

2 Analyzing racial discourse: the discursive psychology of mind–world relationships

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Introductory remarks

The aim of this chapter is to illustrate discursive psychology and its methodology by examining some extracts from the interview materials. “Discursive psychology” studies the relationships between mind and world, as psychology generally does, but as a discourse topic, that is, as a participants’ concern, a matter of talk’s business, talk’s categories, talk’s rhetoric, and talk’s current interactional concerns. This contrasts with most other psychological approaches, in which talk is treated as the expression and communication of thoughts and communicative intentions. Among various inspirational sources for the discursive approach taken here, I would list Harvey Sacks’ (1992) lectures on conversation, Melvyn Pollner (1987) on reality disjunctures, Dorothy Smith (1990) on factual discourse, Jeff Coulter (1990) on language and mind, Michael Billig (1987) on rhetoric, and Potter and Wetherell (1987) on the relevance of discourse studies to social psychology (see also Harré and Gillett 1994; Smith, Harré, and Langenhove 1995). Examples of my own work include various books and articles (Edwards 1991, 1995, 1997; Edwards and Potter 1992, 1993) that investigate how common-sense conceptions of mind and world are deployed in everyday talk and text.

One basic theme in all of this work is the way that mind and world are generally played against each other, in a conceptual and rhetorical trade-off between the world “out there” and the mental world “within,” including whatever characteristics or “dispositions” may be claimed by, or assigned to, people. In fact, this feature pertains in standard psychology too, but there it figures as the psychologists’ own explanation of how mind and behavior actually work (attribution theory, schema theory, cognitive models, social identity theory, social cognition, etc.). In contrast, discursive psychology approaches the mind–world relationship as a participant’s common-sense *basis for talking*. And that produces a number of fundamental differences and tensions between discursive and standard psychology, somewhat akin to those between ethnomethodology and the

rest of sociology, between conceptual analysis and the rest of philosophy, and (glossing rather extravagantly) between sociology of scientific knowledge and the prior history of science studies.

Methodological approach

The various contributors to this volume were invited to consider the following three points:

1. Interviews on controversial topics such as prejudice, ethnocentrism, ethnic categorization, and stereotyping are difficult to interpret.
2. These kinds of interviews often entail contradictory and ambiguous statements.
3. Meanings depend on the interview as an interaction.

Item (1) directly involves what may be called mind–world topics, relationships between what happens in the world, and what people make of it. What people “make” of it need not be approached mentalistically. Rather, talking about minds, thoughts, wishes, preferences, and so on, is among the ways that participants conduct their lives, and that is something we can study empirically. Items (2) and (3) are also grist to the discourse analytic mill, rather than being “difficulties” for discursive psychology. This situation can be explained in terms of three methodological stances.

First, the discursive psychological approach does not try to apply a litmus test, to see if people really are prejudiced, whether openly or behind the camouflage of their talk. Prejudice, or any other mental state or interpersonal disposition, is approached analytically as something that may be attended to in various ways in talk itself. Many of the “problems” that various qualitative analysts have with talk are engendered by their approach to it, as something they are trying to see through, or see past, to some other reality behind or beneath, in particular, the realities of mind and world – the world the talk reports on, and the mind of the speaker. In contrast, discursive psychologists aim to avoid coming to conclusions that analysis can reveal people’s true beliefs and attitudes. We avoid coming to such conclusions not because it is wrong to do so, but as a matter of methodological principle. Furthermore, we avoid this practice in relation to every topic, not just on sensitive topics such as racial prejudice, but on the most mundane things, such as what a person remembers, or wants, or intends – in other words, “mind” in general, and “world” in general, are approached as talk’s business, not analysts’ business (cf. Wieder 1988). Yet once this methodological move is made, it turns out to be not so much an avoidance of the real issues, of dealing with “actual” prejudice, attitudes, memories, causal explanations, and so on. Rather, it becomes

a re-definition of what prejudice, etc., is. That is why we call it discursive psychology, rather than just a way of avoiding doing psychology at all.

