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Grasping the nettle

A narrative inquiry into three Pākehā secondary school principals' cross-cultural engagement with Māori

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*To the Cavanagh family
for their courage and compassion*

Abstract

The purpose of this research study is to explore how three Pākehā secondary school principals have come to value cross-cultural relationships with Māori; and how their openness to an engagement with Māori has affected their leadership practice. A narrative inquiry strategy has informed the research process using semi-structured interviews to build a slice of each research participants' life story as it pertains to the research focus.

All three participants taught in secondary schools throughout the 1980s when the discourse of biculturalism emerged as an influential way of thinking in the education sector and wider New Zealand social and political life. In setting the scene for the participants' stories some of the contours of biculturalism and its effects are explored. Links are also made to three outspoken Pākehā principals from the 1960s through to the 1980s whose words and actions, like those of the participants, have helped shape current discourses about culturally responsive leadership.

While the participants' stories have different emphases they share common traits. The participants developed identities as Pākehā over time as a consequence of their engagement with Māori and the discourse of biculturalism, thus contributing to their social justice orientation as educational leaders. In building ethical and responsible relationships with Māori as part of their leadership practice, they had to balance the need to act knowledgeably with an awareness of the dangers of 'knowing it all'.

The research highlights the importance for Pākehā teachers, who will be the principals of the future, to have ongoing opportunities to learn about themselves as Pākehā. Respecting difference and cultural boundaries, becoming humble and self-aware, knowing the past but focusing on the future – these are some of the practices indicated by the participants' narratives that could form a basis for Pākehā educational leadership that is responsive to Māori aspirations to enjoy educational success “as Māori”.

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He aha te mea nui o te ao? He tangata, he tangata, he tangata.

Table of Contents

<i>Dedication</i>	ii
<i>Abstract</i>	iii
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	iv
<i>Table of Contents</i>	v
Chapter 1. Grasping the nettle	1
Chapter 2. The bicultural in cross-cultural	13
Chapter 3. Stories from the archives	28
Chapter 4. The research journey	40
Chapter 5. Summaries of the participants’ stories	53
Chapter 6. Becoming Pākehā	71
Chapter 7. Walking tall/walking small	86
Chapter 8. Hearts and minds	101
Glossary of Māori terms	113
Appendix A. Participant Information Sheet.....	114
Appendix B. Consent Form	117
Appendix C. Interview Guide	118
Appendix D. Transcriber Agreement.....	119
References	120

Chapter One

Grasping the nettle

It's a fine autumn morning when I arrive to be interviewed for an assistant teacher position at an urban New Zealand secondary school. The year is 1987 and I have three years of teaching experience behind me. The interview does not take place in an office – instead the Pākehā principal and I walk around the school grounds. My enduring memory of this encounter is his pointing to the recently erected wharehūi at the back of the school and telling me how it was not in the right place. Working with the Māori teachers on staff, he was now trying to resolve this issue. I got the job, and shortly before I started teaching there, the marae buildings were re-located near the school's front entrance. And it was within the walls of the wharehūi that I kept on learning, not without a great deal of trepidation on my part, about cultural difference and the make-up of my own cultural identity.

There are several important stories that sit inside this narrative fragment from the storehouse of my teacher memories, including those of the Māori teachers, and the students and their whānau who first breathed life into the wharehūi. Their stories are not mine to tell and are being/will be told elsewhere. It is the Pākehā principal who symbolizes what I want to bring into view. I remember his concerns for the Māori students and the pattern of their disappearance from the senior school, concerns which he discussed with the staff; and his talks about the Treaty of Waitangi to whole school assemblies as Waitangi Day approached each year¹. He devoted time to building relationships with Māori and non-Māori staff members, students and the school's various cultural communities, constantly looking for ways to make a mainstream secondary school a place where all students could experience a sense of belonging. The day-to-day effect of his values and expectations were part of my ongoing 'education'. As a novice teacher, I intuitively understood what both New Zealand-based and international researchers now assert in their best evidence syntheses: leadership matters (Leithwood & Day, 2007a; Robinson, Hohepa, & Lloyd, 2009).

¹ Waitangi Day is an annual national holiday on February 6 that commemorates the first signing of the Treaty of Waitangi by Māori chiefs and representatives of the British Crown on that day in 1840.

This thesis is the result of a narrative-based research study, at the heart of which reside the stories of three Pākehā secondary school principals. An important feature of their work as leaders, like that of the principal in my opening vignette, is their openness to relationship with Māori; and their desire to re-configure colonial power relations in the shared project of improving educational outcomes for Māori students in mainstream schools. Strong Māori leadership has been instrumental in calling into existence such a shared project (Walker, 2004), but it is the qualities of certain Pākehā leaders working for change that I explore in these pages. By concentrating on Pākehā, my aim is to add to understandings about the dominant Pākehā group's entanglement with bicultural politics and cross-cultural relationships. Located as I am on a personal level mostly within a Pākehā cultural ethos, I regard this thesis as a response to the challenge that we Pākehā, in the interests of productive relationships with Māori, engage in the "hard work" of getting to know ourselves, "our own settler culture, society and history", and how we "have been formed in the troubled engagement with indigenous peoples and their lands and spaces" (Jones, 2008, p. 482). It is the "hard work" of the Pākehā research participants that informs the discussion in the following chapters, not only by virtue of their cultural affiliation with Aotearoa/New Zealand's majority group, but also because of the way their leadership practices in their local contexts have opened up new possibilities for Māori/Pākehā educational partnerships.

Garfield Johnson, the innovative foundation principal of Hillary College, was described by his friend, artist and teacher Arnold Manaaki Wilson, as a Pākehā leader "who had grasped the nettle" in the way he advocated for Māori culture and language to infuse mainstream school life (interview, February 10, 1999 quoted in Bowler & Openshaw, 2006, p. 53). My research participants have also "grasped the nettle", a metaphorical reminder that the journey away from mono-cultural norms as a member of the dominant cultural group is marked by tensions and upheavals requiring personal courage and political commitment. Pākehā commentator Patrick Snedden (2005) observes that "in public life, it requires political nerve to take a positive view of Māori/Pākehā relationships that is more substance than style" (p. 54). Principals can be regarded as both agents of change and significant public figures in community life (Notman, 2006), and as theorist Paulo Freire (2005) argues: "we engage in politics when we educate" (p. 121). People like the research participants, whose leadership practices have disrupted the universalizing and homogenizing tendencies

of the majority cultural group they belong to, will continue to be a precious resource in the struggle for democratic educational ideals that are both inclusive and challenging.

Outline of research context

Discourses surrounding culturally responsive teaching and leadership are now to the fore in New Zealand's educational rhetoric, underpinned by the changing demographic of the school population:

By 2040, current projections predict that the majority of students in New Zealand primary schools will be Māori and Pasifika. The change will occur within the working life of teachers who are currently being trained or inducted into teaching. (Alton-Lee, 2003, p. 5)

Minority immigrant groups share “many forms of relative powerlessness” with Māori, but Māori by virtue of their indigenous status at the time of British colonisation, occupy a unique political and social position in relation to the Pākehā majority (Pearson, 2009, p. 33). Responding to the implications of an increasingly multicultural population, and coming to terms with the histories and present realities of Māori and Pākehā, are both important educational concerns. Whilst the scope of this thesis does not allow me to explore this complex intersecting terrain, I concur with social anthropologist Joan Metge's (2008) rejection of the way the terms *biculturalism* and *multiculturalism* have given rise to oppositional discourses. She prefers the adjectives ‘bicultural’ and ‘multicultural’ being attached to nouns where appropriate: “I emphasise a both/and approach which embeds a bicultural model – focused on the relation between Māori and Pākehā – at the heart of a multicultural model recognizing a wide range of cultural diversity” (p. 22). Without minimizing the pressing issues for other cultural minorities in relation to the majority group, the context for my research is the Māori-Pākehā educational relationship, specifically within the secondary school sector.

Over 80% of Māori-identified students are enrolled in New Zealand mainstream state secondary schools where at least three quarters of teachers identify as “European/Pākehā” (Ministry of Education, 2004). Two major research projects into secondary schooling (Harker, 2006; Biddulph, Biddulph & Biddulph, 2003) have

signaled that, once socio-economic indicators are accounted for, a contributing factor in Māori under-achievement is “an additional negative effect arising from the interaction between schools and Māori ethnicity” (cited in Robinson et al., 2009, p. 59). This finding supports other research that points to the ongoing consequences of colonizer discourses, which position Māori identities and knowledges as inferior (Bishop, 2008). Karen Sewell (2008), the Secretary of Education, has identified “the disproportionately large number of Māori and Pasifika students who are not achieving their potential” as of “critical” concern for school leaders. (p. 4). The government’s Māori education strategy², amongst other related policy initiatives, seeks to counteract the effects of entrenched discriminatory patterns by championing the right of Māori students to enjoy educational success “as Māori” (Ministry of Education, 2008a, p. 18). The legacy of past injustices, coupled with Māori aspirations for the future, continues to pose a significant challenge for Pākehā educational leadership in the present.

The importance of leadership

Leadership practices are now recognized as having both direct and indirect forms of influence on student achievement, not only through an engagement with pedagogical concerns, but also through the fostering of a particular kind of school atmosphere (Robinson et al., 2009). A leadership focus, for example, on an “orderly and supportive environment” that incorporates “cultural understanding and a respect for difference” contributes to a climate conducive to learning (Robinson et al., 2009, p. 43). The words “understanding” and “respect” indicate the importance of relationships.

Leadership is “a deeply relational activity” (Waitere, 2008, p. 45). Central to principals being able to make “educationally powerful connections” between schooling and the identities of the students and their families, is their ability to form relationships:

² Ministry of Education. (2008). *Ka hikitia - managing for success: The Māori education strategy 2008-2012*. Wellington: Ministry of Education.

Relationships can be a key to developing knowledge of, and respect for, individual and cultural identities. Relationships between adults need to be developed in ways that promote the achievement and well-being of students. (Robinson et al., 2009, p. 43)

Researchers highlight relational trust as integral to the welfare of a school community, with the school principal at the heart of its development “both in demonstrating it herself or himself and fostering a culture of trusted relationships” (Bryk & Schneider, 2002 cited in Fullan, 2003, p. 43). When relational trust is robust, reform initiatives are more likely to be engaged with by school members and to become embedded throughout the school’s organization (Fullan, 2003; Robinson et al., 2009). The primacy accorded relational trust in international and New Zealand literature on leadership supports the contention that

... [e]ducational practice is *always* finally about the affective relationships between people. Those relationships are where we find education’s most important and difficult questions. The significance of any educational talk about practice, including discourse on evidence, lies in *the relationship to other groups of people* it makes possible [emphasis in the original]. (Jones, 2005, p. 19)

The way in which leadership is embodied/enacted can either “constrain” or “open up” possibilities for cross-cultural partnerships in education (Waitere, 2008, p. 44). Leaders can act as a catalyst for “unleashing the potential capacities that already exist” within organizations such as schools (Leithwood, Harris, & Hopkins, 2008, p. 29), thus sparking new directions for school-community partnerships that do “not merely mimic what has gone before” (Middleton, 1998, p. xviii). Evaluations of professional development programmes targeted at improving secondary teachers’ relationships with Māori students point to the pivotal nature of the principal’s involvement: “The success of any initiative to enhance Māori student achievement rests upon the unqualified support and leadership of the principal” (Ministry of Education, 2010, Lessons for Ongoing Practice section). The individual classroom teacher has the most significant school-based impact on individual students’ learning (Hattie, 2003), but effective leadership is the key to positive work by lone classroom teachers becoming the direction of the whole school in synergy with its students’ communities.

The principal as a person – the research focus

Schools can be thought of as complex living systems in which many people contribute to the organic processes that make the whole function well (Wheatley, 2005 cited in Leithwood & Day, 2007b). Researchers on leadership favour forms of *distributed* leadership across an array of positions within a school, rather than an emphasis on individual leaders. It is impossible for one person to contain all the necessary “knowledge, skills and dispositions” at the level required for school-wide improvements (Robinson et al., 2009, p. 47). However, the principal acts like a guiding light for the values a school aspires to: in the person of the principal, certain leadership qualities need to inhere, that enable distributed leadership in the first place, and that “cause others to do things that can be expected to improve educational outcomes for students” (Robinson et al., 2009, p. 70). The modeling of the principal is especially important when managing resistance to and conflict about professional development initiatives that require teachers to critique their culturally located practice (Tuuta, Bradnam, Hynds, Higgins, & with Broughton, 2004).

Inside best evidence are real leaders from real schools. Their personal stories/oral histories serve to complement the de-peopled nature of official discourse (Simon & Smith, 2001). The “wisdom of practice” that emerges out of narratives of experience from local contexts, may ring true for others dealing with similar concerns (Davis, 1997 cited in Walker & Shuangye, 2007). The wise practices of the principals featured in this thesis are based on the values and attitudes that they have accrued over their lifetimes, and inform how they interpret and filter new experiences (Doherty, 2002, p. 164). A narrative inquiry provides a glimpse into aspects of a leaders’ practices that are “internal, almost invisible”, and not able to be ‘measured’ by quantitative research approaches (Heck, 1998, p. 68). The participants narrate stories from their life experiences prior to becoming principals, as well as from their time in the principal’s office.

During the process of collecting the participants’ narratives I foregrounded two main questions: *How do Pākehā secondary school principals interpret the experiences that have shaped their desire for cross-cultural engagement with Māori; and how has this affected their leadership practice?* When reflecting upon the participants’ meaning-making in the light of current leadership discourses, other questions began to emerge in the background: what does a concept such as relational

trust imply for Pākehā leaders working with Māori?; and what is the role of Pākehā leadership vis-à-vis Māori aspirations to engage in education as Māori? In this thesis I do not seek definitive answers, but instead, through interaction with the participants' narratives, hope to support the ongoing exploration of possibilities for the educational relationship between Māori and Pākehā.

The researcher as a person – my situated perspective

‘A portion of territory the eye can comprehend in a single view’ does not correctly describe the relationship between the human being and his or her surroundings. This assumes the viewer is somehow outside or separate from the territory she or he surveys. Viewers are as much a part of the landscape as the boulders they stand on. (Silko, 1997, p. 27 quoted in Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007, p. 37)

Influencing my approach to the research topic is my own experience of a dual cultural heritage. At 53 years of age, I identify as a Pākehā, but one whose being-in-the-world contains indelible traces of Croatian/Dalmatian-ness. I am a first-generation New Zealander with both parents born in Dalmatia, a region now located politically within the state of Croatia. Like many sons and daughters of immigrants, growing up I often found myself occupying an in-between zone when relating to the dominant Pākehā culture, a foot in both camps. Via the New Zealand education system I was thoroughly schooled in Pākehā cultural values, but at the same time, because of my home life, my unique “habitus” or “embodied history” (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1993) contained a cultural dimension outside the dominant societal norms.

Nevertheless, unlike, for example, a child of Pacific Island immigrants, I am white-skinned, and benefited from the “white privilege” that McIntosh (2008) compares to an “invisible weightless knapsack of special provisions, maps, passports, codebooks, visas, clothes, tools, and blank checks” (p. 171). As a child, my sense of difference, when away from home, was “on the inside only” (Greenwood & Wilson, 2006, p. 134). My grandparents and parents managed to retain aspects of their Dalmatian identities, overcame early prejudices and became integrated into, and rewarded by, mainstream Pākehā life (Scott, 2002). The inevitability of assimilation and its effects on Dalmatian-ness was accommodated as a chance for a better life. Whilst members of successive generations, including myself, have lost fluency in the Croatian language, our ‘old people’ and their descendants had, and still have, the

choice to return to the ‘home country’ where Croatian language and distinct cultural practices are sustained by millions of others like themselves.

Many of the Dalmatian immigrants of the late 1800s and early 1900s settled in the Far North of New Zealand, and formed close bonds with Māori. Both cultural groups shared similar attitudes to family and hospitality, and both suffered from social discrimination and racist practices (Božić-Vrbančić, 2008). Some Dalmatians married into Māori families and identified strongly with Māori culture and aspirations (King, 2003). Others, however, upon gaining material success in the Pākehā world and being re-assigned as members of a “model minority”, adopted the prejudices and paternalism of the wider society of the time towards Māori (Consedine & Consedine, 2005).

Unraveling the above threads in my family’s cultural tapestry has been part of my own journey in understanding the workings of colonisation, and how the Croatian history in New Zealand is implicated in its processes. Whilst not the only influence, it has been a significant element in shaping the perspective I have from “the boulder” I stand upon as part of the bicultural and multicultural landscape of contemporary life in New Zealand.

Theoretical perspectives

The main theoretical perspectives I have drawn on relate to post-structuralist ideas about identity and power, and how discourse “produces individuals” (Sawicki, 1991, p. 22) and “regimes of truth” (Foucault, 1980, p. 131). In particular I have referenced the thinking of Michel Foucault and others, who interact with and build upon his work. In counterpoint to this set of ideas, my analysis of the participants’ narratives has also been informed by scholars responding to the thought of Emmanuel Levinas, whose philosophy rests on the “humanistic assumption of a pre-social individual” (Sawicki, 1991, p. 22). Out of this eclectic mix arise tricky epistemological and ontological tensions that underpin the narrative inquiry strategy I have based my research upon. Frosh (2007) describes these tensions as a feature of the qualitative research field itself where there exists

... on the one hand, a deconstructionist framework in which the human subject is understood as positioned in and through competing discourses and, on the other, a humanistic framework in which the integrity of the subject is taken to

be both a starting and end-point of analysis. (p. 639 quoted in Kvale & Brinkmann, 2008, p. 225)

The humanist perspective subscribes to the notion of people as “singular, agentic storytellers and listeners” (Andrews, Squire, & Tamboukou, 2008, p. 3) with choices and real stories to tell. The opposite view theorizes a human being as a subject/body upon which larger socio-political forces are written: “at best an ensemble of available resources, at worse a mere object of discursive practices” (Goodley, Lawthom, Clough, & Moore, 2004, p. 151). In the latter perspective “the storyteller does not tell the story, so much as she/he is told by it” (Andrews et al., 2008, pp. 3-4). Narrative-based research particularly feels the rub of the tension between these two contradictory understandings, by virtue of the status it accords individuals and their voices as heard in the stories they tell about their lives.

Working the tension in a generative way are the theorists who promote the concept of the dialectic nature of the relationship between social reality and individual human existence: “It is guaranteed that we will be greatly affected by our social surroundings, but it is also guaranteed that our social surroundings will be affected by us” (Thayer-Bacon, 2003, p. 139). Feminist scholar Barbara Thayer-Bacon argues for a response to this dialectic that is based not on “either/or”, but on “both/and” (p. 139). It is by building on a “both/and” structure that I have sought productive ways to dialogue across divergent analytical and theoretical perspectives in my interpretation of the narratives I have collected. The stories of my research participants reveal aspects of *both* the person-in-the-world *and* the world-in-the-person.

Overview of thesis chapters

All three principals who became my research participants taught in secondary schools throughout the 1980s when the discourse of biculturalism emerged as an influential way of thinking in the education sector and wider New Zealand society. Some of the contours of biculturalism and its effects are explored in Chapter Two to provide a socio-political and historical context for the participants’ stories. Their stories share discursive links with Pākehā leaders in the past, who have fought for socially just outcomes in education. In Chapter Three I profile a further three school leaders, outspoken Pākehā secondary school principals from the 1950s through to the 1980s,

whose words and actions helped shape current discourses about culturally responsive leadership.

The narrative inquiry strategy that has informed my research process involved conducting semi-structured interviews to build a slice of each participant's life story as it pertains to the research focus. Chapter Four outlines the broader methodological principles underpinning narrative inquiry and provides details of the specific methods used, as well as a discussion on analytical approach, ethical considerations and issues of validity. Chapter Five presents a summary of each participant's narrative in order to allow the sequential arc of their retrospective meaning-making to be read as a whole.

My interpretative work appears in Chapters Six and Seven, each chapter representing an analytical response to participants' stories in light of my main research questions. Taking the theme "becoming Pākehā" Chapter Six explores how the participants came to value cross-cultural engagement with Māori as they interacted with broader social and political forces and forged their adult/teaching identities. How their open orientation to Māori affected their leadership practices is the focus of Chapter Seven with an emphasis on the complexities of conducting ethical relationships across difference, and the paradox of the knowledgeably ignorant leader. Chapter Eight offers concluding reflections about issues arising from the narratives that have relevance for larger questions in education concerning culturally responsive leadership. A glossary of Māori language terms used in the text is provided on page 113.

The impossibility of labels

Labels help us get some intellectual purchase on the world ... but they are never adequate to the complex processes and human experiences of being-in-the-world. (Jackson in Harris, 2009, p. 76)

I use the word 'Pākehā' throughout as a symbol of my acceptance of it as a useful identity label for significant dimensions of my self-understanding; and as an acknowledgement of the relationship it signifies to Māori, and all the discursive possibilities that can lead to. I also use it as a generalized "discursive concept" (Jackson in Harris, 2009, p. 76) when discussing wider societal patterns in which it takes on the meaning put forward by Fleras and Spoonley (1999): "New Zealanders of

a European background, whose cultural values and behaviour have been primarily formed from the experiences of being a member of the dominant group of New Zealand” (p. 83). This definition is explored further in Chapter Six, as is the use of the term by the research participants.

Whilst all labels assigned to human identities are unsatisfactory, I remain more uncomfortable about my use of ‘Māori’ than ‘Pākehā’. Again I have deployed ‘Māori’ as a discursive concept, and the specifics it conceals are not the subject of this thesis. Its application, in the general sense, also acts as a buffer of confidentiality in the excerpts quoted from the participants’ narratives. They did not work “among Māori”, but “among ... specific group[s] of people, in a particular place and time” (Newton, 2009a, p. 41) with their diverse and multiple notions of self shaped by iwi, hapū and/or other influences: “To be Māori is to be part of a collective but heterogeneous identity, one that is enduring but ever in a state of flux” (McIntosh, 2001, pp. 142-3 quoted in McIntosh, 2005, p. 39). Meanings associated with ethnicity, Pākehā or Māori, cannot be “trans-historically fixed”, but are constantly open to re-definition, depending on shifting relationships about difference within particular historical and social contexts (Hall, 1996a).

The source of my discomfort is twofold. Firstly as a member of the more powerfully positioned cultural group, it is impossible in doing this work not to feel haunted by the homogenizing and stereotyping of the ‘racial other’ that has very much been the project of colonizing Western discourses symbolized by such blanket terms such as ‘Māori’ (Hall, 1992) . Secondly, I am conscious of representing ‘Māori’ and ‘Pākehā’ as two fixed, rigidly separate ‘categories’, when my aim has been to tease out meanings about *relationship* for the Pākehā participants across cultural difference.

For both space and confidentiality reasons it has not been possible to present the narratives in their entirety. Whilst a respect for, and learning from, Māori difference is central to the stories of my participants, their narratives also revealed moments of deep connection, the effects of “mutual assimilation” (Jones, 2008, p. 476), and the creative interactions that can arise out of shared educational endeavours.

Alison Jones (2008) refers to the “contested and risky territory” of Pākehā and Māori collaborations in academia (p. 479). My research project is not the result of cross-cultural collaboration, but it is Pākehā desire for a relationship with Māori that has called it into being; and alongside this sit my reservations occasioned by the labels discussed above. The discursive strategies employed in epistemological efforts such

as this thesis “convert subjects of experience into objects of knowledge” and such strategies are “inevitably reductive” (Jackson, 1999, p. 13). With the inadequacy of language to capture human experience acknowledged, and in the spirit of the “risky” but worthwhile work of building relationships across difference, I also grasp the nettle by engaging in the discussion that follows.

Chapter Two

The bicultural in cross-cultural

I think we've got to hold onto the word "bicultural", hold on to it because it gives tangata whenua that status. I think if we let it go they won't have that status and I think they've always got to. I know that people get upset by it but I actually think if we could just value it because while we say bicultural then we've all got a place as well.

(Joan/Pākehā secondary school principal/research participant)

Individuals occupying the position of principal do so at particular historical moments in specific locations. They bring to the position of principal their personal cultural frameworks. Hine Waitere (2008) questions whether the act of leadership can ever be played out in an acultural space. A leader's values and sense of cultural identity are shaped via interaction with larger societal forces. A particularly strong discursive phenomenon in the 1980s known as biculturalism was one of those forces. It attracted and generated energy in social and educational spaces and seeped into the government arena influencing state policy (King, 2003). Whether educational leaders resisted, ignored or actively engaged with its imperatives, it was impossible for them to remain unaffected by biculturalism's challenge to Māori-Pākehā dynamics and the monocultural norms of New Zealand society.

The aim of this chapter is to explore some of the discursive opportunities that the discourse of biculturalism has provided. The terrain covered does not comprise a detailed mapping of the discourse, but instead highlights some of its ongoing effects and complexities as constituting of the wider cultural narratives that individual school leaders inherit, contribute to and are subject to, along with the rest of New Zealand citizens. Also discussed are some of the ways that the challenges signaled by biculturalism still underpin the state's current educational rhetoric, thus continuing to impact upon Pākehā educational leadership in the secondary school sector. It is out of this larger context that my research questions arose.

'Bicultural' – a pesky adjective

Whilst a variety of ethnic groups now reside in New Zealand, the term 'bicultural' has particular resonances for Pākehā and Māori based on their shared past and present. The most politically potent symbol of the Māori-Pākehā connection is the Treaty of

Waitangi, signed in 1840 by representatives of both the British Crown and Māori tribal groupings. Implicit in the Treaty is recognition of Māori as

... the foundation human culture of the land, the first repository of its namings and its histories and its songs: and it is the culture of the people who have, for as long as they want it, a special relationship with the government of New Zealand via the Treaty of Waitangi – a relationship which other peoples and cultures, including the Pākehā majority lack. (King, 2003, p. 515)

Whilst the Treaty ostensibly aimed to protect the rights of both parties, the lack of correspondence in meaning between the English text and Māori translation constituted a significant early occasion of the two groups “talking past each other” (Metge & Kinloch, 1978).

With the sidelining of the Treaty’s mandate by successive settler governments after 1840 and the subsequent political and economic marginalization of Māori (Orange, 2004; Walker, 2004), the qualities of interaction implied by the word ‘bicultural’ carry a much less neutral linguistic heft in the present compared to stand-in epithets such as ‘cross-cultural’ or ‘intercultural’. The adjectival power of ‘bicultural’ assumes equal understanding between, and equal value given to both Māori and Pākehā cultural realms. However, when lifted off the printed page and applied to the lived cross-cultural realities of Māori and Pākehā, it signifies not only a shared history of cultural interchange but also “a relationship of power and inequality that continues to shape differential patterns of cultural dominance and social privilege” (Jones, 2008, p. 473). The expedient term ‘cross-cultural’ can embrace ‘bicultural’ in its overarching linguistic reach, but not make visible its historical and discursive specificities in a New Zealand setting. For my main research question I use the adjective ‘cross-cultural’ so as not to pre-empt the research participants’ own sense of the usefulness of ‘bicultural’ as a descriptor, and to allow space for them and myself to explore meanings that do not assume any one way of defining or relating to the connotations of ‘bicultural’.

