alerted the western media to what it called a sleeping giant. The awakening of economic opportunities presented a fertile field for seeding of the surplus capital of the west.

In this strongly proselytising endeavour, the neocolonial ideologies of the western business media frequently castigated India for its reluctance to quicken the pace of shedding its former socialist ways. As the *Far Eastern Economic Review* (21 August 1997) put it, 'India has discarded much of its socialist baggage since 1991, but it's also showing signs of reform fatigue. Unless it can pick up the pace, it stands little chance of becoming Asia's next tiger' ("Life in the slow lane," 1997, p. 70).

Similar ideological bias is evident in the coverage of the *Fortune* (8 September 1997). According to the magazine, India, by opening the door

to foreign investment, had 'reversed its economically disastrous policy of self-sufficiency' and had wiped out the 'famines and starvation that once plagued it' (Elliott, 1997, p. 40). Such a statement, at the very least, is factually incorrect: Independent India has never experienced any famine and famines were a regular feature in the country only under the colonial regime. Sen (1981), for example, in his acclaimed study of the Great Bengal famine in India in 1943 that killed around three million people, points out that the famine, far from being caused by any significant decline in food availability, can be attributed to a series of policy decisions of the colonial British administration. The famine was a direct consequence of the failure to recognise a shift in exchange entitlements and a deliberate decision of the British government not to break the famine by allowing more food imports into the public distribution system.

Despite what media columnists have to say, India's policy of self-reliance did keep the social fabric of the country intact. The impact of the increase in western conglomerate-driven big business on the country is rarely analysed. Instead, any opposition to the long march of western business power is condemned for being anti-modern. As Das (1997) points out, the very use of the term 'economic *reforms*' implies that 'anyone critical of the new set of economic policies' is necessarily 'a die-hard conservative, a fuddy-duddy, veritably a dinosaur' (p. 4).

When the government of the Indian state of Maharashtra cancelled a mega power project being executed by the American multi-national Enron in 1995 (the decision has since been reversed after modifications), for example, the western media came out in hysterical condemnation. A lead

article in *The Economist* (12 August 1995) claimed that the 'movement to pander to anti-foreign sentiment' could be 'economically dangerous' ("India that still says no," 1995, p. 11). The clear implication was that India's economy could be boosted only through western intervention. This kind of discourse situates western intervention as safe, without specifying who or what is at risk. It also allows the profit-raking business plans of multinationals to pass without media scrutiny. These exploitative, neocolonial business plans are carefully protected under the mask of a civilising mission that seeks to convert the non-west to western notions of a modernised, developed world.

Black ties and white cloths: Dumping of Eurocentric images through advertising

The inferiorising of India in media texts is not restricted to the four selected business magazines. In less structured fashion, I occasionally shifted the focus from these four magazines to scrutinise contemporary texts on the 50th anniversary of India's independence in business publications in New Zealand.

The Independence Day feature on India and Pakistan in the *National Business Review* (15 August 1997) was primarily a high school history lesson which concluded with the observation:

Free market liberalisation has been the key (in India) and for the first time since independence the private sector is being expected to take the lead in generating economic growth. But there is a lot of catching up to do. (Hunt, 1997, p. 31)

Pushing the other to catch up with western tastes is obviously a driving force for the expansion of the western 'corporate planet' (Karliner, 1997). This force is evident in both light and serious coverage of management and business writing. Its influence can also be easily tracked in the advertising accompanying that coverage. A double-spread colour advertisement for the New Zealand *Deloitte/Management* Top 200 Awards Dinner in an issue of *Management* (November 1997) featured a photograph of a bare-bodied and *dhoti*-clad Mahatma Gandhi waiting at the door with an invitation card for the dinner (appendix E). Punning on 'ma' as 'my', the accompanying text was captioned 'I Mustn't Forget Mahat, Matie or Majacket' (pp. 30-31). It declared that if Gandhi, the 'ultimate advocate of non-violent protest and the epitome of wisdom and quiet leadership', turned up for the Awards Dinner, he would be 'shown the door' because he was 'an absolutely shocking dresser' (pp. 30-31).

In belittling the sartorial tastes of the principal icon of the Indian independence movement in a manner reminiscent of Winston Churchill's dismissal of Gandhi as a 'half-naked *faqir*' (Bernays, 1932, p. vii) during the height of the anti-imperialist struggle, the advertisers ended up trivialising the political symbolism of Gandhi's dress code. In search of an easy joke through a readily available symbol of sartorial 'quaint poverty', the copywriter, whose copy was presumably endorsed by the dinner organisers, was oblivious to (or chose to ignore) the politico-economic dimension of Gandhi's leadership of India's epic freedom movement which ultimately forced the British to part with its 'jewel in the crown'. In social theory, Gandhi 'stood for an outright rejection of all the key values of

world-systemic capitalism' (Washbrook, 1990, p. 485). If Gandhi chose to walk around in a home-spun *dhoti*, it was because that is what most of his fellow countryfolk wore. Besides, the Gandhian political philosophy of *swadeshi* revolved around buying and using indigenous goods and spurning foreign merchandise dumped on India by the colonial rulers. The 'boycott of British-made cloth' was, in fact, 'one of the principal items of the programme of non-cooperation' during India's freedom struggle (Prasad, 1955, p. 249). The *swadeshi* movement gained momentum by the public burning of cloth spun in the looms of Manchester and the weaving of the indigenous *khadi*.

The dumping of Manchester textiles may have stopped several decades ago. It has, however, been replaced by the dumping of western images. The west still believes that western sartorial tastes signify superiority and, therefore, there is this conscious (or sub-conscious) need to give the other a kind of cultural sanctity by dressing them in black ties. The cultural imperialism is closely linked to economic imperialism just as the dumping of western images is linked to a balance of trade in favour of the west. That the United States exports 1.6 billion dollars worth of entertainment every year (Corbett, 1995) to the rest of the world (including almost all of the Third World) is evidence enough of the economic dimensions of cultural image dumping.

If the *dhoti*-clad image of Gandhi in the *Deloitte/Management* advertisement is constructed to generate mirth, the blue pin-stripe suited image of Roger Bhatnagar, a successful businessman of Indian origin in New Zealand, in the same issue of *Management* (November 1997) invites

readers to invoke a sense of respect. As one of the 'leaders of the pack' in New Zealand business, Bhatnagar is clearly seen and projected as a western person. The feature writer takes pains to dwell on the fact that Bhatnagar 'learned the discipline of hard work and persistence in Europe' (Birchfield, 1997, p.20), but makes no reference to his origins in India. The writer also conveniently avoids writing about the racist abuse Bhatnagar faced on Auckland's streets when he started off as a fledgling trader in New Zealand in 1980. Bhatnagar, as it happens, loves to tell people how when Auckland's businessmen called him a 'black bastard', he always retorted with the line: 'You're wrong, I'm brown' (Hanning, 1997, p. G 3).

Thus the same issue of the same journal presents a denial of identity to an Indian icon even as it simultaneously confers a (western) identity on a successful Indian businessman by ascribing his success to his education in business in Europe. Such coverage fits in with Shohat and Stam's (1994) observation about media discourses on 'other peoples' being influenced by Eurocentrism which:

appropriates the cultural and material production of non-Europeans while denying both their achievements and its own appropriation, thus consolidating its sense of self and glorifying its own anthropophagy. (Shohat & Stam, 1994, p. 3)

Texts and pretexts: Legitimising neocolonial expansion through texts of globalisation

Much of the western business media has remained oblivious to insights generated by long established theoretical work in areas such as postcolonial studies. Indeed, cloaked under its egalitarian sounding mantras of globalisation, media discourses effectively consolidate the neocolonial business interests of an influential western business elite.

In academic areas, too, with less justification, the problem of ethnocentrism and insularity is evident. Such discourses continue unreflexively despite substantial bodies of literature criticising such theoretical ethnocentrism and questioning assumptions that Third World countries are backward, primitive, and in need of development toward a perceived image of the west as progressive and modern (see, e. g., Frank, 1978; Amin, 1974). Instead of the economy being seen as part of a society, the media project the economy as the society. Underwritten by Eurocentric notions of an ideal economy, the media reduce a society in all its complexities to a market representable by animal imagery. For the media, the nature and state of the economy become a measure of the society -- a benchmark to demarcate the modern and the developed from the primitive and the underdeveloped. In this process of seeing the economy as the society, the western business media look at non-western economies as the other. That other, they presume from a Eurocentric perspective, needs development and modernisation not just economically but socially, culturally, and politically as well. This presumption of the other's need to 'develop' according to a carefully scripted plan of the dominant elite guides media discourses along a neocolonial path. The

influential business media feels the need to cover the world which, it sees, as a unified marketplace, and it does so from the perspective of the dominant elite.

This chapter showed how the civilising mission of the western business media first inferiorises a non-western region sought to be commercially neocolonised and then goes about fraudulently projecting the west's self-interested behaviour as philanthropy. In such a mission, the rhetorics of an equitable global world are only tools to consolidate the 'domination of ever-larger sectors of the world economy by multinationals' (Lal, 1996, p. 10). The next chapter builds on this theme. It illustrates how western public relations theorists use the seemingly egalitarian concept of requisite variety to bring the non-western other into the circle of organisational strategies but simultaneously ensure that it is kept on the margins of such a circle.

Photographing the other: Ethnocentric lenses and the 'united' colours of public relations¹

Chapter 4 argued that the western media seek to hide the fine print of neocolonial expansionism under the headlines of philanthropic globalisation. This chapter contends that public relations theory in the west screens its dominant ideologies behind an equivalent campaign through the conceptual lens of requisite variety. Theorists in the field have, in recent years, used requisite variety to get a wider view of issues of diversity, ethnicity, and multiculturalism. Although this lens has helped bring the cultural other within the focal area of theorists in the field, this chapter contends that the resulting public relations perspectives of the other have remained ethnocentric.

Requisite varieties and strategic hierarchies

In public relations literature, even the concept of multiculturalism has been slow to emerge. The theoretical moorings of public relations have, for the most part, been anchored in systems theory (e. g., Grunig & Hunt, 1984),

¹ An earlier version of this chapter was published in the *Asia Pacific Public Relations Journal* (see Munshi, 1999).

communication theory (e. g., Botan & Hazleton, 1989), and rhetorical theory (e. g., Toth & Heath, 1992). Within the field, none of these theoretical perspectives deal explicitly with multicultural publics. Significant references in public relations theory to requisite variety, as a way to redress the imbalance, began to surface only at the beginning of the 1990s (e. g., Culbertson, Jeffers, Stone, & Terrell, 1993; Dozier, Grunig, & Grunig, 1995; Grunig, Grunig, & Ehling, 1992). These moves happened more than a decade after Weick (1979) used the concept in the context of making organisations effective.

Even these belated references have been limited in their scope because the need for diversity in public relations has been approached primarily from the point of view of an oligarchic management. Without requisite variety, as some public relations scholars have pointed out, 'senior managers of organisations interact awkwardly with constituents different from themselves' (Dozier, Grunig, & Grunig, 1995, p. 151). This in turn leads to difficulties in communication, misunderstandings, and, from those managers' perspective, organisational inefficiency. Even if part of a white ethnic minority in a large multinational workforce, these senior managers often represent the 'elite'. As a communication concept, this elite has been defined as a 'fragment of the dominant section of a social formation that exercises or claims social and cultural leadership by virtue of some assumed qualities of excellence which are held to belong exclusively to

that fragment' (O'Sullivan, Hartley, Saunders, Montgomery, & Fiske, 1994, p. 103).

That Dozier, Grunig, and Grunig (1995) see the senior managers as a part of the elite is explicit in the way these scholars characterise the position of the managers. According to them, senior managers

are surrounded by people just like themselves (i.e., White males) [parenthesis in original]. Such dominant coalitions develop their own systems of codes to make sense of the world outside, a private language that further insulates them from reality. That is, dominant coalitions make up their own reality, consistent with the perceptions of senior managers who construct it. (Dozier, Grunig, & Grunig, 1995, p. 151)

Not surprisingly, therefore, processes of requisite variety, formulated by senior managers from the perspective of the small but powerful managerial elite, do not work to promote multiculturalism. Instead, they safeguard it from the potential threat to the status quo posed by the changing status of the other. The managerial fear of this perceived threat to the status quo is articulated by one leading public relations scholar who talks about 'existing relationships being strained' and virtually everyone being 'forced into new relationships within social systems that are becoming both increasingly diverse and correspondingly divisive'

(Kruckeberg, cited in Kruckeberg, 1995, p. 37). In the responses of public relations to such perceptions of a changing world, the tendency is to abet a strategic subordination of 'minority' groups (even when they are in a numerical majority) by the elite. In this scheme, such groups become positioned as communication and cultural handmaidens of the elite. This role is clearly set out in public relations theory which states how

communicators from culturally diverse backgrounds can play critical roles as *go-betweens* [emphasis mine], the boundary spanners who can translate what management says to publics and publics say to management. (Dozier, Grunig, & Grunig, 1995, p. 151)

By assigning members of 'culturally diverse backgrounds', an euphemism for the other, roles as 'go-betweens' between the management and publics, public relations theory consolidates the position of the ethnocentric coalition as the unquestioned norm for strategic 'white male' (Dozier, Grunig, & Grunig, 1995, p. 151) management decisions. Although Dozier, Grunig, and Grunig (1995) do acknowledge that 'communicators from culturally diverse backgrounds cannot provide needed requisite variety to senior management if they are not part of strategic management and planning' (p. 152), public relations theory does not make sufficient room for the other to get anywhere near the decision-making processes.

Organisational leaders and monocultural frames

Although leading theorists have defined public relations as the 'management of communication between an organization and its publics' (see e. g., Grunig, 1992, p. 4), the field has never been able to shake off its inherently hierarchical structuring of those publics. Apart from unquestioningly assigning the dominant coalitions that run organisations a paramount position as a natural norm, this hierarchy ranks publics according to their usefulness to the dominant coalitions. This is clearly encoded in Cutlip, Center, and Broom's (1994) definition of public relations as 'the management function that establishes and maintains mutually beneficial relationships between an organization and the publics on whom its success or failure depends' (p. 6). In other words, public relations has nothing to do with publics that have no bearing on the potential rise or fall of organisations. Such a view of public relations, ironically, runs counter to its professed goal, as envisioned by Grunig (1989), of being 'a highly valued and effective force for resolving social conflict and improving the societies in which we live' (p. 41).

Throughout its history, western public relations has been dogged by the contradiction between its ideal of being 'a service-oriented profession' (Newsom, Turk, & Kruckeberg, 1996, p. 5) driven by public interest, on the one hand, and its major goal in practice of consolidating the business interests of dominant coalitions in organisations and prioritising key publics, on the other. The hierarchies of power so evident in public

relations has kept the other on the margins of theoretical work in the field and continues to act as a brake on its attempts to move towards multiculturalism. Not until the publication of *Multicultural Public Relations* by Banks (1995), was there any substantial work by public relations scholars in relation to multiculturalism. Banks's (1995) book makes an attempt to fill that gap in public relations scholarship, and, according to him, public relations 'is itself a cultural activity' (Banks, 1995, p. 32).

Despite its importance in raising the issue of multiculturalism, Banks's book remains largely stuck in a monocultural frame because it focuses on how organisational leaders should control diversity rather than how organisations should become diverse. Banks (1995) positions his work as being 'about recognising, analysing, and responding to those categories of human differences that might "make a difference" in the practice and study of public relations' (p. 1). Nevertheless, he remains within the established paradigm in that he takes for granted, and highlights, the preeminent position of 'organisational leaders' (Banks, 1995, p. 122). Prescribing a plan for the future of multicultural public relations, he asserts that a 'genuine dialogue with relevant publics will occur only when organisational leaders personally demonstrate that they ground their own communication in solidarity and mindfulness' (p. 122). Admirable though his aims are, they ignore key questions such as who the 'organisational leaders' are and whether multicultural public relations is only about an organisation, or its leaders, having equitable relations with a requisite

variety of diverse publics, or whether it concerns the organisation itself acquiring a multicultural character. These questions are similar to those skirted by scholars in the area of diversity management as well (see chapter 7).

By ignoring such questions, Banks (1995), along with other theorists in public relations, has reduced requisite variety to tokenism. Shorn of the veneer of equitability, requisite variety in public relations literature has ended up bolstering the image of an other that is markedly different from the dominant mainstream of an organisation represented by 'organisational leaders' (Banks, 1995, p. 122) and 'senior managers' (Dozier, Grunig, & Grunig, 1995, p. 151). The consistent emphasis on the central role of organisational leaders extends the managerial bias inherent in business into a systemic ethnocentrism.

Controlling the settings

This chapter argues that the principles of requisite variety concern issues of control without acknowledging such power/race intersections.

According to the current use of the concept, 'the diversity of ideas and viewpoints within a manager's self-regulating system should equal diversity of the environment' (Culbertson, et al., 1993, p. 23). Such an equitable incorporation of diversity into an organisation appears laudable. But, as long as the emphasis of public relations rests on the manager's 'self-regulating system', requisite variety bestows power on a dominant

centre. In fact, it is the same exercise of power and control that lies at the core of Weick's (1979) much-cited book, *The Social Psychology of Organizing*, which is the principal reference point for public relations theorists working with the idea of requisite variety. Providing an example of requisite variety, Weick (1979) says that:

if a photographer has to photograph 20 subjects, each of which is at a different distance from the camera, then his camera has to have at least 20 distinct settings if all of the negatives are to be brought to a uniform density and sharpness. If the camera has fewer than 20 settings it lacks requisite variety and will not register with sufficient detail enough of that environment so that control can be maintained over it. (p. 189)

Weick's (1979) illustration clarifies that requisite variety is primarily about the control the photographer needs to exercise over the environment to get good photographs. Just as photography is not as much about the *reflection* of reality as it is about the *construction* of reality, the use of requisite variety is not as much about being diverse as it is about controlling diversity.