The second methodological point relates to contradictions, inconsistencies, and ambiguities. If these arise, then they are likely to be important and interesting, rather than a kind of nuisance that analysts might wish were absent. They are only a nuisance if we start by expecting and hoping for their opposites – for consistency, clarity of thought, and a singular, “mapping” relationship between versions (descriptions, formulations, etc.) and a coherent mind or world beyond them. They are a nuisance only if we approach talk as a kind of veil to be penetrated, behind which lies what we are really after – mind and world. But if we start from an interest in how talk works, as an arena of activity, as *managing* these kinds of concerns about mind and world rather than expressing them, then what at first looks like an analytic nuisance becomes precisely what is most interesting.

However, it is only a first and partial move to make, analytically, to point to contradictions and inconsistencies, or variability (Potter and Wetherell, 1987), between what a person says on one occasion compared to another. It is not something to hold onto and explain, as a phenomenon, because it may have a dubious status as a phenomenon. For example, it may be something that analysts note by comparing one bit of talk with another, rather than something that participants themselves pick up and deal with. Rather, variability is a *way into* examining what talk does, on occasions, sequentially and in context, and rhetorically. Once we are focused on those things, then in a sense we are no longer dealing with contradictions. They were contradictions only on the normative assumptions of mind-mapping and world-mapping, where a statement about X in one context ought logically, or morally, to be the same as a statement about X in another. If we examine talk for the situated actions it performs, then inconsistencies and contradictions are best used as potential paths into those actions for analysts, rather than as the basic phenomena themselves, or analytic conclusions about those phenomena.

The third point, regarding methodological/theoretical orientation, is that mind-world issues are at stake, topicalized, managed, and so on, as part of talk's routine business, pervasively and generally, in talk of all kinds, and not just on sensitive social issues. So I do not approach these materials as anyone especially interested in race and ethnicity, nor in the problems of analyzing interviews. But mind-world talk is obviously very relevant to these matters. The notion that talk expresses minds and reflects worlds is not totally gotten rid of, but features as part of talk's performative business, as a participants' basis for talking, a possible participants' orientation to the status of what they are saying.

Discursive psychology, as a general field, already includes a variety of theoretical and methodological perspectives that approach psychological topics through the study of discourse concepts and practices. The relations and differences between these perspectives reflect their different aims and origins, and there are significant tensions between them; they do not all add up to a unified, comprehensive approach. Most practitioners take a perverse, argumentative pleasure in that. For example Billig (1987) focuses on rhetoric and ideology, seeking the ways in which ideological and political themes are embedded and put to use in discourse. In contrast Coulter (1990) analyzes the logical properties of concepts-in-use, taking inspiration from Wittgenstein, Sacks, and ethnomethodology, and focusing on the social nature of psychological concepts. Harré (1983; Harré and Gillett 1994) also draws on Wittgenstein, but develops his discursive psychology out of cross-cultural and historical studies of language, together with an extension of the "ethogenic" study of everyday accounts, tied to a social psychological theory of agentive, meaningful, social action. The analysis offered in this chapter demonstrates a form of discursive psychology derived most directly from conversation analysis, conceptual analysis, and the kind of "discourse analysis" first developed in social studies of science (Gilbert and Mulkey 1984; Potter and Wetherell 1987), hence its focus on the conversational deployment of concepts of mind and reality. For extended applications of this perspective to topics such as mental states, emotions, causal explanations, narrative accounts, event descriptions, acts of remembering, and a variety of other discursive-psychological themes, see Edwards (1997), Edwards and Potter (1992), and Potter (1996). For an illustrative study *not* focusing on racial discourse, see Edwards (1995).

Analysis

The discourse of mind–world relations includes offering one's thoughts, opinions, policies, and ideas as constrained by the nature of the world. Examples include offering beliefs as based on personal experiences, on shared experiences, on consistent experiences, on consensus, on rational inferences from the facts, and so on. Three examples of this kind of common sense discourse are selected for analysis: (1) links between mental states, events, and rational inferences; (2) scripts and dispositions; (3) reluctance to come to a view, along with coming to a view "unlooked for," serendipitously, or by accident, which is to offer a certain view or version as not having been worked up artfully for an argument. Participants sometimes offer a point of view, an observation, or a conclusion, as a kind of casual noticing, as something that they have not really thought

much about. One thing that such an offering can do is to counter the idea that what the offerers are saying is in any way prepared, or pre-established in their minds, let alone any kind of axe they are grinding. So, offering a report of something on the basis that it was not really in one's mind to start with, but was accidentally observed, can counter the category of being, in a general sense, prejudiced.