When ‘bicultural’ stretched into ‘biculturalism’, another dimension in the continuing relationship amongst Māori and Pākehā groups opened up at various levels of society, from the individual and institutional (including schools) to the national locus of governmental power. The arrival of an ‘ism’ often indicates the reduction or elevation, depending on one’s point of view, of an idea into an ideology with a great

deal of attendant ‘shoulds’ and ‘oughts’. Like its adjectival root, ‘biculturalism’ has proved controversial but also productive in that it has generated public debate about what it means and how it should be practically applied (Meredith, 1999; Smith, 2003).

Biculturalism in brief

At its simplest biculturalism can be understood as “the valuing and learning of two cultures” (McMurchy-Pilkington, 2001, p. 167). Its rhetoric foregrounds the acknowledgement of two foundational cultures “Māori and Pākehā, different and equal ... to be celebrated, making up ‘New Zealand’” (Bell, 2007, para. 28). Writing not long after the peak of biculturalism’s emergence, educational researcher Sue Middleton (1992) outlined some of its contours:

In its less radical sense, it refers to “bicultural individuals”, for example, Pākehā attempting to learn Māori language and customs. In its more radical sense it refers to the restructuring of major social institutions ... according to Māori values. Separatist institutions – Māori-controlled and often funded with public money – are also seen as a way of achieving a “bicultural society”.
(p. 305)

Whilst governments in Canada and Australia during the 1970s formulated state policies focused on multiculturalism (Bartley & Spoonley, 2005), New Zealand’s key social policy principles developed around the concept of biculturalism, which tackled “issues of indigeneity and an appropriate basis for the recognition of Māori as tangata whenua, and as clients and partners of the state” (Bartley & Spoonley, 2005, p. 136). From a bicultural foundation, it was argued, the building of a framework for relating to other cultures could then proceed (McMurchy-Pilkington, 2001, p. 166).

Cultural commentator James Liu (2005) locates New Zealand’s “bicultural narrative” within the liberal democratic tradition of the nation-state. He defines a liberal democracy as inclusive, and “guided by the ideals of freedom and equality, operating within an open society with a free market economy, governed by an elected government under rule of law...” (p. 72). The struggle for social justice constitutes part of this liberal democratic discourse. If the principles of democracy are not adhered to then people have the right to protest and engage in “outright rebellion” (Liu, 2005, p. 74.). It is arguably within the framework of these liberal notions of equality and fairness that biculturalism gained traction in New Zealand “rather than as

a recognition of cultural claims within democracy per se” (Barclay, 2005, p. 120) . The 1977 ‘illegal’ occupation of Auckland’s Bastion Point by members of the Ngati Whatua iwi and their supporters exemplified a local instance of “outright rebellion” against the limitations of the democratic process and its tyranny of the majority (Liu, 2005).

In response to Māori claims for justice and self-determination symbolized by such events as the Bastion Point land protest, biculturalism emerged as part of state rhetoric. Fuelling the bicultural discourse were Māori activists, who envisioned a country where “Māori ought to be able to behave as Māori in wider New Zealand life rather than submerge their identity in favour of Pākehā mores and values” (King, 2003, p. 468). It marked a shift in a public discourse previously dominated by Eurocentric policies of assimilation and integration in which the “agencies of the state were committed to reflecting Western values, criteria, practices and priorities rather than Māori ones” (King, 2003, p. 484). It mirrored the advent of allied international movements “whereby traditionally ‘difference-blind’ democracies began to give more political recognition to cultural and ethnic difference in the face of a resurgent ethno-cultural ‘identity politics’ ” (Barclay, 2005, p. 119). In New Zealand the effects of biculturalism played out in a number of ways with the re-invigoration of the Treaty of Waitangi as the centerpiece.

Established in 1975 via an Act of Parliament, the Waitangi Tribunal sought to define the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi in a contemporary context and to gauge whether the Crown had been in breach of those principles (Byrnes, 2005). By 1985 the Tribunal was further empowered to investigate historical claims related to the Crown’s actions dating back to 1840 up until the present. From historian Michael King’s (2003) perspective these developments contributed to a revolutionary change in “the face of New Zealand” (p. 487) with the Treaty’s survival and continuing relevance

... ensured by both the Māori insistence that the document mediates a *living* relationship between Māori and the Crown, and by the majority Pākehā view that this constitutes an appropriate stance for the country to take. (pp. 515-16)

The liberal democratic notion of fairness implicit in King's statement resonates in the words of Chris Finlayson, the current (2010) government's Treaty Negotiations Minister:

All New Zealanders benefit from the improvement in the crown-Māori relationship – jobs and wealth are created, and standards of living are raised. ... [Treaty] settlements address our past and invest in the future. The wrongs of history are real. Failure to address genuine grievance creates a new grievance. (Finlayson, 2009, p. 13)

The Treaty facilitated what has been described as a “resource-based biculturalism” (Liu, 2005), resulting in positive discrimination policies and limited restitution for past injustices with the return of some confiscated land and some financial reparation to Māori groups. This kind of biculturalism-in-action, where culture and indigeneity are given political recognition (Barclay, 2005), has been the source of most opposition from Pākehā (Liu, Wilson, McClure & Higgins, 1999 cited in Liu, 2005).

In response to the research and reports of the Waitangi Tribunal, the government and its agencies manoeuvre around “four reconciling Treaty principles” which are:

... the principle[s] of active protection, the tribal right to self-regulation, the right of redress for past breaches, and the duty to consult. The recognition and adherence to these principles ensure the ‘active protection’ of Māori language and culture. (Hayward, 1993, cited in Waitangi Tribunal, 2009, para. 3).

Debates about the possible material effects of these principles continue, with the Treaty viewed “either as an ongoing social contract on the one hand, or as an outdated historical anomaly on the other” (Byrnes, 2005, p. 88). As a guide for bicultural co-existence that attempts to protect both the rights of the indigenous population and the rights of those who came after, the Treaty provides potent, if not legally binding, leverage for Māori groups (and non-Māori who support them) in their struggle for equitable treatment in their country of origin (O’Sullivan, 2007).

Against the backdrop of Treaty politics, notions of what the ‘bicultural’ face of a national identity might look like appeared along the biculturalism continuum. Described by Liu (2005) as “biculturalism in principle”, the effects included: the efforts of various government departments in their policies and practices to become more responsive to Māori (King, 2003); the Māori language being granted official

national status in 1987; the Treaty of Waitangi making its way into a national educational curriculum document (Ministry of Education, 1993); and Māori emblems and language made significantly more visible in public spaces such as airports, museums and sports arenas. The latter outward symbols of bicultural harmony provided New Zealand with a special distinctiveness on the international stage, and unlike “resource-based biculturalism” enjoys widespread support amongst Pākehā (Liu, 2005). When the All Blacks perform the haka and our national anthem is sung in both English and te reo during globally broadcast rugby test matches, race relations in New Zealand tends to “look prettier from the outside than the inside” (Liu, 2005, p. 80).

With the Treaty of Waitangi “rehabilitated” as a symbol of partnership, biculturalism offered a fresh nationalist orientation in which New Zealanders could think of themselves as a country with “two equally valid and, ideally, legally equal cultures” (Bell, 2006, p. 257). Continuing economic and social disparity between the two groups expose the gap between the reality and this rhetoric and challenge the view of biculturalism as a destination rather than as a dynamic process “that needs enacting” (Waitere, 2008, p. 41).

Biculturalism and the politics of identity

The effects of the biculturalism discourse reverberated beyond the corridors of Parliament and were also experienced at the micro level where “the personal and the politics of identity” are located (Waitere, 2008, p. 37). Critiques of biculturalism’s conceptual shortcomings included observations on the unproductive binary opposition it constructed between Māori and Pākehā, an us/them—colonizer/colonized dichotomy (Bell, 2006; Meredith, 1999), with an “overly simplistic categorization of Māori and Pākehā” (O’Sullivan, 2007, p. 31). Highlighted also were the dangers inherent in the assumption that Māori and Pākehā constituted homogenous, essentialised cultural entities, offering little insight into the relationships between the two “where there are multiple subject-positions, aspirations, and contrasts continually at play through ongoing interaction and exchange” (Meredith, 1999, p. 12). With reference to Māori identities Durie (1998) comments:

Māori are as diverse as any other people – not only in socio-economic terms but also in fundamental attitudes to identity. Nor can a Māori identity any longer be entirely dismissed in favour of a tribal identity. The reality is that some Māori also choose to identify with a particular tribe, others might wish to but have lost access, and others still might be content simply as Māori, with no desire to add a tribal identity. (p. 59)

Tracey McIntosh (2005) describes how Māori identities can be experienced on a continuum as either “fluid”, “forced” or “traditional” (p. 39). Whilst the ‘forced’ identity derives from circumstances of deprivation, the ‘traditional’ arises out of Māori activism. The latter identity has evolved as a “power-positioned articulation” embodied by those culturally and politically adept Māori, who actively de-stabilise corrosive stereotypes, but it can also operate so as to exclude Māori who are not considered ‘authentic’ enough (McIntosh, 2005, p. 44). With the term ‘Pākehā’ being resisted as a cultural marker by a significant number of New Zealanders of European descent (Bell, 1996; Liu, 2005), ‘who’ the other side of the bicultural equation represents has its own brand of complexity³.

Identity politics aside, commentators from both cultural groups have begun to explore how to re-imagine a biculturalism that acknowledges and negotiates “not only difference but affinity” (Meredith, 1999, p. 12). Some have described the circumstances in which Māori and Pākehā come together as “the third space” (Bhabha, 1996 cited in Meredith, 1999). The notion of this intercultural ‘liminal’ terrain, and the stories of those who experience it, act to mitigate narratives that merely polarize Māori and Pākehā or attempt to place each culture in a “closed box” unable to influence the other (Greenwood & Wilson, 2006, p. 165). Alison Jones (2005) advocates also for an emphasis on relationship across difference. Without minimizing the fact of oppression that is part of the complexity of colonisation and its legacies, she finds hope by focusing on the experiences of engagement between Māori and Pākehā, however difficult (Jones, 2005, p. 28). Schools constituted one of the earliest social spaces where Māori and Pākehā experienced a form of ‘engagement’, albeit from unequal positions of power, within educational institutions that were “developed and determined by and for the dominant culture” (Bishop, 2003, p. 236).

³ Issues surrounding Pākehā identity are discussed more fully with reference to the research participants’ narratives in Chapter Six.

Biculturalism and education

One way to visualize the education system is to imagine it as “a living artery of the social world” (Rata & Openshaw, 2006, p. 11). The dramatic influence of biculturalism in the political arena leading up to and during the 1980s flowed into this artery along with the ensuing complexities outlined in the above sections. What played out against biculturalism’s idealism were the desires of Māori families for education to meet the needs of their children in tension with the challenge for teachers in Pākehā-dominated schools to work out what their role should be in response to those aspirations. In 1986 the Waitangi Tribunal expressed the view that “the Treaty guarantees Māori the right to both educational success and to education that is culturally relevant” (Greenwood & Wilson, 2006, p. 127). With the Treaty of Waitangi serving as a kind of ethical compass, the biculturalism discourse acted as a catalyst for schools to reflect on how they (dis)engaged with Māori students and their families.

It is worth pausing at this point to recollect the material reality for many Māori students in mainstream secondary schools in New Zealand during the 1970s. Māori artist and educator Arnold Wilson, employed by the Department of Education at the time, describes the situation in Northland:

All the schools in the mid and far North had a large percentage of Māori students. These students, however, were invisible in the cultural and achievement profiles of the schools. The secondary schools in particular had few Māori teachers: perhaps a Māori language teacher, perhaps none at all. They had little or nothing that was Māori and that supported their Māori students on their walls or in their grounds, their libraries or their practices. Moreover, their expectations of success seldom included their Māori students. Failure, absenteeism, alienation, detention, early leaving and expulsion were patterns seen again and again. (Greenwood & Wilson, 2006, p. 64)

The above scenario, replicated in other secondary schools around the country (see Mann, 1987; Middleton & May, 1997), reflected the effects of earlier discourses that regarded state education as a mechanism for facilitating the “Europeanising’ of Māori (Simon & Smith, 2001). Whilst acknowledging socio-economic status as a contributing factor, McMurchy-Pilkington (2001) also argues that the crisis in Māori educational under-achievement is linked to Māori “historically being denied the right to learn one’s language and culture – one’s very being” (p. 181).

The shift in emphasis away from assimilation challenged leaders of Eurocentric school environments to ‘get to know’ Māori students and their communities (Gadd, 1976; Greenwood & Wilson, 2006; Mann, 1987). Some schools offered bilingual units and teachers were encouraged to incorporate “taha Māori”, a Māori dimension, into their programmes (McMurchy-Pilkington, 2001). These state-sponsored initiatives were later critiqued as ‘sticking plaster’ solutions “based on Pākehā cultural frameworks” that achieved little in the way of addressing Māori issues in the mainstream (McMurchy-Pilkington, 2001, p.167). Acting within the ever stronger framework of self-determination, various Māori communities from the 1980s onwards devoted energy to their own initiatives for cultural survival, spearheading the creation of Māori-medium schooling alternatives such as kōhanga reo and kura kaupapa Māori. However, the majority of Māori-identified students continued to attend school in the mainstream and still do.

Equity and the bicultural ideal

Current educational discourses around equity focus on the same issues first brought into sharp relief by the discursive offshoots of biculturalism, namely that “the New Zealand schooling system has continued to perform less well for Māori students” (Tuuta et al., 2004, p. vii). Advocates for structural changes at national level have also continued to experience the same battles for Māori-centered viewpoints to be recognized in decision-making (McMurchy-Pilkington & Trinick, 2008). When plans to revise the English-medium national curriculum were instigated in 2006, familiar patterns of dominance haunted consultation processes with Māori on the outside looking in rather than partners at the centre (McMurchy-Pilkington & Trinick, 2008). This resulted in a draft curriculum document (Ministry of Education, 2006) that appeared to aspire to ‘aculturalism’.

Paradoxically, the process of fine-tuning the abovementioned draft into its final form as *The New Zealand Curriculum* (Ministry of Education, 2007) allowed the social justice dimension of the biculturalism discourse to flex its muscles. As Hall (1992) comments, “discourses don’t stop abruptly. They go unfolding, changing shape, as they make sense of new circumstances” (p. 315). Biculturalism’s implied hopes for relationship building and a more just society surfaced fiercely in the public consultations over the draft curriculum, with feedback received from both non-

teaching and teaching professionals and organizations (Human Rights Commission, 2006).

The word “bicultural” had a low profile in the draft curriculum. It sat there quietly on the page under the guiding principle “Cultural Heritage”:

All students experience a curriculum that reflects New Zealand’s bicultural heritage and its multicultural society. Students who identify as Māori have the opportunity to experience a curriculum that reflects and values te ao Māori. (Ministry of Education, 2006, p. 9)

“Heritage” suggested that biculturalism was located in the past, and was not necessarily a living process that represented continued interaction amongst Māori and Pākehā. Unlike in its 1993 predecessor, the *National Curriculum Framework* (Ministry of Education), the opportunity for “all students to acquire some knowledge of Māori language and culture” was not stipulated; the words “Pākehā” and “Aotearoa” along with any mention of “The Treaty of Waitangi” had been omitted.

Of the ten thousand submissions received in response to the draft (Ministry of Education, 2007), a significant number registered opposition to the downgrading of the bicultural relationship in such a symbolically important national policy document. The outcome was a return to the language of biculturalism and the belief in education’s role as a container for “optimism, redemption and solutions” (Jones, 2007, p. 11). One of the opening statements in the final version of the new national curriculum promotes a vision for education as a vehicle for nurturing young people

... who will work to create an Aotearoa New Zealand in which Māori and Pākehā recognize each other as full Treaty partners, and in which all cultures are valued for the contributions they bring. (Ministry of Education, 2007, p.8)

Despite the neo-liberal climate of the previous two decades, in which “economic objectives had replaced citizenship as the primary political purpose of public education in New Zealand” (Codd, 2008, p. 17), the bicultural ideal along with the word “Pākehā”, contested as it was and is, could not be dislodged. The re-affirmation of the bicultural relationship also surfaced in the publication of *Ka Hikitia* (Ministry of Education, 2008a).

Ka Hikitia, the government’s current Māori Education Strategy (Ministry of Education, 2008a), articulates a social policy link to the discourse of Māori self-

determination with a focus on “realizing Māori potential” in education. Emphasis on “indigeneity and distinctiveness” is explicitly preferred over the implications of phrases such as “Māori as a minority” (p. 19). It also acknowledges “the widespread aspirations of Māori to live and succeed as Māori in te Ao Māori, in Aotearoa New Zealand society and in the wider world” (p. 18). *Ka Hikitia* represents an effort by the state, in keeping with international trends in educational policy, to increase its policy activity around issues of equity (Levin, 2005). Whilst the strategy was formulated under the Labour government, *Ka Hikitia* survived the election of a National government in 2008, and the subsequent ideological shift from the left to the right of the political spectrum (Goren, 2009).

International reports have described New Zealand’s present education system as “high quality, low equity” (OECD, 2001, p. 253) and local research has supported that judgment, highlighting disparities in achievement for Māori students across all socio-economic groupings (Hattie, 2003; Robinson et al., 2009). The government’s moral (if not legal) acknowledgement of Māori rights to self-determination can be seen as intersecting with economic pragmatism rather than solely with issues of social justice (O’Sullivan, 2007). The disproportionate representation of Māori in the statistical “underachievement tail” does not contribute to a vision of a globally competitive New Zealand. Whatever the competing mix of motivations that has shaped state rhetoric, the “long tail of educational disparity” and the “sting” it wields remains one of New Zealand’s serious challenges in education (Waitere, 2008, p. 38). It is difficult to imagine principals working today, particularly in the secondary sector, being unaffected by the ‘gaze’ of government upon the achievement levels of Māori students in their schools.

Secondary schools and the bicultural challenge

The school’s bicultural partnership approach means everybody has the same opportunity, responsibilities and obligations for success at school. When we use ‘everybody’ and the word ‘bicultural’ we’re specifically saying Māori and Pākehā and if we mean that then we’ve got to do set special things.
(Albert/Pākehā secondary school principal/research participant)

Across a range of educational sites educators either reject the bicultural discourse and its theories as culturalist dogma (Rata & Openshaw, 2006), or embrace it as a

transformative framework from which to support a fairer deal for Māori students (Greenwood & Wilson, 2006). Alternatively teachers and principals locate themselves somewhere in between these two stances, influenced by the specific contexts in which they work. There exists a marked variation amongst secondary schools with regards to the value placed on teacher knowledge of things Māori: “the differences in vision by the schools reflect the differences regularly expressed in our society as a whole” (Greenwood & Wilson, 2006, p.164). Smith’s (2003) research into biculturalism and the art curriculum across three secondary schools, for example, revealed the continuum of responses with one principal admitting: “I actually don’t give a toss about the [Treaty] partnership” (p. 42).

What secondary schools are doing to cater for a culturally diverse student body, however, is increasingly under the microscope. Waitere (2008) observes how teachers have grown more

... self-conscious about their own cultural encapsulation. They are challenged to not only understand their cultural beliefs but to apprehend them relationally as they butt up against students in their charge. (p. 34)

Aligned to these developments has been a shift away from the ‘blame the victim’ ethos of the past to a focus on the nature of teacher interaction with students:

Research has revealed that mainstream teachers have had lower expectations of Māori children, have failed to effectively identify or reflect on how their practice impacts on the educational experiences of Māori students, and have had limited support to address these specific issues.
(Alton-Lee, 2003, cited in Tuuata *et al.*, 2004, p. vii)

The state’s 21st Century response has been to fund initiatives designed to encourage cultural awareness on the part of educators.

Under the strategy entitled *Māori in the Mainstream – Te Tere Auraki* (Ministry of Education, 2009a) many secondary schools around the country have participated in either *Te Kotahitanga* or *Te Kauhua* professional development initiatives. Informed by research with Year Nine and Ten Māori students (Bishop & Berryman, 2006), these programmes describe an effective teacher as one who is able to care “for students as culturally located human beings above all else” and to “positively and vehemently reject deficit theorizing as a means of explaining Māori

students' educational achievement levels" (p. 273). The Ministry's uptake of such programmes has not been without controversy. *Te Kotahitanga* has come under scrutiny from the secondary sector's own teacher union for, amongst other reasons, its "culturalist ideology" (Openshaw, 2007).

The contested nature of the above initiatives and strategy documents can also be sensed higher up in the state's education hierarchy. With regards to the implementation of *Ka Hikitia*, an unidentified senior Ministry official expressed the view that the strategy

... is trying to change deeply embedded attitudes, a system that valued only one way. We still have managers who debate it, who don't see the value. They know the top priority but their view of change is different. *Ka Hikitia* is trying to change hearts and minds. (quoted in Goren, 2009, p. 45)

Concerns have been expressed that the intent behind the *Ka Hikitia* strategy will "evolve into" ticking compliance boxes "rather than a broad commitment to improve education for and with Māori learners that leads to authentic work by educators and government officials" (Goren, 2009, p. 45). Feelings of resistance also exist around other bicultural imperatives within the education system.

Schools are required to operate consistently with the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi (Ministry of Education, 2009b) and an amendment to the National Administration Guidelines

... places explicit requirements on schools to plan for improving the achievement of Māori students, to carry out a process of self-review, and to report to the community on this self-review and on Māori students' achievements. (Ministry of Education, 2000, p. 6)

Graham (2003) points out that these are only guidelines. Outreach from schools to Māori communities to form productive Treaty-based partnerships has developed in an "ad hoc fashion" without schools receiving adequate support in how to go about building such partnerships. This is exacerbated by lack of knowledge about and commitment to Treaty principles in school communities. Whilst there are exceptions, many schools manage only tokenistic Māori representation in their governance structures, which meets "legislative requirements, but not the needs and interests of Māori whanau and communities" (Graham, 2003, p. 8).

Like the debates that surround the interpretation of the Treaty of Waitangi, the contradictory and competing views about the definition and promise of a bicultural future are ongoing. What remains certain is that the resulting tensions and potentialities are part of the socio-cultural as well as political fabric of life in New Zealand, in which educational leaders, our children and their teachers are situated.

“A relationship of struggle”

In this review of the biculturalism discourse I have see-sawed between the recent past and the recent present, tracing some of its earlier and later manifestations. Notwithstanding its limitations, biculturalism created a “philosophical climate” (O’Sullivan, 2007) in which Māori gained some recognition and space to pursue cultural revitalisation projects, and in which some Pākehā took the opportunity to engage with the legacies of a colonial history (Liu, 2005). Māori and Pākehā groups and individuals across the political spectrum have continued to interrogate what simplistic understandings of biculturalism exclude and to consider how its boundaries can be extended to encompass other ways of thinking about the bi-cultural in cross-cultural (Maaka & Fleras, 2005).

The various levels of unease and resistance that rumble away near the surface of the educational terrain around Māori-Pākehā issues mirror the tensions in the wider society. Representing one end of the spectrum are critiques that oppose ethnicity becoming “an institutionalized category recognized in government policies” (Rata & Openshaw, 2006, p. 3). This stands in contrast to Māori calls for self-determination that articulate a desire to move beyond limited bicultural accommodation to a bi-national approach based not on welfare *needs*, but on *rights* to development derived from Māori status as descendants of the original occupants of the land (O’Sullivan, 2007). The relationship between Māori and Pākehā remains one of *struggle* (Jones, 2007; Snedden, 2005) and is easily relegated into the ‘too hard basket’.

Jones (2007) reframes the notion of struggle between Māori and Pākehā and the associated personal and political discomforts as both “positive” “necessary” and “interesting”. Struggle signifies an “energized engagement, where each is taken seriously” (p. 11):

This has to be seen positively, given it is *engagement*; it is not *dis-engagement*. To struggle with another is to give active and proper *attention* to the other, to *relate* to the other. Even as an enemy you are *hoariri* or *hoa whawhai* – an angry ‘friend’: one with whom it is worth engaging, someone with whom you have a relationship of struggle. (p. 12)

It is this orientation towards “a *relationship* of struggle [emphasis in original]” (Jones, 2007, p. 13) that informs a *critical* biculturalism (Barclay, 2005), which goes beyond homogenizing impulses and soothing fantasies of unity and equality. Instead of a unity that seeks to repress differences behind the ‘we are all one people’ myth, and instead of notions of equality that ignore the impact of colonizing practices, a critical biculturalism foregrounds the potential for learning from the “generative tensions” (Jones, 2007) that inevitably arise from making the choice to stay in relationship. Regardless of government policy there has always been, and hopefully always will be those in education who engage critically with such tensions.

The desire of my research participants to stay in relationship with Māori as part of their leadership practice is echoed in New Zealand’s educational history by the values and actions of other notable Pākehā secondary principals long before the discourses of inclusiveness and diversity came to dominate educational rhetoric. These principals, like my research participants, interpreted their leadership role not only as a call to action, but also as “a call to relationship” (Waitere, 2008, p. 45). The next chapter reaches back into the recent past to remember these former principals, whose words and deeds helped nurture the potential of the bicultural vision, and in whose footsteps my research participants have followed.

Chapter Three

Stories from the archives

Stories are central to the way we see things. They explain what is important about the past and how things relate to one another. They shape much of what we think and do. Some stories cramp us into spaces that are tight and limiting. Some give life. (Greenwood & Wilson, 2006, p. 67)

While exploring the literature on Pākehā school leaders in the New Zealand education system I began to catch glimpses of those who, in the past, had challenged the prevailing norms in their style of engagement with Māori. Initially I stumbled across their names while searching for something else. Then I deliberately went looking for more information about each of the three past principals I feature in this chapter. Writings by and about all three appear in education related literature, and one has written an autobiography. What drew me to these individuals was their propensity for being changed by their contact with Māori, and their desire to explore a different form of educational relationship between Māori and Pākehā. In so doing, they often disrupted, in their local contexts, Pākehā assumptions about the role of culture in education.

Recently, social anthropologist Joan Metge (2008) paid tribute to the Māori and Pākehā she encountered between 1958 to 1990 “who worked to make a difference for Māori and other minority group students in the face of indifference and even hostility from many Pākehā” (p. 13). She observed that some of the same problems in education still exist today, and suggested that “[p]erhaps there are lessons to be learned from those who struggled with them all those years ago” (p. 13). The three principals interviewed for this thesis all spoke of important mentor principals whom they came into contact with before taking on a leadership role themselves. The past leaders highlighted in this chapter can be imagined as having a link to those mentors, some of whom would have been their contemporaries, forming branches of a professional *genealogy*.