The field of public relations has remained mired in such processes of control because it has steadfastly refused to look into how issues of

control have been dealt with in other disciplines. As McKie (1999, forthcoming) asserts, public relations is an insular area that remains isolated from work in disciplines other than those that are part of 'the public relations canon of accepted feeder disciplines (e. g., management and decision theory, marketing, communication theory)'. For example, no one has 'taken up L'Etang's (1996) proposal for considering public relations "in tandem with international relations", despite her persuasive argument that both link "to fundamental positions about the way individuals organize themselves into collectivities (whether publics or nations), form identities and relate to other collectivities"' (McKie, 1999, forthcoming).

This insularity of public relations also contributes to making the discussion of the concept of requisite variety in public relations literature inadequate. In particular, public relations' virtually total neglect of disciplines such as postcolonial studies and subaltern historiography excludes the influence of colonialism, racism, and the voices of discontented others on the field. Without attempting to look at these disciplines, public relations screens out a multicultural point of view that contains contesting positions. As a result the concept of requisite variety, as presented in public relations theory, has less to do with embracing diversity than with preparing the ground for the dominant elite to seize control of an enlarged market space. The emphasis on controlling the enlarged market place comes through in the manner in which minority communities are described in numerical terms.

Examples of such descriptions can be found in the following excerpts from public relations texts:

- Today, 25 of the nation's (U. S.) largest cities -- including Chicago, Detroit, and Los Angeles -- have a majority population of African Americans, Latinos, and Asians. The socio-economic status of African-Americans also has improved markedly over the past decade. African-Americans have increased their disposable income fivefold over the past decade (Seitel, 1995, p. 334).
- Recently the easily identifiable ethnic groups -- primarily Hispanics, African Americans, Asians, and Native Americans -- as a whole have been growing five times faster than the general population. The U. S. Census Bureau predicted that by the year 2010 Hispanics and Asian Americans each will make up 13 per cent of the U. S. population, a total of 26 per cent, while Anglos will be 58 per cent. Asian Americans and Native Americans will provide the remaining percentage. Even greater changes will occur by 2050, the Census Bureau predicted. Notably, Hispanics will form nearly one-fourth of the U. S. population. (Wilcox, Ault, & Agee, 1997, pp. 236-237)

In underlining the fact that 'what were once referred to as minorities are rapidly becoming the majority today' (Seitel, 1995, p. 333), these

textbooks open out the possibility of a shift in power and a fear of the other. The strategy of treating the other as a 'target audience' (Wilcox, Ault, & Agee, 1997, p. 235) assists in keeping the other under the control of the dominant neo-colonial elite.

Marking the focal point: Textbook treatments of cultural norms

The idea of the need to control emerges in the kind of discourses of the other which are constantly reinforced in public relations textbooks. Far from integrating issues of cultural diversity into the core concepts of public relations, the majority of these textbooks make, at most, cursory references to cultural diversity, multiculturalism, and minority publics. Despite the often well-meaning attempt to acknowledge the importance of issues of cultural diversity, these issues are recurrently described, as one textbook puts it, as 'issues of ethnicity and other cultural *problems*' [emphasis mine] (Newsom, Turk, & Kruckeberg, 1996, p. 74). By denoting issues of ethnicity as a *problem*, the dominant mainstream textbooks construct ethnic minority groups as the other that needs to be managed or taken care of. Another example of this process of othering at work is in the sub-section entitled 'Language, cultural differences, and other *problems*' [emphasis mine] in Wilcox, Ault, and Agee's (1997, p. 348) popular textbook. In this sub-section, their textbook discusses how American companies operating in foreign countries are confronted by some of the

same public relations challenges faced by them in the U. S. But it goes on to state that these problems:

may be aggravated by conditions such as the following:

- Differences in languages and the multiplicity of languages in some countries
- Longer chains of command, stretching back to the home country
- Evident and subtle differences in customs
- The varying levels of development of the media and public relations
- Antipathy expressed toward 'multinationals,' a pejorative word in many countries
- A dislike grounded in such factors as national pride, past relationships, envy, and apprehension, especially in regard to the United States, concerning foreign cultural, economic, political, and military influence. (Wilcox, Ault, & Agee, 1997, p. 349)

This list of so-called aggravating factors clearly denigrates the cultural values of the other. An analysis of the list shows how the dominant managerial frame of mainstream public relations tries to marginalise and control the other. By describing 'differences in languages and the multiplicity of languages in some countries' as a problem, the authors

privilege English, the language of the neo-colonial Euro-American elite. Moreover, the U. S., in particular, is set as the point of reference and an opposition to multinationals is seen as a manifestation of 'envy' and 'apprehension' (Wilcox, Ault, & Agee, 1997, p. 349) of the international influence of the U. S. Nowhere is the suggestion that the Euro-American reading of cultural differences as a 'problem' could indeed be the dominant elite's fear of the other nor that opposition to multinationals may be a logical action by less powerful nations to preserve national autonomy and resist an outward flow of capital.

As in colonial discourses, the other is not only sought to be controlled but exploited as well. This economic colonisation can be internal as well as external. Within the U. S. setting, Wilcox, Ault, and Agee (1997) see ethnic minorities merely as a 'target audience', or as a market that needs to be developed. In the light of the 'demographic make-up' changing 'dramatically in the United States' (Wilcox, Ault, & Agee, 1997, p. 235), they identify one of the major target audiences that 'deserve special attention' as 'ethnic minorities, who differ from the traditional mainstream citizenry in race, language, and customs' (p. 235).

In considering ethnic minorities as a 'target audience' and not as a part of the general population, the textbook reinforces the point that organisational interests are the prerogative of the 'traditional mainstream citizenry' (Wilcox, Ault, & Agee, 1997, p. 235). I contend that the slotting of

the other into a separate target group is a means to perpetuate the ghettoised Chinatown-type existence of minority groups. This process of othering is carried out by accentuating the difference between what is described as the traditional mainstream and the other.

The perspective of the 'traditional mainstream citizenry' (Wilcox, Ault, & Agee, 1997, p. 235), and its emphasis on control, parallels the approaches of organisational strategic thinking. This process of control goes hand in hand with what Morley and Robins (1995) call the 'logic of profit and competition' (p. 11). This is the logic that drives large corporations 'to get their product to the largest number of consumers' (Morley & Robins, 1995, p. 11). The consuming desire to construct a large market space is facilitated by the sucking in of smaller cultural spaces into the larger organisational culture defined by western cultural norms, concepts, and ideologies. To enlarge their markets, for example, western fast-food chains advertise their focus on adhering to local dietary preferences in the non-western countries they do business. Yet, their attempts to adapt to local tastes notwithstanding, what they essentially do is to oversee the spread of the western concept of burgers-and-cola fast-food to regions where such food is culturally alien.

Increasing apertures: Spreading dominant values through integrated communication

Issues of control in relation to the other have grown because of changes in the business environment as well as in demographics. With international markets expanding the world over, organisations are embracing diversity to get an edge in global marketing, particularly because the business success of western multinational companies in the 1990s has been largely 'dependent on foreign markets' (Cox, 1993, p. 4). The market, however, favours the 'needs, wishes, tastes, and preferences of some over others' (Firat, 1995, p. 122). Considerations of requisite variety need to be situated in the context of that lopsided market power equation. This is not to deny that the market has a role to play in the shaping of cultural identities, but to emphasise the fact 'that the power to signify, represent, and communicate forcefully what is acceptable, seductive, attractive, and meaningful is not evenly distributed' (Firat, 1995, p. 122).

Uneven power distribution is ignored by public relations strategies of seduction, which revolve around supposedly universal ideals framed by a western worldview. In these strategies of seduction, public relations has become intricately intertwined with advertising. Public relations, publicity, and corporate advertising are now three spokes in the rapidly-spinning wheel of integrated marketing communications (Belch & Belch, 1998).

One major example of how integrated market communications attempts to

co-opt the other into the larger frame of mainstream publics is the series of United Colours of Benetton advertisements and posters (see e. g., appendix F). In these communications campaigns, the requisite variety of diverse faces from around the globalised world are made to fit one universal style. The faces are in a range of skin colours and hues but the stylised expressions are synthetically similar. Despite the differences in features, they all look like formatted computer print-outs.

On the surface, it may seem that requisite variety seeks to foster diversity and heterogeneity. But, examined centripetally from the margins to the centre, it is evident that the concept is invoked selectively by the dominant frame of western business profitability. Requisite variety is a commercial requirement for the purposes of the market. Because cultural diversity in this context is maintained 'primarily through commodification and simulation' (Costa & Bamossy, 1995, p. 5), requisite variety as a concept acquires a uniform character. Paradoxical as it may sound, requisite variety in these contexts fosters homogeneity more than its professed goal of heterogeneity. In the Benetton advertisements, the range of faces is subordinated to the fashion statement of designer clothes tailored by a western multinational company. Furthermore, in these advertisements, skin colour is treated as a 'fashion palette' (Haraway, 1997, p. 261). As a result, 'politics and culture become symbolized as fashion' (Tinic, 1997, p. 15) and issues of difference are commodified for a market run by the dominant elite.

This cultural control of the other by the dominant economic and social system fits neatly with other conceptualisations of public relations. According to Miller (1989), for example, public relations 'serves as a definitional label for the process of attempting to exert symbolic control over the evaluative predispositions ("attitudes," "images," etc.) and subsequent behaviors of relevant publics or clienteles' (p. 47). Miller (1989) further suggests that 'whenever control of the environment hinges on the attitudes and behaviors of others, attempts to control these attitudes and behaviors are inevitable' (p. 47). This kind of public relations, of course, has been dismissed by some scholars as being 'manipulative' and a form of 'asymmetrical' communication (Grunig, 1989, p. 29), but it has not vanished in either public relations theory or practice.

Focussing at the core: Public relations and self-interest in the U. S.

Offering an alternative to the model of manipulative public relations in which the organisation seeks to dictate terms, Grunig (1989) and others have promoted the theoretical formulation of the two-way, symmetrical model. First put forward by Grunig and Hunt (1984), this model was developed in a series of research publications (e. g., Grunig, 1989). The developed version of the symmetrical model has since been projected as being not only egalitarian, but morally superior to other models because it

is seen to advocate 'understanding among people and such other systems as organizations, publics, or societies' (Grunig, 1989, p. 38).

While the symmetrical model's democratic aspirations do implicitly claim to incorporate the missing element of diversity into public relations theory, the claim lacks substance. At first glance, the model appears to pay more attention to equitable relations than the one drawn by Miller (1989). While 'Miller sees the evaluation of means and ends as necessary to assess the ethicality of persuasion,' the symmetrical model 'considers all persuasion as unethical' (Hazleton & Botan, 1989, p. 6). Leitch and Nielson (1997), however, identify one fundamental flaw in the theory of symmetrical public relations by pointing out how 'a willingness to listen to publics and to adapt one's behaviour as a consequence of this interaction does not address the asymmetries inherent in discourse practices weighted in favour of one of the discourse participants' (p. 19). In other words, the symmetrical model does not adequately look at public relations in an environment of social inequality with lopsided power equations. Such an unequal environment usually characterises relations between the dominant, western mainstream and the other. In presuming that all parties are organised like 'corporate' systems, the symmetrical model also allows for, or even unintentionally promotes, a kind of 'elitist corporatism' (see Cheney & Christensen, 1999, forthcoming).

In the 1990s, as well as an embryonic consideration of multiculturalism, public relations has begun to acknowledge issues of relative power. Theorists Roth, Hunt, Stavropoulos, and Babik (1996), for instance, make a case for a universal code of public relations principles that takes into account 'differing cultural valuations of autonomy and connectivity as well as differences in global power' (p. 160). But in proposing that American professional associations 'should consider reviewing their codes of ethics from the standpoint of "others" with whom practitioners are increasingly doing business' (p. 159), these scholars continue to strengthen the dominant western frame of American professionals and their business interests. Apart from establishing the binary division between American professionals and a collective non-American other, the scholars suggest that the U. S. take the lead in formulating a code of ethics that furthers its business goals.

A universal code of public relations ethics has very little chance of being equitable within such an unselfreflexive professional and theoretical climate, where the prevailing business interests of commercial or organisational leaders remain paramount. On the contrary, the homogenising tendency behind any attempt to create a universal code will inevitably lead to the appropriation of diversity rather than the flowering of multiculturalism. Just as 'international public relations may not actually be the two-way multicultural exercise as the name implies' (Botan, 1992, p. 152), as long as the practice of public relations is controlled from the home

country, a universal code of public relations ethics is likely to be ethnocentrism masquerading as 'universal' while there is a continued power imbalance and a refusal to give the other any voice.

Roth, et al. (1996) are on the right lines, and unique in public relations, when they draw from postcolonial literature to argue in favour of a code of ethical principles based on a critical assessment of issues of relative power. However, their reading of postcolonial work is limited, not only because of the small, and dated (one 21-year-old reference), range of literature cited, but also because they acknowledge neither the centrality of the western managerial framework nor the homogenising tendency of the process of setting up a universal code. As a result, their championing of a universal code from a western perspective resembles the dubious universalism of Eurocentrism that postcolonial writers (e. g., Said, 1993; Thiong'o, 1993) have critiqued. This pushing through of western positions in a seemingly benign approach towards global equity actually serves to protect the neo-colonial interests of the dominant elite.

Underexposed films: Monocultural public relations in Australasia

If scholars in the United States have been slow to incorporate issues of multiculturalism and diversity into public relations theory, scholars in Australasia have not even reached this elementary stage. Although New Zealand is bound to biculturalism by the Treaty of Waitangi and Australia

has legislation in place to promote multiculturalism, public relations textbooks in the region make multicultural or bicultural issues virtually invisible.

In New Zealand, bicultural goals of organisations have remained, as Tremaine (1997), points out, 'unrealised for years and little progress towards realising them has been achieved' (p. 286). As both 'Pakeha and Maori cultures (in all their diverse modes of expression) belong in New Zealand', organisations need to 'understand the importance of both cultures as part of their broader cultural environment' (Tremaine, 1997, pp. 287-288). Despite this context, public relations literature fails to take cognisance of the fundamentally bicultural character of New Zealand, let alone devise strategies to incorporate issues of biculturalism into the theory of effective public relations.

Even by the time of its second edition in 1996, *The New Zealand Public Relations Handbook* (Peart & McNamara, 1996), the only textbook on public relations in New Zealand, makes no mention of issues of cultural diversity. Instead it defines and describes the nature of public relations from one perspective: the perspective of the dominant managerial frame. In Peart and McNamara's (1996) formulation:

For many organisations it is a case of get organised and communicate or perish. The competition in the media for space or

time, within government for funding, and among the general community for attention is fierce. If a manufacturer does not compete in the marketplace, the company will soon cease to exist in that market. If organisations do not compete in public relations, their points of view will cease to exist for the public.

It has been said that a company without an active public relations programme, soon finds itself ignored by the media, threatened by hysterical minorities and faced with political and economic neglect.
(p. 20)

In Peart and McNamara's (1996) language, the implicit fear surfaces with the other explicitly positioned not only as a *hysterical* entity but a *threat* as well.

The situation in the main Australian textbook is no better. Topics of 'cultural difference' encompassing issues relating to immigrants and Aborigines and their interplay with the official policy of Australian multiculturalism have been a major part of the political and cultural agenda of the country in the late 1980s and the 1990s (O'Regan, 1994). However, as is the case in New Zealand, public relations textbooks in Australia do not address these issues at all. In fact, the major Australasian text in the field, *The New Australian and New Zealand Public Relations Manual* (Tymson & Sherman, 1996), makes no reference to

multiculturalism. Like a carriage horse with blinkers on, this manual ferries its practitioner passengers along the beaten track without as much as a glance at the bush on either side. The closest the manual comes to the topic of multiculturalism is a single line on 'working with minority groups' (Tymson & Sherman, 1996, p. 85) among the challenges facing public relations since 1963. There is no further development of the topic at all.

Although Tymson & Sherman (1996) avoid issues of multiculturalism, they do acknowledge that 'as a nation struggles through political and socioeconomic change, public relations strategies must change to accommodate new and more challenging situations' (p. 81). But even this acknowledgement comes from within the dominant managerial frame which is concerned with 'strategies' that can 'accommodate' new challenges rather than considering new target publics who are not in the mainstream.

A grainy picture: Regional differences and theoretical inequalities

While public relations textbooks in Australasia have been stuck in an outmoded time warp, some public relations literature in New Zealand has ventured in fresh theoretical territory. In making a case for 'reframing public relations', Leitch and Nielson (1997) suggest 'new directions for theory and practice' (p. 17). They argue that public relations theory in general has been dominated for far too long by the 'organisational

perspective', which not only seeks to present publics as 'organisational artefacts or constructs' (Leitch & Nielson, 1997, p. 17), but also makes publics appear to be uninvolved in the construction of their own identities.

This organisational perspective, built around western notions of organisational success and excellence, sees public relations as an active tool of the organisational business plan. As Cutlip, Center, and Broom (1994) underline:

For public relations to survive in business, it must do more than build and maintain relationships with employees and neighbours. *Public relations must help business create an environment in which owners or investors are satisfied with return on their invested capital.* This motivation usually means that much of what is called public relations is designed to help the marketing function attract new customers and keep present customers satisfied with products or services. Simply put, *public relations must contribute to achieving the profit goal of business in a competitive environment* [italics in original]. (p. 437)

There is obviously not much room for theories of cultural diversity in an environment geared so strongly towards profit-making by an elite group that runs the organisation. Effectively, it consigns public relations to the role of propaganda wing of the neocolonial business enterprise.

Despite the transition from the era of colonisation to globalisation, public relations has continued to be a part of the imperialist economic system. In the colonial days, European domination of the colonies was reflected in the advertising and public relations campaigns of British companies. Many, for example, stamped 'images of colonial conquest on soap boxes, biscuit tins, whisky bottles, tea tins and chocolate bars' (McClintock, 1995, p. 209). In the age of globalisation, we have advertisement campaigns of multinational conglomerates featuring groups of 'persons of all colours and nationalities' who represent a 'community of consumers' (Lal, 1996, p. 10). Both kinds of campaigns are characterised by the use of the other as a reference point. While the former uses the other as a trampled-upon underling, the latter holds the hand of the other in what could be read as a gesture of benevolence but is also interpretable as a grab for the profits to be gained from ethnic markets, both internal and external.