Mental states and epistemic inferences

In extract 1 (below) the interviewee offers a generalized gloss on racial problems in schools (lines 1-2), and unpacks (or instantiates) it in the form of a specific narrative of a Maori woman's thoughts and experiences.

Extract 1 (Appendix: New Zealand Interview 44: 298/299)

1. R: An' I- I know that uhm (2.0) you know there is a- a problem
2. in the schools here (.) the- the blacks and whites sort of thing
3. a::nd (1.0) there's a Maori lady down the corner down here (1.4)
4. an' she's got two boys (1.0) well she was thrilled that her boy
5. was going to a class with a lot Europeans
6. I: ((lau[gh]) yes
7. R: [Because she was worried [uhm that he would get into a class
8. I: [()
9. R: with quite a few Maoris and therefore they'd form a gang
10. I: Yes [(.) and he'd stop worki[ng yeah
11. R: [And [and once they're a gang [then
12. I: [Yeah
13. R: they- they (loll it not seem to apply) themselves
14. I: Yes
15. R: If they (.) ya'know are not interested- got more interested
16. agitating in the classroom than
17. I: than working
18. R: Mmm
19. I: Yeah (.) right (.) I know
20. R: But I- I don't- It makes you wonder sort of the people that make
21. (2.4) these laws and rules Do they know what's really going on
22. I: ((l[ough])
23. R: [in the- in the
24. I: yeah
25. R: you know the average school and
26. I: Yeah
27. R: an' home and everything
28. I: Probably not

There are a number of psychological descriptions (if I may use the notion of "psychological" loosely) in extract 1, including the notions

thrilled, worried, interested, wonder, and various expressions to do with knowing. The latter are mostly casual-looking tokens, such as the pervasive "you know" (lines 1, 15, and 25). There are also a couple of uses of "I know" (lines 1 and 19). I take it that there is a face-value relevance, in any study of attitudinal or race-prejudice-relevant talk, of how people invoke psychological reactions to, or assessments of, racially categorized events. Extract 1, and the talk that precedes it, deals with a question posed by the interviewer of what R thinks of the recent increased emphasis on Maori culture and language in the schools. R has suggested that not only Pakeha people, but Maoris themselves, including some who are R's friends, are worried about the compulsory introduction of Maori language. Of course, whatever the factual merits of that information, that R has Maori friends and that they share her worries are also ways of countering any implication that R's judgments stem from any kind of anti-Maori prejudice.

Consider now some details from extract 1, concerning "knowing." In lines 1-2, the section "I- I know that uhm (2.0) you know" frames the "problem in the schools," and its categorial status as involving "blacks and whites," as something that not only R knows about personally, and might need to provide evidence of, but something knowable by the interviewer, and potentially anybody else, too ("you know"). I am not suggesting that "you know" has to be an explicit, literal invocation of what somebody else knows; rather, I am suggesting that its use is associated with appeals to intersubjectivity, to not having to spell things out. The expression "sort of thing" (line 2) adds to this status of racial problems as something generally knowable, and vaguely formulatable, such that R need not explicate what she means in any detail; it is not something she treats here as new or controversial information. Introducing the nature of the world as common knowledge, or framing descriptions as uncontroversial, are ways of talking, and, as such, can be ways of packaging potentially controversial matters as nothing of the sort. I shall return to this possible rhetorical trajectory later.

Note similarly, in line 20, "it makes you wonder." This is another avowal of a mental state as jointly available ("you"). The expression is a cliché, of course, but, like any cliché, it has a particular content that is relevant to its selection and its occasions of use. The term "wonder" is used to question a state of affairs without having to offer a confident description or critique of it. The component "it makes you" suggests that the questioning, the potential criticism, is objectively, rather than subjectively, derived – a function of the object or event itself rather than the speaker's attitude or disposition. The critical intent of "it makes you wonder" is later endorsed by the interviewer (line 28, "probably not"), following

another appeal by R to what is intersubjectively available (line 27, “and everything”), completing a three-part list that includes the “average” school and home, introduced by another “you know” (line 25). So we can start to analyze mental state expressions (think, know, wonder), even when they occur within idiomatic expressions, as performative, interaction-oriented tokens in talk, and to pick out what their interactional import might be.