“Genealogy” was the term Foucault used to describe his method of studying the histories of particular social phenomena through the analysis of discourses. Focusing on “a problem in the present” (Tamboukou & Ball, 2003) his ‘genealogical’ work involved the micro-analysis of the tiniest details in an extensive range of archival material. In this way Foucault constructed what he termed “histories of the

present” describing how certain knowledges/truths emerged at specific times out of a matrix of social life, forming discourses and their attendant power relations (Tamboukou & Ball, 2003). The content of the previous chapter, for example, with its outline of the biculturalism discourse is my attempt to look at an aspect of “the historical conditions” that have led to “our present circumstance” in education (Foucault, 1982, p. 209 quoted in Middleton, 1998, p. 1).

Whilst the scope of my descriptions bears little resemblance to Foucault’s intricate genealogies, I am nevertheless inspired by his belief that delving into a society’s textual legacy has the potential to uncover “discontinuities, recurrences, and unexpected backlashes ...” (p. 5). Often the people inside these historical ‘blips’ or flare-ups have been engaged in struggles to shift or resist dominant ways of thinking, thereby signaling the potential of an alternative discourse. These historical moments have tended to be neglected or smoothed over by traditional histories. It is through the process of revealing ‘discontinuities’ that it becomes possible to locate counter-stories and to construct “a historical knowledge of resistance” (Sawicki, 1991, p. 37), thus supporting political struggles and critical questioning in the present.

One approach to learning from past ‘discontinuities’ in the Pākehā educational relationship with Māori is to focus on actual people whose words and actions represented the possibilities for change. Whilst Foucault’s genealogies sought to illuminate ‘subject positions’ within discourses rather than embodied ‘persons’, Sue Middleton (2003) argues that the use of life histories (or narrative inquiry in this thesis) can be complementary to his methods. Foucauldian genealogy concerns itself with questions of “what happened” and its contingent “truth-effects” (Middleton, 2003). Real people are implicated in the stories of “what happened”. Their textual legacies contribute to the creation of knowledge/truth constructions not only within their specific historical contexts, but also into the future as social researchers and others continue to interact with their stories in the present.

By ‘stringing’ together the biographical fragments below my intention is to animate some of the links between past and present, to make possible an interaction between the experiences of my research participants and the stories of Pākehā principals who came before them. Foucault (1980) stated that “it is not theory but life that matters ...” (p. 81). These three stories from the archives need not remain lifeless and forgotten. Instead they can be deployed as productive narrative artifacts reminding us, as Joan Metge (2008) has done, that some struggles are not new.

Tom Hawthorn: principal of Kaitaia College 1958-1966

In 1816 Englishman Thomas Kendall opened the doors of New Zealand's first European-run school for the local Māori children at Rangihoua in the Bay of Islands⁴. Almost 140 years later, another moment of cross-cultural engagement in a Northland setting was being played out in Ahipara. Joan Metge (2008), who was present, described the scene:

Attending a tangihanga during fieldwork in Ahipara I witnessed the startled response of the mourners when Tom Hawthorn, Principal of Kaitaia College, arrived with a party of college staff and students to share in mourning the death of the father of a senior student. Surprise quickly gave way to appreciation and a marked improvement in college-community relations.
(p. 15)

The rare sight in 1958 of a Pākehā principal turning up at a Māori ceremony sent out a powerful message to the community: that a different relationship with the local high school was possible.

In his eight years as principal, Hawthorn aimed to “make the college and its curriculum delivery relevant to its students (a multicultural, intermarried mix of Māori, Dalmatian and Pākehā) and to produce good citizens able to share in and contribute to society” (Metge, 2008, p. 15). He was known for his focus on effective teaching methods, “his compassion for the underprivileged and his determination to improve the educational opportunities for Māori students” (Kaitaia College, 1990, p. 16). Former colleagues and students assigned words such as “far-sighted”, “innovative, and “unconventional” to his approach and described the atmosphere at the school as “relaxed and humane” (Kaitaia College, 1990). For a brief time Hawthorn managed to abandon the use of corporal punishment, almost thirty years before it was abolished by law in 1990: “he ceremoniously hung the cane up on the hall wall. Some months later he took it down again – it seems the staff and board had not really been convinced” (Kaitaia College, 1990, p. 17). More successfully, under Hawthorn's stewardship the school instituted the whānau system, whereby students were grouped into smaller family-like units with older pupils helping younger

⁴ For a critical discussion on the differing Māori and European views about the promise of Kendall's school refer: Jones, A., & Jenkins, K. (2007). Invitation and refusal: A reading of the beginnings of schooling in Aotearoa New Zealand. *History of Education*, 32(2), 187-206.

students, a system that did not gain attention in other schools until a decade later (Kaitaia College, 1990).

Hawthorn's aspirations for Māori students in mainstream secondary schools were firmly located within a framework that positioned teachers as working for the betterment of society:

Teachers have a special responsibility to work for good race relations. You can put many labels to the aim: clear thinking on the facts of race; the ethical value, tolerance; economic welfare through maximum utilization of skills; an attempt to make Christianity work. (Hawthorn, 1962, p. 261)

On social, humanitarian and economic grounds he challenged the government for its inadequate investment in Māori education (Hawthorn, 1965), and railed against the mutterings heard in staffrooms around the country "that Māori pupils fail to take advantage of the educational opportunities already available to them" (Hawthorn, 1962, p. 261), a way of thinking supported by official policy statements at the time.

The 1960 Hunn Report, for example, put forward explanations for low Māori educational performance that centred on "the culturally deprived state of Māori backgrounds" (McMurchy-Pilkington, 2001, p. 165). This was followed up by the 1962 Currie Report "which showed concern for the situation of Māori children but little understanding of Māori culture" (Metge, 2008, p. 15). Research studies also appeared during this decade that "aroused the ire of Māori commentators then and since for adopting imported deficit models" (Metge, 2008, p. 15).

Tom Hawthorn was not uninfluenced by these discourses, as can be seen in his beliefs about the "damaged vocabulary" of Māori students in their use of English (Fry, 1968). However, he upturned other aspects of deficit-thinking that set him apart from his peers. Effective teachers had to be able to "sell" a different world to the students, and to have "the will and the skill ... to give [students] the desire to grasp a set of values which are foreign to [their] cultural or socio-economic environment" (Hawthorn, 1962, p. 261). His concerns centred on Māori students having the same opportunity for economic success as their Pākehā counterparts. With this line of thinking he edged towards articulating the Freirean notion of "the importance of learning standard syntax and intonation so that students diminish disadvantages in their struggle to live their lives" (Carpenter, 2008, p. 114). Thus he shifted the emphasis away from the student's socio-economic background:

That is just the error we are encouraged to fall into when we ask “Why is Hemi (or [Pākehā] Johnny) a non-achiever?” We have far more chance of turning our thoughts to the factors we can alter if we give that question a new slant “Why is Hemi’s school a non-achiever? Why is Hemi’s teacher a non-achiever? (Hawthorn, 1962, p. 262)

However he may be viewed with a contemporary lens, Hawthorn was of a different ilk than the principals criticized by one of his peers, Māori academic Koro Dewes, for their “complacency, indifference, and prejudice” (quoted in Fry, 1968, p. 8). Garfield Johnson, a teacher who worked with Hawthorn at Kaitaia College, would also prove to be another kind of Pākehā principal. It is Garfield Johnson I focus on next.

Garfield Johnson: principal of Hillary College 1966-1976

Appointed as foundation principal of a new secondary school in the multicultural South Auckland suburb of Otara, Johnson brought the importance of students’ culture and identity to the fore:

Obviously a school in such an area needs to be different. If the community is different, the school has to be different. This is so obvious as to appear trite – often said, but too seldom put into practice. If pupils’ culture is ‘working-class’ can a school set middle-class values? If half the children have a foot in two cultures then does the school not need to have the same? Has this not been the cause of failure in the past? (Johnson, 1974, p. 152)

The fledgling Hillary College reflected the changing demographic of the Auckland region with 64% of its roll by 1972 comprising Māori and Pacific Island students (Johnson, 1974). Within this milieu Johnson consolidated his belief that “the ‘truly educated’ New Zealander would be both bicultural and multicultural, able to move freely between one end and the other” (Johnson, 1980, quoted in Bowler & Openshaw, 2006, p. 52). The choice of the school’s name symbolized his vision for bicultural co-operation:

I was searching for a tangible symbol to inspire the students. Sir Edmund Hillary was a New Zealander who had surmounted great obstacles to reach his goal, and he had done it in co-operation with Sherpa Norgay Tensing – two people of different races working together. It embodied the kind of spirit we wanted in the school. (Johnson, 1977 quoted in Bowler & Openshaw, 2006, p. 52).

By being outspoken in person and print, Johnson acquired the mantle of “cultural broker” during the 1970s and into the 1980s (Greenwood & Wilson, 2006), not only at Hillary College but also in the wider education sector as an increasingly diverse student body began to unsettle what he referred to as the “stubbornly monocultural” nature of New Zealand schools (Johnson, 1989).

Working from similar principles that underpin the current government-funded Te Kotahitanga programme (Ministry of Education, 2009c), Johnson facilitated the creation at Hillary College of a culturally responsive model of mainstream secondary schooling:

We set the protocol and mauri (ethos) of the school to be Māori. We introduced weekend hui for parents and the public at large to discuss and suggest methods and approaches. We threw open grounds and buildings to Māori organizations. We introduced Māori language as a compulsory subject, we appointed staff to match our ethnic components, and we greeted our many distinguished visitors in marae fashion. ... And, with an eye on those exam successes, we ran homework centres three nights a week and study camps in the vacations. ... Our measures were everywhere approved by leading Māori people. (Johnson, 1989, p. 105)

Through an emphasis on Māori values he sought to validate the students: “Māori children need to know that the system is theirs, not just decorated with things Māori” (Johnson, 1989, p. 106). Māori political commentator Ranginui Walker acknowledged the ‘education’ he himself received in discussions with Johnson and other Pākehā staff members at Hillary College on the need to transform a school system that disadvantaged Māori and Pacific students (Spoonley, 2009). He described Johnson as “a pioneer in recognizing ethnicity as a qualification in its own right, along with academic qualifications” (Bowler & Openshaw, 2006, p. 55).

When the predominantly working class suburb of Otara received negative media coverage with stories of youth crime and gang activity, Johnson countered in the press with the positive aspects of the community and its people, many of whom he came to know personally (Bowler & Openshaw, 2006). Former students recalled his interest in them and their families:

He kept telling us all that we were ... the future leaders of our people. It seemed pretty far-fetched at the time but a look through the past roll bears out this prediction ... He went to our parents’ homes and got to know them. Won their trust ... sought their advice, ate and laughed with them, prayed with

them. I remember him talking at length with my Grandfather. We had a powerful Māori club, which was given school time to work in. (Paratene, 1999 quoted in Bowler & Openshaw, 2006, p. 53)

He had a clear understanding of the new urban Māori phenomenon and was concerned about those of us who were displaced culturally so he used to create a lot of situations for that to be corrected. Some of them were trips to the rural areas of some of the students' turangawaewae (tribal homeland) that became a part of the Hillary College history of learning about ourselves. (Riki, 1998 quoted in Bowler & Openshaw, 2006, p. 54)

Johnson supported the Pacific and Māori students to maintain links with their “traditional cultures while equipping themselves for life in an urban situation and a technological society” (Wilson, 1999 quoted in Bowler & Openshaw, 2006, p. 53). He also encouraged the Pākehā students to experience and learn from the diversity around them (Johnson, 1974). His enthusiasm and idealism about the potential inherent in Māori-Pākehā educational relationships were harnessed by the Department of Education which appointed him as the chair of two influential departmental committees in the 1970s.

These committees produced two publications: *Parent-School Communication* (Department of Education, 1973) and *The Report of the Committee on Health and Social Education* (Department of Education, 1977). The latter generated heated public debate and became known as the Johnson Report⁵, an acknowledgement of the influence of its chairman (Bowler & Openshaw, 2006). Whilst the scope of this chapter does not allow detailed discussion of either report, both contributed to an increasing visibility of Māori in official educational discourse, with the Johnson Report stating: “The Māori people as tangata whenua of our country have the same rights to the promotion of their cultural heritage in our schools as the dominant Pākehā society” (Department of Education, 1977, p. 16).

The formation of the earlier 1973 committee was prompted by the actions of members of the pressure group Nga Tamatoa, who protested outside Kelston Girls High School to expose the high expulsion rate of Māori students (Bowler &

⁵ The Johnson Report has been referred to as the “conceptual predecessor” of *Te Whāriki*, the national early childhood curriculum, which has a strong bicultural focus. See Bowler, J., & Openshaw, R. (2006). Not understood: The bicultural dimension of the report of the New Zealand committee on health and social education, Growing, Sharing, Learning (1977). *New Zealand Journal of Educational Studies*, 41(1), 45-67.

Openshaw, 2006). Charged with considering ways schools could improve their relationships with Māori communities, the committee's final report commented on Pākehā teachers' ignorance of Māori values and expectations, and recommended that "school principals and senior administrators of the department should attend courses on marae to expose them, many for the first time, to these things" (Johnson, 1989, p. 103).

Johnson regarded his own learning in bicultural matters as an important part of his life. He became a fluent te reo speaker and was mentored in the art of whaikōrero by key Māori figures in education of the time, such as John Rangihau and Turoa Royal (Bowler & Openshaw, 2006). Writing well after retirement, he still held to his conviction that the Pākehā population needed to be bicultural with a particular emphasis on bilingualism for educators: "I do not think that any teacher should get away with not being able to speak Māori, nor any member of a public service profession for that matter. But then I have a high regard for teachers and expect big things of them" (Johnson, 1989, p. 107). Johnson's position that being bicultural equated to being bilingual was not embraced by many of his Pākehā contemporaries and "has not attained wide public acceptance some 30 years on" (Bowler & Openshaw, 2006, p. 65).

Unlike the task of starting a school from scratch that Johnson faced, the newly appointed principal of Auckland Girls' Grammar (AGGS), Charmaine Pountney, grappled with the challenge of leading change at a school steeped in tradition dating back a hundred years (Northey, 1988).

Charmaine Pountney: principal of AGGS 1978-1988

Pountney arrived at AGGS in 1978 when the school's ethos reflected the monocultural style of formal British grammar schools (Pountney, 2000) despite its student demographic resembling that of Hillary College's. By the time she left ten years later a more inclusive and relaxed school atmosphere had emerged, and amongst other initiatives, a school marae and Māori bilingual immersion unit had been established (Northey, 1988; Pountney, 2000).

As discussed in Chapter Two the 1980s was a time of often intense political exchanges amongst Māori and Pākehā. The discourses of biculturalism and rangatiratanga played out in various education sites, and the Treaty of Waitangi

entered the vocabulary of teachers. During the same decade controversies raged around the Springbok Tour⁶ and homosexual law reform. Despite criticism from conservative quarters of the school and community, which sometimes appeared in the media, Pountney was unafraid to ground her leadership in actions based on confronting the difficult social and political issues circulating in the wider society:

By the mid-1980s I had a deep commitment to educational and social change ... I respected Māori sovereignty and was committed to power sharing between Māori and Pākehā, and the empowerment of all cultural and economic groups to participate successfully in education ... I had become much stronger in my commitment to feminism, and to confronting and fighting homophobia. (Pountney, 2000, p. 117)

As with Hawthorn and Johnson above, the full story of Pountney's leadership constitutes a multi-faceted narrative that cannot be covered in detail here. The main aspect I wish to highlight concerns her ability to hold her nerve when Pākehā encountered Māori anger during the 1980s.

In her 2000 autobiography *Learning Our Living*, Pountney reflected upon some key lessons she learned at AGGS about the process of making a school more culturally inclusive. One of the points she emphasized was the need to “respond positively rather than defensively to challenges from activists and other informed critics both inside and outside the school” (Pountney, 2000, p. 226). This attitude was forged in a series of challenging encounters such as Ripeka Evans' appearance at a senior assembly in 1981:

These days Ripeka is a senior business consultant – then she was one of the young radicals fighting for Māori cultural survival and sovereignty. She arrived in khaki dungarees and jungle boots and gave an impassioned political address. Among other things she charged Pākehā students with racism for learning Māori – wasting the precious resources of Māori elders when so many Māori people had had no opportunity to learn their own language and culture. She said to the girls, “My heart aches for you, you young black women, because you are so beautiful, and yet your white racist teachers teach you to hate your selves...” She harangued us for at least 10 minutes in this way. (Pountney, 2000, p. 88)

⁶ When the South African rugby team, the Springboks, toured New Zealand in 1981 it sparked anti-apartheid demonstrations around the country.

Momentarily taken off guard herself by Evans' speech, Pountney did not waver from her increasing engagement with issues of dis/empowerment and race in New Zealand (Pountney, 2000). In dealing with the subsequent distress from staff and students, Pountney chose to create opportunities in less confrontational circumstances for staff and students to explore concepts such as "structural racism" and to look squarely at cultural practices both in and out of the classroom, and at how they could together plan for improvement (Pountney, 2000).

In hindsight, Pountney viewed the school's learning about "gender and cultural inclusiveness" as "erratic – sometimes proactive, sometimes reactive, very dependent on individual people and on the social climate of the time" (2000, p. 225). Students as well as staff contributed to the ongoing discussions, despite personal fears and revelations that led to further discomfort. A Samoan girl was one of the senior students who spoke out:

Most girls and staff in this school are friendly and helpful. But ... there are teachers who spend a whole year teaching us, and at the end of the year still cannot tell one Samoan girl from another in her class ... There are staff, and girls, who never even try to say our names properly. (quoted in, Pountney, 2000, p. 89)

The sole Māori member of staff at the time also voiced aspects of her reality not aired in the staffroom before:

She talked frankly about her pain, her difficulties, and her anger which we had not been aware of before. She gave many examples of the absence of acknowledgement of Māori in the past even on special occasions such as the opening of the buildings. (Pountney, 2000, p. 90)

Consciousness-raising activities continued with anti-racism educators coming in to speak to staff and the showing of material produced by the Race Relations Office such as the 1982 film *Race Against Time*:

It was the first time that some of the staff had had the opportunity to hear a range of Māori people speaking for themselves about their experiences of an education system which was essentially hostile, excluding, alienating. Many of the staff were in tears. That was an important part of our learning. We need to be *moved*, literally, beyond the limits of our previous experience, if we are to learn to work in new ways with people different from ourselves. (Pountney, 2000, p. 91)

Learning to work in “new ways” also meant challenging the teachers’ previously unexamined instructional styles with Polynesian students. Pountney welcomed into the school Auckland University doctoral student Alison Jones to investigate teacher-student interactions in their racially mixed classrooms:

I believe that agreeing to participate in this research was one of the most important decisions AGGS staff and students made. It showed a commitment to improving the quality of classroom teaching and learning, and the courage to learn from mistakes and weaknesses exposed. The researcher duly began to report back to us at seminars for staff, and we were often horrified at what she showed us ... [it] helped many teachers to change their teaching practice ... Until teachers understand how they unconsciously obstruct students’ learning they will go on doing it. (Pountney, 2000, pp. 80-81)

The publication of Jones’s findings⁷ resulted in many other teachers well beyond the gates of AGGS critically questioning the quality of their classroom interactions with culturally diverse students.

Upon leaving AGGS, Pountney took up a position as head of Hamilton Teachers College, where she oversaw the amalgamation with the University of Waikato. Her tenure is well remembered by colleague Wiremu Anderson:

We had reo papers and tikanga papers. We had also established the marae. It had a whole lot of exciting things ... Then Charmaine Pountney came as Principal [1989-1992]. Her kaupapa was to promote things Māori and you only had to mention something to her and she would go “Yep, that sounds pretty good”. Suddenly we were on a whirlwind. (quoted in Middleton & May, 1997, p. 308)

“Whirlwind” is also an apt description of the effect of Pountney’s leadership at Auckland Girls’ Grammar, a decade in which she gained a reputation as “an articulate and often provocative speaker on educational and social matters” (Northey, 1988, p. 230). In her role as principal she was prepared to translate her own learning about issues of social justice into direct action, and to do so within a traditional institutional setting where the easier option would have been to follow a conservative path.

⁷ Jones, A. (1991). *At school I’ve got a chance: Culture/privilege. Pacific Islands and Pākehā girls at school*. Palmerston North: Dunmore Press.

Of hotbeds and truth-effects

The three stories featured above, and others like them, sink deeper beneath the surface as time goes by. Unearthing them allows the previous contours of the bicultural discourse in education and the impact of certain leaders to be remembered. The Māori word for seedling bed is “pārekereke” – metaphorically a “hotbed” – that nurtures others before they are transplanted into new environments. Many teachers who worked with and were influenced by Hawthorn, Johnson and Pountney went on to make valuable contributions to bicultural and multicultural processes in other educational settings (see Metge, 2008). In the second half of this thesis the influence of these past principals also enriched the analysis of the stories told by my research participants, as both sets of narratives share ‘genealogical’ traits.

In this chapter I have constructed ‘truth-effects’ suggested in the texts written about and by three Pākehā secondary school principals who worked in the era prior to 1989, *before* the government policy paper known as “Tomorrow’s Schools” led to dramatic changes in the structure of education in New Zealand (Middleton & May, 1997). In contrast my three research participants took on leadership roles in a climate shaped by those changes, which saw the responsibilities of the principal increase as schools became self-managing units within a de-centralized education system. Principals, such as the participants, working under this new regime have, I argue, less time to debate publicly their educational views to a wider audience outside the local contexts in which they work. Making public aspects of their stories via this thesis is one way to make visible their contribution to the “history of the present” in education. In the next chapter I outline the research journey I undertook to collect their stories.

Chapter Four

The research journey

To engage productively with the complexities inherent in this qualitative research project, I chose to cast my thesis as an interview-based narrative inquiry inside a framework that incorporates both the interpretivist-constructivist and critical paradigms. It is not uncommon for researchers not to agree with all elements of a particular paradigm and to borrow elements from more than one (Guba & Lincoln, 2005; Mutch, 2006; Neuman, 2003). Guba and Lincoln (2005) refer to this as an “interbreeding” of paradigms and that such blending can be productive if the paradigms in question “share axiomatic elements that are similar, or that resonate strongly between them” (p. 201).

Two main questions inform my research: *How do three Pākehā secondary school principals interpret the experiences that have shaped their desire for cross-cultural engagement with Māori; and how do they understand the effect of these experiences on their leadership practice?* In this chapter I present a “narrative of methods” (Riessman, 1990) in which I align my research focus with: *firstly* a narrative inquiry research strategy; *secondly* the abovementioned paradigms, and *thirdly* methods of selecting participants and gathering and analyzing the empirical material. Constructing a methodology also entails a consideration of issues related to ethics and validity.

Narrative inquiry

Choosing narrative inquiry as a research strategy reflects my assumption that storytelling’s value is important and productive in several spheres of human activity – to the individual sense of ‘self’, to the fabric of wider social networks, to the maintenance of culture and as a driver of political action. Narrative is one of “the primary means by which we make sense of our experiences through time” (Randall & McKim, 2008, p. 20) and by which we engage “one another’s assistance in building lives and communities” (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007, p. 35).

“Narrative” or “story” – I use the terms interchangeably – has escaped the confines of the literary sphere to find a growing acceptance in the social sciences.

Sociologist Susan Chase (2005) refers to contemporary narrative inquiry as a “field in the making” that can be:

...characterized as an amalgam of interdisciplinary lenses, diverse disciplinary approaches, and both traditional and innovative methods – all revolving around an interest in biographical particulars as narrated by the one who lives them. (p. 651)

Whilst the history of the narrative ‘turn’ is beyond the scope of this thesis, its emergence has been charted by a number of scholars working across a variety of disciplines, from sociology and psychology to anthropology, linguistics and education (Bruner, 2003; Chase, 2005; Clandinin, 2007; Riessman, 2008).

Critics of the enthusiasm surrounding the uses of narrative in research question the tendency to over-celebrate narrative for its evocation of experience at the expense of rigorous broader analysis. Their accompanying assertion, however, that it is “not a unique mode of organizing or reporting experience” (Atkinson & Delamont, 2005, p. 824) is open to serious challenge. Psychologist Jerome Bruner (2003) points to the difficulty of finding an easy answer to our “seemingly innate addiction to story” but argues that “telling” and “knowing” are deeply entwined (p. 27). Research in the field of cognitive neuroscience is building a case for the notion that “narrative activity is rooted in the most basic forms of consciousness, and that consciousness itself is a narrative process” (Randall & McKim, 2008, p. 23), highlighting our “intrinsic need to make sense of, and weave stories out of, our disparate experiences” (MacBeath & Dempster, 2009, p. 17).

There are no set rules to guide the novice practitioner about what narrative research is. While scholars continue to explore definitions and boundaries (Chase, 2005; Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007; Riessman, 2008; Squire, 2008), negotiating the field is marked by “difficulty and diversity” (Squire, 2005, p. 93). The only option is for the researcher to enter the discourse and be guided by her research question and paradigm influences in defining narrative inquiry for herself and the project at hand. Thus the definition of narrative I have decided to work with as most appropriate for this thesis is: *an extended story about a significant and specific dimension of a person’s life* elicited through in-depth interviewing. As outlined by Squire (2008) I also ascribe my general approach to narrative as “experience-centred” and “culturally-oriented” (p. 41). It follows that the resulting interview transcripts and the “re-

storying” interpretative activity outlined below are regarded as empirical material of a narrative nature. In approaching the analysis of the material, I also keep narrative considerations in mind, albeit not exclusively. In the following section I consider how narrative inquiry encourages a dialogue with both the interpretivist-constructivist and critical paradigms.

An interpretivist-constructivist framework

The verb “interpret” in my research question points firstly to a dialogue with the interpretivist paradigm, which focuses on how people *make sense of* or *assign meanings to* their social world (Sarantakos, 2005). It promotes the view that there are multiple realities, that reality is subjective, that it is socially constructed through interaction and interpreted through the actors (Neuman, 2003). I am interested in the meaning-making of individual Pākehā secondary school principals in and around the phenomenon of Māori-Pākehā interaction. Their subjective understandings and interpretations around this specific dimension of their life experiences to date have been “re-constructed” via the research process and “co-constructed” with me, the researcher. Within the interpretivist paradigm this constitutes a legitimate form of knowledge production (Neuman, 2003; Sarantakos, 2005).

The constructivist paradigm sits under the interpretivist umbrella (Sarantakos, 2005; Schwandt, 2000), sharing its relativist ontology and subjectivist epistemology. Constructivism emphasizes that “we are contextual social beings” (Thayer-Bacon, 2003, p. 7) and that the historical and socio-cultural aspects to our constructed realities are paramount: “We do not construct our interpretations in isolation but against a backdrop of shared understandings, practices, language, and so forth” (Schwandt, 2000, p. 197).