In the concept of requisite variety, as in the concept of globalisation (see Morley & Robins, 1995), equity is a myth. Allowable variety is incorporated into the dominant organisational worldview that assumes that all theory is essentially western. This is a view that 'projects the west as "mind" and theoretical refinement and the non-west as "body" and unrefined raw material' (Shohat & Stam, 1994, p. 14). In this cosmetic incorporation of allowable variety, the dominant western worldview usurps symbols of the other. This occurs even when it has neither the skills nor the knowledge to

comprehend the meanings of the symbols. A facet of the integrated communications campaign designed by Saatchi & Saatchi for Team New Zealand's defence of the premier yachting championships, the America's Cup, illustrates one cosmetic incorporation of diversity. This campaign used snippets of Maori culture but paid little attention to their meanings. It did not seem to bother the campaign managers that a Maori song, chosen as the background music for one particular audi-visual advertisement, was in fact a dirge ("Dirge bemuses Maori", 1999). That the song sounded exotic enough to neocolonial, western ears was all that mattered to the producers. Variety, in this context, was only superficially incorporated. While instituting requisite variety in the culture of public relations is a beginning, this concern also needs to break the shackles of imperialist perceptions. One way of breaking these shackles is by listening to the voice of the other.

Zooming in: Requisitioning postcolonial varieties

This means attending to other disciplines as well as other peoples. McKie (1997) argues that one major problem with public relations theory is that it is out of touch with advances in scholarship elsewhere, particularly in the humanities and social sciences. Certainly, public relations appears to be oblivious to the theoretical formulations of culture and imperialism in areas like media and cultural studies (e. g., Said, 1994; Shohat & Stam, 1994; Shohat & Stam, 1996) as well as postcolonial and subaltern studies (e. g., Chakrabarty, 1996; Guha & Spivak, 1988; Mohanty, 1991). Such a lack of

awareness carries a cost, since these are formulations which build sites of resistance to western dominance. They also provide resources to empower the other to speak for themselves.

Isolated from such theories, mainstream public relations theory looks at and interprets issues of cultural diversity without relating them to their 'primarily imperial' (Said, 1994, p. 57) historical contexts. Although old imperial hegemonies may have become 'scattered' (Grewal & Kaplan, 1994), the 'historical thread' of 'western dominance remains a powerful presence (Shohat & Stam, 1996, p. 146). It is, at least in part, a legacy of colonialism that the reins of international political, economic, and cultural power are held by a coterie of powerful western nations (including Japan, which has been conveniently co-opted into the western economic circle). A similar power equation exists in the concept of a so-called multinational organisation where a dominant western worldview holds sway.

Changing the lens: Looking beyond the tokenism of requisite variety

Just as powerful western nations have sought to accommodate the rest in the global space through the process of globalisation, the organisational leaders of western business have sought to accommodate the other in their organisations. Theoretically, organisational theorists have attempted this through the concept of requisite variety. But, unlike postcolonial scholars, who have picked holes in the claims of international equity made

by the champions of globalisation, public relations theorists have, by and large, accepted the concept of requisite variety with, at best, a limited acknowledgement of power inequalities.

Public relations has shaped the lens of requisite variety as a supposedly neutral medium of balanced and symmetrical communication. In sharp contrast, postcolonial scholars such as Fraser (1997) have reworked the lens metaphor to make the persuasive argument that

public life in egalitarian, multicultural societies cannot consist exclusively in a single, comprehensive, public sphere. That would be tantamount to filtering diverse rhetorical and stylistic norms through a single overarching lens. Moreover, because there can be no such lens that is genuinely culturally neutral, it would effectively privilege the expressive norms of one cultural group over those of others, thereby making discursive assimilation a condition for participation in public debate. The result would be the demise of multiculturalism (and the likely demise of social equality). (Fraser, 1997, pp. 83-84)

This privileging of 'the expressive norms of one cultural group' is inevitable in Roth et al.'s (1996) requisite variety-driven call for a universal code of ethics. Although the work of Roth et. al. (1996) has been unique in drawing on postcolonial literature to shape their argument for a set of

ethical principles based on an assessment of issues of relative power, their reading of postcolonial literature is incomplete. While they acknowledge some lopsidedness of power relations, they show no awareness of postcolonial critiques of exactly the kind of homogenising (Mohanty, 1991) that their universal code of ethics sets out to do. In any homogenising exercise, it is the dominant western frame that gets to set the boundaries.

In the context of globalisation, countries in the elite coterie continue to be 'cultural transmitters' positioning the rest as what Shohat and Stam (1996) call 'receivers' (p. 147). Similarly, despite requisite variety, the mainly western dominant managerial frame has continued to shape policy in line with its own requirements and centrifugally push other frameworks to the geographical and organisational periphery.

In such a process, the import of the concept of requisite variety into public relations marks a small beginning towards acknowledging the long practised cultural domination of the western elite. But the treatment of requisite variety in public relations has more to do with the assimilation of variety than with giving the field a multicultural character. Just as the 'universalising force' of modernity and global capitalism 'has in reality been about westernisation' (Morley & Robins, 1995, p. 108), this assimilation of the other goes hand in hand with the enlargement of the western organisational frame.

By bringing the public relations body of knowledge into contact with the bodies of knowledge in other fields, theorists can get a better picture of its limitations. The concept of a universal code of ethics underpinning the work of Roth et al. (1996), for example, belongs to the paradigm of a unitary bourgeois public sphere critiqued by Fraser (1997). Such a unitary public sphere was, and continues to be, constituted by a 'number of significant exclusions' (p. 73). Building on the work of predecessors in different fields, Fraser (1997) contends that

the idea of an egalitarian, multicultural society makes sense only if we suppose a plurality of public arenas in which groups with diverse values and rhetorics participate. By definition, such a society must contain a multiplicity of publics. (pp. 83-84)

With the incorporation of requisite variety, western public relations has certainly taken cognizance of the other but it has not lived up to its own ideal of earning understanding and support of a multiplicity of publics (see e. g., McKie & Hunt, 1999, forthcoming). If public relations keeps minority publics out of focus in the west, it keeps them in the dark in the east. The following chapter discusses how public relations deals with the non-western other in its Orientalist darkrooms. In particular, I examine the Orientalist and Eurocentric treatment of the Bhopal gas tragedy in India in public relations literature.

Exposed anatomies: Other bodies, other publics, and public relations experiments

The goal of public relations to communicate 'with many different publics' (Seitel, 1995, p. 9) is a lofty one but theoretical work in the field tends to narrow its focus down to 'target publics' (Cutlip, Center, & Broom, 1994, p. 245). This chapter suggests that the targetting is selective and reflects the commercial self-interest of the dominant coalition rather than public interest. In not recognising a wide range of publics, particularly those which lie outside the traditional definition of key or target publics, public relations scholarship remains tied up with goals shaped by a neo-colonial elite.

Such a preoccupation is evident in the vision of public relations articulated by Grunig, Grunig, and Ehling (1992). Stating the 'major proposition about the relationship between public relations and organizational effectiveness' (p. 86), they say:

Public relations contributes to organizational effectiveness when it helps reconcile the organization's goals with the expectations of its strategic constituencies. This contribution has monetary value to the

organization. Public relations contributes to effectiveness by building quality, long-term relationships with strategic constituencies. Public relations is most likely to contribute to effectiveness when the senior public relations manager is a member of the dominant coalition where he or she is able to shape the organization's goals and to help determine which external publics are most strategic. (p. 86)

Mind over matter: Dominant strategies and commodified publics

The central element of this proposition is to push public relations practitioners into getting a membership of the *dominant coalition* and determining their *strategic* publics. In such a scheme, there is little room for publics not considered key by the dominant coalition. As Beder (1997) points out, public relations firms often stratify publics 'so that they can concentrate on those likely to be persuaded of the benefits of a proposed project and marginalizing those who are likely to oppose it' (p. 137). In line with this strategy, public relations campaigns for multinational companies making forays into the Third World concentrate on wooing the upwardly mobile middle class. The focus of these campaigns is, as Sham Lal (1996) says, to create 'First World enclaves in Third World societies' (p. 12).

Those outside these enclaves are rarely acknowledged as publics. In fact, they have 'no venues in which to undertake communicative processes' that are not 'under the supervision of dominant groups' and are 'less able

than otherwise to expose modes of deliberation that mask domination' (Fraser, 1997, p. 81).

With the help of a revisionist historiography of the public sphere, feminist scholar Fraser (1997) shows how underprivileged groups of people such as women, workers, peoples of colour, and gays and lesbians have often constituted what she calls 'subaltern counterpublics . . . to formulate oppositional interpretations of their identities, interests, and needs' (p. 81). Examples of such alternative publics include feminist journals and bookstores, gay and lesbian conventions, and ethnic minority forums.

Public relations literature, however, has not paid much attention to these subaltern counterpublics. Instead of dealing with issues of subaltern identities, it has sought to colonise them through messages of pluralism scripted by the dominant elite. The processes of colonisation are more than merely economic and ideological. They are physiological and psychological as well. Western theorists have for long assumed that all theory is western: 'a view that projects the west as "mind" and theoretical refinement and the non-west as "body" and unrefined raw material' (Shohat & Stam, 1994, p. 14). From this perspective, therefore, the 'mind' of the popularly projected universal theoretical mainstream controls the 'body' of the other.

Perceived through the eyes and ears of postcolonial criticism, it is evident that the use of the concept of requisite variety in public relations theory remains within the same dualistic restriction. The concept still enables the 'mind' of the dominant coalition to control the bodies of the other by maintaining a rigid binary divide between a western, neocolonial 'us' and a distant, colonised 'them'. One major public relations case in which this hierarchical divide is exemplified is the much-discussed Bhopal tragedy in India. In this case, the multinational Union Carbide's 'scientific and financial focus resulted in "looking beyond Bhopal", past the suffering of the victims toward the future of the company itself' (Ice, 1991, p. 358).

Corporate bodies, human bodies, and revisiting Bhopal

The Union Carbide gas leak, which claimed more than 3,000 lives and left over 200,000 with major injuries (Sen & Egelhoff, 1991), occurred in the central Indian city of Bhopal in 1984. It remains relevant today because it continues to be cited in fresh literature and because that literature bears testimony to the limits of requisite variety. Bhopal still stands out as a landmark case of how the dominant managerial frame of corporate bodies deals with its less powerful constituents and how public relations frames the whole issue. In a clear case of aligning with corporate bodies against human bodies, the Union Carbide public relations response to the disaster's aftermath dealt primarily 'with the scientific, rather than the human, sides of the leak's effects' (Ice, 1991, p. 357). In concentrating more on the scientific aspects, the company's public relations machine

was responding more to the target publics in the western world whose main concern was the safety of similar plants in the west. The relegation of the human face of the disaster to the margins reflected the low rank accorded to the non-key public of Bhopal's victims, who neither had a stake in the company nor had any influence on shaping policy.

In keeping with the emphasis on the scientific aspects of the disaster, the first three paragraphs of a company document from December 1985 entitled 'Union Carbide fact sheet: Bhopal' (reproduced in Motion & Weaver, 1999, pp. 234-235), talks of how methyl isocyanate gas escaped from a storage tank at the Bhopal plant; how a 'scientific investigation by the company determined that 120 to 240 gallons of water initiated a self-sustaining reaction in a methyl isocyanate storage tank'; and how 'based on Union Carbide's scientific findings, the only plausible explanation for introduction of water into the tank is through a deliberate act' (p. 234). The collage of technical details was meant to provide credibility to the company's preferred angle -- alleged sabotage by a disgruntled employee. This primary emphasis on absolving the company of blame has not shifted even today. The Union Carbide web site on Bhopal in September 1999 ('Bhopal', 1999) links to a Bhopal fact sheet which says in the very first paragraph: 'There is conclusive evidence backed by third party investigation that the tragedy was caused by employee sabotage'.

In its drive to push the 'sabotage angle', the public relations machinery of the company underplayed the fact that the 'safeguards to prevent runaway chemical reactions in Carbide's Bhopal pesticide plant were well below standard practices employed by the company in the United States' (Karliner, 1997, p. 149). Such double standards are in keeping with the strategies adopted by many multinational corporations 'to accelerate the migration of polluting industries to the Third World' (Karliner, 1997, p. 148) in the face of stronger environmental regulations in the so-called developed world. These exploitative strategies are not only routinely 'greenwashed' (see Athanasiou, 1996, p. 6) by public relations wings of multinational corporate houses, but are also projected by the other arm of western corporate enterprise -- the business media -- as a means to accelerate the pace of 'development' in the Third World.

It is precisely the nature of these double standards that exposes the fragility of the concept of requisite variety. The very elite that talks of extending its benevolence to the other actually ends up exploiting the other. In 1961, 23 years before the disaster, a Union Carbide advertisement, depicting a light-skinned male hand pouring a coloured fluid onto a rural Indian landscape, declared: 'Science helps build a new India' (Montague, 1997). The text of the advertisement said that 'India needs the technical knowledge of the western world' and that Union Carbide had made available its vast scientific resources to the country (see appendix G). The message embodied in the advertisement's slogan,

'A hand in things to come', was that the multinational company was a philanthropic institution that was doing its best to help a developing country. History, however, showed that the company instead had a hand in the country's worst industrial disaster in a transition from modernisation in theory to modernisation in practice.

The company's pre-disaster euphoria at being a partner in India's development appeared to evaporate after Bhopal made it to the front pages of the international media. Union Carbide then attempted to distance itself from its Indian subsidiary after the leak in the Bhopal plant. According to Browning (1993), vice-president of the company at the time of the leak, 'the entire work force at the Bhopal plant was Indian' (p. 367). In keeping with India's interest in self-sufficiency, Browning (1993) says that 'the last American employed at the site had left two years before' (p. 367). The company's attempts to differentiate between the U.S.-based headquarters and the subsidiary in India was, however, 'a financial differentiation' (Ice, 1991, p. 358) based on bookkeeping. By Browning's (1993) own admission, the parent company in the United States held 'just over 50 per cent' (p. 365) of the stake in the subsidiary, making it the majority shareholder. Besides, as Sarangi (1998) points out, the international corporate office of Union Carbide was much too closely involved with the design, and subsequent working, of the Bhopal plant to deny any involvement in the tragedy. He says:

The immediate causes of the disaster (at Bhopal) are related to the cost cutting drive initiated by Union Carbide Corporation from its headquarters in Danbury, Connecticut, in 1980. The moves directed at enhancing profits included: reducing the number of personnel, use of low quality construction material, cutting down on vital safety measures and adoption of hazardous operating procedures. (Sarangi, 1998)

Despite pontifications about requisite variety, multinational conglomerates evidently tend not to heed it in the face of requisite commercial viability in the short term. In this instance, Carbide, which initially talked of its philanthropy in helping build a new India, later resorted to cost cutting measures for viability. Moreover, in the post-leak phase, Carbide attempted to safeguard its commercial interests in the west by trying to distance itself from the India plant. In fact, post-Bhopal, Carbide focussed primarily on 'maintaining its image with financial investors and the developed world' (Sen & Egelhoff, 1991, p. 77).

This focus on the developed world is reflected in a company document entitled 'Bhopal: Crisis management and communications at Union Carbide Corporation' Bhopal' (reproduced in Motion & Weaver, 1999, pp. 232-234). This document, which talks at length about crisis management and commitment to open communication, refers primarily to its corporate communication strategies in the U.S. It details accounts of press

conferences, media interviews, and facility visits for the media in the U.S. and also of congressional hearings in West Virginia and Washington, D.C. Even at the height of the crisis in Bhopal, Union Carbide 'distanced itself from the press in India' (Sen & Egelhoff, 1991, p. 77), although it communicated with the press in the U.S. through official releases.

Science of public relations: Multinational experiments in distant laboratories

The field of vision of the company's dominant coalition approximates to the public relations field's vision. Both see the Bhopal tragedy almost entirely through the eyes of Union Carbide and the western chemical industry. One introductory textbook illustrates the convergence succinctly:

Following the Bhopal disaster and a resultant out-of-court settlement, Union Carbide found itself on the receiving end of a takeover bid. The bid was foiled as the result of better communications with appropriate publics and an increased share value. (Kitchen, 1997, p. 30)

The more concentrated disciplinary coverage talks about the pluses and minuses of the way those protagonists dealt with the crisis. As in colonial historiography, this documentation omits or marginalises the perspective of the subaltern, in this particular case the victims of Bhopal. It can justifiably be claimed that, in the discourses of public relations or crisis

communication, the bodies of these victims approximate to human guinea pigs for experiments in the science of public relations. The resulting findings assist in the charting of new strategies for the practice of the profession in, or for, the western world. For example, as Browning (1993) says:

The impact of Bhopal went well beyond Union Carbide. It changed views and practices among the entire U.S. chemical industry. It provided impetus to the development and enactment of federal laws requiring companies to notify government and the public about toxic substances they make or use. The EPA's Federal Superfund Reauthorization, spurred by the Bhopal tragedy, helped bring about a network of local emergency planning councils, in which corporate specialists work with their neighbouring communities to safely deal with unthinkable environmental disasters. (p. 381)

The experience of Bhopal translated into safer industrial practices in the U.S. In fact, right from the beginning, the western spotlight on Bhopal was guided in large measure by western self-interest. After all, the tragedy involved 'a U.S. firm that was manufacturing the same lethal chemical' in America (Heath, 1998, p. 296). The public outrage in the west had less to do with the actual dead and maimed Indian bodies than with the imagined western injuries that might be inflicted by the threat of a similar accident in

the U.S. In this context, Dozier, Grunig, and Grunig's (1995) reference to a corporate communication expert's observation that the Bhopal tragedy pushed all chemical manufacturers to change and be more open to the public evidently refers to the public in the west. Such an ethnocentric conception of a public reinforces the divide between the 'us' of key western publics and the 'them' of peripheral non-western ones.