The notion of a racial problem in schools (lines 1–2) is developed, not via R’s own experiential narrative, but by way of another person’s story, that of “a Maori lady down the corner here” (line 3). Although personal, eye-witness accounts generally have a rhetorical force all their own, in this instance the story is second-hand. One relevant consideration may be that a claim made by a white, Pakeha observer about problems between “blacks and whites” courts the danger of being taken as possibly a “white” claim, indexical of the speaker herself, of her potentially relevant racial identity, attitudes, or prejudices. Another possibility is that her conclusion about racial problems is otherwise somewhat distant from whatever events in schools she is able to cite as a basis for it. But whatever the second-hand narrative might be doing here, there are again traces in R’s talk of an orientation to the epistemic grounds of what she is saying. The “Maori lady” serves as a vicarious eye witness and experiencer (being variously “thrilled” and “worried,” lines 4 and 7), being close enough to serve as a known witness (“down the corner here,” line 3), but also Maori enough that her worries are not identifiable merely as R’s, or Pakeha worries. So R’s racial concerns, voiced in lines 1–2, emerge as rationally founded, carefully arrived at, and as shared (not hers alone), particularly by those (Maori) against whom she might otherwise be taken as positioned.

Note how a nice contrast case is provided for R’s well-informed and carefully drawn rational inferences by the lawmakers (lines 20–28). *These* are the people who, in contrast to R, are ignorant of what is “really going on” in schools (and this extends to the “home and everything”) and, therefore, are presumptive of (prejudiced about) racial problems in “the average school.” So R’s rationally based, knowledgeable inferences stand in rhetorical contrast to the uninformed, distant viewpoints of policy makers.

I must display a bit of inferential circumspection myself here; I am at least as concerned to display the rational basis of my own remarks as R is. In assigning to R the categories “white” and “Pakeha,” I am somewhat presuming their relevance to what she is saying in extract 1. That kind of indexical relevance for the speaker is, in fact, oriented-to throughout the interviews we were given to analyze, where it crops up in varying degrees of explicitness. Indeed being white, Pakeha, and talking

about ethnic issues were understood bases on which the interviewees were selected and the interviews conducted. Nevertheless, the important things about extract 1 are what it contains rather than what might lie behind it. Among its contents are R's own uses of the categories "black and white" as the "problem"-definitive categories for persons involved, and "Maori lady" as the relevant category of person whose perspective R provides as an example (cf. Jayyusi 1984). These categories tie in to the various play-offs between external events (in schools), psychological states (thrilled, worried, wonder, interested, know), and R's own bases for rational inferences. For example, note how the Maori lady's being "thrilled" (line 4) about her son's joining a mainly "European" class is linked to her "worry" about what would happen if he were placed with other Maoris (lines 7-18). It is the notion of an *emblematic* narrative, such as an appeal to what projectably "would" happen, that I shall focus on next.

Scripts and dispositions

R's version of racial problems in schools (extract 1) hinges on a "scripted" story of what *generally* happens when Maori children are separated in schools, put into groups, form gangs, lose interest in school work, start agitating, and so on (lines 7-18). This part of the account is framed not as a specific, witnessed episode, but as a known and predictable pattern — what I have called a "script formulation" (Edwards 1994, 1995, 1997). The scripting is done by various grammatical activity-generalizing devices. In extract 1 there is the iterative present tense ("they'd form a gang"), the use of the modal "would" (lines 7, 9) to provide a sense of predictable *types* of event sequences, and the use of conjunctions and adverbs such as "therefore" (line 9), "once," and "then" (line 11) in conveying a kind of predictable sequential logic of activities. The sequential logic of activities in the world is conflated with the speaker's rational inferences about them (see also the discussion of narrative and logical "then" in Edwards 1997).

One way that scripted versions of events work is that formulating events as regular makes them both factually robust and also somewhat knowable in advance without having to wait and see for any specific instance. Script formulations are presented as if based on lots of instances, and perhaps lots of people's repeated (consensual) experiences of instances. So a narrated sequence of events can be offered as an expectable sequence. There are two features here with regard to mind-world relations. First, events are offered as falling into a regular pattern, and therefore an empirically

robust one, so despite the pattern in extract 1 being offered as hypothetical, a “worry,” it is also formulated as what is “really going on” (line 21) in “the average school.” Second, being a regular pattern, it is therefore indicative of *dispositional tendencies* that can be attributed to the actors (cf. Smith 1978). These are very general and pervasive features of script-and-disposition talk, and we find them in lots of discourse settings. Person-characterizing formulations, such as racial characteristics or the speaker’s own balanced point of view, can be descriptively built as script and disposition formulations.