Narrative inquiry comes to life under the interpretivist-constructivist paradigm through its emphasis on the social context within which narratives are produced, and through the importance accorded to the role played by narrative conventions in assisting human beings to make meaning retrospectively (Chase, 2005, p. 657). What distinguishes narrative inquiry is its emphasis on the way narrators select and order past experiences into a *temporal* sequence (Chase, 2005). The narratives told when making sense of a personal chronology of experience usually feature turning points or epiphanies (Denzin, 1989) and “displays of transformation or change” (Squire, 2008,

p. 42). With the distinct focus of my research being the participants' views of their life-long learning about engagement with Māori, relevant questions that touched on a sequence of experiences from childhood up to and including their professional roles as educational leaders became inevitable. Narrative inquiry emerged as a good conceptual fit within which to construct the research process.

Narrative and the critical standpoint

My second paradigmatic dialogue is with the “critical” world-view. While this perspective takes into account subjective meaning, its epistemological imperative centres on providing insight into underlying power relations and structures, and their effects (Neuman, 2003). Allied concepts such as Foucault's (1980) work on “discourse” and its depiction of ‘objectivity’ and attendant explorations of the symbiotic link between power and knowledge are able to flourish on the research landscape created by the critical paradigm.

Discourses can act to determine what knowledge or ways of thinking are acceptable, legitimate and ‘normal’. Notions of truth are also constrained or enabled at various points in history through changing discourses:

Each society has its regime of truth; that is, the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true;... the techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisition of truth; the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true. (Foucault, 1980, p. 131)

Such a perspective holds that “we can never remove the quotation marks from around knowledge and reality”, and need to concentrate instead on exploring “how beliefs come to be viewed as real and true” (Thayer-Bacon, 2003, p. 3). The ‘regimes of truth’ created and the power relations exercised through the effects of colonizing discourses across time in New Zealand, particularly in the education, form an important backdrop to my own biography and the stories of the research participants, and therefore this research project. I concur with the suggestion that “we approach the relationship between Māori and Pākehā as one where, for each, education takes on different meanings and has different histories, and therefore *a different present* [emphasis in the original] ” (Jones, 2005, p. 25).

From the critical standpoint, human beings in their subjective meaning-making processes have the potential, through critical reflection and action, to “unveil” what can be described either as unjust concrete realities (Freire, 1996) or the workings of discriminatory discourses (Foucault, 1988 cited in Sawicki, 1991). Both the interpretivist-constructivist and critical approaches make the link between meaning-making and action to change oppressive conditions (Guba & Lincoln, 2000). However, activist-orientated research is an essential, not optional, dimension of the critical perspective (Neuman, 2003). Kincheloe and McLaren (2005) assert that “[i]nquiry that aspires to the name ‘critical’ must be connected to an attempt to confront the injustice of a particular society or public sphere within the society”, and that a critically-based research design is “unembarrassed by the label political” (p. 305).

Researching aspects of Māori-Pākehā relations in New Zealand is unavoidably located in the political realm, and one of the motivations behind this thesis is a concern for the injustices arising from that set of relations. This thesis is written for an academic audience, and the most that can be wished for is that it contributes to the ongoing learning of scholars in education about the complexities and possibilities of cross-cultural engagement. The research participants narrate their professional selves as located within a social justice discourse; connecting with their stories may influence readers’ thoughts and actions in conducting their own relationships across cultural difference and engagement with similar issues.

Where a narrative based inquiry aligns itself more directly with a critical perspective is in its view of stories as “verbal action” (Chase, 2005, p. 657). Narratives, as discursive acts in the Foucauldian sense, accomplish things and can have “microsocial and micropolitical effects through the local knowledges” that they produce (Andrews et al., 2008, p. 12). Whilst strategic and purposeful stories (Riessman, 2008, p. 8) operate to support the maintenance of discriminatory practices, they can also be deployed within interpretative communities (Squire, 2008, p. 55) as fuel for resistance against those same practices.

The local and storied knowledges (Hancock & Epston, 2008) that narrative inquiry privileges can serve to open up alternative ways of looking at “our habits of conceiving what is real, what [is] canonical” and to challenge whether a particular unjust situation or set of circumstances has to be that way (Bruner, 2003, p. 94). As Thayer-Bacon (2003) argues “we have a tendency to forget that our world is socially

constructed and can be remade” (p. 140). Narrative viewed in this light can be a source of inspiration and “a seed of subversion” (Bruner, 2003, p. 94).

Selecting research participants

“Purposive sampling” was the technique used for selecting the principals who took part in the research (Mutch, 2005). Riessman (2008) describes narrative inquiry as “a way of conducting case-centered research” in which individuals are the “case” (p. 11). Accordingly I was interested in individuals who would be “information-rich cases for study in depth” (Merriam, 1998, p. 61). Stake (2000) stresses that understanding the phenomena being researched “depends on choosing the case well” (p. 446).

Merriam (1998) points out that establishing the *criteria* that will guide case selection is important. That my research participants identified as Pākehā and that they had held the position of secondary school principal were the first two obvious criteria in my selection process. My research aims focused on principals known for their ability to reflect upon the challenges of being educational leaders positioned within the dominant Pākehā culture. Consequently a further selection criterion for potential participants was that they be perceived as being able to work *with* Māori students, teachers and communities in a climate of mutual respect, allied to an understanding of cross-cultural complexities.

The first principal I approached is a person I have known since we were both employed as assistant teachers in the same secondary school twenty years ago. The climate of trust between us, coupled with an enduring mutual interest in the focus of the research topic, formed a strong foundation from which to launch a narrative-based inquiry. A teacher since 1975, this participant has many years experience as a principal, and has established professional networks amongst other principals. She has also been publicly highlighted by colleagues, Māori and Pākehā, for her abilities in the arena of cross-cultural engagement with Māori. On the basis of the above attributes, her recommendations about other possible participants were of value for a small-scale research project. Following the ethical guidelines set down by the University of Auckland’s Ethics Committee, she undertook to make the first approach to other principals to gauge their interest in the research. Only after they had indicated *to her* a willingness to participate did I communicate with them directly. Each person

was provided with a Participant Information Sheet (refer Appendix A) and Consent Form (refer Appendix B) as part of the initial contact process.

Collecting the narratives

The semi-structured interview emerged as the most appropriate vehicle for collecting the stories. Initially I envisioned interviewing up to seven present and former principals, but decided against this given the time-consuming nature of a narrative inquiry approach. Four principals were interviewed, one of whom withdrew from the project before the analysis stage.

The interview method sits comfortably within the interpretivist paradigm as a “construction site of knowledge” (Kvale, 1996, p. 2), where the interview itself is regarded as a form of discourse, as “a joint product of what interviewees and interviewers talk about together and how they talk with each other” (Mishler, 1986, p. viii). Each interview lasted from one and half hours to two and half hours and took place at a jointly agreed upon location. I kept a reflexive journal throughout the research project in which I recorded my initial ‘interpretative’ responses to the interview occasions. As two of the participants live outside the city I reside in, follow up questions and the signing off on the interview material occurred via post and email. For the third participant, extra questions were dealt with in a second hour-long interview.

Advance planning for the interviews involved creating a set of key questions that translated into an “interview guide” (refer Appendix C). The semi-structured approach supported the critical orientation of my research. I was interested in the experiences of “conscientization” in the lives of my participants; and how these experiences related to their leadership attitudes and to larger socio-political contexts. To keep this research focus required some forethought and foreshadowing of issues before the interview: “we can distinguish between arriving with closed minds and arriving with an idea of what to look for” (Malinowski, 1922/1984 cited in Stake, 2000, p. 449). Kvale (1996) advises, however, that thorough preparation should not preclude the interview entering uncharted territory or the narrative twists and turns of participants’ stories.

To “invite stories” (Chase, 2003a, 2003b) is a skill that requires practice in listening and questioning, and the confidence to let go the safety of the interview

guide. From the very first interview the guide seemed too prescriptive and overly directive, if useful in helping me keep the interview arc on track. Each participant was given a copy of the guide before the interviews took place. So while it had its limitations, it did serve the important function of aiding their mental preparation, prompting memories and orienting them to the focus of the research.

Ethical concerns

Ethical decisions have suffused all the stages of the research process. In the moral and legal sense, researchers do not have the “right to know” as they “are guests in the private spaces of the world. Their manners should be good and their code of ethics strict” (Stake, 2000, p. 447). Gaining informed consent from the participants was a key ethical requirement. The initial conversations with my participants to establish my intent were just as necessary as actual written consent. After the face to face interviews two further opportunities were provided for each of the participants to consider what they had said in the interviews and make any desired changes to, firstly the unedited interview transcript; and secondly the text of the “re-storied” version discussed below. This process operated as an ongoing expression of consent over the empirical material to be used in the final analysis.

In the early stages of the project, the interview transcript and “re-story” text belonging to a fourth potential participant had to be withdrawn from the research. Due to other commitments it became difficult for the principal concerned to check the content and provide consent for its use within the study’s timeframe. All material was subsequently returned to that person.

Ensuring the anonymity of participants underscored the second major ethical responsibility, especially in the analysis stage. This presented some difficulty with my participants, as they are or have been high profile people in their spheres of influence, and New Zealand is a small place with a great deal of interconnectedness. Through the content of the Participant Information Sheet and conversations with participants I had to be clear at the outset that I would do all I could to prevent identification through judicious editing out of place names, the use of pseudonyms and the fictionalizing of certain details when required. In my interpretative work I also had to be mindful of respecting the privacy of those people who appear as ‘characters’ in the participants’ stories (Josselson, 2007). As part of the informed consent process,

however, the participants had to accept that it was impossible for me to completely guarantee their anonymity. Employing a third party to transcribe the interview tapes also posed issues around maintaining confidentiality and the transcriber was asked to sign a confidentiality agreement (refer Appendix D).

Issues of validity

Now this is a true story. (Joan/Pākehā secondary school principal/research participant)

Narrative researchers acknowledge that all stories are partial and situated and that experience itself can never fully be captured through language (Polkinghorne, 2007; Riessman, 2008). Stories are a form of representation and not a “neutral” attempt to mirror the past (Ellis & Bochner, 2000). All we can do is to tell a selective story about the past from “a particular point of view for a particular purpose” (Ellis & Bochner, 2000, p. 750). In the interview process not only is experience *re-presented* through the narrative act, it is also *re-constituted* (Squire, 2008, p. 42). Each human being is a work in progress and therefore our stories are continually open to revision “according to contingencies of our present life circumstances, the present from which we narrate” (Ellis & Bochner, 2000, p. 745). With its emphasis on “narrative truth” (Spence, 1982 cited in Polkinghorne, 2007), narrative researchers accept the unpredictable and intertwined workings of memory and imagination inherent in storytelling acts. The underlying epistemological value of stories concerns “truths” rather than *the* truth (Personal Narratives Group, 1989 cited in Riessman, 2002).

Another threat to conventional notions of validity posed by the narrative research interview concerns the ways in which characteristics of the interviewer may influence a participant’s response. Gender, appearance, and speech patterns (Mishler, 1986) and the fact that the interviewer is “in charge” of the course of the interview (Polkinghorne, 2007) are all implicated in the creation of the interview. My pre-existing relationship with the first participant also made for a more intimate kind of narrative environment compared with the other two participants. The latter two interviews equated to a conversation between strangers, albeit in a convivial atmosphere. Interviews can also stimulate an automatic social response of performing one’s “preferred self” (Riessman, 2002) and projecting a positive self-image that

filters out “a socially undesirable portrait” (Polkinghorne, 2007, p. 481) affecting the depth of what research participants are prepared to share with the researcher.

With the above limitations acknowledged, narrative researchers claim that narrative inquiry in general, and the interview method specifically, are a valid means for finding out about “the meaning life events hold for people” (Polkinghorne, 2007, p.476). Unlike ethnographic practice, interview-based research is not about being with the participants in the midst of their professional setting observing what they ‘do’. Instead it is based exclusively on the language they use, what they ‘say’, as they reflect upon the past. Each of the school principals interviewed for this project has extensive experience as an educational leader. Time constraints of the interview process aside, hearing what they have to ‘say’ about the topic under research is arguably seriously worthwhile, their stories being “meaning-making units of discourse” (Riessman, 2002, p. 705). The emphasis in the narrative study of lives is not so much external criteria of truth or validity, but the “internal coherence” experienced by the narrator (Atkinson, 2002).

As with the case-study approach, narrative research’s validity claims are grounded in the value of studying *the particular* where the aim is not to generalize but to provide greater opportunity for “better understanding” of persistently problematic issues, and “perhaps better theorizing about a still larger collection of cases” (Stake, 2000, p. 437). A narrative inquiry focused on a small number of individuals can be regarded, like the case study, as being valuable for refining theory, illuminating complex social relations and increasing understanding in areas where knowledge is “shallow, fragmentary or incomplete” (Punch, 2005, p. 147), as well as pointing to other complexities that beg further investigation (Stake, 2000).

Finally, issues of validity in narrative inquiry are connected with how “lifelike, believable and possible” (Ellis & Bochner, 2000, p. 751) the re-presentations of the interviews are for the reader through the researcher’s interpretation of the narratives they contain. It is my analytical efforts in this thesis, as well as the verbatim extracts from the participants’ stories, that will strengthen the reader’s belief in the trustworthiness and usefulness of the narrative material collected via the interviews.

From the personal to the academic: interpreting the narratives

Phase One

For the initial interpretative work on the interview transcripts I collaborated with the participants. First, they gave feedback on the unedited interview transcripts checking for factual errors and responding to any further questions I had. I then adopted the narrative inquiry approach as espoused by Susan Chase (2003a) and began my analytical engagement with the interviews by listening to the audiotapes with the transcripts in front of me “following the themes and patterns *within* that interview” thus initiating the “coding” stage of analysis (p. 97). Next I wrote an “interview summary” of the contents of each interview (Chase, 2003a, p. 92) in which I gained a sense of the sequential order of events in the participant’s life story around the research focus. I continued to note down broader social/cultural themes, certain language used and subject positions portrayed.

With the above steps serving as the groundwork I “re-storied” the original transcripts by re-organizing the material into a clear chronological order, creating causal links between ideas and focusing on key elements of the stories including time, place, plot and scene (Creswell, 2008, p. 519). In this process my words as interviewer were deleted and the participants’ words edited. When requesting feedback on the “re-storied” text of their narratives I wrote each participant a letter which included the following statement:

Enclosed is the “re-storied” version of your interview transcript. I have attempted to put the ‘plot’ in chronological order as much as possible, and group your experiences under ‘chapter’ headings. I have tightened some sentence structures and put in punctuation and linking phrases where appropriate. Whilst I have made these changes, I have not attempted to edit out all your conversational style and the repetition and idiosyncrasies that naturally go with this ... it is this re-storied version that I will use to mark up for themes and comparisons with my other interviews, and to source quotes for my thesis. Going through the process of re-storying the interview helps me keep in mind the “whole” of your story which I don’t want to lose sight of in the analysis stage. Please feel free to make changes to the “re-story”. My editing may have resulted in errors or a change of emphasis you disagree with.

Only slight changes were made by two of the participants to their re-stories. The third participant and I corresponded several times via email using a question/answer process to add clarifying detail into their re-story. The time constraints of our initial

interview had precluded gaining some of the relevant information. Most of the final corrections that all three made reflected their concerns for how they spoke about others. Through my subsequent close reading of the re-stories the common themes I had identified across the narratives from my initial “coding” exercise were confirmed and fine-tuned, providing a framework for my analysis.

A positive relational outcome for me as a researcher was the handing over of the final version of the re-stories – and a copy of the audio-files and raw transcripts – to the participants for their personal and family archives. In this way I felt I was able to reciprocate for the time and knowledge they shared with me.

Phase Two

In the second phase of the interpretative process my focus switched from the relationship with the participants to a relationship with the academy and readers of the thesis, and what I wanted to communicate to them (Josselson, 2007). The following three chapters, which contain summaries of the participants’ stories, analysis and concluding reflections, are concerned not so much with the participants, but with my “meaning making” in response to their narratives. Ethical tensions have accompanied this solo journey as how each participant will respond to being “an illustrative character in the research text” is an unknown at the time of writing (Josselson, 2007, p. 551). It can be unsettling to read about oneself, especially as “a linear portrayal of a person is always flattened and thereby inaccurate” and also if one does not agree with the interpretations put forward (p. 551). Mindful of these tensions, I have attempted to stay truthful to what I perceive as the spirit of the narratives in the knowledge that my interpretative efforts do not seek to capture all the multiple truths inherent in the stories; and that my work is limited by the material I consciously omit and my own “horizons of understanding” (p. 556).

The broad interpretive approach through which I responded to the stories has been described by Riessman (2008) as dialogical/performance analysis. This eclectic type of analysis enabled me to focus not just on the language and themes of the personal stories, but to enter the complexity of the whole dialogic environment within which they took place. Thus I interrogated aspects of their historical and cultural context and explored how the social world and its discourses are embodied in the participants’ stories as well as how they “use, make sense of, resist, or transform those cultural resources and constraints” (Chase, 2003a, pp. 97-98).

Framing the participants' narratives as performances is not to suggest that they are inauthentic but to acknowledge that we construct our identities with an audience in mind: "we are forever composing impressions of ourselves, projecting a definition of who we are, and making claims about ourselves and the world that we test out and negotiate with others" (Riessman, 2008, p. 106). My choice of analytical approach also allowed me to situate myself in the research as part of the audience and wider environment; and as the initiator of a particular dialogue with the stories, the literature and theory (p. 137). Aspects of my own positioning with regards to the research focus were discussed in Chapter One.

In the next chapter I provide summaries of all three narratives using a combination of my own words and quotations from the re-stories. All direct quotations from the re-stories are italicized throughout the rest of the thesis. Names are fictionalized, certain timeframes altered, and identifying details of place and of the contextual specifics behind the word "Māori" removed to preserve confidentiality. Much human richness is sacrificed as a result of losing these local cultural and geographical particulars, but I have retained the overall historical context as much as possible to aid in constructing a meaningful representation of the stories.

I have two reasons for presenting the summaries. Firstly, I want to provide the reader with some sense of each participant's whole narrative to militate, in a minor way, against the fragmentation of the original "living conversations" that the re-stories were created from (Kvale, 1996). Secondly, the summaries act as a touchstone for the content of the analytical chapters that they precede. The complete re-stories vary in length from approximately 9,000 to 15,000 words and I have 'reduced' each one to just over 2,000 words. The summaries operate as an introductory analytical overview with the content selected to highlight how the participants' engagement with Māori came to be significant for them over time. Each summary has a different emphasis but common traits emerge across all three. In the interpretative arc of these 'mini-stories' I have attempted to follow the shifts of meaning as articulated by the participants in the lengthier re-stories.

Chapter Five

Summaries of the participants' narratives

John's story

Beginnings

Born in the mid 1940s into a middle class family, both John's parents were university educated. The word *Pākehā* was not a term he identified with when young. During his youth he had little to do with people from other cultural groups and what contact he had was not understood in terms of cultural difference:

I had a very good friend. The two of us went to university and he identifies as Māori but he is very much my skin colouring. A little bit darker I guess. But we never saw him as being any different. We did see his father as being different because his father was obviously Māori and a little bit exotic we thought. It wasn't ever something we queried or enquired into and he was never encouraged at school to be Māori in any way.

Participating in the haka at the predominantly European high school he attended constituted another early brush with things Māori, an experience which he now views as odd for its lack of context:

When the 1st XV was playing the whole school got out and did the haka. We used to have to do haka practice. Don't ask me what it meant. Nobody ever explained to us what the words were... We did this haka and we all thought it was extremely important but no-one had any idea of the meaning or the significance but we just did it. It's really weird when you think: what's that about? It's just a ritual that a school like that will do and it looks very impressive, but it's slightly nuts the whole thing.

What knowledge he gained about New Zealand history while at school he also now regards as inadequate:

When we were at school we talked about the Māori Wars didn't we? And then they became the Land Wars, but we weren't taught the truth. Even when I did a degree we weren't taught the truth about what happened... That's bullshit what we were taught.

He perceives his proper education about New Zealand's past to have started many years later when he became a principal.

John credits the strong influence of a secure family environment during his adolescence as underpinning his decision to become a teacher. The adults in the family were variously immersed in education, community activities and national politics:

[they] shaped me...and provided a very steady guiding hand about the parameters you lived by, about the things that people should grow up to be, about things that should be important to people with a focus very much on community and family ... I would like to think that I still pretty much live by those values most of the time. I have my lapses.

Whilst a teacher trainee in 1970, he was exposed to the social realities of students whose backgrounds were not as privileged as his own:

It was just a revelation – a whole new world. I suddenly saw these other kids that we used to perhaps look down on, I don't think intentionally but you know, a "why would you go there?" attitude, and our school won everything. I decided that no, this is not right.

This insight, coupled with his family's orientation to community service, shaped a desire in him to move away from the milieu he had been educated in, and to become a teacher in a school where he would be challenged to learn, and to *make a difference*. Aged in his early 20s, he left his home town and transplanted himself into another world.

Becoming a teacher

Memories of the culture shock he felt upon arrival as a beginning teacher in a multicultural urban school with a high Māori and Pacific roll remain vivid. The first school concert he attended amplified his sense of displacement:

Now a concert to me was going into the town hall ... and sitting down and someone playing the violin or singing and then we all clapped. But of course ... a Pacific Island concert was people dancing and people pinning money up and people moving. I remember standing in the hall this evening and feeling really agitated about this and thinking really my God what is happening? These people have got no manners, it's just terrible. This is not how people should behave. Then the principal came up to me. He must have been watching me. He stood beside me and he said to me: "You know John if you just relax you'll really enjoy it."

This experience signaled the start of his education about people's lives beyond the cultural boundaries of his own upbringing: *I was just a baby*. Tensions gradually surfaced between his personal and professional life in response to the type of school he was working in. His home life was

very conservative Pākehā... and there was a bit of feeling within the greater family: "What does he think he's doing? Why doesn't he get to a real school?" We had quite fiery debates and I'd say: "I am in a real school".

Inspired by mentors such as the principal, *a wonderful educator*, and other colleagues concerned with ameliorating the effects of a mono-cultural education system, his commitment to teach in areas that suffered from *inequitable educational opportunity* was strengthened.

The students presented him with many challenges as their backgrounds were so dissimilar to his own. Doing well at school and going onto University, for example, were not part of the norm. He found some of his classes difficult and had to adapt his teaching style. By championing extra-curricular sporting activities, he gained school-wide popularity and developed close relationships with students in the classroom: *I thought by having these kids in teams, getting to know them and their families in this way that that was enough*. He soon came to think of himself as a reasonably successful teacher – the students were achieving and they knew he cared about them. However, beyond the classroom and the sports field, he had little contact with the reality of the students' cultural contexts. He never attended festivals or tangi. For him it was a matter of

school, basketball, athletics, learning, shut the door. What I never did was to take that other step over into their culture to learn. I don't think I saw it as being important.

Over the next decade John went on to teach at other multi-cultural urban high schools holding various positions of responsibility. At each he practiced his tried and true relationship building strategies utilizing the medium of sport. In this way he made a significant contribution, but his level of engagement stayed the same as in the school he first taught at – he did not *dip into* students' cultural lives to any great extent. He regards the person he was then as someone *unwittingly on a journey of self-realization*. Whilst he had a strong desire to improve the quality of education the

students received, it was to take him *a lot of time to realize that culture was at the heart of it all – recognizing difference, celebrating it, learning from it*. Not until he became a principal in the late 1980s did his student-centered approach and concerns for equity dovetail with a unique Māori context, propelling him into an unexpected but potent learning experience about cultural difference.

Becoming a principal

During his first few hours in the principal's office of a secondary school with an 80% Māori roll, John's self-confidence faltered. Shortly beforehand the school and local community had welcomed him with a pōwhiri into his new position as the head of the school. The occasion served to heighten his feelings of uncertainty about what lay ahead:

You know how they call you on ... I'm this white middle class Pākehā gangly guy sort of wandering on, but I did sense the real importance of it all. Then of course in the powhiri people stood up and spoke. It was mainly in Māori but they also spoke in English and they said: "You have a huge job here. When you come here we want to see you change this place. This is the challenge for you young man". And I'm sitting there thinking: what me? It's just me. It was a very long ceremony and I didn't understand it all but I got the message that boy this was a welcome but it was a challenge. Then we all had a cup of tea and everything as you do and I ended up in the principal's office thinking what do I do now? I've got no idea what to do. So I had another cup of tea.

During John's first few weeks as principal he was struck by how disaffected many of the students were and the level of disjunction between the school and the community:

Glum, long faces. Awful. ...The kids and parents regarded the school as the bottom of all schools in the region. There was this antagonism and when you scratched the surface you could see that what was being taught and the way the school was organised was totally inappropriate... It took me probably two or three weeks to work out who the shining stars on the staff were and there were very few ...You couldn't possibly continue with this.

Figuring out *what to do* over the next decade motivated him *to step over* into another cultural perspective, to immerse himself in *a different world*. Whilst his established beliefs about equity and fairness positioned him to take on the challenge of a school where pride and self-esteem were thin on ground, he was not able to fall back on his usual relationship-building strategies.

In his desire to transform the school atmosphere into one that reflected and valued the cultural richness of the students' lives, John felt he had no option, but to move out of his *comfort zone to learn* about the community, regardless of a reoccurring sense of doubt about his ability or qualifications to do so: *I remember driving home thinking, I can't do this. It's too hard for me. I'm the wrong person.*

Gaining credibility with the locals and their cultural leaders for the changes needed was an important part of creating a school that *was the best place for Māori kids*. His *learning* of the community pushed John to examine an alternative world view to his own, a process for which he says *there was no blueprint*, describing it as *haphazard* and *flying by the seat of his pants*. The experience shaped his leadership philosophy and view of the principal's role as one of *servant apprenticeship*:

*You're actually serving the community. I never talked about **my** school. It's our school and the school belongs to the community, belongs to the kids who are there. ... You've got to take people with you, or you've got to go with them. ... You've got to often help them lead themselves to come to the conclusions. I thought I'd learnt this everywhere else but it was at this school I really understood it.*

As the tumuaki he became very conscious that he had to be able to speak the Māori language with a certain level of competency:

I had to win the confidence of these people. ... I did need to be able to understand what was going on. Without the language I would never have had any chance of gaining an insight into Māori culture. I didn't have to be fluent but I had to be acceptable. I had to not be an embarrassing Pākehā to the kids when I was invited down to the marae.

To educate himself about the nuances of the cultural context he was working in John also deliberately and consistently devoted after hours time to building relationships by participating in marae activities, socialising at the local pubs, spending time with parents and students and other community members. Whilst his forays into a different cultural milieu involved missteps, he forged mentor-friendships with individual Māori in the wider school community who *stepped up to guide me*; and he maintained a strong collegial network with staff members committed to the same goals: *you can't do it by yourself*. As part of his leadership he ensured that the number of Māori teachers employed on staff dramatically increased.