Although public relations uses the lessons of Bhopal to better serve strategic publics in the west, it continues to neglect the fate of the peripheral public -- the victims of Bhopal. This phenomenon parallels the experimentation on the physical bodies of the other during the colonial era. According to subaltern studies scholars such as Arnold (1997) and Chakrabarty (1996), the colonial state conducted some of its earliest and pioneering medical research on the easily accessible bodies in Indian prisons. Just as the results of the research at that time translated into better and more potent medicines for the colonisers but not for the colonised, post-Bhopal corporate measures may have led to better industrial safety in the west but have not mitigated the suffering of either the relatives of those killed or those that survived the tragedy but are today the living dead of Bhopal.

Fifteen years after the Bhopal disaster, residents of the city are still bearing the brunt of the tragedy. Although there is no definite estimate of the number of people who have died as a consequence of the tragedy,

studies carried out by various agencies show that the leak has adversely affected the health of a large number of people. Research carried out by the Indian Council of Medical Research 'has established that the toxins from the Carbide factory have crossed into the bloodstream of those exposed and have caused damage to their lungs, brain, kidneys, muscles, as well as gastro-intestinal, reproductive, immunological and other systems' (Sarangi, 1998). What is equally alarming is that toxic chemicals from the plant have degraded the environment in the city. According to Sarangi (1998), water in over 200 wells around the Carbide factory have been declared unfit for human consumption.

Public relations ignores the plight of the victims of Bhopal. They are not a target or key public and so they are absent as factors in the equations of requisite variety. Instead, tragedies, such as the one in Bhopal, have spawned a new genre of risk communication in public relations literature. As Beder (1997) points out, the genre deals with risks to companies about regulation and law suits and is unconcerned about the health and environmental risks to the community.

The definition of community, too, is stratified. If the community is one in the west, public relations does take notice. Scholars in the area of risk issues management acknowledge the presence of community campaign groups such as Greenpeace or Surfers against Sewage, which 'have the power to inflict long-term damage on companies', and say that 'like shareholders

and politicians, they need to be factored into corporate planning and decision making' (Regeester & Larkin, 1997, p. 23). However, if a public does not have the power to inflict commercial damage, it remains neglected. In a crisis situation in particular, communication 'manages public perception following industrial accidents' and is 'aimed at restoring reputation' (Beder, 1997, p. 127) with strategic publics. There is no effort to help deal with the implications of the disaster among affected communities, especially if they are in the periphery. For example, when Ken Saro-Wiwa, the Nigerian environmentalist and president of the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP) launched a campaign against the ecological destruction of the Ogoni land by Shell, the oil multinational responded with a 'counter-PR offensive' (Rowell, 1996, p. 309). The preoccupation of Shell's public relations offensive was 'to keep its image clean rather than address the real concerns of the communities' (Rowell, 1996, p. 309).

In the case of Bhopal, the field of public relations has chosen to highlight the lessons with the intention of helping corporations maintain their positions in the world of western business in the face of disaster. In a lengthy section on the Bhopal tragedy, Newsom, Turk, and Kruckeberg (1996) devote two and a half pages to a 12-slide pictorial presentation of 'Union Carbide's side of the story' (pp. 550-552). Entitled 'What really happened at Bhopal' (Newsom, Turk, & Kruckeberg, 1996, p. 550), the presentation builds a case for the company's argument that the tragedy

was caused by 'employee sabotage' (Newsom, Turk, & Kruckeberg, 1996, p. 551). The focus of the authors is largely on what the company did and what the company's officers had to say. The authors do acknowledge that one of the publics affected critically were 'the squatters who built homes just outside the plant' but describe them rather ambiguously as a "nimbus" public' (p. 548). The point of view of this public is not adequately incorporated in the discussion dominated by the perspective of the company. Rather than an analysis of the consequences of the tragedy, the discussion veers around to a report on the series of crises faced by Union Carbide:

Union Carbide's management also had to contend with more than one crisis. While the Bhopal situation was still very much in flux, the West Virginia plant (of the company) had a minor crisis. But that was nothing compared to the attempted hostile takeover that developed when the Bhopal incident caused Union Carbide's stock to fall dramatically. To prevent a takeover, the company restructured, which caused another management crisis. (Newsom, Turk, & Kruckeberg, 1996, p. 549)

By accepting Union Carbide's perspective, public relations neglects the lessons to be learned from Carbide's toxic legacy in India and ignores what nations outside the U.S. may think of the company. In its treatment of Bhopal, public relations clearly sets out its priorities and commercial

concerns as it defines the crises faced by Carbide in managerial terms. As feminist scholars such as Shrivastava (1994) have pointed out, 'the larger crisis of poverty, ecological degradation, social upheaval, and political corruption that form the context and web in which the Bhopal crisis is enmeshed are underemphasised and underspecified' (p. 285).

Far from its ideal of being the 'disclosure of an active social conscience' (Newsom, Turk, & Kruckeberg, 1996, p. 4), public relations is, as Bhopal proves, primarily concerned with towing the line of the dominant coalition. That Union Carbide restructured, downsized, and eventually prevented a takeover has become a part of public relations literature as a success story. This 'success story' entrenches Grunig, Grunig, and Ehling's (1992) suggestion that public relations 'contributes to organizational effectiveness when it helps reconcile the organization's goals with the expectations of its strategic constituencies' (p. 86). It also entrenches the ethnocentric definitions of who counts as a public at all, let alone a strategic public. Furthermore, it raises the question about whether the expectations of strategic constituencies can ever keep the interests of diverse (minority) publics in mind.

Feeding on other bodies: Controlling genetic diversity

As long as the western, or western trained 'manager's self-regulating system' (Culbertson, et. al. , 1993, p. 23) remains central to the organisation, the attempt to incorporate diversity will continue to be

primarily about control of the other. The importation of requisite variety into public relations can usefully be paralleled with diversity in the natural world. Postcolonial scientist Shiva (1993), for example, has condemned the western world's attempt to use the biodiversity convention 'to "globalise" the control, management and ownership of biological diversity' (p. 151). In order to nurture diversity, Shiva (1997) says that 'dominant groups of nations and humans' who impose their ways of life on other peoples and species need to give up 'the will to control' (p. 120).

The appropriation of diversity has been a politico-scientific issue in relation to people as well as plants. The proposed human genome diversity project, for example, sought to collect blood samples from members of 500 ethnic groups around the globe to efficiently detect variations in DNA (Lewin, 1993). Although the project's sponsors claimed they were attempting to create a bank of useful genetic information, critics argued that project leaders who had previously 'ignored the plight of aboriginal peoples' were only planning 'to swoop in, collect blood for their own scientific goals, and then leave the people to their fate' (Lewin, 1993, p. 25). Already western seed companies have capitalised on crops bred in the developing world to create profits and put farmers in the third world out of business. In fact, activists protesting against this practice of seed manipulation have accused the western seed companies of being 'gene thieves' (Mangla, 1993, p. 8). Many of these companies are trampling upon crop diversity in a sinister manner. As Karliner (1997) explains:

The growing competition among transnationals such as Cargill, Monsanto, Hoechst-Roussel and others to develop and globally market transgenic crops (plants that have been genetically engineered to retain traits from other organisms) threatens the survival of centers of crop diversity, most of which are located in the Third World. These geographic areas, where a great many of the planet's staple crops originate, contain a diverse wealth of varieties. The global proliferation of transgenic crops, approved as safe in countries such as the United States, threatens to contaminate these centers and reduce the diversity of strains of various food crops, thus undermining the genetic basis of the world's future food supply. (p. 151)

Such an onslaught against crop diversity goes hand in hand with the desire of multinational corporations to diversify their operations by expanding their bases across the globe. For these corporations, requisite variety is limited to the range of countries that figure on the maps of their neo-colonial conquests. Protecting diversity is not even a footnote in these maps. Just as 'biodiversity cannot be preserved until diversity is made the logic of production' (Shiva, 1993, p. 146), requisite variety cannot be functional until organisations become wholly multicultural.¹ In other words, the use of requisite variety in public relations cannot contribute towards

the cultivation of diversity unless it is accompanied by a commitment to share control.

In the changing demographics and economic balance of the late 20th century, public relations' unwillingness to push the dominant coalition towards sharing control is shortsighted. Its anachronistic tendency to categorise publics into key ones and marginal ones is, in fact, more in tune with colonial discourses of imperial enterprises. Postcolonial scholarship talks of 'a colonialist discourse which exercises a very specific power in defining, coding, and maintaining existing first/third world connections' (Mohanty, 1991, p. 73).

Because of the power differential inherent in the stratified hierarchy of publics, public relations remains glued to the interests of what the dominant managerial elite sees as its strategic constituencies. In such a setting, requisite variety becomes a mask to hide the dominant coalition's gameplan of keeping the other in the margins. It remains, at best, a seemingly benign tool of colonisation that ties into what Mohanty (1991) calls 'the larger economic and ideological praxis of "disinterested" scientific inquiry and pluralism' (p. 74). In the following chapter, I examine the dominant elite's larger economic and ideological agenda in the proliferating literature on diversity management. In particular, I discuss how this literature is carefully structured to construct and control the other in a bid to prevent it from moving closer to the centre of power.

Constricting the other: Organisational expansion, diversity management and western consolidations

Chapter 6 argued that requisite variety in public relations attempts to bring the cultural other into the larger frame of an organisation's external relations without challenging its hierarchies of publics. This chapter contends that diversity management similarly seeks to incorporate the other into an organisation's internal relations, but similarly bypasses issues of power imbalance among various groups. The chapter lays out diversity management's sing-along celebration of a multiplicity of voices in a utopian raceless and egalitarian world and positions it as, at best, premature and, at worst, a dangerous illusion. Although these celebrations of diversity may often be well meaning, they can cover over the failure of neocolonial organisational leaders to equitably share power and authority with the other.

In the course of writing this thesis, I have discovered that examining texts on managing diversity through a postcolonial lens requires, essentially, an ability to distinguish between the terms colonialism and neocolonialism.

While colonialism was the European stranglehold on much of the non-European world from the mid-18th to the mid-20th centuries, neocolonialism is the 'dominant economic, political, and culturalist maneuvers emerging in our century after the uneven dissolution of the territorial empires' (Spivak, 1999, p. 172).

In colonial discourses, the mission to keep 'the native under control' (Said, 1994, p. 162) was, by and large, an overt one. Through institutions of domination, agents of imperialism in the colonial era subjugated the 'native' other culturally, socially, militarily, and politically. In British India, for example, institutional power was vested in colonial officers such as district magistrates, army colonels, and factory superintendents, who collectively kept the native insurgent and the native employee under check. While hierarchical demarcations are explicit in colonial discourses, they are less overt in neocolonial discourses. This chapter centres contemporary variations of subjugation in the strategic use of managerial authority by neocolonial elites to control the cultural other and the employee.

Controlling the other: Managerial strategies and neocolonialism

The processes of economic globalisation, which involve large-scale organisational restructuring, downsizing, and profit-driven competitiveness, are creating new geographies and new hierarchies of

power. Western, or west-trained, managerial elites exercise imperialising control over the changing workforce in two interlinked ways: The use of tranquillising discourses of employee participation; and the deployment of surveillance technologies.

Although some form of control has always been integral to organisational functioning (Weber, 1978), neocolonial control can be subtle. It is often structured around discourses that create an illusion of employee participation, empowerment, and freedom. These discourses, however, downplay the fact that they 'inevitably entail a measure of commitment to corporate values' (Humphries & Grice, 1995, p. 29) drafted by the managing elites. Such corporate values are rooted in western market-defined terms such as productivity and efficiency and these terms tend to count for more than worker emancipation rhetoric.

Geared to achieving bottom-line results, the associated management practices revolve around the service of greater productivity and 'offer few or no options for democracy' (Cheney, 1999, p. 145). These practices, especially ones that promote teams, give workers a sense of participation but do not allow them to have a real say in the decision-making process. That power of decision-making continues to be vested in the dominant managerial core driven by the rational economic successors of western enlightenment 'man'.

Despite the rhetoric of employee participation, many employees have actually lost their job, or had their voice quietened, in the climate of insecure employment fostered by economic globalisation. As Hays (1999) points out, more and more employees are now scared to express their opinions for fear of losing their already fragile jobs. The narratives of participatory management are told to employees already tense about their jobs, loss of wages and deteriorating workplace conditions. Ironically, these narratives can function to 'promote acquiescence' to the managerial elites and, in effect, 'depoliticize incipient organizational issues, removing them from arenas of discussion and debate' (Witten, 1993, p. 115).

Closely aligned with the process of control through narratives of illusory empowerment is the exercise of employee control with the use of new technologies of surveillance. Sewell (1998) documents the emergence of new, unobtrusive forms of administrative dominance that are 'displacing bureaucracy as the principal mode of rationalization and control in the contemporary life, particularly in the workplace' (p. 397). In fact, according to a survey carried out by the American Management Association, as many as two-thirds of employers monitor their employees' communication channels such as voice mail, email, computer files, and phone calls (Hays, 1999). These new technologies of surveillance are often invisible to employees, who are left to assume that they have been given innocent access to the fruits of an information revolution. Such technologies are particularly insidious 'because they disguise control' and are hidden

behind 'the unstated promise of providing more thorough control for the elites' (Jermier, 1998, p. 235).

These hidden forms of control characterise many present-day neocolonial discourses driven by the market. Although the concept of democracy is enthusiastically espoused by dominant elites, it is never followed in spirit because, as Gray (1998) says, 'democracy and the free market are rivals, not allies' (p. 17). Neocolonial institutions such as the World Trade Organisation, which see themselves as the epitome of a 'free' market, frame rules for the market which are not open to the scrutiny of any democratic legislature (Gray, 1998). These institutions, which idealistically speak of equality for all actually reinforce what Spivak (1999) calls the 'continuing narrative of shifting imperialised formations' (p. 102), because their norms of functioning adhere to social, cultural, and legal frameworks that are predominantly western.

Neocolonial narratives, despite their egalitarian-sounding slogans of a 'free' market and global 'equity', continue to emphasise the managerial authority of elite groups. These groups retain a clearly marked division between western or west-trained managers and largely non-western workers. The dominant managerial core, usually comprising western 'white males' (Dozier, Grunig, & Grunig, 1995, p. 151), formulate policies for the entire workforce although, in numerical terms, white male westerners are only a small minority. In most transnational organisations

in the age of globalisation, the control of underprivileged ethnic groups aligns closely with the control of disempowered employees, who are most likely to be immigrants, women, and people of colour (Sassen, 1998). This dual control is exercised by a core group of organisational leaders who are thus doubly privileged: by virtue of their ethnicity, and because of their positions in organisational hierarchies.

In diversity management, the gap between managers and workers is retained in two parallel ways. In the first, much of the orientation of diversity management is geared, according to scholars in the field, to encouraging managers to view managing diversity as a means to achieving 'organizational objectives' (Kossek & Lobel, 1996, p. 10). This orientation privileges the position of managers. In the second, as the organisational ends invariably reflect the demands and needs of managers who are western or west-trained, diversity management maintains the gap between the west and the non-west. As postcolonial critics such as Moore-Gilbert (1997) have pointed out, neocolonial discourses recognise 'difference "equally" but, again, only in relation to the assumed centrality of the dominant culture' (p. 199). In the pursuit of western organisational ends, therefore, the pursuit of managing diversity perpetuates monologues of domination rather than promoting a constructive interplay of ideas.

Controlled voices in the orchestra of diversity

Proliferating volumes on the subject of diversity management (see e. g., Carr-Ruffino, 1996; Cox Jr., 1993; Gardenswartz & Rowe, 1998; Kossek & Lobel, 1996; Thomas Jr., 1991; Thomas Jr., 1996; Weiss, 1996) are guided by the same aim. That aim is to get a variety of voices to sing together in a multicultural orchestra. The rising decibel levels of these volumes is reinforced by their increased presence in business sections of bookshops in recent years. The sheer rise in numbers offers a clear indication that managing diversity is now a major organisational issue. In order to make sense of the trend, I scanned the Library of Congress Catalogue for works in the area of diversity management. Finding 58 books on the subject listed in this catalogue, I then studied all those that had the words 'managing diversity' in their titles and were available in New Zealand libraries¹.

As those words suggest, the majority of the books characterise diversity as something that needs to be 'managed'. The word 'manage' as a verb transitive, according to the *Chambers Giant Paperback English Dictionary* (1996), means, variously, 'to administer, be at the head of; to be able to

¹ Carr-Ruffino (1996); Cox & Beale (1997); Gardenswartz & Rowe (1998); Golembiewski (1995); Kossek & Lobel (1996); Prasad, Mills, Elmes, & Prasad (1997); Thomas (1991); Weiss (1996).

cope with; to deal tactfully with; to train by exercise, as a horse; to handle; to conduct; to control; to manipulate; to contrive; to have time for; to bring about' (p. 641). The act of 'managing', therefore, sets up a distinct power hierarchy in which the one who manages is superior to the one who is managed. This meaning is confirmed by scholars such as Blommaert and Verschueren (1998), who assert that 'management is always in the hands of the powerful and the management of diversity is not an exception' (p. 15).