There are many further examples of script and disposition formulations in these materials. Consider extract 2, in which R suggests that various newspaper reports were biased against the police.

Extract 2 (Appendix: New Zealand Interview 16: 275)

1. R: Yeah you [don’t hear what the clo:wns did to the police
2. I: [Yeah
3. I: Mm mhm
4. R: Ya’know I mean as far as they’re concerned all they wanted
5. to do was walking down the street
6. I: Yes
7. R: And they suddenly got set upon. Rub[bish.
8. I: [Mm mhm mm mhm
9. R: The police I know wouldn’t- ya’know they- they don’t do that
10. I: Yes [yeah
11. R: [Not in New Zealand anyway
12. (1.0)
13. I: Mmm [It must have been a very- Sorry
14. [()]-
15. R: There will have been a motive for the police to [do something about it
16. I: [Yeah
17. I: Yeah
18. (1.2)
19. R: There will have been a motive=okay they may have used excessive force
20. I: Mm mhm
21. (0.4)
22. R: But I think the police got frustrated
23. I: Yc:s well that was the third t[est wasn’t it yeah
24. R: [Ya’know they- they were caught in the
25. middle
26. I: Yeah

The practical reasoning here works as follows: Knowing what the police are like dispositionally (line 9) permits the inference of an emblematic narrative, a scripted version of what “must have” or “will have” happened (lines 13–15) on an occasion when they resorted to violence, even though

the speaker did not witness that event. It is because the police “don’t” do that kind of thing (line 9) that, on some occasion when they did, it had to be exceptional. Being exceptional, rather than dispositional, is to say that it was out of character. And to say it was out of character is to say that its cause was external rather than internal (Edwards and Potter 1992, cf. Jones and Davis 1965), that the police must have been provoked into acting that way (lines 15–22). Police violence, being abnormal, requires a “motive” account (lines 15, 19).

What we have here is a bit of common-sense narrative–normative reasoning, reminiscent of Sacks’ (1992) “A3N,” the “Account Apparently Appropriate Negativer.” In Sacks’ example, an apparently accountable action (being in possession of a gun) is characterized as normal (“everybody does it”), such that no special account (motives, reasons, etc.) need be given. In contrast, R constructs the action (excessive police violence) as *abnormal*, as out of character, and therefore as requiring a special explanation (“motive”), rather than altering a basically favorable view of the police as typically restrained and not generally prone to doing that kind of thing. The narrative itself works via a contrast structure (Smith 1978), using an alternative scripted sequence. In contrast to a scenario where a group of people are walking down the street, supposedly harmlessly (as reported in the press), and are suddenly set upon by unprovoked police violence (lines 1–7), knowledge of the police’s dispositionally restrained character permits us to infer the occurrence of excessive or sustained provocation (without having to witness it), followed by something like a threshold of tolerance being breached (lines 19–25). So police violence is given the common-sense status of the exception that proves the rule.

I would assume that this kind of inferential play-off between scripted action sequences and actors’ general dispositions and specific mental states is a strong feature of everyday reasoning with regard to the management of reality and mind, as well as speakers’ avoidance of categories that might be implied about themselves, such as being prejudiced or irrational. Again, it is not just that, for such a speaker, racial or ethnic prejudice is a socially vilified thing these days, and therefore a characterization to be avoided. It is that *any* kind of prejudice is tantamount to irrationality, to an undermining of the factual grounds for judgments and beliefs, for accountable mappings between reality and mind, in that a concern for common-sense rational accountability is pervasive in discourse of all kinds (Garfinkel 1967; Pollner 1987). In sustaining a negative view of a group of people, while guarding against a disarming accusation of prejudice, the thing to do is to bring off that view as rationally (and, as we shall see, even reluctantly or accidentally) arrived at.