By the end of his tenure as principal, John believes that *some traction for social change* had started to occur with an improvement in the climate of the school and Māori students' achievement and sense of belonging. The community's perception of the school had also shifted as the alliance between the two grew stronger. In hindsight he emphasizes that he received more from the experience than he gave. He had had a unique opportunity to view New Zealand through a different lens:

I learnt so much about my values and the New Zealand educational and social scene. I experienced the Māori side of reality. Well, as much as one could without actually being Māori, I think. It also gave me an update on New Zealand history – a rare and privileged insight. I was learning the real history by living there, through sitting and listening to the old people and reading the books, by just being involved.

John's career in educational leadership has since taken him outside the secondary school sector into other demanding cross-cultural situations requiring him to *adapt and learn*. He regards his time as a New Zealand principal in a Māori context as *defining* of himself as a person and leader: *there has been nothing as tough, when I say tough, as challenging as that time, but probably nothing as rewarding either.*

Joan's Story

Beginnings

Raised on a farm in the 1950s and 1960s, Joan's family were practicing Catholics and part of a close knit religious community. *Being a Catholic kid* was the most significant cultural feature of her childhood. She was bussed into Catholic schools for both primary and secondary education with nuns as her teachers. The nuns' vocation was closely linked to social justice and the welfare of Māori. The nuns' *fiercely protective* attitude towards Māori students contributed to her early awareness of the word *Māori*, but their influence also promoted a form of paternalism:

For the nuns we were all God's children and you'd better not look as if you didn't think that. If anyone said anything slightly nasty about Māori kids you knew you'd be in trouble. So you were very conscious of the difference. I certainly knew the word Māori, but I don't think that I would have used the word Pākehā or have seen myself as a Pākehā at that stage. As a kid what I thought was that Māori people were basically trying to be like us, and that was important. We had to be nice and good to Māori kids and they were our friends. It was our job to make sure that they didn't feel any different from us.

Joan mixed easily with Māori children at school but this did not cross over into socializing outside school hours. Despite the nuns' care of Māori students and acceptance of their speaking te reo, Māori content did not feature as part of the official school curriculum. Growing up she was barely aware of the presence or significance of the long-standing marae located geographically close to her parents' farm.

Whilst her Catholic education provided a contradictory blend of familiarity and ignorance of local Māori realities, Joan credits the Catholic dimension of her upbringing as enabling her later in life to engage with Māori forms of spirituality and cultural rituals:

You think of Easter where the cross is covered and all the little girls are lining up and communion. There's a whole sacred thing about that and then when you make your first communion such and such happens so that you're very used to putting up with things. You're lined up as a group and you sit there. It reminds me a lot sometimes of on the marae and all these little kids ... they might be running around but every now and then they get called and they're

sat down like this and what they're doing all the time is respecting that there's something bigger than you, it's not just about you.

An incident from high school that she describes as *influential* concerns a moment when she innocently collided with a hitherto unspoken incongruity in the school culture:

I was learning French and I wrote down Hiné with the French accent on the last vowel. It sounded right to me but the nuns went berserk. I remember going to see the head nun and she said: "you'd think that you of all people would know that that is a French spelling" and "this is a young Māori woman" and she was going on: "we live in New Zealand, you should know better". I said to her: "well who's in charge of the education around here?" I think I said that, I know I felt like it. Why am I getting in trouble? How come we haven't learnt Māori?

Upon leaving high school she became politicized about *wider Māori issues* through being one of the few Pākehā attending one of the first Māori language courses at a New Zealand University. As a twenty year old she felt a sense of *awe* encountering Māori cultural life on campus in the early 1970s and was attracted to the dynamism and strength of purpose emanating from protest groups such as Nga Tamatoa: *You knew what was going on with Māori protest and it was in the papers all the time and I followed it really closely ... it just caught my imagination, it was just so exciting.* Teachers Training College in 1974 with its short *taha Māori* course proved to be a disappointment after University: *It was just teaching us about Māori things but were we going to do that in school or what? It just didn't make any sense.* The next twenty years as a classroom teacher provided its own rich training ground for sharpening Joan's skills at critiquing the status quo regarding Māori and Pākehā in education.

Becoming a teacher

A vivid recollection from her time as a beginning teacher was a perplexing pattern related to Māori students:

The big thing that hit me at my first school was the high percentage of Māori kids in the junior school because at the top they weren't there anymore. It was just that extraordinary realisation that these bright, bright kids, Māori kids, smart as could be ... they never passed anything and there wasn't the expectation that they would. You didn't think you were a failure as a teacher

or anything like that. You just went on to the next year. I remember thinking there's something wrong. Others and I talked about it amongst ourselves but there was nowhere else to take the discussion at the time.

In subsequent teaching roles at other schools Joan observed a similar scenario. She began to form supportive relationships with like-minded Pākehā colleagues who championed Māori students. One of her mentors in particular she recalls receiving *a bit of flak from other staff members because she spent too much time on Māori kids. She was a forward thinking person for her time.*

Outside of school hours during the 1980s Joan joined a Pākehā anti-racism group that had emerged out of the Māori led-protest actions at Bastion Point in Auckland. Its purpose was to educate organizations about the Treaty of Waitangi. In hindsight she is keenly aware of the group's shortcomings: *we didn't know enough.* Her involvement did, however, allow her the opportunity to sift through some cross-cultural complexities:

The experience deepened my politics and it gave me a very clear sense of being Pākehā or I thought it did. And from this time I developed a belief that you work in your own area on a little minor level. And also an awareness about what is and is not a Pākehā battle, for example about the seating of women at a pōwhiri. You know it's not a Pākehā battle. We've got to go and sort out our own battles.

In the early 1990s Joan took up a teaching position in a secondary school she perceived as having *more of a will to work with Māori students.* She taught within the school's Māori bilingual unit, a situation in which the students became her teachers about social class and cultural difference:

It was incredibly hard. Teaching is always hard at some point but in terms of knowing myself as a Pākehā this was the biggest experience I had. They were all Māori kids and they'd be talking about something and I'd say something and they'd go "Oh Miss, you're so Pākehā". And I'd go "what do you mean"? We had a great relationship but they saw me as sort of posh, that I spoke posh and God my own view of myself was not like that.

That these students did not pass exams remained a nagging conundrum for Joan about her own teaching and the purpose of education in general: *If school is going to be for that, the Māori kids have to pass.* The valuing of the Māori cultural dimension was not embraced by all staff, with the students in the bilingual unit often stereotyped as

the naughty kids. Despite the tensions and contradictions Joan respected the senior management's ideal of *honouring* each student, a vision that contributed to her evolving view of herself as someone who could be *agentic*: *I and other teachers came out of this school with a belief about what Māori kids could do... We were excited by what we could do.* This energy spilled over into her next job at a school in the heart of a culturally rich Māori community where she was eventually to become a principal for the first time.

Becoming a principal

Initially Joan felt *nervous* putting her name forward for the principal's job even though she had already worked in the school's senior management team for almost two years prior:

Then the Board said "look you can do this job" and I had a few Māori people from the marae come and say to me "Okay so you're not Māori and you're not going to be. Your job is to run the school well and that's what we want.

She describes being the principal of this school as a time for learning how to negotiate, on both a personal and professional level, the complexity of being both Pākehā and a woman. With a predominantly Māori school roll, she was often called on to participate in cultural activities in the wider community where the principal's role is held in high esteem. Inhabiting the role and *doing the right thing* was often a challenge with mistakes inevitable. Working daily with different cultural attitudes and practices made her reflect upon some of her own previously untested intellectual convictions around gender issues and Māori-Pākehā interaction.

Significantly, during her tenure Joan's belief in the capability and potential of Māori students was strengthened.

They were running the school. They were always the head students. They were the whānau leaders. There were kids who expected to be going off to university. I remember one kid saying "oh miss, all the nannies, Mum, the whole world is determined to get you". The community wanted the best for these kids, and this is not to say there weren't difficult issues. I still think if I had a Māori kid myself I would send that kid there because when you come as a little kid in Year 9 and see that the head students or the top academic ones are Māori, you've got a future.

A commitment to high expectations for Māori students, combined with an increased confidence in Māori contexts, carried over into her second principal's role at a mainstream school that was very different in tone and cultural mix.

The new situation required Joan to re-adjust to Pākehā norms but at the same time connect with another group of Māori students, who made up one quarter of the roll. Her previous experiences prepared her for what she observed happening around her. Very few of the Māori students stayed until the senior level and their behaviour around the school was often belligerent and uncooperative, compounded by teachers' low expectations of them.

In response Joan spearheaded a series of initiatives with staff over the next five years that transformed the school's climate and teachers' relationships with Māori students. The positive results were reflected in a more congenial school atmosphere and a marked increase in Māori academic achievement:

It was an extraordinary experience for some. One Pākehā teacher admitted that he had had no idea that one of the six Māori boys in his class was extraordinarily clever. When he hounded him he finished every piece of work. There were a few others for whom he got special needs support. He actually said to me that previously he thought of the Māori kids just as the Māori kids. He'd never seen them as bright or middle or slow, just that they wouldn't do the work. So that was a huge shift.

Throughout these change processes and cross-cultural challenges, Joan has been able to draw on the support of longstanding friendships with individual Māori whom she regards as *hugely important*. These friends act as *minders* or *mentors* whom she can talk with when *rattled* about a Māori-related issue. They in turn call on her areas of expertise.

Currently the principal of a high school in a different part of the country with Māori comprising only a small percentage of the roll, Joan's leadership style continues to be informed by her past learning about cultural difference:

I am talking with members of a particular Asian community who are coming into contact with the school right now and I am just sitting there and listening and thinking this is a completely different view of the world and I've just got to be listening.

Her belief in the importance of building a sense of community through ritual has also deepened over time through her affinity with Māori cultural practices. For the

occasion of the pōwhiri, her official welcome to the school, a group of her former Māori and Pākehā students attended especially *to hand her over*. During the ceremony the students spoke in very personal terms about her style of leadership. This was the first time a pōwhiri had occurred at the school, with the mainly Pākehā staff and board members unfamiliar with the protocol. Joan describes them as being *overwhelmed* by its emotional power:

They finally got to see me in context because if they hadn't it would have been as if I had just popped out of nowhere. I wanted them to know who I was, that I was into building relationships, and that I'm well past being challenged over anything to do with Māori stuff. I don't want to be explaining why the Māori thing is important anymore. It just is.

Weaving the significance of the Māori dimension into the life of a multi-cultural but mostly European urban school is a *relational* process she continues to work out with staff, students and Māori connected to the local area.

Albert's story

Beginnings

Growing up during the 1960s in a working class family and neighbourhood shaped Albert's attitudes about the purpose of community:

People looked after each other. To me it was just paradise but there were people who lost jobs or couldn't afford to pay this, that and the other. There were lots of working bees helping people do stuff at their homes ... All that going on around us all the time.

Pākehā organizations such as Cubs and Scouts introduced him to the *idea of service* in a more *formal* way and mirrored the *strong social conscience* exhibited by his parents:

I saw my mother realize that there were a couple of young sports teams which didn't have coaches ... Mum knew nothing about rugby but she said to me "well, let's go and coach that team and help these seven or eight year olds out". You had this idea that there was a gap there so let's get in and help.

Māori people lived in his community, but he had no meaningful connection with or understanding about them – they were *an unknowable, unrecognizable*. His parents' friendship with a *part-Māori family* through his father's work did not extend to socialising at their place. This separateness was also apparent to him at high school in the 1970s:

The classes were streamed. I did French and Latin and no Māori fullas did French and Latin. They were in the tech classes and they were all pretty scary dudes because they all hung out together and I had no close Māori friends.

Like most people in the neighbourhood of his youth, Albert's parents aligned themselves politically with the left wing Labour Party. Their influence was evident in Albert's political attitudes as a teenager:

I got all indignant about National getting back in 1975 after [Labour Prime Minister] Norman Kirk died. And I remember Kirk's funeral. Mum was crying and I thought what's going on here so you're starting to think. I was about 16 at this stage. The candidates came along to school coming up to the election and I had a stand up argument with the National candidate and the principal

wanted me to apologise and I told him I wasn't going to because I felt I was right and he was wrong.

Discovering history as a subject at school and studying South Africa provided his growing political awareness with a focus: *that sort of opened my eyes up as to what was going on in the world.*

Unusually for someone from his background, he enrolled at University where he followed his passion for history throughout the late 1970s. He joined HART (Halt All Racist Tours), an organization campaigning against sporting contacts with South Africa and its apartheid regime. While not a very active member, he describes his idealistic young self as *a bit of a radical: It made me realize stuff was wrong.* At the same time his academic work deepened his understanding of New Zealand's colonial past:

Well you know people say history is always a version but I felt I got a programme delivered in a way that allowed me to get close to what I consider to be near to the truth ...although looking back it was sanitised in that you didn't hear about the massacres you know at Parihaka and you didn't hear about what happened for Tuhoe or Whakatōhea. But you knew that the Māori fullas were crushed in wars that were fought for economic reasons mainly and that they were punished severely. You're certainly not getting all the facts but you're getting the issues and the sense of injustice.

Most of the activists he met through HART were Pākehā and although some of his classmates were Māori, participation rates for Māori at university were low. There was little exposure to what he now refers to as *real things Māori*, but his education about Māori-Pākehā historical entanglement continued, often informally. A Pākehā flatmate had been arrested during the Māori-led protest occupation at Bastion Point in Auckland:

There was lot of sitting around the flat table talking about Bastion Point and the issues ... I began to realise the unfairness of this land going to be used for high price housing while the true owners of this land were left wallowing. It was all part of raising the political consciousness because that was the same time I was in HART. You think – it's happening here too.

Albert's involvement in HART peaked in 1981, a momentous year in which he entered Training College and South Africa's Springbok rugby team toured New Zealand. He was part of the group that invaded the rugby pitch in Hamilton, an action

that caused the test match to be cancelled with the protesters left exposed to the fury of the crowd: *that was the most terrifying moment of my life:*

The hostility and violence stunned me. After assisting one person into an ambulance who had been hit over the head with a bottle it was every person for themselves as the ambulance and its officers were attacked. Thankfully I stumbled across my wife and we sought safety in the local Harriers clubroom and then made our way home. I was very proud of my actions that day as, though I was both afraid and angry, I did not react violently in any way and did my best to help others.

This experience had a profound effect on Albert's view of his own country: *it made me question the myth of good race relations that existed in New Zealand.* His nascent commitment *to do his bit* towards establishing a fair and equal place for Māori took hold more firmly in his psyche. However, still only in his early 20s, he had much to learn.

Becoming a teacher

The following summer in 1982 Albert began his secondary teaching career, where for the first time he entered a school environment where the majority of the students were Māori. For the next seven years he laid down important foundations for his teaching philosophy by immersing himself wholeheartedly in the life of the school and its surrounding community: *It was hugely transformative. It's where I came into contact with Māori. It's been the biggest influence on what I've done since.*

Albert poured his *wanting to change the world* energy into a marae project for which he and several younger Pākehā staff members banded together with Māori parents to build a wharenuī at the school. This experience *grew* his confidence and skills at working *with* people at a community level to help them achieve their goals. New possibilities opened up not only for Māori students but also for the parents:

The marae project involved taking over the PTA with Māori parents and getting quite political in a school community sort of sense ... Before that they weren't even on the PTA. It was all Pākehā. I still remember walking into the PTA's AGM with the marae committee and the people sitting there just horrified because 15 Māori people walked in and they block voted two of them on. It just shocked them but we needed to get them on so the PTA would give us the workday funds to build the marae. Otherwise they weren't going to.

An important early mentor for Albert at the school was his Head of Department:

Under his guidance it was a matter of get in and get to know these kids. He said "I don't care if you invaded the pitch or not mate. You get in here and you start helping out with one of these rugby teams so you get to know these Māori boys", and that's what I did. ... He also made me whaikōrero on a marae for the first time. It was terrifying.

This Pākehā teacher's professionalism along with his high expectations of the Māori students and relational approach to them and their families helped shape Albert's idea of an effective educator: *I just thought that was normal. I had no other real teaching experience.*

Equally important was the role of Māori mentors, one teacher in particular whose *humble leadership* gradually inducted Albert into some of the ways of thinking and concerns of this particular community:

I had countless dinner table discussions with her and others on the staff where we discussed issues around Māori education, but largely focused on the marae and whānau class project. Without telling us what to do she set the direction and gave the 'permissions'. I suppose she was like our cultural minder so we didn't blunder on and upset important factions. Having people in the 'cultural minder' role has been vital for me ever since so that you don't get into situations which cause offense.

By the end of his time at the school his awareness of the differences between Māori and Pākehā had expanded considerably as had his understanding *that teaching and learning could not happen effectively without taking into account the world view of the participants.*

His next teaching job was in many ways a disappointing contrast. The percentage of Māori students at the school was much lower and *they were generally disregarded* with many of the teachers having *no idea of the need to connect with the kids including at a cultural level.* He supported the work of a Māori teacher, who had sole responsibility for the Māori students, a situation he regarded as *really unfair.* Eventually he became frustrated by the lack of initiative from the senior management. As a result the desire to acquire a leadership position himself became stronger: *you've got to get in somehow and have the power to influence real change in the school.* His

first senior appointment placed him back in a school with a high Māori roll which he now realized was the educational context he most wanted to be part of.

Becoming a principal

Albert's years as a Deputy Principal were a fruitful apprenticeship. By the time he occupied the principal's office at the same school he had already spent several years learning from the history and people of the area and had benefited from the leadership of the previous principal: *he was a man of integrity.*

As a beginning teacher Albert had started learning the Māori language. Now in a leadership role requiring him to attend tangi and other Māori cultural events, being proficient in the language became a priority:

I had this commitment I was going to speak in Māori entirely whenever I spoke on a marae and I was supported by the school's Head of Māori in this. ... He would ring me up to tell me he was sick and speak to me only in Māori because I was in charge of relief, and if I got it wrong ...!

Albert studied the language intensively alongside Māori staff members and parents over a period of years, building relationships and knowledge of the area in the process by:

going to wānanga which were hosted by local koro and kuia, sleeping beside them on the marae and asking them about the various hills around the place... getting the background and the stories and hearing those all night.

Through fluency in the language and by taking part regularly in the cultural life of the community he is now more *confident* in his ability to walk in both Māori and Pākehā worlds. *The role of the marae, the values of whanaungatanga, manaakitanga, and the group being more important than the individual* have come to signify for him *real things Māori.*

One of the strongest beliefs underpinning his leadership is *the valuing of what Māori bring to our school and our community.* This involves continual learning for him and his staff: *You've got to keep looking for ways to support teachers to respond appropriately to the educational needs of Māori.* The school's vision for a *bicultural partnership* means more than having a kapa haka group or carvings adorning the buildings:

It's the involving of their cultural reality in what we do at school. First of all it's basic stuff of not getting freaked out by kids being away for tangi and allowing that sort of stuff to happen but it's you and them using the language together in whole school situations. It's staying with them on their marae and it's acknowledging the expertise that exists within their whānau in various ways.

The result has been increased participation and achievement by Māori and a rise in the number of teachers on staff who are Māori: *It's come up over time and a big percentage of them are local.*

Balancing the demands of the principal's role against time for family life and his own recreational pursuits in the *Pākehā* community remains an *ongoing tension* for Albert. This is countered somewhat by his satisfaction at the direction the school has taken:

The last ERO people to visit to us said "we've just spoken to that group of Māori kids ... and they said they're proud to be Māori in your school..." Up to 8 years ago, we'd lose a busload of Pākehā kids, white flight, over to other schools in the regions. We don't lose them anymore.

He remains optimistic about the advantages of being a principal in the New Zealand education system: *you've got the ability to do things but we just need more resources, both people and money, to be able to do it.*

Chapter Six

Becoming Pākehā

‘Pākehā’ is a settler formation without parallel. Nowhere else in the colonial or postcolonial world has a dominant settler culture adopted an identity conferred by a minority indigenous group ... We identify with it, or even resist it, in different ways and to different degrees; nonetheless, for all the varied modalities in which we respond, it seems fair to say that, collectively, we submit here to a unique form of counter colonial interpellation: in other words, called by this name, we answer. (Newton, 2009a, p. 44)

The way in which the participants performed the ‘evolution’ of their teaching and leadership identities through the stories they told revealed strong links to the discourses surrounding biculturalism discussed in Chapter Two. For this chapter, in keeping with my choice of analytical approach (Riessman, 2008), I interact with those links and the historical, political and cultural context out of which the narratives have emerged. My intention is to complement the voices of the participants in dialogue with my own and those from the literature, adding another interpretative layer in response to the narratives and my main research question: how do the participants interpret the experiences that have shaped their desire for cross-cultural engagement with Māori? The particular themes I focus on as an “analytical point of entry” (Riessman, 2002, p. 702) concern the concept of Pākehā identity and its relationship with colonial history, and how both these aspects – identity formation and a knowledge of history – are implicated in the participants’ choice of positioning with regards to Māori in education.

In the discussion below, and in Chapter Seven that follows, I quote from the condensed version of the participants’ narratives provided in the previous chapter, but also incorporate material from the longer “re-stories” constructed with the participants from the interviews. Post-structuralist theorizing about identity and discourse has been helpful in framing my thinking about the narratives and it is these ideas that I touch on first.

Ideas on identity

Chapter Two’s outline of biculturalism’s contours touched on the politics of identity and some of the discursive complexity associated with the terms Māori and Pākehā.

Understanding identity construction in the contemporary world is not a straightforward proposition especially when considering issues of ethnicity and culture. One way of understanding identities sociologically is to think of them as “constructed through discourses, or commonly shared ways of talking about things” (Liu, McCreanor, McIntosh, & Teaiwa, 2005, p. 14). Discourses literally provide the raw material from which we fashion our multi-faceted selves and subjectivities; and this identity-making work is a relational and contingent process that cannot transcend its social, political and historical contexts (Arber, 2000). Our very “bodies” can be thought of as being produced through discourse and ‘imprinted’ by history – “a sort of surface on which different regimes of power/knowledge write their meanings and effects” (Foucault, 1977, p. 63 quoted in Hall, 1997, p. 50). Whilst we are ‘subjected to’ the meanings that discourse provides us with, we also become its ‘subjects’ (Hall, 1997). As the subjects, or ‘heroes’ and ‘heroines’ of our own stories/lives, we are not merely determined by discourse, but can also exercise through our ‘subjectivity’ choice and agency in how we respond to the discourses available and the positions we adopt within them (Monk, Winsdale, & Sinclair, 2008).

Such a conceptual framework portrays identity not as fixed, but concerned instead with individuals “using the resources of *history*, *language* and *culture* in the process of *becoming* rather than being [emphasis added]” (Hall, 1996b, p. 4). Personal identity is understood as “constituted by the myriad of social relationships and practices in which the individual is engaged” (Sawicki, 1991, p. 41), and therefore dynamic and open to change. The trajectory of meaning through the participants’ stories traces how their personal journeys of coming into relationship with Māori necessitated a corresponding development and articulation for them of a particular kind of “position” in relation to Pākehā identity. John Newton (2009), in the quotation that opened this chapter, refers to this position as “counter-colonial”. Hall (1997) writes of how certain discourses “attempt to ‘interpellate’, speak to us or hail us into place” (p. 5). The participants were not born Pākehā but ‘hailed’ into its discursive orbit via their engagement with “history, language and culture” (Hall, 1996b, p. 4).

What’s in name?

Māori and Pākehā are interdependent indigenous terms. Their origins lie in the history of a colonial relationship with the word ‘Māori’ meaning ‘ordinary’: “Each term

forced the other into being ...” (Jones, 2008, p. 473). New Zealand’s first headmaster, the missionary Thomas Kendall, managed to convert the name Pākehā into ink, if not the ‘natives’ he encountered into Christians. The earliest known appearance of the word as text was in the Māori grammar compiled by him in 1815 in which he translated ‘tangata Pākehā’ as ‘white man’ (Biggs, 1988, p. 19 cited in Bell, 2006, p. 267). Whilst both Māori and Pākehā as reductive identity labels have proved to have critical shortcomings in their passage through time (McIntosh, 2005; Waitere-Ang & Adams, 2005), my purpose here is to explore more closely the Pākehā side only of the equation and its relevance to the stories of the research participants.

I concur for the most part with the general definition of Pākehā as used by Fleras and Spoonley (1999): “New Zealanders of a European background, whose cultural values and behaviour have been primarily formed from the experiences of being a member of the dominant group of New Zealand” (p. 83). However, when thinking of my own upbringing and that of the three research participants within the historical context of mid-twentieth century New Zealand in which we were raised, my immediate inclination is to qualify the use of the word “European”. I do so in the way suggested by Joan Metge (1990) when she outlined the “British” dimension of the “tricky” concept of Pākehā. She focused on the “core meaning” of Pākehā as understood by Māori at the time she was writing:

“New Zealanders of British stock,” that is, non-Māori who are of the same stock as the original colonial settlers, and were either born and bred in New Zealand, or are committed to it as home. Where relevant, Māori people restrict the term Pākehā to those of English descent, recognizing the Scots, Welsh, and Irish as ethnic groups in their own right. But in general, they gloss over these distinctions, as Pākehā people gloss over those between Māori tribes. (p. 14)

Depending on the context, however, Māori may widen the reference to Pākehā to “cover all New Zealanders of European background or even all non-Māori New Zealanders” (Metge, 1990, p. 14). Twenty years on from Joan Metge’s sense-making efforts, the word Pākehā resists any single definition, and commentators still refer to it as a “contested” and “controversial” identity label (see Bell, 2006; Newton, 2009a; Wevers, 2007). The research that has been conducted into the use of Pākehā as a self-descriptor indicates that the word is almost equally “embraced and rejected” (Pearson & Sissons, 1997, cited in Bell, 2006, p. 264), with “no consensus among the majority as to what should be the appropriate label for their own group” (Liu, 1999 cited in

Liu, 2005, p. 77). Liu (2005) observes that “it is only the majority group that seeks the prerogative and has the power to go ethnically unmarked” (p. 78). Thinking of Pākehā as an ethnic ‘category’ underscores the ongoing ambivalence around the term:

‘Pākehā’ is widely used within Aotearoa New Zealand as a *category* to name the dominant group. However, that group does not have the sense of self-conscious cohesion and solidarity that typically marks an ethnic *community*. In other words, New Zealanders tend to use ‘Pākehā’ objectively rather than subjectively. (Pearson, 1989 cited in Bell, 2006, p. 264)

A conscious laying claim to a Pākehā identity/subjectivity for the three research participants surfaced as a project for adulthood, with the word Pākehā an unknown in the world of their New Zealand childhoods.