Picking up on the common musical metaphors, this chapter examines the orchestra of diversity management. It finds that plurality is formally validated by the presence of a range of musicians, but the baton remains in the hands of a western conductor. The conductor makes sure that the others interpret the performance on his or her terms. In the literature on managing diversity, the perspective of the conductor is usually that of a senior manager who takes a 'traditional pragmatic approach' to 'solving the new challenges' (Orbe, 1998, p. 230) of organisational diversity. In directing music in praise of an egalitarian humankind, the conductor acknowledges the reality of dealing with the complexities of a diverse new world which has the potential of shaking entrenched western monopolies of business, industry, and profit-making. How neocolonial enterprises see managing diversity as the need of the hour is captured in the words of one diversity management scholar, Weiss (1993):

Corporations are changing more rapidly and radically now than any time since World War II. The forces of international competition, the emergence of a global economy, increasing immigration with the resulting changes in demographics, and regional trading blocs are reshaping the workplace and management practices. (p. 1)

As the world's demographic profile undergoes tectonic shifts, the huge population bases of the non-western world are reducing western enclaves to a smaller and smaller minority in numerical terms. Even in the context of the global economy, emerging and developing economies already account for two-thirds of the world's economic growth (Gingrich, 1999). Yet, despite being the majority in numerical terms, the non-western other continues to be a minority in socio-political terms. As 'a group that is associated with a lack of power' (O'Sullivan, Hartley, Saunders, Montgomery, & Fiske, 1994, p. 182), those that lie outside the dominant neocolonial frame remain a 'minority'. It is because of this lack of socio-political power that non-western groups continue to be positioned as minorities in a world where they collectively constitute an 'overwhelming majority'.

In recognising demographic changes, the field of diversity management does espouse the cause of a plural world through expressed needs: to build 'multicultural work teams' (e. g., Gardenswartz & Rowe, 1998, p. 129); to evolve a 'consensus for change' (Carr-Ruffino, 1996, p. 550); and

to 'motivate a heterogeneous workforce' (Kossek & Lobel, 1996, p. 17). But, this apparent benevolence notwithstanding, the field does little to catalyse a shift in the power base in line with the changing demographics. Instead, the composers of managing diversity tend to reinforce elitist control over the shift by promoting a synthetic equality that ignores the lopsidedness of existing power structures.

Unequal arrangements and instruments of power

In this context, it is ironic that equality is one of the primary values in the idealised texts on managing diversity. Carr-Ruffino's (1996) comments are typical:

Politically, we're a pluralistic society. Our diverse groups get to have a say through individual members' votes and whatever influence their interest groups can wield within the political system. Another of our key values is *equality and fairness for all*, and minority groups have always struggled toward that ideal value. [emphasis in original] (p. 53)

Working towards the 'ideal value' of equality sounds harmonious. But, as the postcolonial welfare economist, Sen (1992), points out, a closer examination of the 'warm glow' (p. 30) of the rhetoric reveals how the concept of equality is often unequal. The rhetoric assumes a uniformity of the plane along which equality among people is measured. But, 'human

heterogeneities', as Sen (1992) observes, 'make equality in one space diverge from equality in another' (p. 4). He asserts that the rhetoric of equality in income distribution conceals the 'substantive inequalities in, say, well-being and freedom arising out of such a distribution given the disparate personal and social circumstances of each individual' (p. 30). In other words, the championing of a unitary notion of 'equality' only consolidates the position of those who are already more equal than others.

Diversity managers promote the belief that educational parity can bring about equality of job opportunities. In line with this belief, *Workforce 2020* (Judy & Amico, 1997), a much-cited think-tank approach to issues of diversity in the workplace, concludes that 'the relatively modest educational gains of Hispanics have prevented them from being hired to fill many good jobs' (p. 65) in the U.S. From a value-neutral equality perspective, *Workforce 2020* may be justified in its analysis. But its concern about the 'sharply rising numbers of Hispanics without a completed high school education' (p. 64) is hollow because it does not take into consideration the socio-political constraints that contribute to the relatively lower educational achievement by Hispanics, many of whom are immigrants from neighbouring Mexico. These constraints include policy interventions such as Proposition 187 of 1994 in the state of California, 'which denied so-called illegal immigrants virtually all social services, especially public education and nonemergency medical care' (Haraway,

1997, pp. 189-190). This proposition is only one of the many ways in which racism and ethnocentrism find their way into seemingly benign structures of public policy. As Haraway (1997) asserts, 'despite the denial of its backers, Proposition 187 was widely understood to have fundamental racial, ethnic, class, and national targets, especially working-class Latinos of color coming across the Mexican-U.S. border' (p. 190).

The consignment of working class Latinos to the margins fits in with the larger scheme of global business. The business motor continues to be powered by neoclassical economic principles, which divide the labour force into a powerful core and a less powerful periphery (Clegg, 1992; Humphries & Grice, 1995). In such an obviously divisive setting, discourses of harmony and equality can act, at best, as a tranquiliser to numb any sense of injustice among those on the periphery. In fact, in Humphries and Grice's (1995) analysis, more and more employees are now being 'conditioned to accept, or at least tolerate, the notion that this new division of labour is not only the most efficient and effective in the face of global competition, but is also inevitable and fair' (p. 29).

This conditioning of people's minds lies at the core of the strategies of diversity management. One major strategy is to create a perception of idealised equality. As Cox Jr. (1993) says in his book, *Cultural Diversity in Organizations*:

It is well known that behavior is driven by perceptions of reality. Therefore, what people believe about their opportunities in the work environment is of vital importance regardless of whether or not these beliefs are consistent with the facts. (pp. 14-15)

This perceived equality based on grand rhetoric may be useful for some but 'misleading for others' (Sen, 1992, p. 30). In fact, the image of a mythical equality only privileges 'the groups of people who make the rules and dominate the social construction of the hierarchy of categories' (Boje & Rosile, 1994, p. 16). Such a hierarchy of categories implicitly validates issues of systemic and institutionalised racism, ethnocentrism, and re-mobilised (neo)colonialism (which the idealised rhetoric of equality chooses to underplay).

Postracist harmonising: Equalising themes and diverse voices

In their zeal for harmonising, the discourses of diversity management exclude racialised power equations. Instead they reach out for what one Chicana feminist author calls a "postracist" space' (Anzaldua, 1990, p. xxii) that is unreal and unrealistic in the short term. She offers a powerful critique of the neocolonial agenda of appropriating the other:

Dwelling on 'diversity' and multiculturalism (a euphemism for the imperializing and now defunct 'melting pot') is a way of avoiding

seriously dismantling Racism We want so badly to move beyond Racism to a 'postracist' space, a more comfortable space, but we are only prolonging the pain and leaving unfinished a business that could liberate some of our energies. (Anzaldua, 1990, p. xxii)

The desire of diversity managers to enter a make-believe 'postracist sphere' is captured by titles such as *Beyond Race and Gender: Unleashing the Power of Your Total Workforce by Managing Diversity* (Thomas Jr., 1991). Other books in the genre, too, strive for a world without tensions of race and gender. In *Redefining Diversity*, for instance, Thomas Jr. (1996) talks of the experiences of 'forward-thinking organizations' who 'have moved beyond race and gender in their thinking, and now use the tool of Managing Diversity to focus their activities' (p. 114). A similar focus on burying the past, and ignoring the present, in premature moves to 'forward thinking', occupies major sections of diversity management texts. It is evident, albeit couched in a typically conciliatory tone, in Gardenswartz and Rowe's (1998) formulation:

If we blame and rage against those who have held power, whatever their color, then we miss the point of the diversity movement. If we are to regain the competitive edge and create not only 'kinder and gentler' but also more profitable and productive organizations, then it is time to share power. That means representing everyone in the

decision-making process. Previously excluded groups who point their fingers and grind their axes move us backward, as do white males who cry reverse discrimination and resist any but token change. Any diversity effort that fails to extend empathy and understanding full circle will end up polarizing people and creating adversaries. We will all lose. (p. 522)

Such an approach simplifies complex social issues and underplays the realities of the dynamics of difference in societies as well as organisations. It does not reflect what Rothenberg (1992) calls 'the incredible complexity of ways race, gender, and class intersect and interact with each other and with other aspects of experience' (p. iv). In the so-called equal-opportunity environments of present-day organisations, the history of oppression transforms into calls to curb blaming and raging against those who have held power and start anew. But it is this history of inequality that continues to bestow power on dominant coalitions. In the process, it consolidates the often unseen effects of racism against underprivileged minorities. The absent effects of racism, seemingly invisible to the diversity manager, are powerfully captured by a Mexican-American poet's response to the 'young white man who asked me how I, an intelligent, well-read person could believe in the war between races' (Cervantes, 1992, p. 225):

In my land
people write poems about love,

full of nothing but contented childlike syllables.

Everyone reads Russian short stories and weeps.

There are no boundaries.

There is no hunger, no
complicated famine or greed.

I am not a revolutionary.

I don't even like political poems.

Do you think I can believe in a war between races?

I can deny it. I can forget about it

when I'm safe,

living on my own continent of harmony

and home, but I am not

there.

I believe in revolution

because everywhere the crosses are burning,

sharp-shooting goose-steppers round every corner,

there are snipers in the schools . . .

(I know you don't believe this.

You think this is nothing

but faddish exaggeration. But they

are not shooting at you.)

I'm marked by the color of my skin.

The bullets are discrete and designed to kill slowly.

They are aiming at my children.

These are facts.

Let me show you my wounds: my stumbling mind, my

'excuse me' tongue, and this

nagging preoccupation

with the feeling of not being good enough.

These bullets bury deeper than logic.

Racism is not intellectual.

I can not reason these scars away. (Cervantes, 1992, pp. 225-226)

The dangerous everyday realities and emotional scars that Cervantes (1992) has to live with because of the ever-present racism are not easily comprehended by those with the in-built privilege of being born in a dominant group. By being part of a self-constructed norm, members of this dominant group enjoy 'the trappings of power that reside within society' (Lorde, 1992, p. 402). They talk of egalitarianism but may not implement it if their own positions of privilege are threatened.

An example of this egalitarianism is in the treatment of the Maori language in New Zealand. Although both English and Maori are official languages of the country, Maori language has 'remained on the margins of New

Zealand society, kept there by those who feel contemptuous about anything Maori' (Jackson, 1999, p. A 15). Every time there is a proposal to make the teaching of Maori compulsory in primary schools, there is an outburst of opposition to it. Predictably, in October 1999, there was a major outcry against the minister of Maori affairs' suggestion to make Maori a part of the school curriculum. As always, the objections were ethnocentric: 'nobody else in the world speaks that language; children would be better off learning the language of our trading partners; Maori lessons would take up valuable time that could be spent on more useful subjects' (Language to embrace, 1999, p. A 14).

The state occupies a similar position by not making any attempt to ensure the teaching of both Maori and English in schools, despite the statutory status of Maori as an official language on a par with English, the preferred tongue of the European segment of the New Zealand population. In fact, it has so far done little to promote Maori, beyond incorporating Maori translations of names of state institutions. The objections raised to the inclusion of Maori in the fixed curriculum of primary schools signal the continuing race/power nexus which diversity managers attempt to ignore or underplay.

The rhetoric of superficial racial harmony in the discourses of a globalised 'one-world' aim for a homogeneity that suppresses ongoing struggles in the contested spaces of race and ethnicity. Haraway (1997) cites a special

issue of *Time* on immigration as a case in point. The magazine used photographs of models from different race/ethnic backgrounds and mated them electronically to produce 'cybergenetic offspring' (Haraway, 1997, p. 263). Analysing the effects of the computer-generated photographs, Haraway (1997) says:

The sense of utter homogeneity that emanates from *Time's* matrix of diversity is numbing. The blacks are not very black; the blonds are not very blond; the range of skin color would require the best chromatography to distinguish one promising golden hue from another. (pp. 263-264)

The image of a new raceless world portrayed by the magazine is designed to be visually seductive. The conceptual seductiveness of creating a mythical equality seems to mesmerise diversity managers. But neither in *Time's* special issue, nor in diversity management's rhetoric of equality, is there anything that 'speaks about racial domination, guilt, and hatred' (Haraway, 1997, p. 264). In terms of a postcolonial analysis, this kind of computer-generated syncretism 'remains enmeshed in the gaze of the West' (Grewal & Kaplan, 1994, p. 7). That viewpoint exercises control over the drawing board of diversity. With the odds of demographic shifts heavily against it, this numerically outnumbered elite bids for future control by retaining the power to shape a homogeneous world in its own mould. The neo-imperialist desire to cast the world on its own terms also surfaces

in the 'anomalous spread of things Western in supposedly non-Western locations (i.e., the bottle of Coca Cola that lands on the African tribesman's head in *The Gods Must be Crazy*)' (Grewal & Kaplan, 1994, p. 7).

An aligned drive for homogeneity consolidates the elitist paradigm in organisations. Such a process not only marginalises the experiences of the other but perpetuates the discrimination of those who refuse to step out of their race, gender, or class identities. To comprehend the paradox of minority groups facing systemic discrimination in diversity-managed multicultural organisations, diversity management theorists will have to look not beyond '*race* and *gender*' [emphasis mine] (Thomas Jr., 1991; Thomas Jr., 1996) but beyond *racism* and *sexism*.

Synchronised singing: Marshalling diverse voices to a common goal

In their symbolic leap over race and gender, the majority of diversity texts either ignore, or remain oblivious to, the racism and sexism inherent in the seemingly neutral terms they use. This is discernible in their vocabulary. Subthemes like 'synergy' (see, e. g., Carr-Ruffino, 1996, pp. 127-128; Weiss, 1996, p. 155) deal with moving beyond prejudice towards synthesis and collaboration. While building synergy does incorporate the views of others, it, in most cases, consolidates the position of the western managerial elite as the major driving force. For example, when Carr-Ruffino (1996) says that '*leadership* challenges for moving beyond

prejudice include understanding the effects of prejudice on *minority* employees' level of trust, motivation, and productivity' [emphasis mine] (p. 134), she at once creates a hierarchy between the (western) leadership and the minorities.

This, obviously superior, position of the elitist leadership is strengthened in another text which defines efficiency as 'doing things right' (Weiss, 1996, p. 372). The implication is that there is one right way of doing things and this one right way is the way charted by the dominant western managerial frame. This line of thinking is echoed in seemingly liberal statements by diversity managers such as Gardenswartz and Rowe (1998):

when we approach different norms less judgmentally, with an understanding that all cultural rules have advantages and disadvantages, we have a better chance of making everyone feel valued and wanted. What's more, when people feel accepted, they are more open to learning your way too. (p. 80)

These writers assume a level cultural playing field which makes it hard not to read their advice as a tactical move to improve the chance of getting the other to learn the lessons western managers want to be taught.

To return to musical terms, it can be said that while the conductor does allow the 'blossoming diversity' (Carr-Ruffino, 1996, p. 1) of voices of every pitch and tone, the tune remains largely western. As conductors control and coordinate a diverse body of musicians, diversity managers believe that 'managerial processes of control and coordination can direct the inputs of diverse people toward a common goal' (Walck, 1995, p. 119). This process of control and coordination exposes the contradictions in the seemingly pluralistic endeavours of those who seek to 'manage diversity'. The 'common goal' which the diversity management industry aims for is western in defining progress or development only in terms of Euro-American models of business and management.

By attempting to unite the world on western terms, therefore, texts on managing diversity continue to vest power in the hands of the neocolonial elite. One expressed goal of managing diversity is to:

minimise or remove performance barriers that result from *diversity-related problems* [emphasis added] such as turnover, absenteeism, low productivity, work quality, and group cohesiveness. It is also argued that effective recruitment and management of a diverse workforce can enhance a company's competitive advantage by adding expertise relevant to addressing increasingly diverse markets, expanding creativity in problem solving, and increasing

organizational flexibility and goal achievement, and profitability.
(Weiss, 1996, p. 15)

In this definition of managing diversity, the paramount position of the western managerial elite is explicit. Diversity becomes the *cause* of organisational problems and, therefore, needs to be *managed* by the controlling elite for the sake of goal achievement and profitability. This focus on problem solving and profitability is further sharpened by the emphasis on a specific set of training that is required to be imparted to diverse groups:

The effect of diversity on work outcomes depends greatly on the extent to which the diversity is proactively managed. In one of the classic studies of this type, Harry Triandis and his colleagues compared the problem-solving scores of homogeneous groups with those of two types of more diverse groups: diverse with training and diverse without training. They found that the diverse groups that were not trained in the existence and implications of their differences actually produced lower problem-solving scores than homogenous groups, whereas the diverse groups that were trained produced scores that averaged six times higher than the homogeneous groups. (Cox Jr. & Beale, 1997, p. 37)

The western organisational emphasis on 'training' diverse groups is central to diversity management's project of control. Through such training, neocolonial organisations establish a uniform administrative and business culture based on western norms and standards. This process of ideologically indoctrinating the other helps organisational elites to project what goes against neocolonial business interests as problems. In this way, organisational leaders involve diverse groups in the goal of solving problems faced by elite groups. These leaders also retain control over the other by defining problems, including 'diversity-related problems' (Weiss, 1996, p. 15), on their terms.

In a superficial reading, books on managing diversity talk about building 'developmental alliances . . . with people who differ in terms of gender, race and/or cultural background' (Kram & Hall, 1996, p. 109). But, as the power and the initiative of building these relationships rests with organisational leaders, the texts end up keeping minority groups in circumscribed spaces situated on the periphery of power. For instance, Carr-Ruffino's (1996) lauding of the African American core values of 'sharing, personal style, genuineness, assertiveness, vitality, and resilience' (p. 261) does celebrate the importance of diversity. However, when the text goes on to say that '(l)eaders can help African American employees build on these strengths as they develop other skills and strengths they need to achieve job and careers goals' (p. 261), the unequal power dynamics are exposed. Quite clearly, the 'leaders', albeit

ones with a benevolent image, are at the centre of the power axis and the 'others' (African American employees in this particular case) are at the margins.

The clear demarcation between the organisational leaders and the employees in diversity training discourses shows that, despite appearances to the contrary, the theory and practice of diversity management are not concerned with shifting the balance of power. Texts on cultural plurality, which often seem to mean well, often, as postcolonial feminist critiques show, 'push to the fringes once more the very cultures and ethnic groups about whom they want to disseminate knowledge' (Anzaldúa, 1990, p. xxi).

