

## July — December 2005: Locations and Locutions: Constituting Identity in Language and Place

### Editorial

Charles Crothers, from AUT's School of Social Sciences has for some years been undertaking research into the demographics of Auckland, particularly with respect to growth, environment and amenity. His paper, "Aucklanders' Attitudes to Auckland's Growth and Environment" engages initially with literature on city growth, then more particularly with Auckland.

The research has developed from a series of surveys on environmental amenity and change. By contrast, Lynn Grant from the School of Languages presents research findings on the use of idioms in everyday speech: "In a Manner of Speaking: Assessing Frequent Spoken Idioms to Assist ESL/EFL Teachers".

In particular, her concern is with differences in recorded usage of idioms in British and American language contexts. While we acknowledge that all languages have their standard rules for usage, we also recognize that all languages are constituted in their dispersion by idiomatic differences, local and regional differences of usage.

Grant's concern is with how language teachers might become aware of the idiomatic strains in everyday speech such that in teaching English as a second language, those unfamiliar with its idioms will come to recognize the located-ness of language via the nuances of its idiomatic differences and those teaching will be able to recognize their located-ness in relation to dominant idiomatic plays.

Tina Engels Schwarzpaul, from the School of Art and Design, discusses bicultural location in the context of cultural appropriation in the computer games industry: "Dislocating William and Rau: The Wild Man in Virtual Worlds".

Her text traces the development of the Sony computer game, *The Mark of Kri*, with its direct appropriation of aspects of Māori culture, and the debate that has emerged over the location of the cultural icons embedded in the game's environment as being generalised (globalised) fantasy or directly attributable to Māori culture.

Schwarzpaul focuses on issues of technology and appropriation in developing a comparative reading of *The Mark of Kri* to the cross-cultural iconography embedded in a celebrated Māori drawing of William Shakespeare with a moko.

The fourth text is from Philippa Smith, herself located in the Centre for Communication Research. Her text, "Raising Anxiety to Construct the Nation: Heartland - A Case Study", like Schwarzpaul's, is concerned with the question of constituting national identities within a bi-cultural framework of nationhood.

Smith engages in a close reading of the television programme "East Coast - Towards the Light" one episode from the series "Heartland" that aimed to define through a televisual travelogue format a picturing of national identity in its difference.

Smith emphasises, in ways that resonate with Schwarzpaul, that identity is a contested field of exchange rather than a site of certain ground.

Smith traces the narrative structure of the episode as one that construes an unfolding disequilibrium such that the text itself may through the elements it has introduced and presented bring about the possibility for a final equilibrium. Thus identity is presented as a potential for conflict and difference, then an open possibility of mediated exchange. Her research makes reference to the narrative theory of Tzvetan Todorov.

The editors encourage you to consider submitting working publications for this online site, and also encourage you to maintain ongoing reference to this site as a location for engaging in cultural theoretical work.

**Editors:** Mark Jackson and Philippa Smith