Describing his cultural heritage as Scottish European, John commented that: *the term ‘Pākehā’ wasn’t something that I identified with when I was a youngster.* Albert also connected his ancestral links back to the British Isles and parts of Southern Europe. During his childhood *there was very little acknowledgement of people being Māori or Pākehā or whatever.* Joan’s primary cultural affiliation as a child was *being Catholic* and like John and Albert she did not have an understanding of herself as Pākehā. Experiencing an Irish Catholic education meant she was heavily influenced by her teachers’ culture of origin: *Quite often if I read a book about Irish nuns in Ireland I can relate to it. At school it was as if we were more there than in New Zealand.*

For majority group members like the participants born in the 1940s and 1950s, it was a commonplace experience to move in a parallel world to Māori, either geographically or socially (or both). Throughout his education, including University in the 1960s, John’s *connection with any Māori students or Pacific Island students was minimal.* The mono-cultural norms of the time made any deep curiosity about the cultural background of his Māori friend at University, for example, impossible and his participation in his secondary school’s haka a strange and de-contextualized ritual: *No one had any idea of the meaning or the significance but we just did it.* Albert came into some contact with Māori in his neighbourhood and at school, but this did not extend to forming friendships. Of the three participants, Joan experienced the most exposure to Māori in her rural upbringing and country school environment. She

enjoyed camaraderie at school with fellow Māori students, but there remained a social divide outside school hours and a strong sense reinforced by the nuns that *Māori people were basically trying to be like us, and that was important*.

In the final section of this chapter I consider how the participants incorporated ‘Pākehā’ into their self-understandings. First, however, I explore the wider social and cultural backdrop to their stories and how particular experiences were influential for them in deciding to “answer” to the name Pākehā.

The effects of dominance

During the period of the participants’ journey from childhood into adolescence the “Britishness” of colonial settlement in New Zealand was pervasive. Society’s norms arise out of the ‘truths’ and knowledge that constitute the dominant discourse’s definition of what is acceptable, of what and who belongs (Hall, 1992). While discourses of Pākehā cultural superiority were starting to be challenged in the 1960s and 1970s, it was a period in which a desire for conformity and homogeneity still seemed to be a rarely questioned part of the normative national psyche. Traces of earlier forms of xenophobia could still be found in a 1960s encyclopedia set owned by many New Zealand families. For example, the entry concerning ‘Yugoslavs’, my family’s ethnic group, referred to them “as still a problem as their assimilation is not easy...it will take time for the Yugoslav to have the same fundamental feelings and outlook as the British New Zealander” (McLintock, 1966, p. 628). Ten years old at the time this was written, I already sensed that my family’s difference was somehow ‘wrong’ and outside the norm.

The “working attitudes” of a discourse in which British-centered values prevailed suffused all social practices and institutions including schools, where the dominant culture sought to reproduce itself. For minority groups that meant ‘assimilation’ into the Pākehā way of being and thinking (King, 2003); and for Māori in particular a marked exclusion from academic pathways, as witnessed by Albert at the secondary school he attended in the 1970s⁸: *I went through a streamed system and*

⁸ For a discussion on how education policy determined Māori students subject choices refer Simon, J., & Smith, L. T. (Eds.). (2001). *A civilizing mission? Perceptions and representations of the New Zealand native schools system*. Auckland: Auckland University.

there were very few Māori in top streams ... I did French and Latin and no Māori fullas did French and Latin. They were in the tech classes.

The mono-cultural norms of their youth and the dividing practices they engendered appeared ‘natural’ to the participants. Discourses, by their very definition have certain rules that “govern what is ‘sayable or thinkable’ about a topic at a specific historical moment” (Hall, 1997, p. 45), and “what something means to individuals is dependent on the discourses available to them” (Richardson, 2000, p. 929). Even though Māori families lived in his street and attended the local school, Albert referred to the Māori present in his childhood as *unknowable, unrecognizable*. These two adjectives suggest that no discursive lens existed for him through which he could ‘see/recognize’ the cultural otherness of a group of people literally in front of his eyes.

‘Unsettling’ history

The power of a discourse to exclude the possibility of ‘recognizing’ what lies outside its norms affected all three participants. Joan felt this acutely as an adult when she returned to work as a principal in the early 2000s to the area where she grew up:

When I went back as the principal to _____ I was overwhelmed by the Māori-Pākehā history. We were brought up here in the 50s and 60s and didn’t know about it. You were so unaware of it and probably your parents were unaware. It was the same everywhere. I’m not saying it was _____ in particular but it is a place rich in the war history, the battles. What was really interesting for me working there as an adult and going to a marae for a tangi was looking across and seeing where our farm was and having had no idea before that a marae was there. My first thought was when did they build that?! And this marae has been there for over a hundred years and as a kid I had absolutely no idea that it was there.

Strong feelings constellated around becoming aware of ‘history’ in all three participants’ narratives. John and Joan emphasized the limited viewpoints promoted by the education system:

When we were at school we talked about the Māori Wars didn’t we? And then they became the Land Wars, but we weren’t taught the truth. Even when I did a degree we weren’t taught the truth about what happened in certain parts of New Zealand. That’s bullshit what we were taught. (John)

As kids we knew nothing about the Māori history and learned nothing at school. It was just sort of over there. People who colonised things, you're not interested in the history, are you? It's something about that. It fascinates me.
(Joan)

The study of history in his last years at high school and then as a major subject at University was regarded by Albert as a vital ingredient in his politicization around the *sense of injustice* pertaining to Māori issues and other disadvantaged groups around the world. In hindsight while valuing much of what he was taught, he referred to some of the University knowledge as *sanitised* in terms of what transpired for Māori in the often bloody processes of colonisation: *You didn't hear about the massacres at Parihaka and you didn't hear about what happened for Tuhoe ...*

A kind of socially sanctioned amnesia regarding colonial history is not uncommon amongst the Pākehā majority, especially those of us educated in the New Zealand school system prior to and during the 1970s. Māori language and viewpoints, with few exceptions, were not available at state schools. The particular version of New Zealand history presented as official knowledge through schooling not only contributed to the reproduction of Pākehā hegemony, but also created “structured silences” (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1993) about Māori realities, rendering them almost invisible in the nation's classrooms (Consedine & Consedine, 2005). Exemplified by Joan's story above of being oblivious to the local marae not far from her family home, this invisibility often extended for Pākehā to Māori cultural presence on the landscape.

Smith (1999) argues that the “negations of indigenous views of history was a critical part of asserting colonial ideology, partly because such views were regarded as clearly ‘primitive’ and ‘incorrect’ and mostly because they challenged and resisted the mission of colonisation.” (p. 29). Over subsequent generations such workings of the colonizing discourse contributed to the creation in the majority group of an

... absolute comfort with occupying the centre, with our own ‘normality’ and with occupying a position of power – and which we don't even see is one of power. ... it is not an individual failing ... but an orientation sedimented into our way of being in the world as the descendants of a colonizing and dominant culture. (Bell, 2007, para. 58)

Part of this ‘comfort’ involves a ‘forgetting’ of a painful colonial past and preference for a form of biculturalism based on “the fantasy that colonisation didn't really

happen or, at least that it didn't really do any harm" (Bell, 2007, para. 35). Stephen Turner (1999) contends that a consequence of this tendency on the part of the majority group to live "ahistorically" is an 'unsettled' national psyche troubled by questions of identity:

The cultural identity of the settler is neither British nor European, nor properly indigenous, and depends on actively acknowledging or engaging with history. The danger of forgetting is that history too will be zoned, plotted and fenced off – a picketed history – leaving settlers with no feeling for the processes of settlement that are the foundation for the distinctiveness of their cultural situation. (Turner, 1999, p. 32)

The will to deny "the experience of contact" with Māori by Pākehā has, however, been disrupted by the "tenacious historical memory and insistent presence of Māori" (Turner, 1999, p. 32). It is this memory and this presence that contributed to the re-education of the participants about New Zealand's colonial past and its effects in the present.

Resistance and re-invention

As the stories of the participants move out of the territory of childhood, what comes to the fore is their resistance to the above impulse to 'forget' history. In her appraisal of Foucault's theories on power and discourse, feminist theorist Jana Sawicki (1991) highlights the potential for human resistance and agency in shaping alternative ways of thinking. Sawicki (1991) explains Foucault's concept of discourse as "a form of power that circulates in the social field [that] can attach to strategies of domination as well as to those of resistance" (p. 43). In using their creative and critical capacities, individuals can "discover the historical link between certain modes of self-understanding and modes of domination", and engage with "new ways of understanding ourselves and each other, refusing to accept the dominant cultures' characterization of our practices and desires, and redefining them ... " (Sawicki, 1991, pp. 43-44). The life experiences each of the participants chose to narrate reflected a process of re-thinking, re-inventing themselves in relation to Māori outside the prescriptions of a mono-cultural world view.

While gaining little awareness of their cultural encapsulation during their early years this was to change when they reached young adulthood. Their entry into tertiary

education and the teaching profession intersected with a new wave of discourses that flooded the teaching landscape in 1970s and 1980s. It became possible to speak of education as “empowering” and “student-centered” (Middleton & May, 1997). The effects of influential movements such as feminism, indigenous and civil rights activism abroad and biculturalism locally, reached into schools, disrupting traditional practices that had been based on ideas “transferred wholesale from England or from a more distant time” (Johnson, 1974). The language of educational policies reflected the changes: “the post-war version of equality of opportunity (‘equal means the same’) gave way to one of education for diversity” (Middleton & May, 1997, p. 221). A 1970 advisory document to the Minister of Education suggested that introducing Māoritanga into the school curriculum would benefit Pākehā as well as Māori children: “the first time, Māori education was seen to include the educating of Pākehās” (Simon, 1986, p. 15).

The stories the participants tell of their experiences from this period and the language they use reveals how the power flowing through discourses such as the above can “reach into the very grain of individuals and ... [insert] itself into their actions and attitudes” (Foucault, 1980, p. 39). This kind of power also has the potential to “grip us at the point where our desires and our very sense of possibilities for self-definition are constituted” (Sawicki, 1991, p. 10). Each participant highlighted specific turning points that shaped their self-understanding of who they might become as teachers. The effect of these influential life moments oriented them towards a relationship with Māori and provided a foundation from which to grow their awareness of colonial histories, Māori struggles and their own identities as members of the majority group.

Critical turning points

Eldest of the trio, John’s teaching career began with a jolt in 1971. He was drawn to place himself in a situation outside the ‘known’ of his middle class background. Arriving at a multi-cultural urban school catering for a burgeoning Māori and Pacific Island population, he felt out of place, and his youthful idealism was soon ruffled. His reaction to the performance rituals of the Pacific Island community – *this is not how people should behave* – symbolized for him the degree to which his beliefs about cultural norms had been, up until then, unchallenged. Guided by the Pākehā principal

and other teachers he overcame his initial *culture shock*: *I had to adapt my teaching style to meet the needs of these students because they weren't from where I came from*. His mentors were key contributors during the 1970s to what were then radical discourses around the possibilities of culturally responsive schooling. John described them as *dedicated* and *determined* in working with students in lower socio-economic areas: *they would talk to me about what's important; they were inspirational*. Through their support and influence, John's teacher identity formed around a strong desire to work for social change and to teach in areas of *inequitable educational opportunities*. These formative teaching years laid the groundwork for his later receptiveness to a *defining* encounter with a Māori community as the principal of their local school where for the first time he felt he truly *stepped over into another culture to learn*. Prior to this point in his career, he had kept himself distant from the cultural realities of his students: *I think I did a good job but there was a huge element missing... It just took me a lot of time to realize that culture was the heart of it all – recognizing difference, celebrating it, learning from it*.

As John was starting out in teaching, Joan plunged into the heady political atmosphere of university where she felt “gripped” by the force of the new social movements that increasingly featured Māori protest about land issues and language revival. Through enrolling for a Māori language paper she began to realize that Māori were not necessarily *trying to be like us*. She felt her naiveté keenly: *I remember going into the Māori class and we had to go round and say why we were learning Māori. People were giving all these great political reasons and I didn't even know any*. As a member of this class she became conscious of wider political and historical issues and was attracted to the energy surrounding the protest activities engaged in by Māori ‘radicals’ who visited the campus:

It was certainly the time of the whole Māori renaissance just starting. ... It was in the papers all the time and I followed it really closely. ... At the same time there were these amazing people around like Hana Jackson, Sid Jackson, Donna Awatere. I can still recall an image of them getting off a bus and I remember thinking they were beautiful. All that stuff was happening with Nga Tamatoa, all those people and they were stunning. It was exciting and caught my imagination.

The effect of this exposure set her in a particular direction within the education field. It propelled her into volunteer work in a Pākehā anti-racism group in the 1980s, out of

which she formed *the belief that you can make a difference in your own area of work on a local level*. It also influenced her role as a young teacher where her expanding consciousness helped her ‘see’ and question the fate of Māori students: *The big thing that hit me at my first school was the high percentage of Māori kids in the Junior school because at the top they weren’t there anymore*. From these beginnings her ongoing critical reflection about Māori students’ experience of mainstream schooling, and what she could do to improve upon it, grew to be an important political and moral dimension of her teacher identity and practice.

Like Joan, Albert was attracted to the political ideas swirling around at university which he attended in the late 1970s. Already informed about social justice issues through his history studies, he was an enthusiastic participant in debates and discussion with his fellow students over the Māori-led protest at Bastion Point and the anti-apartheid movement: *I was a bit of a radical. If there was a cause I was looking for it*. Two events that occurred soon after leaving university were to have a major impact on him. The first involved his strong opposition to the Springbok rugby tour during his training college year in 1981. Like many Pākehā at the time he started to become politicized about injustices closer to home through fighting for an indigenous cause half a world away (Snedden, 2005). Feelings ran extremely high throughout the country as the Springboks played at various venues around the country. Albert’s re-telling of the infamous cancellation of the Waikato test match in which he was one of the protesters on the pitch remains vivid almost 30 years later: *the sight of the riot police running and encircling in step and the crowd baying for blood*. The experience had a profound effect on his political outlook, forcing him to *question the myth of good race relations in New Zealand* and to make a commitment to work towards establishing *a fair and equal place for Māori*. His appointment to his first teaching job shortly afterwards in the heart of a Māori community proved to be a second pivotal life event: *It’s where I came into contact with Māori. It’s been the biggest influence on what I’ve done since*. His protest politics merged with a set of Māori realities previously unknown to him. Mentored by older Pākehā and Māori colleagues his teacher identity formed around an awareness of cultural difference and the need to change a schooling system that privileged the Pākehā cultural context.

The participants’ interpreted the above ‘turning points’ as intense moments of personal change. Such moments can be understood as a form of “interpellation” through which they felt ‘called into’ a “counter colonial” discourse (Newton, 2009a,

p. 44) critiquing aspects of their cultural and social worlds that they had previously taken for granted or had been oblivious to. Foucault (1988) defined the purpose of “criticism” as a matter of “flushing out” and trying to change unexamined thoughts and assumptions – “to see that what is accepted as self-evident will no longer be accepted as such”. He regarded such critique as a precursor to change:” ...[A]s soon as one can no longer think things as one formerly thought them, transformation becomes both very urgent, very difficult and quite possible” (p. 154, quoted in Sawicki, 1991, pp. 123-4). A sense of “urgency” is apparent in the participants’ narration about their younger selves and their interactions with wider social forces stimulating in them a desire *to change the world* (Albert).

As the participants’ careers in education progressed, their understandings of the cross-cultural terrain became more nuanced and embedded in their teaching and ultimately their style of leadership. Importantly this personal development occurred not only through their interaction with “wider social forces”, but also through face to face engagement and sharing of experiences with individual Māori and their families and communities. In the process all three embraced the role of “the marae as teacher” (Greenwood & Wilson, 2006, pp. 38-39), the marae being a place where at various times throughout their careers they learned Māori language, participated in cultural rituals and had the opportunity to listen to different histories:

I was invited to visit all the marae – a great privilege ... I was learning the real history by living there, through the oral history of the old people and reading the books, by just being involved. (John)

One of the most interesting things for me ... was going to all the little marae around and not ever having known as a kid they were there. I think most New Zealanders are still in that sort of blind spot (Joan)

... going to wānanga which were hosted by local koro and kuia and sleeping beside them on the marae and asking them about the various hills around the place ... getting the background to that and the stories and hearing those all night. (Albert)

Through a combination of their intellectual curiosity about, and affective response to, the “asymmetry” (Simon, 1986) of power relations between Māori and Pākehā, the participants incorporated into their leadership praxis a social justice orientation. Joan’s comments are representative of all three participants: *I believe in equity so I’ll*

always work with that, make sure that Māori kids are doing as well. That's the important bit. You've got the power as a principal to do that. This sense of moral purpose mirrors the attitudes and values that influenced the professional stance of Tom Hawthorn, Garfield Johnson and Charmaine Pountney – the Pākehā secondary principals highlighted in Chapter Three. Both groups – the three research participants and the three past principals – refer to *fairness* and *doing what's right* – language that links their stories to the liberal democratic dimension of the biculturalism discourse and its concerns for social justice (Liu, 2005). Implicit in their narratives also is how this discourse enabled them to identify with the name Pākehā.

Becoming Pākehā

To conclude this chapter I return to the issue of Pākehā identity and its relational and contingent character for the participants. The type of Pākehā-ness they 'performed' in their stories connects them to "the flow" (Hall, 1996b) of discourses associated with biculturalism and a certain set of post-colonial politics that it engendered amongst some Pākehā. Bell (2006) observes that

... [s]ince the advent of biculturalism, the use of the term 'Pākehā' has been increasingly widespread in academic and official texts, as well as in the media and in everyday conversations. Wherever Māori and their others need to be labeled, "Pākehā" is the most commonly used term. (p. 264)

All three participants used the word with ease throughout our interview conversations. As they told their stories it surfaced regularly especially with regards to difference:

If you're coming in as a Pākehā [principal], be it in a Pacific Island or a Māori context, you're coming from way, way back. (John)

Teaching is always hard at some point but in terms of knowing myself as a Pākehā this was the biggest experience I had. They were all Māori kids and they'd be talking about something and I'd say something and they'd go "Oh Miss, like you're so Pākehā." (Joan)

At the time [when he started teaching] I wouldn't have said that it was different for Māori or Pākehā but now I know it is. At the time I wasn't aware that there were different world views held by different cultures. (Albert)

The word Pākehā became meaningful to the participants as a result of increased self-awareness gained through their interaction with Māori. Whilst on a personal level this represents individual change and growth, it also reflects the possibilities for self-definition opened up by the social and political impact of biculturalism. Through its effects, Treaty of Waitangi issues and “the injuries of history” (Greenwood & Wilson, 2006, p. 116) entered the participants’ consciousness and informed their teaching and leadership theories. ‘Pākehā’ signified more than just a “convenient” descriptive label (Fleras & Spoonley, 1999, p. 106); it became intertwined with the participants’ teacher/principal identities.

Sociologist Avril Bell (2006) posits that Pākehā are often invisible within the discourse of biculturalism. The Treaty of Waitangi is often explained as a contract between Māori and the Crown, not Pākehā. If there are two founding cultures Bell argues, “they both must have a name” (p. 264). This Pākehā disconnection from the state’s version of biculturalism contributes to their ‘forgetting’ of the colonial past as discussed above, and subsequent disengagement from questions around their own cultural identities (Bell, 2007).

By comparison, the participants carried out their identity work in a way that consciously attempted to make Pākehā-ness and its connection to Māori visible. In doing so they placed a discursive stake in a contested piece of ground:

I unashamedly use the word Pākehā because it identifies me as a New Zealander rather than by saying I’m a New Zealand European which I don’t think gives the totality of the nation. (Albert)

For me “Pākehā” is an expression that I would always use to define myself because I just think what “Pākehā” does now is gives us a status. It honours Māori people as tangata whenua. At the same time I like the fact that it’s a Māori word used to describe who I am. (Joan)

In marking out identity territory in this manner, the participants extended self and other awareness beyond the personal into the political. In their roles as educators, they joined the ranks of those self-identified Pākehā who emerged out of the politics of biculturalism, “allies” who support Māori self-determination and engage in the critique and reform of colonial practices and policies (Fleras & Spoonley, 1999; Liu, 2005). The work of the participants to improve outcomes for Māori secondary students operated in tandem with their knowledge of broader social and political issues.

John talked of his *fierce advocacy* of the Māori community he worked with and the spontaneous lessons in history he felt compelled to deliver to Pākehā students from out of town making *their obligatory marae visit* at their school: *I'd say to them. This not a tourist attraction, we don't have tourists here. To come into this marae is special.* Joan related how she had *always got promotion with people knowing exactly* what her beliefs were: *In my interview for Head of Department in 1990 there was a kaumātua there. He and I talked about the Treaty and I could talk quite passionately about what it meant to me.* Albert articulated a similar engagement with bicultural politics:

... the Treaty has an elevated importance for me because I know it is pivotal for Māori. I believe it has the potential to be a true nation-building document/concept. Māori do not believe they gave up their country, but that they agreed to share it under certain conditions.

Thus becoming Pākehā for the participants can be understood as a process that involved “learning to speak and act from [a] political place which our relationship with Māori opens up to us” (Newton, 2009a, p. 40), a place from which to acknowledge the past while working in the present for the future.

The “political place”, which the participants learned to inhabit as Pākehā, also represents a relational space. In their desire to build relationships “across difference” with Māori (Jones, 2007), the participants had to grapple with feelings of cultural vulnerability that arise at the intersection of the relational and the political. In the next chapter I explore some of the participants’ personal responses in their professional role as principals to the complexity of cross-cultural engagement.

Chapter Seven

Walking tall/walking small

I think you have to have that attitude that you don't know everything. ... You have to actually learn your community and that takes a while. You have to be able to put out there that you are wanting to understand, you are wanting to learn. It's not that you're the big tumuaki who knows everything.
(John/Pākehā secondary school principal/research participant)

One of the key criteria informing the selection of each research participant was their ability to work cross-culturally with Māori students, families and communities connected to the schools where they held the position of principal. The previous chapter explored how their learning from significant life experiences contributed to their adopting specific orientations to their relationships with Māori and a desire to support Māori educational aspirations. The focus now shifts to reflections based on my second main research question, concerned with how this orientation affected their practice as leaders. This chapter examines the ways in which the participants' stories illuminate some of the inherent tensions as well as "the qualities of relation" (Todd, 2003, p. 15) that characterize "a productive relationship with difference" (Jones, 2008, p. 476). The discussion emphasizes the affective dimension of the participants' learning from cultural difference, and the challenges this presented to them in the role of principal, a role associated not only with the legitimate exercise of power but also with the dangers of 'knowing it all'.

My analytical point of entry centres on issues associated with attitudes to 'knowing' that are particularly relevant to Pākehā as members of the dominant cultural group. This allows me to bring into view the contradictions confronted by the participants. In working towards an ideal of respectful partnership with Māori, the participants had to balance the need to act knowledgeably and confidently with an accompanying openness to being "positioned as ignorant" and uncertain (Jones, 1999, p. 283). The versions of themselves performed in their narratives are located within "relations of power". Through our interactions with one another we have choices about how the unavoidable presence of power is exercised:

The problem is not of trying to dissolve them [relations of power] in the utopia of a perfectly transparent communication, but to give one's self the rules of law, the techniques of management, and also the *ethics*, the *ethos*, the *practice*

of self, which would allow these games of power to be played with *a minimum of domination* [emphasis added]. (Foucault in Bernauer & Rasmussen, 1988, p. 18 quoted in Sawicki, p. 124)

Underpinning the discussion below is a consideration of the participants' "practices of self" in their struggles to conduct cross-cultural relationships in an ethical manner "with a minimum of domination". To help with my meaning-making I refer to ideas associated with the concept of the other.

'Other' and other

A common thread in all three participants' narratives was their acknowledgement of the importance of social responsibility to others engendered in them by their childhood experiences and influences. For John, this occurred within a middle class family that involved itself in Labour Party politics, community affairs and education. Albert's working class family had similar political leanings with a strong emphasis on the importance of helping other people, especially through times of hardship. Joan's story highlighted the importance of growing up in a close-knit catholic community with nuns as her teachers whose lives centered on charitable works.

Following Sharon Todd's (2003) definitional guidelines, the term *other* is used in the preceding paragraph as a general descriptor, but as soon as quotation marks and a capital letter are inserted – '*Other*' – its meaning expands in different directions. The '*Other*' refers to the sociological use of the word "as a socially constructed category resulting from social inequities" (Todd, 2003, p. 148), and "signals that which is undesirable by virtue of its formation within oppressive circumstances ... a construction of time and place" (Todd, 2003, p. 2). Thus it may symbolize cultural groups who are marginalized and stereotyped as outside the 'universal' acceptable norms determined by more powerful groups. The negative effects of 'Othering' can be seen in the social, political and economic disadvantages that it helps sediment. It is this latter sense of the word *other* that New Zealand researcher Adrienne Alton-Lee (2003) invokes in the "best evidence synthesis" on teaching diverse students she authored for the Ministry of Education:

The concept of 'diversity' is central to the synthesis. This frame rejects the notion of a 'normal' group and 'other' or minority groups of children and constitutes diversity and difference as central to the classroom endeavour and central to the focus of quality teaching in Aotearoa, New Zealand. (p. v)

In their commitment to leading schools that were culturally aligned to the needs of Māori students, the participants critiqued the effects of traditional discourses that disadvantaged Māori within the educational system. In doing so they had to present themselves as leaders with the confidence and ability to confront the need for different approaches to teaching and learning.

To know – walking tall

Des Mann (1987), the foundation principal of West Auckland's Green Bay High School, observed in his memoir that "being principal of a school is a heady experience" (p. 20). The participants were well aware of and attracted to the flow of power they could harness in taking up the subject position indicated by principalship: *I knew that going into a school to be principal meant that you could really make a difference* (John). Taking on the role meant that they were immediately positioned within a leadership discourse and its attendant norms: *When you're principal you're called on and it's this major thing for you. There's also the expectation that you will be relaxed and know exactly what to do* (Joan). A knowledgeable public demeanour and the ability to "walk tall" based on deeply-held convictions constituted an important part of the participants' effectiveness in leading change. A Ministry of Education (2008b) report recently identified the quality of "having self-belief" as a key leadership attribute (p. 22). Renowned social justice educator Myles Horton expressed it more bluntly:

There's no such thing as just being a co-ordinator or facilitator, as if you don't know anything. What the hell are you around for, if you don't know anything? Just get out of the way and let somebody have the space that knows something, believes something. (in Horton & Freire, 1990, p. 154)

A principal has to literally convey the image of someone who is competent and *knows* what they are doing to inspire trust amongst staff (Robinson et al., 2009).