Limited scripts: Fringe players, bit roles, and the theatre of diversity

Despite their all-encompassing scripts, discourses on diversity management often end up keeping minority groups to fringe roles or silent walk-on parts. Like the chorus in a Sophoclean tragedy, such groups do have a major role to play in the unfolding drama, but never manage to stay centrestage.

Like the Chorus of *Antigone* which 'must express a submissive, if rather unenthusiastic, loyalty to their king, Creon' (Watling, 1984, p. 10), the fringe players in the discourses of managing diversity are more often than

not given roles that are subservient. That way, organisational leaders can continue with their prescribed ethnocentric monologues.

While the imagery may shift from aural to visual culture, the power imbalance stays consistent across different sectors. In the foreword to one prominent text on managing diversity, the chief executive officer of a corporate body proclaims that America is

a great mosaic where all the nationalities of the world have come to lend their hues and tints to the beauty that is America . . . be it in art, music, philosophy, skills, food, or commerce. And the successful organisation must reflect that same mosaic. (Preston, 1991, p. x)

The U.S. is obviously the key player on this stage: The others are simply expected to bring up the chorus to sing to its glory. This kind of reasoning is manifest in the functioning of the world's best-known institution of diversity, the United Nations. Despite being a body that espouses the interests of all nations, its strategic decisions are controlled by an elite club led by the U.S. Clearly a 'conspicuous case of crying inequalities in the distribution of power to take big decisions' (Lal, 1999b, p. 6), the United Nations shows how diversity is often hijacked by those who wield greater economic and military power.

Just as veto-carrying members of the security council dictate the policies of the United Nations, managers representing the powerful western elite hold the keys to power in organisations. Such keys include the power to formulate policies to deal with the other. Thomas Jr. (1991) asks one of the defining questions in the discourses of managing diversity:

As a manager goes about enabling/influencing/empowering his/her workforce, and as that workforce becomes increasingly diverse, are there things that have to be done differently (managerially speaking) with a diverse workforce than would be the case with a homogenous work force? (p. xv).

In other words, managers are at the centre and their constituents at the periphery. Despite their desire to value notions of 'sharing and interrelatedness' (Carr-Ruffino, 1996, p. 231), these discourses rarely address the balance of power from outside.

The imbalance of power at an executive level is mirrored at the strategy level. The power of formulating diversity strategies is vested in traditional organisational leaders. Indeed, a recurring keyword in all the texts on managing diversity is 'strategy', whether it is in the context of leaders requiring to effect change in the interest of 'business strategy' (Cox Jr. & Beale, 1997, p. 287), or on forging 'strategic alliances' (Weiss, 1996, p.

138), or working on 'diversity as a basis for strategic advantage' (Dass & Parker, 1996, p. 368). As Cox and Beale (1997) state explicitly:

because leaders are ultimately responsible for the operational results of the business, they must take the responsibility for seeing that the change effort for diversity is linked to both the business strategy and other aspects of the strategic plan. (pp. 286-287).

On the surface of the text, 'leaders' and their 'strategic plans' may appear to be culture, race, and gender neutral. However, an intertextual reading of these, essentially business, terms reveals how much they echo western, neocolonial values and experiences.

Just as feminist critiques of globalisation show how the 'dominant discourse of globalization conceals and excludes gender-specific consequences' (Brodie, 1994, p. 48), the dominant voices in the discourse of managing diversity drown out the voices of those that are 'managed'. Much is made about the fact that 'diverse markets and workplaces are increasingly made up of people from various cultures and subcultures' (Carr-Ruffino, 1996, p. 1), but not much attention is paid to the structural inequities in such markets and workplaces. As Lal (1999b) accurately notes, the market-driven global village of today is 'an omnipolis of six billion people with a rigid caste system of its own' (p. 6). That system reinforces the 'generally segregated, unequal, and tenuous place' of

women and other minority groups in the labour market' (Bakker, 1994, p. 2). As long as organisational policy and planning remains wedded to the goals of a globalisation that works to widen the gap between the haves and the have-nots, strategies of managing diversity create illusions of an egalitarian world. In effect, they serve as organisational tools to keep the have-nots quiet. The structural inequalities carry over from economic and political space to cyberspace and cybernetworks.

These networks illustrate how the diversity-managed world of globalisation has effectively imprisoned the other on the periphery of power. While electronic networks have given women and other marginalised people easy access to cyberspace, they have consolidated the position of the economically-strong west. This is underscored by Spender's (1998) analysis:

At the moment, most of the forums in which cyber-policy is being made are exclusionary. White, professional, English/American-speaking males have got the floor: and they are focusing primarily on technological issues -- or pornography, property, and privacy problems. (A survey of *Wired* indicates that these are the hot topics.) It is easier to talk about the latest 'toys' and to defend the concept of 'free speech' for the boys, than it is to address the major social and political questions which go with the new technologies. (p. 266)

This west-dominated cyber-revolution, despite its lofty goals of uniting the world, mirrors the existing worldwide division between rich and poor with the cyberspace division between the information-rich and the information-poor. In fact, 'poorer countries, painfully aware of the irony of becoming more dependent than before on colonial powers for capital investment, credit, trade, and technology' (Lal, 1999a, p. 25), have more reason to be worried about the pathology of this revolution, despite its claims to herald equality among peoples.

The neocolonial strategy of subordinating the other in the fields of trade and technology is extended by the diversity management industry. Attempts to consolidate the mechanism of controlling the other finds echoes in the narrowly-constructed managerial/administrative bias that remains unchallenged in the world of business. One of the texts under study, *Managing Diversity in Organizations* (Golembiewski, 1995), does acknowledge the limitations of approaching issues of diversity in 'bureaucratic work settings' (p. 181) and says that these can be 'potentially self-defeating' (p. 182). Building on work on organisational reforms, Golembiewski (1995) makes the case that organisations try to take on board diverse members 'on the basis of benefit to the existing dominant members' (Lindsay cited in Golembiewski, 1995, p. 182). In effectively exposing the tendency of bureaucratic organisations to reinforce separatist tendencies, Golembiewski (1995) suggests an

alternative model of approaching diversity which he calls the 'postbureaucratic' model based on 'flow-of-work structures' (p. 93) of shared responsibilities and collective planning.

Although a more flexible approach, Golembiewski's (1995) model is open to the same structural limitations as that of the traditional bureaucratic model, unless there is an organisational commitment to issues of diversity (Garcia, 1998). As a result, the process of bringing about true and equitable diversity based on demographic trends will remain stuck unless the very managerial processes that run organisations undergo a radical shift. Until such a shift happens, the apparently benevolent frame of diversity management cannot conceal the attempt of a dominant neo-colonial policy-making elite to construct and control the other.

Reclaiming rights: Postcolonial diversities and maps that make a difference

This chapter has argued that the race and gender implications of the notions of managing diversity need to be carefully analysed. Such an analysis, as this chapter has shown, can be based on works from other fields such as postcolonial, feminist, and indigenous studies. Yet, these fields have been largely ignored by the texts of diversity management. The only title among the texts under study that attempts a multi-dimensional critique of diversity management is a collection of essays edited by P. Prasad, Mills, Elmes, and A. Prasad (1997). Their volume stands out in the

management literature on diversity because it undertakes 'to grapple with the more troublesome and disturbing aspects of workplace diversity . . . in a more theoretically informed fashion (P. Prasad & Mills, 1997, p. 5).

Unlike the celebrating-diversity model adopted by most of the texts in the genre, this volume highlights the implications of 'white rage' manifest in orchestrated opposition to the goals of diversity. It also uses a range of theoretical perspectives to analyse the working of the 'diversity industry' (P. Prasad & Mills, 1997, p. 4).

A. Prasad's (1997) postcolonial critique of the way diversity management works in practice is particularly important. He establishes the parallels between the discourses of workplace diversity and the discourses of colonialism. In studying the petroleum sector's representations of the other, A. Prasad (1997) identifies the similarities between the two discourses. The crux of these similarities lies in how both attempt to define non-western others as inferior but at the same time regard them as desirable possessions for the west. Although Prasad's critique is significant, it does not go far enough in pinpointing the complicity of the diversity management industry in furthering the goals of neocolonial managerialism.

Such control-oriented discursive strategies framed on the basis of race, gender, and ethnicity are often conflated with organisational and managerial control strategies. These parallel discourses compound the

effects of each other and create even wider disparities in the hierarchies of power. By not recognising the cumulative effects of these discursive strategies, diversity management does not get anywhere near its professed goal of breaking arrangements of domination.

The growing interest in issues of diversity in the world of business and management is noteworthy in acknowledging the need to achieve equality. But, as this chapter has argued, discourses of diversity management, shaped as they are by western and west-trained managers, effectively feed into neocolonialism's agenda of controlling the other. The following chapter tracks a similar trajectory of the neocolonial processes of western control in the field of intercultural communication.

Cartographies of convenience: Intercultural communication and neocolonial business maps

Chapter 7 argued that the neocolonial elite often uses diversity management as a tool to consolidate its control over the non-western other in an increasingly globalised workplace. This chapter extends the argument by charting the map of business convenience drawn by the more education-based field of intercultural communication. In effect, intercultural communication functions, to some extent, as a much less sophisticated corollary of diversity management. This chapter also argues that it remains ideologically rooted in colonialist perspectives and, as such, falls in line with neocolonial western business strategies.

The map of intercultural communication is based on the cartographic principles of old colonial maps which 'envision[s] the world from a single privileged point' (Shohat & Stam, 1994, p. 2). Colonial maps, drawn by agents of imperial oligarchies in Europe, created a warped image of the world and prompted historians, such as Peters (1989), to come up with less distorted projections of the globe. Peters (1989) criticised the

tendency of conventional maps to place the western world in a superior position by manipulating shapes and sizes of nations in their favour. These conventional maps made (and continue to make) North America look larger than Africa, and Scandinavia appear bigger than India, in an obvious distortion of the reality of their respective sizes. The cartography of intercultural communication, too, thrives on such distortions. In fact, going a step further, this neocolonial map of western business convenience virtually wipes off the map nations of marginal business interest to the west-dominated global market.

Teaching otherness to the other: Re-reading intercultural texts in the classroom

My attention was drawn to this neo-colonial map when I acted as co-instructor for a graduate course in intercultural communication. The required textbook (Chen & Starosta, 1998), as well as the business and management articles in the course reader, delineated a world which clearly followed the geographical contours of the rich trading partners of the Euro-American business hub. As far as these texts are concerned, intercultural communication is essentially a channel to learn about the cultural norms of people from countries with which the west is doing, or has the potential to do, business. Because of the rising business clout of east and south-east Asia, intercultural communication texts concentrate primarily on the dynamics of cultural interaction between westerners (more specifically, North Americans) and people from the economic

powerhouses of China and Japan. For instance, Chen and Starosta's (1998) book refers to the U.S. and Americans on 29 pages, China and the Chinese on 32 pages, and Japan and the Japanese on 22 pages. There are fewer references to Korea, Thailand, and India, and none whatsoever to the vast majority of the member nations of the United Nations who exist outside the shadow of western markets. The economically impoverished parts of the world, such as 'Africa: The unwired continent' (O'Connor, 1998, p. 270), do not exist at all on the map of intercultural communication. On this map, flags are only pinned on the sites of major, or what look likely to be major, trading posts of the west.

My decision to study the textual content of the course material for a graduate class in intercultural communication was guided by the fact that the chosen texts form a microcosm of the field. The textbook was the most recent available in the field at the time and the reader had key chapters from among the most-cited literature in the field. Besides, as a co-instructor, I had the opportunity to learn from the critical insights of a diverse range of students participating in the course. I also had a rare chance to look self-reflexively at the way I, as a non-western other, negotiated the teaching of course material that was largely western in its perspective.

Of the 13 participants in the course, eight were international students -- five from Thailand and one each from China, Vietnam, and the Solomon

Islands. In numerical terms, the non-western students formed the majority. Yet, the teaching tool was quintessentially western. The medium of instruction was English, the second or third language for the majority of the class and, despite efforts to include a diverse a range of reading material, most of the business and management texts in the course reader looked at culture and communication through a western lens.

As a counterpoint to neocolonial perspectives, the reader included chapters from the work of postcolonial scholars such as Said (1978), Shohat and Stam (1994), and McClintock (1995); feminists such as hooks (1994); and novelists such as Amy Tan (1996) and Yasmin Gooneratne (1992). These alternative readings provided bodies of resistance to contest the literature on intercultural communication in the genre of business and management. Although, like the textbook, the business readings were often well-meaning in their goal of furthering intercultural understanding, they were rooted in western modes of thinking. They recognised difference but only in relation to 'the assumed centrality of the dominant culture' (Moore-Gilbert, 1997, p. 199).

This assumed centrality is recurrent in the literature on intercultural communication. More often than not, a western reader (or businessperson) is persuaded to learn more about non-western cultures not only for their own increased business productivity but also for their survival in an ever-changing world. As Hanna and Wilson (1998) put it:

The U.S. society and *U.S. businesses* are characterized by enormous diversity. Differences flow from both biology and culture. All this diversity nearly guarantees that at some time *we* will have a need to communicate with diverse people. [emphasis mine] (p. 92)

The 'we' Hanna and Wilson refer to is the collective western 'we' who 'watch Discovery Channel on television, . . . read the National Geographic, and . . . drive to different states and fly to different nations so we can touch and appreciate different cultures' (Hanna & Wilson, 1998, p. 84). The idea is to train the western 'we' to learn about the cultural values and business practices of the 'they' in a bid to remain ahead in business. This logic ties in with the current perception in western management literature that 'few businesses can afford to ignore the fact that in an economically hardpressed world, it is these new economies in Asia that provide the best hope for sustained business growth for both European and North American companies' (Cragg, 1993, p. 16).

For non-western students of intercultural communication, the text's emphasis on the culture-business nexus from an Euro-American worldview is clearly misplaced. Ironically, as one Thai student put it, these texts go about teaching Asians how to deal with themselves. As for students from regions where the west has no major business interest, such as the many tiny islands of the Central and South Pacific, the texts

mean even less for there is rarely a cursory reference to issues of concern to them.

Unleashing the power of representation: Portraying ethnic specimens and subaltern cultures

The preoccupation with training western business people¹ to learn about prospective trading partners is reflected in Chen and Starosta's (1998) range of case studies. These consistently build scenarios of interaction between an American and a person from another part of the world. Cases of such simulated interaction, which Chen and Starosta (1998) call 'critical incidents', typically revolve around essentialised notions of what Americans and Japanese, for instance, are supposed to stand for. In one example, Chen and Starosta (1998) cite the case of a meeting between representatives of an American and a Japanese corporation in which 'the Japanese men all arrive dressed in identical blue suits' while the 'Americans, each dressed in his own individual style, greet the other men with vigorous handshakes and a few slaps on the back' (p. 273). The example sets the tone for a line of binary divisions between homogenised western individualism and an equally homogenised Asian collectivism.

Central to the binary division between the largely western 'we' and the largely non-western 'they' in intercultural communication are the cultural dimensions charted by the Dutch researcher, Hofstede (1980). These dimensions are routinely referred to in much of the work in the field (see e.

g., Chen & Starosta, 1998; Harris & Moran, 1991; Hoecklin, 1995). In a study spread over 40 different cultures around the world, Hofstede (1980) found consistent dimensions of cultural values. Among these values were individualism/collectivism and power distance. According to Hofstede's (1980) thesis, some cultures promote individual values like personal achievement, while others emphasise collective values such as a respect for conformity. Hofstede classified the U.S., Australia, the U.K., Canada, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Belgium, Italy, and Denmark, among others, as individualistic cultures and listed Columbia, Venezuela, Pakistan, Peru, Taiwan, Thailand, Singapore, Chile, and Hong Kong as examples of collectivistic cultures (Chen & Starosta, 1998). Although Hofstede does not spell it out, these groupings, which have been treated as gospel by a long line of researchers, are unmistakably divided on west-east lines. As one prominent intercultural communication text by Hoecklin (1994) puts it:

The position of all of the countries in the Asia/Pacific region on the cultural dimensions of individualism/collectivism and power distance is very different from the position of most 'Western' industrialized countries. All Asia/Pacific societies are collectivist and all Western societies are individualist. (p. 71)

The groupings on individualist and collectivist lines are extended in the dimension of power distance. High power-distance cultures are

characterised in Hofstede's thesis as those with an unequal and hierarchical social structure while low power-distance cultures have more informal social interactions. This dimension, too, draws a line between the west and the east in essentialised and homogenised terms. Many high power-distance eastern cultures are indeed concerned 'with titles' and with 'elaborate rituals of acknowledging precedence' (Hoecklin, 1994, p. 71). But so are many western cultures such as Britain, the Netherlands, Australia, and New Zealand, which continue with institutions of monarchy and varying forms of nobility. In overlooking the obvious contradictions in such oversimplified categorisations, such intercultural communication, in fact, maintains a gap between the 'us' and the 'them'.

It is because of the 'notion of intercultural training as a matter of helping "us" with the problem of coping with and controlling "them"' that 'the academic field of intercultural communication cannot escape its links to colonialism' (Putnis, cited in Irwin, 1996, p. 25). The colonialist desire to master the native is rekindled by intercultural communication's neocolonial pursuit of representing the other in its own terms. The way colonial discourses appropriate the manner in which the other is represented has close parallels with the way intercultural communication describes the cultural values and norms of the non-western world in essentialised terms. From a postcolonial perspective, as far as academic history is concerned, 'Europe' remains the sovereign, theoretical subject

of all histories, including the ones we call 'Indian,' 'Chinese,' 'Kenyan,' and so on' (Chakrabarty, 1996, p. 223).

In this master narrative, Chakrabarty (1996) continues, other histories such as India find themselves in a 'position of subalternity' (p. 223). In much the same way, non-western cultures find themselves in a position of subalternity in the field of intercultural communication. Nevertheless, the power of representing these cultures is vested in those who compose the western master narrative of cultural exchange.