Extract 3 (Appendix: New Zealand Interview 16: 283)

1. R: It's normally that- Okay that argument gets put in that Maoris never get
 2. the jobs okay but you look. hh when they turn up for an interview
 3. I: Yes
 4. R: What's he wearing how's he sitting
 5. I: Yeah
 6. R: How's he talking >ya'know what I mean< an' there's no
 7. point in having a receptionist that picks up a phone "Yeah
 8. g'day 'ow are ya" ((strong New Zealand accent))
 9. I: Ye:s (0.4) [mm mhm
 10. R: [I mean they want someone that is- (0.4) that is
 11. gonna put their clients at ea:se
 12. I: Right (.) [Mm mhm
 13. R: [You don't wanna shop a- a shop assistant who's smelly
 14. I: [Yes
 15. R: [who's got un-dirty unkempt hair [an' tattoos all over your
 16. I: [Mm mhm
 17. R: arms [an' fingers all that sort of thing
 18. I: [Yeah
 19. I: Mm mhm
 20. R: Because people are not gonna feel- (0.2) they're not gonna- wanna buy
 21. things from people like that
 22. I: Right (.) mm mhm
 23. (1.2)
 24. I: So sometimes the bias is justified really (0.4) yeah
 25. R: Mhm.

Note again briefly in extract 3, in the first three lines, the *rhetorical* context, just like in extracts 1 and 2. As Michael Billig (1985) pointed out, talk about social categories tends to be argumentative, not just an expression of views, but a denial of counter views. In these cases, the speaker R sets up an argument, or presumption, that "Maoris" (i.e., *as* Maoris) "never get the jobs," and counters it via a series of script and disposition formulations. Again, these take the form of iterated activities, of "what happens when," a routine wherein Maoris *accountably* fail to get the jobs they go for. And it is all done dispositionally, as due to various emblematic Maori characteristics, presented as if recognizably characteristic of the category "Maori."

Note the detail in line 2, "you look .hh when they turn up for an interview." This appeals not only to scriptedness ("when they turn up for an interview"), but also to an event's experiential basis ("you look"), and an indefinitely repeated experiential basis at that ("Maoris never," "when they turn up"). It formulates what anyone ("you," not just the speaker personally) can look to see, and repeatedly see, about Maoris

per se, as a category. Again, “when they turn up” deploys the generalized, iterative present tense (see Edwards 1995: 345 for a further list of grammatical scripting devices), rather than offering this description as a specific episode where somebody turned up once. It is not a specific narrative event about a particular person on a particular day. The whole sequence is scripted and generalized this way. Note again the generalizing expression “all that sort of thing” (line 17), and the insertion “>ya’know what I mean<” (line 6), with their implications of common knowledge and experience, of not having to elaborate further specifics.

Consider also lines 10–21: “they want,” “you don’t want,” etc. As with the Maori woman quoted as being worried about her kids in extract 1, the account here is an externalized one, cast in terms of what other people (employers, customers) want and see, rather than the current speaker personally. And it is cast in terms of generalized and normative concerns rather than personal ones, such as the requirement for a shop business to sell its goods to its customers (lines 10–11, 20). Again, psychological dispositions (“you don’t wanna,” “they’re not gonna wanna”) are provided for, as rationally tied to the way the world is, which is to say, how Maoris generally behave and look. The contrast case to “rational” is implicit here; that characteristics assigned to Maoris, and job opportunities refused to Maoris, might otherwise be ungrounded and prejudicial. But if prejudice *were* the issue (line 24), then script and disposition formulations are ways in which whatever one is saying about the world is presented as fixed in that world, and rationally inferred from it, rather than residing in the speaker’s ways of seeing.

Beliefs reluctantly arrived at, and knowledge unlooked for

The rhetoric of reality and mind involves grounding knowledge states as reflections of the world (Edwards 1997), which may involve working them up as based on repeated experiences, or as regular and recognizable event sequences, as in script formulations. Another way of grounding factual claims is to offer them as reluctantly arrived at, or even precisely counter to, not only what others may think, but also one’s own presumptions and biases (Potter 1996) or, in gestalt jargon, counter to “mental set.” This is another very powerful way of attending to the rhetorically dangerous notion that you believe what it suits you to believe, what you believed before you looked, or that your beliefs are a function of mental predisposition rather than external reality; that is, of attending to a possible accusation of pre-judgment or prejudice. But note again how general this is. It is a basic feature of factual accounting, of the mind-world play-off, not just something located in the arena of sensitive social issues such as racism. For

example, it is commonly used in advertising (Edwards 1997). Extract 4 is an example from the interview materials.

