



## **An Introduction to Social Psychology**

*Discursive Psychological Research*

### **Narrator (vo):**

Margaret Wetherell pioneered discursive psychological research in the 1980s, along with Jonathan Potter. They analysed the language of racism, looking in depth at people's daily talk, which had previously gone unscrutinised. Their work had a profound affect on our understanding of hitherto obscured aspects of racism.

### **Prof Wetherell:**

What I did was to interview white middle class New Zealanders like myself and that was a bit different, because often I think in the past social psychologists when they have looked or thought about issues of race and they're focused on ethnic minorities so people. There's been very little social psychological work that's really focused on the majority group, the taken for granted, powerful, normal group. New Zealand's a multicultural society that's a colonial society, so there it is the white European or white British people who are either migrants, you know, the problematic overstayers, the people who've, you know, come and taken over the country. And so there's lots of important kind of social psychological issues at stake there about the contact between white European migrants and the indigenous people of New Zealand. Lots of social psychological issues about contact between these two groups, about racism, about power, about the psychology of a colonial situation and questions of identity.

The work we did was to, to try and understand the ways of making sense of this particular group, the representations, the arguments, their ways of constructing or their discourses of the situation in New Zealand, and then think about the consequences of the ways that they were making sense. So it was rather like what we know about things is sort of sedimented down through history and culture, is an infinity of traces of discourses that make up our thinking about something.