With their focus on improving educational outcomes for Māori students, the participants drew not only on the political, historical and pedagogical knowledge from their previous learning, but also on new information arising from the different cultural contexts that they found themselves in as leaders. Walker and Shuangye (2007) describe one of the main characteristics of authentic cross-cultural leadership as a fine attunement "to the values, beliefs and behavioural uniqueness of the students, teachers and others which comprise the community" (p. 185). As well as reflection and actions

focused on pedagogical concerns and *the valuing and involving of the students' cultural reality* (Albert), the participants consciously took opportunities to influence the climate of their school environments in a variety of ways:

I started a little gallery outside my office for photos of our students when they were in the paper. I remember some grumpy old bugger on the staff saying "you'll only need a small wall". Well we ended up having about three walls and the reaction of the kids — it was wonderful when the kids would come along and say "oh my cousin" or "oh remember that back then". It was a living modern history of kids getting awards, or being at certain things and again it was "Hey this is our school. These are kids from our school". (John)

A couple of years ago I appointed a Māori boy as head boy and he could speak Māori and he spoke on the marae and it was the first time it had ever happened. I said to the Deputy Principals to watch the little Māori kids when they come in. Well when the head boy got up and spoke the look on their faces said "we could be him". (Joan)

An older Pākehā male teacher told me that I was "never going to change" one of the persistent problems at the school — sixth form skinhead Pākehā boys needling the third form Māori boys — "it's always been like that". And I said to him: "Is that never going to change, never ever in the whole of history from now on, is that never going to change?", and he said: "I think I've got it wrong haven't I"? And I said: "yes". (Joan)

Commenting on the effects of discourse, Foucault observed: "[p]eople know what they do; they frequently know why they do what they do; but what they don't know is what what they do does' (in Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1982, p. 187 quoted in Middleton, 2003, p. 53). I argue here that the participants, through the deliberate use of their agency and "positional authority" as principals (Robinson et al., 2009, p. 198), knew what the flow-on effect of their actions could be: an opening up of possibilities for *all* students, and the creation of new discourses in the schools they led.

The "knowing stance" required of a principal committed to promoting equity is also a necessary "practice of self" to deploy in the face of the criticism that inevitably ensues when the "bulwarks of established order" are threatened (Mann, 1987, p. 22). Joan, for example, had to hold her ground in the early days of her second appointment as principal:

At first I got a lot of flak at _____. There's a sort of a bit of a game you've got to play because Pākehā people including the kids are watching you thinking: Is she going to do more with the Māori kids?; Oh you'll only be head student if you're Māori while she's there and all that sort of stuff. You've just got to ride over all of that ... It just requires consistently being courageous or I don't know whether it's courageous, yeah it is.

Whilst the participants placed value on being well-informed about the historical and cultural context of the students' communities, their stories revealed that culturally responsive leadership paradoxically also involved the courage to lead from a place of not-knowing.

The problem with knowing

Having access to knowledge is a fundamental principle of Western education. Developed from within the Enlightenment period in the 18th Century, beliefs surrounding 'being educated' are based on "the knowability of things ... a notion that has radically underpinned the historical impetus of exploration and colonisation". This framework enthusiastically positions teachers and students as "potential knowers on an 'open' epistemological territory" (Jones, 2001, p. 283). The belief in the entitlement to know sits against a historical backdrop of colonizing discourses that promoted "the superiority of Western 'civilization'" as the container of "universal Truth" (Bell, 2008, p. 850), where other cultures could be envisioned as "a knowable whole" and with "difference" there to be "studied and consumed" (Bell, 2008, p. 855). Such ways of thinking remain with us in the present and encourage the objectification and stereotyping that contribute to the creation of the 'Other' referred to earlier.

Through the effects of the above discourses it becomes possible for dominant group members to stay unconsciously wedded to the centrality of their cultural assumptions around their right to access knowledge about other cultural groups (Jones, 1999, 2001). As discussed in the previous chapter social and numerical dominance has other consequences:

For Māori since about 1870 onwards, exposure to all things Pākehā has been comprehensive and inescapable. Contrast this with that of the average Pākehā. We can live a full life in New Zealand and never have encountered Māori in their own milieu – be it a hui, tangi or on the marae. (Snedden, 2005, p. 79)

Unable to access “the knowledge and influence” connected to Māori-centered points of view, “[Pākehā] become defensive” (Snedden, 2005, p. 79). Such reactions highlight not only a lack of exposure to cultural realities different to our own, but also our difficulty as the dominant group with sharing the ‘centre’, accepting “cultural vulnerability” (Snedden, 2005, p. 79) and the possibility “that some things may be out of one’s grasp” (Jones, 2001, p. 283).

A feature of all three participants’ stories was the fact that they had worked as teachers and/or principals for significant lengths of time in the midst of Māori communities. As Pākehā, they were positioned as the cultural minority in such contexts. Coming into such close and regular contact with a different set of cultural beliefs and practices literally ‘de-centred’ the participants, resulting in a loss of certainty about the ‘rightness’ of their own ways of ‘being and doing’:

Each day driving into school I passed the welcome sign for the district. I knew that if I looked at the sign and said “Welcome to _____ where everything that I think is right is wrong” it actually helped. (Joan)

The first marae I went onto was at _____ in my first year at the school. It was terrifying when I had to speak. [The Head of Department] made me do the whaikōrero and you’re just so uncomfortable – what am I going to do wrong? And so on. Do something wrong and be stupid. (Albert)

When I actually ever thought I had it right and this is really working, that’s when something else would come out of left field and I’d be thrown into disarray because oh God have I got it wrong again. You never knew. You never quite knew the rules. (John)

New Zealand anthropologist Michael Jackson describes how vulnerability inducing experiences in another culture “[make] you somebody who suffers the world rather than someone who’s in a position where you’re calling all the shots, when everything conspires to make you feel increasingly sure of yourself” (in Welch, 2006, p. 34).

While the participants went on to become more familiar with many aspects of the communities in which they worked as principals, their accompanying acceptance of *not knowing* enhanced the quality of the cross-cultural relationships they developed within those contexts. When reflecting upon the qualities of relationality exhibited by the participants in negotiating their own ‘ignorance’ in response to Māori difference, it has been useful to consider another set of ideas associated with otherness.

The other Other

Earlier I outlined aspects of a sociologically informed meaning for the word ‘Other’ as indicated by Sharon Todd (2003). Following her usage again, another definition now comes into focus – minus quotation marks – in which *the Other* signifies “an absolute difference, a pure exteriority” (Todd, 2003, p. 148). This alternative understanding is based on the thought of philosopher Emmanuel Levinas, who used the concept of the Other extensively with particular reference to the “ethics of alterity” (p. 2). In my discussion below I refer to the interactions with his work carried out by Sharon Todd (2003), a Levinas scholar, and by New Zealand academics from the field of education, Avril Bell (2008) and Alison Jones (2008).

To be the Other, according to Levinas, is an ontological given and pertains to all human individuals. Each of us, as one another’s Other, possesses an “unassimilable and unknowable alterity” (Todd, 2003, p. 9). Within such a framework our unknowable difference is inviolate; to attempt to ‘de-Other’ someone becomes both unethical and logically impossible (ibid., p. 148). The alterity of the Other serves as a “catalyst” for human sociality with an ethical imperative to behave with “respect and care” towards the Other’s unknowable difference (Bell, 2008, p. 856). Such an ethical framework recognizes our “everyday capacity for social engagement that is not driven by self-interest” and denotes an “orientation to openness” to the Other that exists “prior to the exchange of information required to get to know each other” (Levinas, 1996, p. 46 cited in Bell, 2008, p. 857). It is a hopeful vision for the inherent potential in human encounters to be based on a respectful stance to one another’s difference/otherness.

By invoking philosophical notions of the Other my intention is not to dislodge the significance of the sociological ‘Other’ and its implications for the ongoing effects of colonisation upon Māori-Pākehā encounters in the present. However, I agree with Bell (2008) and Jones (2008) that Levinas’s ethics of alterity, when mapped onto bicultural relations in New Zealand, challenge Pākehā to reflect upon the limits of our pursuit of knowing in the interest of improved cross-cultural relationships. As Todd (2003) explains:

... when I think I know, when I think I understand the Other, I am exercising my knowledge over the Other, shrouding the Other in *my* own totality. The other becomes an object of *my* comprehension, *my* world, *my* narrative,

reducing the Other to me. What is at stake is my ego [emphasis in original]. (p. 15)

The potential for non-dominating relationships to emerge is increased if we abandon the illusion that we can *know all about* the Other or reduce their alterity to our familiar categories and existing horizons (Bell, 2008, p. 857). Levinas's theories about the ethical dimension in human encounters encourage instead a susceptibility and receptivity to what "I can learn *from* the Other as one who is absolutely different from myself [emphasis in original]" (Todd, 2003, p. 15). Relationship building across cultures can thus be premised not just on finding common ground, but also on an acceptance of the fact of an unknowable difference. The emphasis shifts from epistemological mastery over another culture to greater understanding about *oneself* and one's own cultural influences as a result of encountering difference (Jones, 2008).

Levinas's framework of ideal ethical behaviour includes an insistence "on the obligation of the self to preserve and protect the alterity of the [O]ther" (Bell, 2008, p. 856). His ideas help cast light on the relational skills practiced by the participants in their efforts to support/preserve "the otherness of the Other" (Todd, 2003, p.15) via an openness to and respect for Māori difference.

To not know – walking small

Growing up Pākehā as I have in New Zealand through the 50s, 60s, 70s, 80s, 90s [what is] far harder for me than lifting these instruments and caressing and drawing voice is to learn the concept of whakaiti, of making yourself humble, of making yourself small. And I constantly practice that every day. That's my hardest task...of stepping back, of being quiet, of a kind of surrender of ego when everything in my other life tells you to step forward, take a place, to make a speech, to make a contribution. (Nunns, 2008, March 15, n.p.)

A leading Pākehā exponent of taonga puoro (traditional Māori instruments), Richard Nunns is no stranger to cross-cultural tensions. His self-talk in the above quotation about "exercising...cultural manners" (Snedden, 2005, p. 75) resonates with the participants' own theorizing. Joan, for example, used similar language in describing the stance a Pākehā principal should adopt:

Keeping quiet when you first go in is the main thing. Quite rightly Māori people would like to have a Māori principal in a place like _____ or

wherever it is and so at your first meeting they're quite likely to say that. Whatever you're thinking – let it be, let all those things be and don't make any judgments about it. If you think you travel overseas to see people in a different culture, well you don't have to go very far in New Zealand to actually. It's a different way of looking at the world and so your best bet is to keep quiet, find out who the key people are and build relationships with them and just be someone who is humble, listens and pays attention. Once that happens you'll get all the advice you need. You don't have to know any answers.

As a woman in the principal's role, and an accomplished public speaker, she faced a different kind of challenge to the male participants. She had to wrestle with her conflicted feelings around Māori rituals such as pōwhiri in which the male staff and students took the main ceremonial roles, and for which she had to tame her desire to “step forward”:

I thought I had it sussed about having to sit at the back during pōwhiri, but when I first became a principal it was difficult for me. You're welcoming all your Year 9 students into the school and you're sitting half up the back with the girls and then the male Deputy Principals and the senior boys are sitting in the front and the young kids come in and they don't even know that I exist, like I'm not even there. I was excited about being the principal so this kind of thing I found hard in my head. Or we'd be handing over a teacher I really loved to another school and I'd want to be the person who stood up and made the speech for them on the marae but not ever. So you have to get someone else to do that all the time. In the end I learnt that my own feelings were just that, my own feelings. They actually had nothing whatever to do with the protocols that existed and I could feel as grumpy as I liked about it but so what? I certainly wasn't going to express that to anybody Māori because you know at least I'd got to the point where I thought who am I to say that? I had to let it go.

She also articulated the dissonance she often experienced during cultural rituals such as tangihanga that required her attendance in her capacity as principal:

I'm very conscious all the time of being Pākehā in that situation. I always feel like it's a huge privilege and there's something about being on the outer, on the outside of it, that I'm not Māori. I have a sense of shyness around me when I go into a situation like that. I've never nailed it in terms of feeling just confident and at ease with myself. I would have more happily sent someone else like the Māori Deputy Principal.

To manage her feelings of vulnerability Joan balanced out these moments of inner discomfort with an appreciation of the value placed by the community on the appearance of the principal:

Then I'd think actually it's not about me. You're there as the principal. You know people are grateful that you've been. I think it's just part of the job and it's about not backing off and again it's that thing about being courageous.

For the male participants their experiences of the challenges of participating in Māori cultural rituals were of a different order to Joan's.

Both John and Albert had to grow their confidence to take on the responsibilities of speaking publicly when called on by virtue of their gender. They devoted a significant amount of energy and time to improve their proficiency in Māori language as part of their learning to fulfill this role. Albert emphasized his facility with engaging in public ritual as a key ingredient in maintaining positive community-school relationships:

The feedback informally and through formal appraisal is that the single most important factor that gives the local community confidence in what I'm doing is seeing me at a marae, that I stand and speak in Māori..., I mean that's just where I'm comfortable now and yeah it's me as a New Zealander I think.

Albert's sense of confidence biculturally – as “someone who is at home when ‘not at home’” (Alred, 2003, p. 26) – arose out of almost two decades of close involvement with one school. However, his leadership practice continues to be influenced by his beliefs about the limits of his own role in people's lives, an outlook that was firmly cemented by his experience as a young teacher working on a collaborative marae-building project:

My history studies showed me the futility of doing things for people in the sense of telling them what their problem is, telling them what the solution is and then putting that solution in place. I always made it clear to the [Māori] parents that I would use my skills of organisation, planning and strategy to help them get what they wanted.

What also characterized a respectful attitude towards difference in his narrative was an acknowledgement of the importance of Māori individuals in his life who had been

“cultural minders”. He paid particular homage to a Māori colleague and friend from the first school he taught at:

She was like our cultural minder so we didn't blunder on and upset important factions. Having people in the cultural minder role has been vital for me ever since so that you don't get into situations which cause offense.

The value of having such ‘guides’ featured in all three participants’ stories, reflecting their awareness and acceptance of the impossibility of ‘mastery’ over the territory of difference they had been invited into.

When first finding his way as a Pākehā principal in the midst of a well-established Māori community, John also acknowledged the role played by Māori students as his teachers on cultural matters:

I made my first mistake when I drove to _____ where the school's kapa haka team was in competitions. They were performing after lunch and staying on a marae. I arrived at lunchtime and I got a really frosty reception. I expected they would be really pleased to see me but the head boy and head girl came out to greet me and they were just looking down their nose at me. “What do you want”? It was that aggressive and I said: “oh I've come for lunch. I've come to see you perform this afternoon”. So I went and had lunch and I spoke to the kids and one of the boys, a really nice kid, he took me aside with the head girl, and they said to me: “We need to talk to you”. They said to me: “Why have you come”? I said: “Well you're performing for our school”. “No, we're performing for our _____,” they said. And I said: “But _____ is part of our school too and I want to be here to support you”. And they said “Well, if you really wanted to support us you would stayed with us overnight”. “Oh,” I said, “well I didn't know that ...

One possible interpretation of John's experience above is to consider it as a symbol of how our efforts as liberal Pākehā “to do good” are often accompanied by an unarticulated desire to be located outside the ongoing effects of colonisation (Jones, 1999, p. 313). We are taken aback when Māori signal a boundary or do not want “to ‘share’ *their* difference/territory [emphasis in original]” (Jones, 2008, p. 480). With the legacies of a colonial history very much part of their particular community's struggles in the present, the students' suspicion of John's motives brought the effects of that history into the “here and now, where we are all implicated, where there is mud on all our boots” (Jones, 1999, p. 313). Whilst in the moment John felt the students' rejection personally: *I found it quite hurtful because I thought I was being great*, he responded to the challenge of their “alterity” by adjusting *his* attitude: *You have to be prepared to open your eyes and be taught and to listen and to want to take*

things on board because you don't know. Over the next decade he became a strong supporter of the kapa haka group, and found an appropriate way to contribute to its activities making possible a less alienated relationship between the students and the school in the process. However, the longer he engaged with the school's wider community and its cultural complexities, the more his awareness grew that his 'knowledge' as a Pākehā outsider could only progress so far: *It was very complicated and I probably had a greater appreciation of all of that than most people but I would say that I appreciated probably 5% of it and I needed to realise that.*

The practice of humility allowed the participants to stay in respectful relationships with a set of different cultural realities to their own. Whilst they might have become knowledgeable about certain aspects of those realities, they could not take for granted the inevitable 'ignorance' on their part that would remain. It is this kind of ignorance that constitutes "an act of responsibility for the [O]ther, rather than ignorance (or knowledge) as domination" (Bell, p. 856, 2008). The quality of the participants' acts of *listening* implicit in their humility revealed "an attentiveness to the narrative presence of the Other", carrying with it a sense of responsibility towards what was being expressed (Todd, 2003, p. 14). Paradoxically, their ability to empathize and form relationships entailed an acceptance of "a necessary distance" (Bell, 2007, para. 70) between themselves and Māori with whom they interacted.

Ethical proximity

Avril Bell (2007) describes the abovementioned distance as "a space in which Māori difference can flourish" (para. 70), referring to it as a form of "ethical proximity". This idea echoes Levinas's notion of the Self's responsibility towards the Other's uniqueness:

A proximity in the sense that Māori concern us, Māori matter to Pākehā. But a proximity that allows for distance and difference – in forms of knowledge, in ways of being. (Bell, 2007, para. 70)

The participants' meaning-making with regards to the spiritual dimension of Māori cultural practices exemplified their attempts to negotiate such an ethical proximity. In their narratives this was evident in their stance towards the saying of karakia within secondary school environments:

I'm not a religious person ... I think you have to go with the rituals even if you're not religious because if you don't go with it, you miss out. You miss out on the opportunities to actually engage and actually to learn. (John)

I remember reading how James Ritchie⁹ dealt with the spiritual content in his relationships with Māori. He participated respectfully and took the opportunity to think about things of the spirit important to him. By ensuring there are all the opportunities needed for the Māori spiritual world to be present you are acknowledging their world view. You don't have to agree with their world view in totality you just have to acknowledge it as part of their reality. (Albert)

Joan's experience with establishing the role of karakia as part of school-based practice in a staffroom of mostly non-Māori teachers highlighted the tensions that can arise over enabling different traditions to co-exist:

The question was not shall we have a karakia or not? The question is how should we establish a sense of community amongst us? Whether you're honouring God or not is one thing. To me it's about acknowledging the human spirit. That we're here together. It's about building a sense of community. Also you can't say a karakia anywhere else in the world. That's quite exciting, it's quite a privilege. Some people get hooked up on "I don't see why I should say it". You don't have to say it, someone else can say it. You can be having your own thoughts about whatever you think is important. Having said that I know that having my background where we prayed every single day I don't have a problem with people praying at all. Funnily enough sometimes we would say the prayer in English. We got to the point at _____ where if there was no Māori person there it didn't matter because we had enough people who were religious to say it. And sometimes what they said kind of jarred with me. But we did shift huge ground over this whole issue.

Each participant prioritized maintaining relationship in a productive tension with their own and others' beliefs without trying to "resolve" the "interminably difficult" (Jones, 2007, p. 13) questions that the expression of the spiritual in mainstream school life inevitably gives rise to.

The participants' practice of ethical proximity and its implied care for the alterity of the Other expressed itself also in boundary-setting via their roles as professional educators with legitimate expertise to offer. Albert related the story of appointing a Pākehā to a senior leadership position within the school instead of the Māori candidate that had also applied: *That person would have been a disaster. I had to deal with a lot of anger initially about that, but I stuck to my guns and delivered in*

⁹ Refer Ritchie, J. (1992). *Becoming bicultural*. Wellington: Huia Publishers/Daphne Brasell Associates Press.

areas which showed I was serious about increasing Māori participation and influence. Joan explained how she negotiated the authority invested in her as principal vis-à-vis maintaining a not knowing stance:

If there's ever a tension for me I worry about Māori people saying "who the hell does she think she is?" But on the other side of that is that as the principal I'm responsible for every kid in the school and so I am responsible for every Māori kid in the school as well and if their achievement is down here, the onus is on me to make sure that it doesn't stay there. So that becomes where my authority comes in. When the school started doing really well for the kids and the stats were going up and up and people could see it happening I would be asked to go and talk at principals' meetings. I remember saying I'm never going on my own, I'm not going to go and be Mrs Expert on Māori Education so one of the senior Māori members of staff would come with me. She would talk about what it was like to be Māori growing up in the education system and I would talk about strategies that you can put in place for your Pākehā teachers to make sure that they recognise that Māori kids are different.

The participants' focus on respectful boundaries reflected not just their acceptance of the limits of their knowing, but their ability to 'stand in their own shoes' as both Pākehā and principals.

Two double acts

I learned so much about myself.

(John/Pākehā secondary principal/research participant)

Taking into account that it is impossible to ever know "the otherness of ourselves – the unconscious" (Todd, 2003, p. 148), to be able 'to stand in one's own shoes' implies self-knowledge and a confidence to operate in the world on the basis of a certain self-awareness. Developing an ability to work cross-culturally is akin to "a double act – getting to know others goes hand in hand with getting to know oneself" (Alred, 2003, p. 20). In learning from their relationships with Māori, the participants critiqued/adjusted but did not "deny" their own ways of working: "There is a big difference between learning to see one's own cultural origins in concert with others and surrendering these completely" (Walker & Shuangye, 2007, p. 194).

As outlined in the previous chapter, the participants' engagement with history and politics in the process of "becoming Pākehā" constituted a significant dimension of their evolving self-knowledge in relation to Māori and ultimately impacted on the

values and desires that informed their style of leadership. In this chapter I have reflected upon what their narratives revealed about their understandings of the actual *doing* of cross-cultural relationships. Their effectiveness as culturally responsive leaders lay not just in their politics or decisions about pedagogy, but also in the “practices of self” they deployed to manage their *affective* responses to having their sense of self disrupted: *Anything that really matters has emotion attached to it.* (Joan).

In the preface of a 1986 publication directed at Pākehā teachers and principals to support the promotion of biculturalism, John Rangihau, a prominent Māori leader and scholar, chose to emphasize the emotional dimension entailed in dislodging the negative effects of monoculturalism in New Zealand’s education system:

It is no mean feat to detach oneself from the cultural condition of previous Pākehā philosophies, beliefs, practices and process which have severely inhibited Māori achievement to date. The voyage away from racist assumptions involves emotional, social, spiritual and intellectual changes which are accompanied by insecurity, anxiety and even fear, on the part of the travelers. (in Scott, 1986, p. 3)

In being three such “travelers” in more recent times, motivated to create contextually meaningful, culturally attuned teaching strategies for Māori students, the participants’ narratives reveal more than “a sensitivity to the orientation of others” (Walker & Shuangye, 2007, p. 188). Their stories also show how they were prepared to interpret the challenging feelings of cultural vulnerability as a site of learning and insight rather than as a signal for immediate retreat into the certainties of a monocultural comfort zone. These “practices of self” involved a second “double act” for the participants – being able to position themselves as “learners” adopting a stance of humility and “not knowing” hand in hand with being able to project the knowledgeable, agentic persona of principal. The stories of the participants point to the centrality of the two double acts highlighted above for the complex day to day work of Pākehā educational leaders seeking to engage in ethical relationships with Māori.

Chapter Eight

Hearts and minds

... I want to emphasise that leadership is not only a call to action but rather it is a call to relationship. A relationship with people, process and principles embedded within the socio-political contexts that do indeed require foresight, courage and critical engagement. Whether we achieve the cultural leadership we are looking for is a matter of our willingness to employ these threads into *both our hearts and minds* because leadership is a deeply relational activity [emphasis added] (Waitere, 2008, p. 45).

Writers evaluating or commenting on educational initiatives that seek to engage Pākehā principals and teachers in examining how their cultural assumptions influence their practice, often refer to the dual significance of *hearts and minds* in change processes. Variations on this discursive pairing appear in the work of Māori and non-Māori researchers and educators from the recent past (Mann, 1987; Pountney, 2000) and the recent present (Goren, 2009; Tuuta et al., 2004; Waitere, 2008). The affective and intellectual are also deeply interwoven threads in the narratives of the three Pākehā principals at the centre of this thesis. Pākehā commentator John Newton (2009a) regards the exploration of the affective “register” of Pākehā desire for relationship with Māori as essential for a better understanding of our “Pākehā otherness”, but also as territory that is “cloudy”, “theoretically daunting” and for the most part “poorly articulated” (p. 42).

In grappling with articulating a small corner of such problematic territory, I focused in the previous two analysis chapters on themes that illuminated certain shades of meaning arising from the interlocking workings of heart and mind suggested by the participants’ narratives. In this concluding discussion I outline the overarching reflections that have resulted from my interactions with those themes and my two research questions. I make links to aspects of the leadership discourses outlined in Chapter One, and to the biculturalism discourse described in Chapter Two. Highlighted are how the participants’ sense-making about cross-cultural engagement with Māori adds nuances to concepts such as “leading with moral purpose” and “building relational trust” (Ministry of Education, 2008b; Robinson et al., 2009). What the participants’ stories signal for understandings about Pākehā ‘cultural competence’ is considered along with recommendations for further research. Firstly, however, I re-connect with the stories of the individual principals.

Similar themes/different stories

I get on with people pretty well and you know I do a lot of sitting back and just seeing how things operate here, wherever that 'here' is. (Albert/Pākehā secondary school principal/research participant)

Enjoyment in relating to people and sensitivity to context are characteristics reflected in the narratives of all three participants. Whilst I have focused mostly on what they have in common, the uniqueness of each person's story is very important.

Whilst their life paths traversed the decades from the 1950s through to the present, the participants each grew up in different parts of New Zealand, entered the teaching profession at different points of time and were influenced by the particular local contexts they worked in, as well as by the wider discourses within education and national politics. Between them they have worked as teachers and principals in both urban and rural locations, as well as internationally. All first took on a principal's role in their 40s, but each in a different decade from the 1980s through to the 2000s.

The participants came into contact with Māori via specific pathways, and their narratives diverge in how they learned about themselves as Pākehā in relation to Māori. Joan's story reflects a slow accrual of understanding through frequent contact with Māori from early childhood onwards; Albert identifies a formative experience as a beginning teacher in his early 20s as *the* foundation for his subsequent learning; and for John it was not until his first position as a principal (already in his 40s) that Māori values and world-views truly impacted on his awareness of his own cultural encapsulation.

The ways in which the participants described their connection with Māori communities whilst holding the position of principal also differed. Albert's belief in the importance of relationship building with students extended to living within the school's locale himself, and an insistence that fellow school leaders do the same. His experience of leadership is defined by a long-term commitment to the one school for almost twenty years. John's personal and professional selves also became closely intertwined with the wider community of the school where he was the principal, but the intensity of his involvement, whilst part of his effectiveness, also contributed to his decision to leave after a decade: *I needed to regain who I was ... to appreciate what I had been part of and how that had changed me*. In contrast, Joan, who has been principal in three high schools, and whose leadership philosophy is also firmly

grounded in the art of relationship, did not regard living in the heart of the schools' immediate geographical area as a pre-requisite to doing the job well.