One good example is a mini case highlighted by Chen and Starosta (1998). It depicts the intercultural interaction between what is projected as a patient departmental secretary in a U.S. University and a rude Indian student:

Mrs. Jane Simpson enjoyed her job as departmental secretary in a large, well-respected university in the United States. She enjoyed trying to be helpful to students as they worked their way through departmental and university regulations on their way toward their bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees. One day, a student from India entered the departmental office and began demanding attention to his various problems with his visa, low course grades, and his thesis adviser. He never used words such as 'please' and 'thank you,' talked in a tone reminiscent of a superior talking to

subordinates, and gave orders to Mrs. Simpson. Mrs. Simpson counted slowly to 10, but her anger did not subside. She went to see the department chairperson to see if someone else could work with this student in the future. (Chen & Starosta, 1998, p. 226)

In citing this case as a demonstration of 'a potential problem caused by cultural differences' (Chen & Starosta, 1998, p. 226), the intercultural communication textbook uses its power of representation to define these differences. The essentialised positioning of these differences, without discussions on issues of class, status, and individual circumstance, simplistically attributes patience to westerners and rudeness to Indians.

This power of representation is similar to the one wielded by Hollywood films to caricature non-western cultures. In Steven Spielberg's *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom*, for instance, India is shown to be both exotic and grotesque. The menu at a lavish dinner at an opulent palace of a Maharaja quite predictably includes, among other things, a soup with floating eyeballs, an entree of cooked python, and a dessert of iced monkey brains. This caricature, despite working as entertainment for a western audience at one level, adds to the power of the western master narrative to represent other cultures.

Intercultural communication scholars would reject the similarities with Hollywood's gross 'othering' and see people in western or west-centred

texts on intercultural communication as educative for a western audience. Nevertheless, these texts retain the potential to exercise similar colonising influences on a non-western audience. As Stuart Hall (1996) explains:

Every regime of representation is a regime of power formed, as Foucault reminds us, by the fatal couplet, 'power/knowledge'. But this kind of knowledge is internal, not external. It is one thing to position a subject or set of peoples as the Other of a dominant discourse. It is quite another thing to subject them to that 'knowledge', not only as a matter of imposed will and domination, but by the power of inner compulsion and subjective con-formation to the norm. (pp. 112-113)

This imposed will of the intercultural communication texts, driven by the western power of representation, was evident in the class I was associated with. As one Chinese student put it, the texts were providing her with essentialised notions of the cultural values she *was supposed to* stand for. Within such limitations, she said it was often difficult for her to reach out and tell people in the west that she actually enjoyed watching Hollywood films such as Walt Disney's *Lion King*. Chow (1996) narrates a similar story about how a Chinese candidate for a faculty position at the University of Minnesota faced disparaging comments from a western colleague because she 'betrayed our expectation of what communist "ethnic specimens" ought to be' (p. 122). This pigeon-holing of ethnic

communities is most evident in neocolonial tourism enterprises in which western consumers often demand that 'Third World culture, people and places be as "original" and "unspoiled" as possible' (Moore-Gilbert, 1997, p. 197).

One way bridges: Building information bases for commercial gain

As the global axis of power moves to the east, the west's power of representing cultural values and traits will increasingly be dependent on its knowledge of non-western cultural groups. Intercultural communication helps arm the neocolonial western elite's power by building a knowledge base of the other for it. This knowledge base is thickened by homogenising certain cultural traits of 'ethnic groups'. Among the 'sample ethnic traits' listed by Chen and Starosta (1998) is a generalised description of Indians:

Only urbanized Indians shake hands. They have a relaxed sense of time. They tend not to date prior to marriage. They may interrupt the speaking of others. They maintain a strong respect for secular and religious teachers. Many practice dietary restrictions. They tend not to participate in classroom discussions. They like clearly defined tasks and exercise close supervision over their subordinates. (p. 228)

Such a description undermines the enormous diversity of India and Indians. It glosses over the fact that the sub-continent is 'a huge geographical expanse' that is home to 'nearly a billion people' who speak 'at least 20 major languages' (Bose & Jalal, 1998, p. 4). People from different parts of India have a huge range of cultural beliefs and practices that cannot be simplistically homogenised for the convenience of a western audience. Such unidimensional homogenised constructions serve to characterise India and Indians as the other. This process of othering is strengthened by statements such as 'many have dietary restrictions' (Chen & Starosta, 1998, p. 228) which are positioned to portray Indians as being different from the western norm. Yet, ironically, many in the west, too, have dietary restrictions. Similarly, the description of Indians as people who like 'clearly defined tasks' (Chen & Starosta, 1998, p. 228) denies them the attribute of creativity which the west likes to keep for itself. These dichotomous constructions of the other are not restricted to Indians alone. Chen and Starosta (1998) have lists of 'sample traits' of Vietnamese, Cambodians, Puerto Ricans, Colombians, and African Americans as well.

As an anticipatory action to ward off a charge of stereotyping, Chen and Starosta (1998) clarify that these 'observations should not be treated as absolutes' (p. 227). The charge against the documentation of sample ethnic traits, however, is not as much of stereotyping but of creating a bank

of so-called ethnic traits to subsidise the intercultural negotiating skills of western business people.

Information about the other has been crucial to western colonial and neocolonial projects. Like the 'arrogance of the radical European humanist conscience which will consolidate itself by imagining the other' (Spivak, 1999, p. 171), intercultural communication helps augment the dominance of the western elite by providing a medium for it to acquire knowledge about the other. The Eurocentric arrogance of being able to understand the other is reflected, as Spivak (1999) illustrates, in a passage from Sartre's (1946) much-cited *Existentialism and Humanism*. With the self-assured superiority of an European, Sartre (1946) says:

Every purpose, even that of a Chinese, an Indian or a Negro, can be understood by a European. To say it can be understood, means that the European of 1945 may be striving out of a certain situation towards the same limitations in the same way, and that he may re-conceive in himself the purpose of the Chinese, of the Indian or the African. In every purpose there is universality, in this sense that every purpose is comprehensible to every man. Not that this or that purpose defines man for ever, but that it may be entertained again and again. *There is always some way of understanding an idiot, a child, a primitive man or a foreigner if one has sufficient information.* [emphasis mine] (pp. 46-47)

For an European intellectual like Sartre (1946), the other is clearly, if arrogantly, defined and situated. The non-western 'foreigner' is revealingly clubbed together with an 'idiot', a 'child', and a 'primitive man'. The definition of the other in intercultural communication is more subtle: 'people who are different from us, who act differently, who look different, who do not share our beliefs and cultural assumptions' (Hanna & Wilson, 1998, p. 72). In a field where the central figure is that of a westerner, however, the 'they' to our 'us' are invariably assumed to be non-westerners. The subtleties of positioning the other notwithstanding, intercultural communication remains concerned with collecting information about the other. The understanding that is gathered can subsequently be used to further Euro-American business goals. That intercultural communication is concerned with the self-interested goals of the developed (read western) world is implicit in Harris and Moran's (1991) typical statement:

With international trade and foreign investments on a steady increase, particularly with developing countries that have strong nationalistic tendencies, deep understanding of forces at work and skills to manage these forces will be keys to successful international management. (p. 67)

Successful international management in a globalised economy is an euphemism for sustained dominance by the neocolonial west. This dominance is illustrated by the way western conglomerates use non-western knowledge to manufacture commercial products, patent these products under the protective cover of intellectual property rights, and then market them to the very societies from which it took the knowledge. One case in point is how western firms patented pharmaceutical formulas based on *neem*, a native plant used in India for centuries, as a biopesticide and medicine (Shiva, 1997). Right through the colonial era, British, French, and Portuguese scientists not only ignored the values of *neem* but also looked down upon its use by Indian peasants and doctors. In the last few years, however, the west has begun to acknowledge its healing properties. With patents under its belt, one American company has even 'set about manufacturing and commercializing its products by establishing a base in India' (Shiva, 1997, p. 70).

Nor is the exploitation restricted to plants. The 'all-embracing' international trade mechanisms such as the General Agreement of Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and the World Trade Organisation (WTO) compose the new 'narrative of shifting imperialist formations' (Spivak, 1999, p. 102). Unlike colonial nation states of the past, the new imperialist formations are dominant coalitions of neocolonial business. These coalitions need to engage with the other for business profitability and yet want to maintain a distance between themselves and the other so as to retain the power of

control. The manner in which western countries shape the rules of such organisations suggests, at best, a fresh narrative twist to familiar colonising tales of unequal power relations.

In such a global context, despite its egalitarian goals, intercultural communication aids and abets neocolonial business in maintaining the gap between western and non-western cultures. By talking about difference in terms of traits, it ignores the social processes behind the construction of cultural differences. As the postcolonial scholar, Avtar Brah (1996) explains: “Difference” is constituted within the interstices of socio-political and economic relations. Just as social groups with differential access to wealth, power, and privilege are ranked in relation to one another, so are their cultures’ (p. 19).

The dominant culture constantly attempts to define other cultures in relation to itself. Intercultural communication often acts as a vehicle for these processes of defining the other. As a result, despite its best intentions to ‘usher in a more interdependent future that shapes our differences into a set of shared concerns and a common agenda’ (Chen & Starosta, 1998, p. 4), intercultural communication shows no awareness of its postcolonial legacy and neocolonial present and future. The field maintains the three major ideological components of, not only colonialism, but also colonial racism: ‘one, the gulf between the culture of the colonialist and the colonized; two, the exploitation of these differences for

the benefit of the colonialist; three, the use of these supposed differences as standards of absolute fact' (Memmi, 1965, p. 71).

In constructing difference in the sanitised terms of shared concerns and a common agenda, intercultural communication texts align with diversity management texts (see chapter 7). Neither set of texts grapples with questions of power. In refusing to openly deal with fundamental issues of race, gender, and ethnicity, for instance, these texts become 'the stuff of colonizing fantasy' (hooks, 1994, p. 31) that is not grounded in the socio-political reality. The kind of diversity where everyone wears the same 'have-a-nice-day smile' (hooks, 1994, p. 31) does little to shift the balance of power on the lines of changing demographics. Indeed, as McLaren (cited in hooks, 1994) says, the construction of a 'harmonious ensemble of benign cultural spheres' ignores the fact that 'all knowledge is forged in histories that are played out in the field of social antagonisms' (p. 31).

The absence of a discussion on the reality of social antagonisms in intercultural communication texts was brought home by a Pacific Island student in the course I co-taught. During a presentation, this student questioned the notions of harmony in these texts in the light of his own experience of living and studying in New Zealand. He narrated the story of how passengers would shift away from him every time he took a seat on a public bus in Hamilton and how pedestrians would give him a 'strange look' every time he went out for a stroll. The reality of this student's

experiences found an echo in my own experiences of confronting racism on the streets of New Zealand. Intercultural texts did not prepare this student (or anyone else) for an often-predictable western racism. As a result, his lived experience was ignored, or negated, by the simplistic celebration of innocent differences.

Transgressing textual borders: Defining difference through personal experience

The course I co-taught attempted to bring the dynamics of these social antagonisms out in the open. It interspersed traditional texts on intercultural communication with texts that directly addressed issues of race, gender, and ethnicity¹. These alternative texts exhorted students to challenge intercultural communication concepts through presentations based on their own experiences of crossing cultural borders rather than on simulated experiences recorded in the conventional texts. The primary objective of the course was to develop a self-reflexive and politically informed framework to study intercultural communication. In 'teaching to transgress' (hooks, 1994), the course provided a platform for students to speak on issues such as race and racism, and ethnicity and discrimination. The students then went on to analyse how the incorporation of these issues, and their personal accounts of encountering

¹ The alternative texts in the course reader included Gooneratne (1992), Hall (1997), hooks (1994), McClintock (1995), Said (1978), Said (1994), Shohat and Stam (1994), and Tan (1996).

racism in New Zealand, became an integral part of discussions on diversity, culture, and communication.

Without such integration, the ever expanding literature on diversity management and intercultural communication can still make contributions to promoting cross-cultural understanding. However, it will do so at the cost of ignoring the balance of power between imperialised formations, represented by largely western neocolonial business enterprises at the centre, and numerically stronger but socio-economically weaker cultural and ethnic groups on the margins.

Towards a democratic global culture

A starting point for conceptualising the emerging world in a less distorted manner is provided by the *Dictionary of Global Culture* edited by two prominent postcolonial scholars, Appiah and Gates Jr. (1997). Tailored for a world whose 20 largest cities will neither be in Europe nor in the U.S., this dictionary's entries have been written primarily by scholars living *outside* the Euro-American metropolis. The making of the book is itself an interesting model to follow. To avoid western biases, Appiah and Gates Jr. (1997) invited 'scholars *from* other cultures' [emphasis in original] (p. xii) to write what, in their opinion, were the signal elements of culture and civilisation. Much of what emerged would come as a surprise to many in the west. For instance, the Chinese entries made no mention of gunpowder, Mao Zedong, or noodles, which most scholars on China

based in the west would be tempted to include. Instead, they talked of the Beijing opera, the Spring Festival, and the terracotta warriors. The entries highlighted the essential difference between a dominant worldview *shaped by the west* and a worldview drafted by those who actually inhabit the world and do not have a vested interest in representing it in line with neocolonial projects.

This chapter has argued that mainstream intercultural communication has, perhaps unintentionally, helped dominant cultural groups in the west to retain power. They do this by codifying cultural gaps between the west and the non-west and by allowing the neocolonial elite to exploit the cultural knowledge of the other for commercial gain. The chapter has also argued that the field needs to shed its mythical image of being politically neutral and incorporate issues of race and racism, gender and ethnicity, and power, which have a far-reaching impact on the lives of people on the margins of power. The next chapter brings together various strands of the process of othering in media, public relations, and organisational management to address the 'business of the other' in the era of globalisation.

Conclusion

This thesis has illustrated how the dominant discourses of diversity in the larger area of business management retain, and update, aspects of colonialism. It has argued that what may appear as benign-looking discourses also act as adjuncts to neocolonialism. It positions them as part of the west's bid to retain power in a world where, in rapidly changing demographics, traditional western populations are increasingly becoming a declining minority.

Contemporary neocolonialism is associated with a variety of neutral-sounding labels in the field of business management. Western business media sing to the glory of 'globalisation', public relations celebrates the need for 'requisite variety', and global organisations keep repeating mantras of 'diversity management' and 'intercultural communication'. In peeling away the romantic rhetoric of equality inscribed in these labels, this thesis opens up the core function of western neocolonial control underneath. Drawing on conceptual frameworks from postcolonial, feminist, and indigenous studies, it has identified ways in which dominant neocolonial elites manage issues of diversity to their own advantage. It has situated these processes as part of a commercially-driven business of the other.

Damming diversity: Controlled flows in four tributaries of globalised management

The four main paths taken by the thesis traversed the fields of business journalism, public relations, diversity management in organisations, and intercultural communication. These fields are intricately interwoven in the globalised net of contemporary business management. The ideologies of globalisation, with its focus on turning the world, and its myriad diversities, into a huge market for unfettered west-dominated world trade, underpin all four fields. Discussions on diversity in each of the fields may sound egalitarian but the norms or standards followed in framing the terms of reference for these discussions continue to be fixed by western neocolonial elites. Accordingly, each chapter has deconstructed treatments of diversity which, in practice, translated into imperialising control of the non-western other.

The thesis began with a subjective introduction to the process of othering by coalescing my lived experience with the theoretical aspects of academic research. Chapter 2 went on to define and illustrate this process of othering with a case study on how the mainstream New Zealand media racialised a politically-charged immigration issue in the country. Chapter 3 laid the theoretical foundation of the thesis. It used material from postcolonial and feminist approaches to global culture, and from indigenous experiences of racialised effects of economic and social

inequality, to prepare the ground for identifying patterns of western control in neocolonial discourses on diversity and plurality. Following Stuart Hall (1992), the thesis used the terms 'west' and 'western' as a representation of neocolonial ideological concepts rather than as geographically-defined entities.

Chapter 4 looked at how the neocolonial control of the other, in business journalism, maintained a division of the world into binary hierarchies in which the politics, economics, and culture of a dominant west is projected as superior to those of the non-west. It demonstrated how that inferiorisation of the other provides fertile conditions for an indoctrination into the ideas of western capitalism. In critically analysing a selection of business journalism texts on India, this chapter outlined how contemporary western media not only continue to be shaped by Orientalist and Eurocentric ideologies, but remobilise them. It also suggested that these processes align with the goals of western economic expansionism.

Chapter 5 extended the issue of how neocolonial expansionism has been cloaked by modernist discourses of global 'development' from business journalism to public relations literature. It contended that public relations hides its western ideological leanings under the academically-touted egalitarianism of requisite variety. Although the theoretical push for requisite variety has allowed public relations to take at least notional cognisance of diverse publics, including non-western minority publics,

chapter 5 concluded that the field has remained overwhelmingly ethnocentric. Chapter 6 deepened the analysis of ethnocentrism in action in public relations with a critique of the field's theorisation of the Bhopal gas tragedy in India. In the stratified hierarchies of publics constructed by public relations, the chapter contended that the interests of the controlling managerial elite are clearly privileged.

Chapter 7 similarly argued that it is this dominant coalition's larger economic and ideological agenda that drives the commercially-fuelled diversity management train in transnational corporations. While the chapter acknowledged that this train does stop to pick up passengers from diverse groups, it argued that existing diversity theory in business management does not provide many first class seats for non-western passengers. The chapter identified a systemic tendency to sidetrack the key issue of who has access to socio-political power in a range of texts on managing diversity, despite their rush towards a seemingly harmonious plurality. In their scramble for harmony, these texts call upon the world to look beyond race and gender, but ignore the realities of existing imbalances and the persistence of racism and sexism in the workplace. The chapter concluded that the containment of diversity management by the logic of market forces meant that these texts were likely to recognise plurality only to the extent of including minority groups as growing markets.