Extract 4 (Appendix: New Zealand Interview 2: 245)

1. R: Uhm (1.2) I would li:ke to see apartheid done away with (1.0) but can
2. anybody come up with a-[a (.) positive way of saying
3. I: [Mm mhm
4. R: "This is how it can be done"
5. I: Mm mhm
6. R: It's all very well to turn round and say "Give 'em a vote"
7. I: Yes
8. R: I mean the majority of them (1.0) don't know what a vote is
9. I: Mm mhm

The interviewee manages to make a case for retaining apartheid as something that is forced by the realities of no alternative, a move reminiscent of one of Margaret Thatcher's famous arguments for her controversial economic policies in the 1980s. The notion that the speaker might be saying this out of some kind of preference or liking for apartheid, that is, because of mental disposition rather than world, prejudice rather than reality, is further countered by locating his preferences as precisely the opposite. He would *like* it done away with (line 1), if only that were realistically possible. Again, although this counter-dispositional construction is a recognizable feature of talk about sensitive and controversial issues, it draws on a very general device in factual discourse, which is making a version factually robust by playing off mind against world, by formulating a conclusion as reluctantly arrived at.

Extract 5 (Appendix: New Zealand Interview 2: 260)

1. I: (. . .) d'you think there should be res- (.) restrictions on immigration?
2. (.)
3. I: How do you [feel about
4. R: [Oh yes.= There's got to be.
5. I: Ye[:h
6. R: [Unfornately,
7. I: my|c:h
8. R: [I would love to see the whole wor:ld y'know, jus where you: (.) go
9. where you like,

Similarly in extract 5, R appeals to necessity (line 4), rather than personal preference or desire (line 6), a disposition bolstered by a rather extreme ("would love," "whole wor:ld," line 8) counter-preference for a world *sans frontières* (lines 8–9). One use of "extreme case formulations" (Pomerantz 1986) of this kind is to display, via the extremity of a formulation and its potential for being non-literal or exaggerated, the speaker's investment in, or attitude towards, what is being said

(Edwards 2000). In this case, R displays reluctance in supporting anti-immigration policies. Note that analyzing how talk works in this way entails no commitment to the reality of reluctance, preference, or any other mental state that might be conceptualized, managed by, or at issue in, such talk. These are ways of talking.

R's talk in extract 6 continues soon after extract 4. I include this final extract in order to point out some quite subtle features of this kind of discourse, and particularly of "knowledge unlooked for." Once again, we are concerned with participants' common sense, offered bases for knowing things and offering judgments.

Extract 6 (Appendix: New Zealand Interview 2: 245/246)

1. R: E:hm (0.6) but- (1.0) I mean what African country
2. I: 'Mm mhm
3. R: that used to have European rule
4. I: 'Mm mhm'
5. R: that is now ruled (0.6) totally by the blacks
6. I: Mm mhm
7. (1.0)
8. R: What (.) one can you hold up as an example and say "We would like
9. South Africa to follow that (one)?"
10. I: Mm mhm
11. (1.0)
12. I: ['Yes'
13. R: [Nigeria? Ghana? (1.0) Sierra Leone?
14. I: 'Y(h)es'
15. R: 'any of them'
16. I: 'Yeah'
17. R: Zem- m Zimbabwe or- >an' I don't know the names of half
18. of them < it's [a long time since I was the[re
19. I: [yes [yes
20. R: Any of them I mean [they are absolute (0.6) diabolic places
21. I: [yes
22. (0.6)
23. I: Well it's a very complex [problem isn't it that whole [thing
24. R: [(ghh.) [I mean
25. there are- [what is it I was readin (.) (somewhere there)
26. I: [yeah
27. R: nineteen of the (.) countries that [were colonized
28. I: [yeah
29. (0.6)
30. I: 'M[mm
31. R: [there (0.4) are no:w (0.4) dictatorships. One party states

Consider lines 15–20. The expressions "any of them" (in both 15 and 20), and "I don't know," occur around a point where the speaker appears

to be having trouble with producing further examples of ex-colonial African countries. As we saw with the item “you know” in extract 1, speakers’ appeals to what is known, or intersubjectively available, are a pervasive feature of talk that can serve a variety of activities. “Any of them” serves here as a kind of “et cetera” clause (Garfinkel 1967), invoking a longer list of countries that might be enumerated, given time. It appeals to the notion that whatever the speaker is getting at is founded in solid fact, such that he would be in a position to fill in further details, to separate Zambia from Zimbabwe (for instance), or to come up with further examples, if this information were only fresher in his mind (lines 17–18). Further, “any of them” directly bolsters, in a way that “you know” would not, R’s block categorization of black-ruled ex-colonial countries as equivalent, having the same characteristics, and sharing the same awful fate. So the speaker’s difficulty in naming and enumerating these countries is put to rhetorical advantage: they are all the same, QED. The important thing to note here is that appeals to shared knowledge, to what is known, or available to be known, or temporarily unavailable to consciousness, are categories that are locally and interactionally produced in this way, irrespective of what a speaker may “actually think” is known (Edwards 1997).

Ignorance claims, or claims about forgetting, are as interactionally potent as knowledge claims (cf. Beach and Metzger 1997; Coulter 1985; Edwards 1995; Lynch and Bogen 1996; Potter 1997). As I have noted, the “I don’t know” formulation in line 17 flirts with the rhetorical danger, in this instance, of R’s not knowing what he is talking about, of not having a sufficient factual or experiential basis for the contentious claims he is making. R has presented himself (prior to extract 6) as someone who has visited Africa, as a basis for knowing what he is talking about when recommending what Africans and Aotearoans should do with their lives. But what we get here (“It’s a long time since I was there,” line 18) are formulations of not knowing. We might ask, what are these “not knowing” formulations doing here, in a stretch of argumentative talk where “knowing” might be thought more persuasive?

Formulations of ignorance can be exploited as a way of saying that one has not worked up one’s position artfully, as any kind of prepared, rehearsed, prior position on things. One is offering a series of observations, with no axe being ground. Consider line 25, “what is it I was reading somewhere.” This does a number of things. It attends to R’s knowledge claims as based not merely on out-of-date personal experience (line 18), but as also externally provided for, based on “reading.” The items “what is it” and “somewhere” contribute something too, which is the sense of all this as something not seriously attended to, not information

specifically prepared, researched, diligently noted, and so on, but casually obtained, from somewhere or other. And that helps to play down any notion, should it arise, that R is coming to these conclusions from any kind of concerted campaign against African emancipation. It is a formulation that might be useful if the place he forgot he read about it happened to be in the memoirs of ex-President Botha, or some pamphlet put out by the New Zealand National party. Of course, I have no basis for any such supposition, and I do not suggest it. But for a useful perspective on how claims of ignorance and of forgetting function in sensitive domains involving factual accuracy and speakers' accountability, see Lynch and Bogen's (1996) study of Oliver North's testimony to the Iran-Contra hearings.

Last words

The analytic comments I have made range from the very specific to the speculative, being an effort at demonstrating an analytic approach and what it rests on, rather than producing a fully substantiated analysis. More data and analysis would certainly be needed in order to pursue some of the lines of investigation that I have touched on. If the project were my own, I would also want to obtain more spontaneous talk in preference to interviews, difficult though that obviously is. The interviews are certainly very analyzable as they stand for the kind of work I do, as I hope I have shown. Indeed, I have tried to locate the analysis in the details of the transcripts as provided, and in the participants' own interactional orientations.

My aim has been to show how various features of "discursive psychology" are pertinent to the analysis of social issues such as prejudice and racism, and to social interactions such as interview talk. One basic point is that the resources for doing this analysis are also the resources used when approaching discourse of *any* kind. To the extent that "attitudinal" talk involves a play-off between mind and world, it shares that with mundane and institutional talk of all kinds, not just in recognized sites of prejudicial discourse, and it involves the same kinds of devices and rhetoric found virtually anywhere else we may look. One thing that the approach I have taken does *not* do is offer a historical or cultural analysis of where such participants' resources (devices, categories, positionings, rhetorical moves, etc.) might come from (see Wetherell and Potter 1992). But I recommend that any such investigation be grounded in examining what those resources are, in terms of how they are used (cf. Schegloff 1997). One additional upshot of locating them as very pervasive kinds of discourse devices is that it reduces, without removing, the explanatory

burden faced by theories of race relations in accounting for the linguistic features of racial discourse (indeed, locating them thus provides a platform for such accounting).

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