Chapter 8 argued that this market-oriented drive to appropriate diversity, rather than sustain it, constitutes much of intercultural communication discourse as well. It acknowledged how the growing literature on intercultural communication has contributed to cross-cultural understanding and to breaking down communication barriers among different groups. However, the chapter concluded that the literature in the field, perhaps unintentionally, helps dominant cultural groups in the west in two ways: Firstly, it consolidates their power by codifying cultural gaps between the west and the non-west; and secondly, it allows neocolonial elites to exploit the accumulated cultural knowledge of the other for commercial gain.

What emerges from all the preceding chapters, therefore, is that discourses in business management, especially in the areas of business journalism, public relations, diversity management in organisations, and intercultural communication, do recognise the importance of issues of diversity for a world undergoing demographic changes. However, it is also clear that none of the fields go far enough to catalyse a shift in the power base more attuned to the new demographic realities. Instead, they attempt to reinforce elitist control over the other by emphasising a superficial rhetoric of equality which ignores the lopsidedness of inequitable power structures in a globalised world. By weaving together the various processes of exercising control over the other from four different fields, this thesis identified a major cross-field pattern of neocolonial dominance. This

dominance, a subtle variation of the more open forms of colonial subjugation, clusters around the strategic use of managerial authority by western or west-trained managers to control the other as well as control the employee. The control-oriented discursive strategies framed on the basis of race, gender, and ethnicity are conflated with organisational and managerial control strategies. These parallel discourses of control interact with one another to compound their effects and lead to greater power imbalances which do not favour non-western others.

Significance of this research: Understanding difference through interdisciplinary approaches

In its study of discursive patterns of control in a wide range of business management texts, this thesis has broken from traditional narrowly-focussed methods of research. It has spread the scope of its inquiry across diverse fields to identify common patterns in the processes of neocolonial control. In identifying the nature of control in what seems like a neutral or benevolent frame of diversity representation in each of these areas, this thesis has opened up possibilities for less ethnocentric research on issues of difference.

It has also opened the largely insular world of business management to research trends in disciplines that do not currently fall within their peripheral vision. There has been no work so far that has holistically analysed a wide range of business management texts from the combined

perspective of postcolonial, feminist, and indigenous studies sources as this thesis has done. In fact, there has been few references to postcolonial and feminist perspectives in management, organisational diversity, and public relations literature (see e. g., A. Prasad, 1997; Hegde, 1998; Roth, et al., 1996) at all. Notwithstanding the contribution made by these alternative visions, the thesis contends that none of them has gone far enough in indentifying contemporary patterns of neocolonial exploitation that have remained largely invisible in the existing literature in the fields individually let alone collectively.

By introducing my subjective experience as an other, I attempted to synthesise marginalised personal experiences with the legitimacy of academic theorising. This synthesis has been a particularly important tool to resist the sites of control manifested in western worldviews, perspectives, and decisions which have traditionally been deemed to be 'naturally' objective. This so-called objectivity invariably goes against the interests of the colonised native (Fanon, 1967; McClintock, 1995), or the non-western other, because the norms and standards that shape the supposedly neutral, and non-subjective, practice are overwhelmingly western. The redefinition of these norms and standards to fit the worldview of a demographically changing world is a challenge that remains for future researchers.

Conclusion

To shape a worldview, or a cluster of integrated worldviews, that is more representative of an increasingly diverse world, business management will need to move from an imperialist obsession with controlling the other to the advocacy of an actively multicultural theatre marked by constructive interplay and dialogue rather than monologues of domination. It will have to bury prevailing theories of management as control and make room for a proliferating multiplicity of flexible theories and ideas which may allow the world to collectively engage with issues of difference and the 'currently calamitous dispersions of power' (McClintock, 1995, p. 396).

A coalition of a multiplicity of thought processes is needed to challenge the existing dominant paradigm of diversity management epitomised, for example, by U.S. toolkits on 'working with Asian Americans', 'working with African Americans', and 'working with Latino Americans' (e. g., Carr-Ruffino, 1996). Instead, it needs to cultivate, as Shiva (1997) says, the kind of diversity that can restore the 'right to self-organise' (p. 120) to those coerced into living by rules scripted by imperialising neocolonial institutions in trade and business.

Parallel to minority groups' right to self-organise in an era of homogenised globalisation is what Cheney (1999) calls the employee's 'right to self-determination' (p. 160) in the workplace. A movement for diversity that recognises every employee's right 'to have some capacity to affect the

conditions and requirements of work' (Cheney, 1999, p. 160) would assist in dismantling the colonising influence of market-driven principles of managerialism.

Shiva's (1997) redefinition of diversity as a conservation and consolidation of 'a plurality of knowledge traditions' (p. 123) points the way to making the world not only more egalitarian but more productive as well. As diverse organisations are better equipped to deal with complexity in internal and external relationships (McDaniel & Walls, 1997), organisations with a plurality of administrative practices, and diverse decision-making processes, are better placed to survive in times of rapid change that is international in scope. Similarly, a multi-dimensional diversity, or what Shohat and Stam (1994) call 'polycentric multiculturalism' (p. 46), can help break down the historical asymmetries in the configurations of power and cultural and managerial hierarchies. Together, these theorists signpost directions to a more equitable global world that is democratically representative of the expanding demographic profile of many non-western others.

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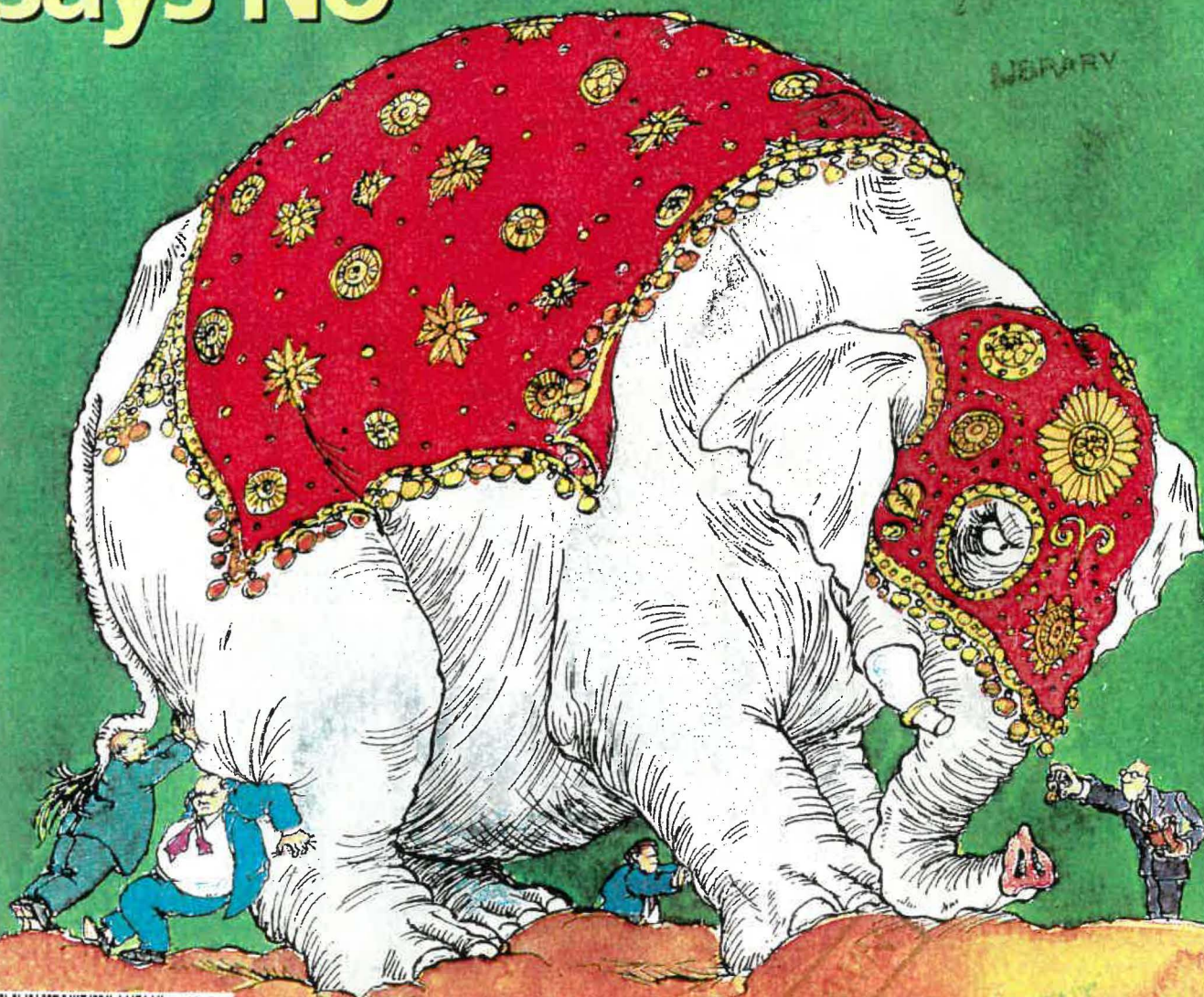
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An India that still says No



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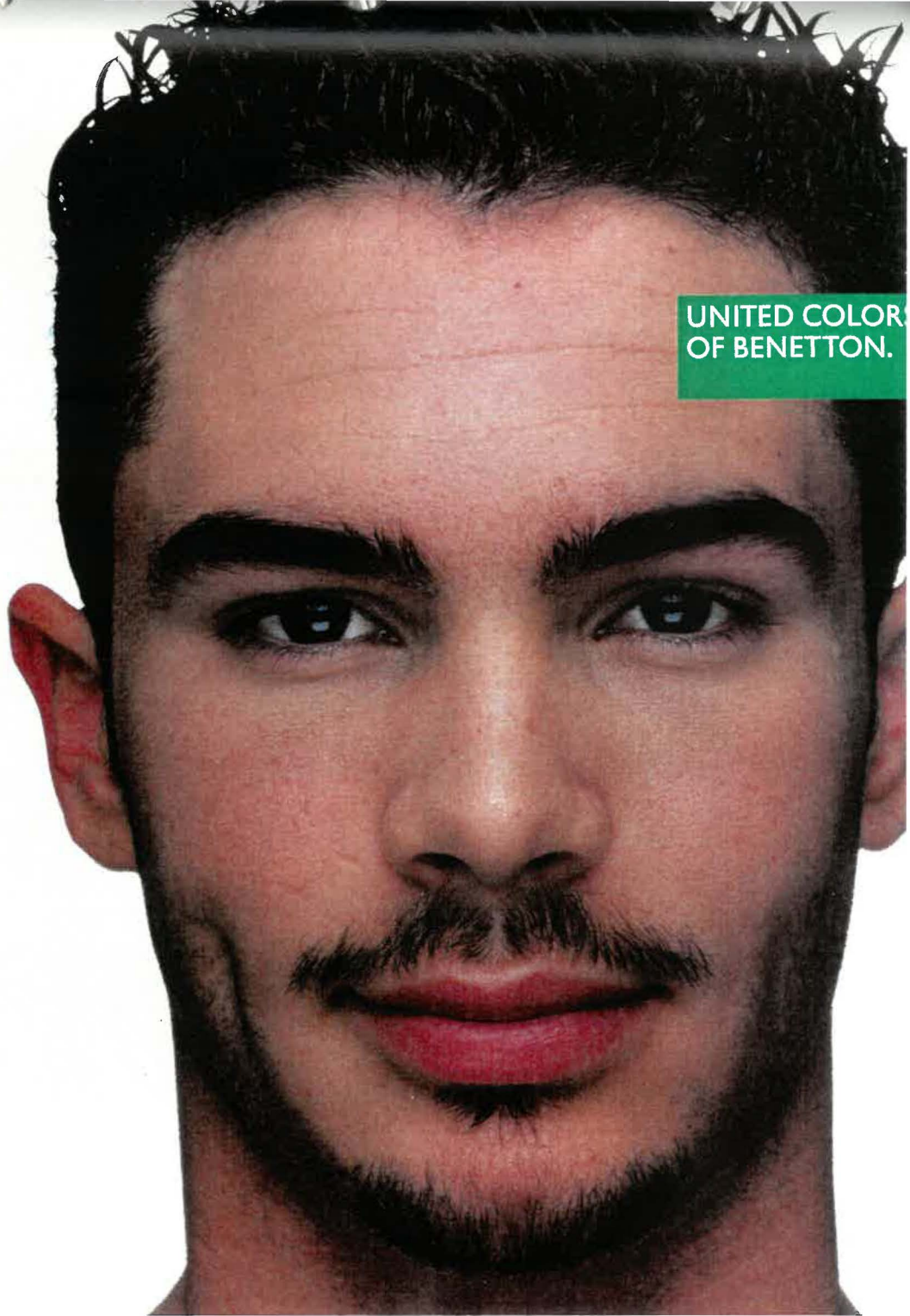
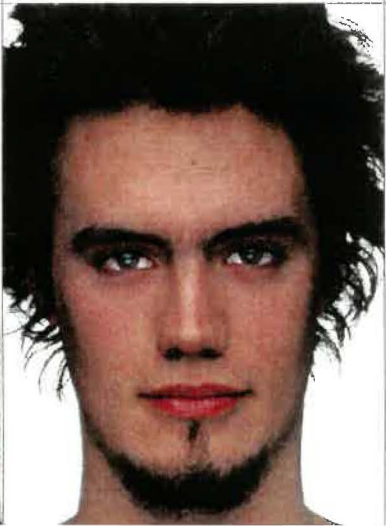
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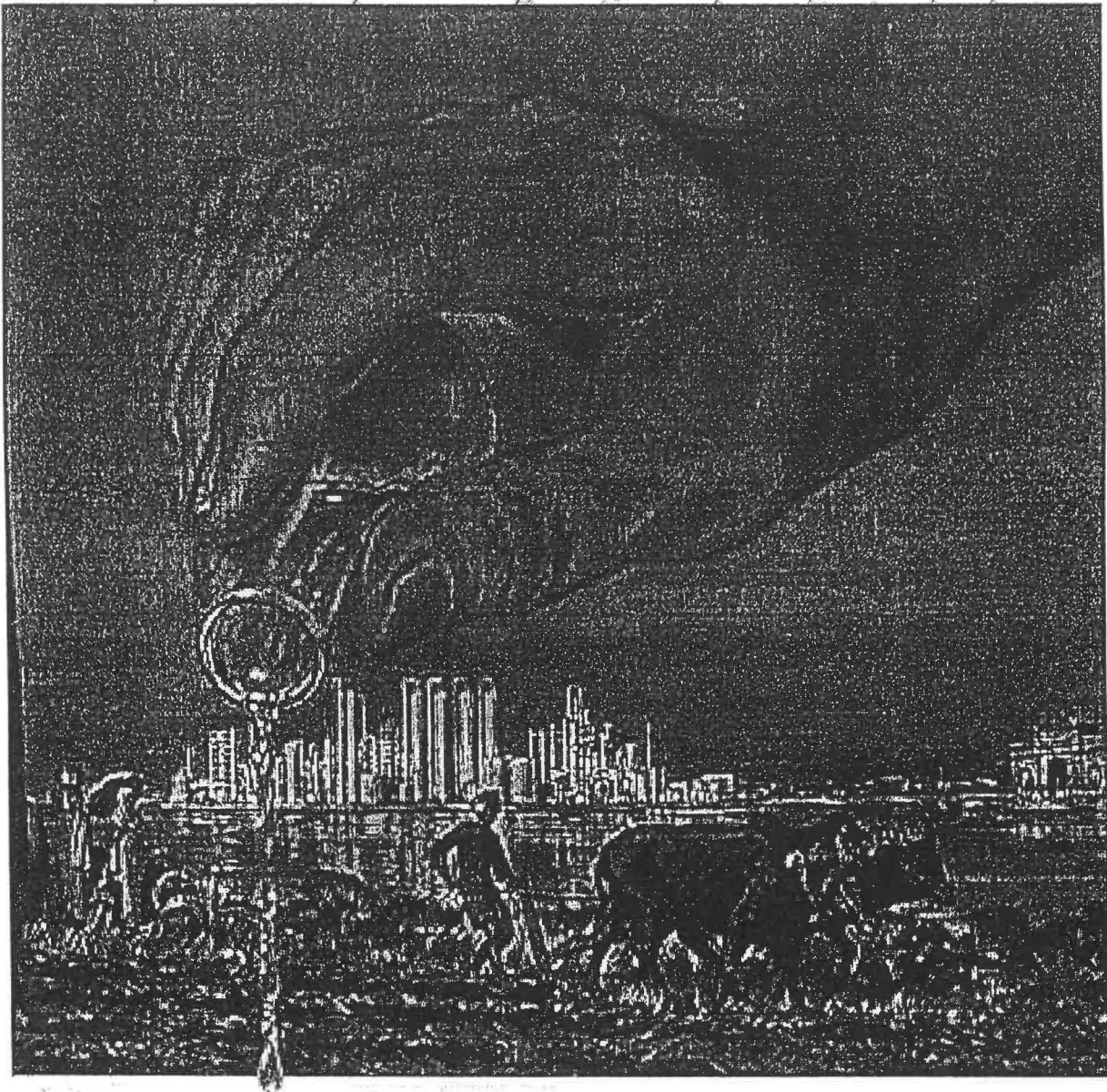


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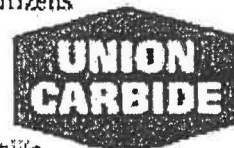
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Oxen working the fields . . . the eternal river Ganges . . . jeweled elephants on parade. Today these symbols of ancient India exist side by side with a new sight—modern industry. India has developed bold new plans to build its economy and bring the promise of a bright future to its more than 400,000,000 people. ► But India needs the technical knowledge of the western world. For example, working with Indian engineers and technicians, Union Carbide recently made available its vast scientific resources to help build a major chemicals and plastics plant near Bombay. ► Throughout the free world, Union Carbide has been actively engaged in building plants for the manufacture of chemicals, plastics, carbons, gases, and metals. The people of Union Carbide welcome the opportunity to use their knowledge and skills in partnership with the citizens of so many great countries.

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