Personal dispositions, gender influences and family circumstances are just some of the contextual variables that contributed to the participants' individual approaches to their leadership practices in relation to Māori. Shields (2002) considers that many leaders, regardless of style, personality, and backgrounds, can be successful if their espoused beliefs match their actions, actions which need to be "firmly grounded in moral and ethical conceptions of social justice and academic excellence for all students" (p. 43).

The variety in the participants' stories suggests that learning to engage with Māori in educational contexts, as a member of the Pākehā majority group, is a process which can begin at any stage in personal and professional life, and can occur in unpredictable ways. There is no one 'right' story or one 'right' way – what matters is the openness to relationship. Thus I do not present a consideration of the participants' sense-making in this thesis as a one-size-fits all, or a once-and-for-all recipe for culturally responsive leadership. What I do believe their stories offer is a contribution to the "wisdom of practice" (Walker & Shuangye, 2007). The kind of wisdom I refer to here concerns more than their intellectual endeavours:

Knowledge relates to an accumulation of facts and is a thing of the head. Wisdom on the other hand, is a thing of the heart. It has its own thought processes and is the integration and use of knowledge at the centre of one's being. (Marsden & Henare, 1992 cited in Tuuta et al., 2004, p. 12)

Aspects of heart/mind integration from the participants' stories feature in my interpretative work in Chapters Six and Seven. I revisit the main themes of those chapters below with reference to current best evidence syntheses regarding school leadership.

Moral purpose/known history

In the recent government position paper *Kiwi Leadership for Principals*, "leading with a moral purpose" is identified as one of the four main qualities needed for "effective leadership in Aotearoa" (Ministry of Education, 2008b, p. 22). The same document acknowledges the Treaty of Waitangi and the unique place of Māori as tangata whenua, in line with other key educational policies, *Ka Hikitia* (Ministry of

Education, 2008a) and *The New Zealand Curriculum* (Ministry of Education, 2007). The hopes and ideals arising from the advent of biculturalism three decades earlier still underpin state-sanctioned education goals. Hine Waitere (2008) speaks for many in education with her belief that:

Notwithstanding the discomfort, biculturalism remains an aspirational space; a vision of society that has yet to be realized but nevertheless ... one that is worth striving toward (p. 41).

However, the notion of leading with a moral purpose has certain implications for Pākehā leaders engaged with Māori learners and their communities, that are *not* made explicit in official government policies, but which surface in the personal narratives of the participants.

My main research question concerned how the participants interpreted the experiences that had shaped their desire for cross-cultural engagement with Māori. In framing my analytical response, the discourse of biculturalism features strongly. Through its effects, opportunities opened up for the participants to critique their hitherto mono-cultural understandings of New Zealand's various histories and cultural realities; and to confront the injustices for Māori arising from colonising processes:

Attention to history *can* fuel resentment and blame as well as understanding and reconciliation. But it is equally clear that understanding is impossible *without* attending to history [emphasis in original]. (Bell, 2006, p. 256)

The participants' interaction with the bicultural discourse throughout the 1980s and 1990s also enabled them to mark out a particular kind of "cultural positioning" (Monk et al., 2008) by claiming the identity label 'Pākehā'. Its adoption signaled their self-becoming as historically and politically defined by/linked to Māori (Newton, 2009a). As creative subjects of biculturalism and its related discourses, they found their own ways to tackle racial stereotyping and Māori disadvantage through their work as classroom teachers and then principals. In the process they developed a strong sense of moral purpose and commitment to making mainstream secondary schools more responsive to the needs and identities of Māori students.

A recent case study which examined links between the Pākehā principal and the level of whānau engagement at a secondary school, highlighted the importance of

trust and the role of history (Wilson, 2007). Māori interviewed for the project identified trust and relationship building skills as key attributes of the principal in aiding partnership processes between the whānau and the school, especially given the wider socio-historical context in which Māori had “not experienced a trusting relationship” in the past (Wilson, 2007, p. 50). While the study emphasised the “pivotal” role of the principal in setting the direction and tone of the staff’s engagement with whānau, it also attached value to the principal having knowledge of “the historic issues which have resulted in the shape of education today” and its effects for Māori (p. 50). This viewpoint is supported by a principal from another New Zealand study, who regarded learning to engage with Māori as “both intellectual and emotional ... you have to know our history and ... the sociology of indigenous peoples ... and about the impact on a culture of a dominant culture” (quoted in Smith, 2003, pp. 42-43).

Stories such as those from the above studies and this thesis point to what is missing from official educational discourse and notions of leadership and moral purpose: the significance of a principal’s engagement with issues of social justice linked to New Zealand’s coloniser/colonised histories. John, Joan and Albert all felt compelled to convert the strong feelings that their recognition of Māori provoked in them into purposeful actions that challenged the status quo. For the three participants in my study, their desire to work for social change also reflected a propensity for being moved by their personal and professional relationships with Māori, relationships without which their moral and political convictions would have had *less heart* and their leadership practices less efficacy.

Relational work/becoming humble

What Baxter called ‘learning from the Māori side of the fence’ occurred on a number of different fronts and at a number of different levels. But the glue that held the experience together – both what was learned, and how it was learned – was a network of relationships which were not just the vehicle of that cross-cultural transmission but its most important ‘content’. (Newton, 2009b, p. 106)

The above quotation refers to the experiences of the Pākehā individuals who joined poet James K. Baxter to create an alternative communal lifestyle alongside the Ngati Hau community on the Whanganui River in the 1970s (Newton, 2009b). The passage

highlights how the actual relationship itself with the local Māori people constituted, for the Pākehā group, their most significant learning. This resonates with the participants' narratives. Their stories of direct encounter with Māori through their participation in rituals, community activities, and day to day school-based interactions, suffused their meaning-making. The actual work of relating – 'turning up', making an effort and getting involved – is what mattered, not only for fostering good will, but also for learning about oneself and cultural difference. Located within all three narratives was 'a network of relationships', ranging from those the participants had nurtured in the wider community, to those that were more intimate, such as their friendships with cultural minders. These connections initially grew out of shared concerns for the educational well-being of students, but also became crucial in supporting the participants to negotiate respectfully the complex terrain of cultural practices, viewpoints and expectations different to their own.

The analysis in Chapter Seven concentrated on participants' relational skills as an interpretative response to the second research question: how had the participants' specific orientation to Māori affected their leadership practice? I focused on certain "practices of self" (Sawicki, 1991) that enabled the participants to sustain fruitful cross-cultural relationships. As referred to in Chapter One, the facility of an educational leader to build relational trust has been identified as an indirect but crucial influence on a school's learning environment:

No matter how good a leader's pedagogical knowledge and problem-solving ability may be, their impact will be limited if relations within the school are characterized by lack of trust. (Robinson et al, 2009, p. 199)

Acknowledged in leadership research also is the fact that "school leaders in culturally heterogeneous contexts need to actively take the initiative in overcoming mistrust" as initially "people find it easiest to trust people who seem similar to themselves" (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000, cited in Robinson et al., 2009, p. 186). Participants' narratives confirm such an observation. They told stories that revealed the time and relational energy required to break through cultural and class barriers as middle class Pākehā arriving in schools with low socio-economic status profiles. The same essential ingredients for trust-building applied, but greater levels of determination and courage were demanded of the participants to put them into practice.

To create relational trust, it has been suggested that leaders need to model in their daily interactions its four key determinants: interpersonal respect, personal regard for others, competence in role and personal integrity (Robinson et al., 2009, p. 184). In the light of the participants' experience as Pākehā working with Māori, an understanding of how to build relational trust ideally should also include an awareness of local socio-historical contexts as discussed above, and most importantly, the practice of humility. Paradoxically, the participants' capacity to accept the impossibility of gaining total understanding of the culturally other, contributed to their coming to 'know' their school communities. A humble, respectful stance conveys the message that community members are "experts on their own lives" with "detailed local knowledge of cultural significance that can serve as the wellspring of resourcefulness for change" (Monk et al., 2008, pp. 442-443). The participants deployed their leadership skills to serve and empower communities, not to 'save' them or impose upon them outsider prescriptions for change. Instead of side-stepping or attempting to erase difference, the participants worked alongside it, adapted to it, and harnessed it for student well-being, learning from the dissonance and tensions that are inevitable when Māori and Pākehā opt for "staying with the relationship" (Jones, 2005, p. 19).

Mis-steps and mistakes are a feature of cross-cultural terrain, and necessitated an emotionally mature response from the participants, with humour at times a necessary ingredient in working through misunderstandings and difficulties. Participants' stories reveal the growth in their resilience about being in the wrong and personally vulnerable, as well as, for Joan in particular, coping with having to step out of the limelight when cultural protocols dictated. The participants' negotiation of this affective domain supports the contention that developing relational trust is not just about "feelings of warmth or affection" (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000, cited in Robinson et al., 2009, p. 183), although both sets of feelings featured strongly in their narratives. These principals chose to behave ethically and responsibly towards Māori difference, even when such a choice entailed feelings of uncertainty for them, and a relinquishing of control. All three possessed an optimistic, flexible outlook, attributes recognised in educational leaders who are successful in challenging circumstances (Leithwood et al., 2008). The overall qualities the participants brought to their leadership praxis can also be described as *heartfelt* and imbued with "right spirit"

(Salmond, 2005, quoted in Jones, 2008, p. 481), qualities that elude intellectual theorising, but aid relationship-building.

‘Cultural competence’/knowing yourself

I had to really be careful because I’m not Māori ... Too many Pākehā ... begin to think they’re Māori and they’re not. (John/Pākehā secondary school principal/research participant)

When relating the concept of ‘cultural competence’ to the participants, what comes to mind first is not their effectiveness cross-culturally, but their willingness to explore their self-understandings. The participants all shared an “active curiosity” about Māori otherness, and had a “persistent interest” (Monk et al., 2008, p. 443) in working out how best to be together in education for the sake of their students. Becoming more secure and knowledgeable about articulating a Pākehā identity helped them maintain an “ethical proximity” to Māori (Bell, 2007), to define boundaries for their relationships, and to keep their curiosity in check. Respecting difference and cultural boundaries, becoming humble and self-aware, knowing the past but focusing on the future – these are some of the practices indicated by the participants’ narratives that could form a sound basis for educational leadership responsive to Māori desire, as articulated in the *Ka Hikitia* strategy, to enjoy educational success “as Māori” (Ministry of Education, 2008a).

An important additional impact of a Pākehā leader’s confidence in their own cultural identity and sense of moral purpose is how these elements can serve to motivate other Pākehā to consider new ways of thinking. All the participants’ stories featured references to Pākehā educational leaders from their past, whose attitudes and actions concerning socially just education they had admired, and been influenced by.

Research on leadership describes its potential to be “a catalyst, without which other good things are quite unlikely to happen” (Leithwood et al., 2008, p. 27). Leaders like the participants, who have the courage to “walk the talk” (Robinson et al., 2009, p. 188) in confronting individual acts of racial stereotyping, or school-wide dysfunction, can act as a stabilizing and inspirational force for those non-Māori teachers, who take the leap to critically reflect upon their practice and their own cultural assumptions. When Joan, for example, introduced a major school wide improvement initiative, she had to stand fast in the face of resistance from Pākehā

members of the school community in response to her challenging the systemic and individual behaviour that disadvantaged and typecast Māori students. When habits are entrenched, a Pākehā leader promoting change in relation to Māori can expect to field criticism from different quarters. It is not easy territory to enter into, with the competing views and prejudices of the wider society represented within the microcosm of school life. For the difficult processes involved in tackling ingrained attitudes, the inspirational effect of a leader who is prepared to “grasp the nettle” is not to be underestimated, if hard to quantify except in the *hearts and minds* of those moved by it to examine what they had previously taken for granted.

The idea of ‘achieving’ cultural competence, however, has to be regarded with caution (Monk et al., 2008). Given the dynamic and fluid nature of cultural life and individual identities, envisioning an end-point to cultural understanding assumes a dangerous certainty.

In many ways ... attaining cultural competence is like being drawn to a mirage in the desert that looks identifiable and attainable but as we get closer breaks up. (Monk et al., 2008, p. 445)

What the participants learned in one Māori context may not be applicable to another, and their understandings are unlikely to address the heterogeneity of Māori within the same context: “The goal of cultural learning is insight not stereotype” (Lynch & Hanson, 1998, p. 67 quoted in Bevan-Brown, 2003, p. 7). The participants’ narratives revealed them to be leaders with a restless curiosity, with a preparedness to learn afresh in new contexts. In their openness to a relationship with Māori they emphasized listening well as an important skill, and practiced being *mindful* of their conduct in the “here and now” of communicating across difference (Todd, 2003).

In articulating their concept of “authentic intercultural leadership”, Walker and Shuangye (2007) describe an effective leader as someone who engages in “a circular process without an ultimate or explicit endpoint which calls for constant learning” (p. 190). This circularity also represents the non-linear nature of the participants’ conscientisation over time in relation to Māori. Whilst I have separated out strands of meaning for my analyses, the journey for the participants has not been a tidy step by step progression, but an often messy, iterative process of “learning and unlearning” (Bell, 2007, para. 8), a life-long project still in the making. It is in this sense that the participants can be thought of as *becoming* rather than *being* Pākehā. John Newton

(2009) prefers such an emphasis in that it “has the tactical advantage of directing us, not to a birthright, but to an on-going process of exploration, negotiation and critique” (p. 40). Adhering to a similar process seems desirable for any educational leader aspiring to a degree of cultural competence.

Heart to heart

I chose to focus on principals in this thesis because of the transformational effects leaders can have on the climate and vision of whole organizations. I chose the research topic because I wanted to tell stories of Pākehā leaders that supported Māori struggles for self-determination with regard to mainstream educational issues. Russell Bishop (2008) argues that Māori insistence on the right to determine their own destinies needs to be understood as located in relation to others:

It is not a call for separatism or noninterference, nor is it a call for non-Māori people to stand back and leave Māori alone, in effect to relinquish all responsibility for the ongoing relationship between the peoples of New Zealand. Rather, it is a call for all those involved in education in New Zealand to reposition themselves in relation to these emerging aspirations of Māori people for an autonomous voice. (p. 440)

The way in which all three participants responded to the challenge signaled by biculturalism’s ideals reflects their understanding of its practical application as a Pākehā concern, “not simply a Māori issue” (Waitere, 2008, p. 41). In so doing they embodied in their practice a sense of responsibility towards Māori aspirations, basing their leadership on a “practical politics of hope” (Jones, 2008, p. 483), and the hard work of providing a relevant education for all students. Social change does not have to occur from the top down (Sawicki, 1991), but can be fuelled by power relations located in the micro-social of the creative/imaginative day to day interactions between students, teachers and principals. In a memoir of Māori and Pākehā educators from 1958 to 1990, who had advanced “mutual understanding” and “pioneered innovative strategies”, Joan Metge (2008) comments that “the effects they had were often small and localised but they sowed seeds that bore fruit in unexpected places” (p. 15).

“Let many stories bloom”¹⁰

The only thing that keeps us from floating off with the wind is our stories.
They give us a name and put us in a place, allow us to keep on touching.
(Spanbauer, 1992, p.190 quoted in Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007, p. 35)

My main recommendation for further research is that more stories to be told about “unexpected” local and particular experiences of cross-cultural partnerships in education, arising out of a variety of contexts. This could help mitigate against the “the tyranny of the single story” (Bruner, 2003, p. 103), and the dangers of de-contextualised ‘best practice’ checklists. The sharing of stories of experience contributes to the democratic life of interpretative communities, in which complexity is acknowledged and “where people can go on articulating difference without essentializing the differences encountered” (Couldry, 2000 cited in Monk et al., 2008, p. 458). Knowledge conceived of as a collective pool of “wise practices” (Walker & Shuangye, 2007) can thus continue to grow, and practitioners can draw on what makes sense to them, the situation they are in, and the people they are with.

Alongside more storytelling, we need to keep asking questions about Māori-Pākehā engagement in education. Here I touch briefly on one set of questions only to do with how we can better prepare Pākehā secondary teacher trainees to be open to the challenge of working with cultural difference. New Zealand’s tradition is to provide an intense, content-filled training in the duration of a University academic year. All future principals will begin their journey as educators in such fast-track programmes. Teacher-training faculties need to question the priorities of how and what content is delivered in terms of the most productive way to engage students in self-critique. Are programmes providing learning opportunities for trainees that are both experiential as well as intellectual? Is Māori input into such programmes sufficiently valued and adequately resourced? These questions are not just about the trainees, but also concern issues of power im/balances and the inevitable ongoing struggle of cross-cultural relationships in teacher training institutions.

Common to all the participants’ stories are key learning experiences in Maori-defined or controlled settings. These life episodes disrupted their sense of self and enabled them to begin to understand themselves as shaped by and positioned within a

¹⁰ Quotation from page 103 in Bruner, J. (2003). *Making stories: Law, literature, life*. Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.

set of specific cultural and historical frameworks. As James Liu (2005) contends, “it is a rare majority group member who gets to see him or herself in the light of a less powerful groups’ gaze” (p. 85), but an experience that seems invaluable for would-be teachers. Whilst initial teacher education is only the start of a teacher’s development, it is an important time in which to create opportunities for self-disruption and the unsettling of cultural assumptions, if we are serious about ideals of culturally responsive teaching/leadership. It is in moments of discomfort, of being literally off-centre, that the possibilities for personal growth lie.

‘End of story’

Ironically, given my comments above about the importance of context, one of the key limitations of this study is its lack of contextual detail related to the content of the narratives presented. This was inevitable given the ethical issues of confidentiality. Also, whilst the emphasis on Pākehā is the point of this thesis, it has created a certain lopsided-ness. The Māori voices/viewpoints inside the participants’ stories are present, but not in focus. I have been conscious of this contradiction throughout – writing about relationship without the relationship. Further research that explores cross-cultural partnership processes in education from all sides can only enhance our understandings of the interesting but difficult work of Pākehā and Māori exploring how to be together “differently without drifting apart” (Maaka & Fleras, 2005, p. 300). In hindsight, and with extra time, engaging in a slightly different research process would have been instructive. To have been able to provide the participants with an opportunity to ‘talk back’ may have served to confirm/disrupt/question and add to the meaning-making herein.

People’s lives “are continually outstripping the stories into which we would fit them” (Randall & McKim, 2008, p. 64). The lives of the participants have of course moved on since my research was conducted. My hope is that the contents of this thesis be regarded not as a freeze-frame of either their views or the complex issues of cultural difference and education, but as part of a larger continuous narrative about Pākehā learning, and the challenges of our relationship with Māori. To be able to grasp the nettle requires of those who aspire to lead our schools, openness to relationship as well as strength of purpose, mind and heart.

Glossary of Māori Terms

Aotearoa	New Zealand
haka	dance usually performed by males
hapū	sub-tribe
hui	formal Māori meeting
iwi	tribe
kapa haka	group performing arts
karakia	incantation/prayer
kaumātua	male elder
koro	male elder
kaupapa	philosophy
kōhanga reo	pre-school Māori immersion centres
kuia	elder (woman)
kura kaupapa Māori	Māori immersion primary schools
manaakitanga	hospitality
marae	formal Māori meeting venues
pōwhiri	ceremony of welcome
rangatiratanga	chieftainship, control
taha Māori	Māori perspective
tangata whenua	literally people of the land, indigenous people
tangi/tangihanga	funeral and burial ceremony
te reo	the Māori language
tikanga	protocol and customary practice
tumuaki	school principal
wānanga	teaching/learning session/workshop/debate (usually held on marae)
whaikōrero	formal speech
whakaiti	humility
whānau	extended family
whanaungatanga	relationships
wharenuī	meeting house/ main building on marae

Appendix A



THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND

FACULTY OF EDUCATION

Te Kura Akoranga o Tamaki Makaurau

INCORPORATING THE AUCKLAND COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

CRITICAL STUDIES IN EDUCATION
(Incorporating Education Studies, Health & Physical Education,
Pasifika, & Social Sciences)

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1st May 2008

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Title: Looking both ways: Pākehā secondary principals and cross-cultural engagement with Māori

My name is Rose Yukich and I am currently undertaking a Master of Arts degree in Education at The University of Auckland. I am writing to invite you to participate in a research project that will be the basis of my MA thesis.

I have worked as a secondary school teacher for five years in Auckland during the 1980s. I am a first generation New Zealander of Croatian descent so have been brought up influenced closely by more than one cultural context. For the past decade most of my work experience has been as a writer and researcher in local government on a number of projects with a Māori dimension.

The aim of my research project is to understand how individual Pākehā secondary principals have come to value maintaining cross-cultural relationships with Māori communities connected to the schools they lead. Its wider aim is to contribute to the current body of knowledge on the role of Pākehā educational leadership in fostering cross-cultural relationships in New Zealand secondary schools.

The study will explore

- what life experiences have been important for the participants in shaping their awareness of cultural groups different to their own
- how the participants understand their willingness, based on those life experiences, to engage in cross-cultural relationships with specific reference to Māori
- how the participants perceive the influence of these life experiences on their professional leadership
- how the participants define “working bi-culturally/cross-culturally”
- what they perceive to be the issues, tensions and benefits associated with working bi-culturally/cross-culturally.

I will be analysing the information gathered and reporting on the common themes and issues that emerge. In my analysis I will also be making connections with the wider social, political and historical context in New Zealand around cross-cultural relations. My research design is described as a qualitative study with an emphasis on what can be learned through people's own narratives or storytelling about their experiences.

If you agree to be involved in the study, your participation will involve one interview that will take at least one hour and possibly close to two hours. We can arrange for this interview to happen over two sessions, if this is more suitable. I would like to audio tape the interviews. You can request that the tape recorder be turned off at any time, or that certain information remain confidential between you as participant and myself as the researcher. The tapes will be transcribed and the transcriber will be asked to sign a confidentiality agreement.

I will be interviewing up to seven participants. Aspects of the "life stories" shared with me will appear as part of my final thesis and some extracts will be quoted verbatim where relevant and appropriate. This may also occur if any articles I write based on the research findings are published. I will do all I can to preserve participants' anonymity through careful use of the interview transcripts, and use of pseudonyms and fictionalized place names in the final research report. However, as New Zealand is a small country, and as principals have a high profile in their communities and local regions, and sometimes nationally, I cannot completely guarantee that identification of those taking part will not occur. This is all outlined in the Consent Form that I will ask you to sign before your involvement in the research can commence.

As part of my preparation for the interview I will be looking at material such as the recent ERO reports for your school and the school website. This will enable me to gain some understanding of your current professional context, and is not the focus of the research.

A transcript of the interview will be sent to you as soon after the interview as possible so that you can verify that it is an accurate record, and for you to make changes, and add or delete material, should you so desire. You have the right to withdraw from this study at any time, or withdraw information you have provided up until the data analysis commences, 1st July 2009. Interview transcripts and Consent Forms will be stored separately and securely for six years in my supervisor's office at the Auckland University's Epsom Campus and then destroyed.

At the completion of the study you will receive a copy of the final report, and the interview tape will be returned to you. The final report will be submitted for assessment for the Master of Arts in Education from the University of Auckland and a copy of the thesis will be accessible at the University of Auckland library. Findings may also be used for publication and conference presentations.

Thank you for taking the time to consider being part of this study. To accept the invitation to take part, please contact me by phone: (09) 630-4518 or email me at

rmy@iprohome.co.nz. Please also contact me, if you would like more information about the proposed research project.

Sincerely,

Rose Yukich
Researcher

Supervisor: Iris Duhn, c/- Faculty of Education, University of Auckland, PB 92019. Ph: 09 623 8899 x46422; email: i.duhn@auckland.ac.nz

Head of Department: Dr Airini, c/- Faculty of Education, University of Auckland, PB 92019. Ph: 09 623 8899 x48226; email: airini@auckland.ac.nz

For any inquiries regarding ethical concerns please contact: The Chair, University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee, The University of Auckland Research Office – Office of the Vice Chancellor, Private Bag, 92019, Auckland. Tel (09) 2727999 extn 87830.

APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE on
17 April 2008 for a period of three years from 1 March 2008. Reference 2008/095

Appendix B



THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND
FACULTY OF EDUCATION

Te Kura Akoranga o Tamaki Makaurau
INCORPORATING THE AUCKLAND COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

CRITICAL STUDIES IN EDUCATION
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CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH (This Consent Form will be held for a period of six years)

***Title:* Looking both ways: Pākehā secondary principals and cross-cultural engagement with Māori**

Researcher: Rose Yukich

I have been given and have understood an explanation of this research project. I have had an opportunity to ask questions and have them answered.

I consent to participating in the study with the understanding that my participation is entirely voluntary and I can withdraw personally at any stage and have information I have contributed withdrawn up until the point of data analysis (1st December 2008). I understand that I will have the opportunity to respond to the transcript of the interview to verify its accuracy and to make any changes if I wish to.

I agree to:

- Take part in an individual interview
- The interview being audio-taped and transcribed. I am aware that I can have the tape turned off at any time, or that I can request that certain shared information not be included as part of the study.

I understand that my name will not be used in any written or oral presentation, but that aspects of my interview will form part of the final report and extracts may be quoted verbatim. I understand that my privacy will be respected, but that anonymity cannot be guaranteed. I understand that the findings may be used for publication and conference presentations.

I agree to participate in the research.

Signed: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____

APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS
ETHICS COMMITTEE on 17 April 2008 for a period of three years from 1 March
2008. Ref: 2008/095.

Appendix C

CRITICAL STUDIES IN EDUCATION
(Incorporating Education Studies, Health & Physical Education,
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THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND
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Interview Schedule: guiding questions for semi-structured interview approach

Project Title: *Looking Both Ways: Pākehā secondary principals and cross-cultural engagement with Māori*

1. How would you describe your own cultural heritage and background?
2. While growing up how did you first come into contact with Māori?
What were your thoughts and feelings about these early encounters?
3. As an adult, before becoming a teacher, what were the key experiences that made you aware of the history and/or dynamics of Māori/Pākehā relations in New Zealand?
How did these experiences impact upon your thinking at the time?
4. Looking back over your teaching career before becoming a principal, what were some of the key experiences that changed/increased/ influenced your understanding of cross-cultural relationships between Pākehā and Māori?
5. What aspects of your work as a principal bring you into contact with Māori?
6. How does your understanding of cultural differences and beliefs about cross-cultural relationship influence your leadership practice and philosophy?
7. Since becoming a principal what has been your greatest learning experience regarding Māori/Pākehā interaction?
8. Describe your moments of greatest personal and professional satisfaction regarding your school's engagement with Māori?
9. What does the term "bicultural" mean to you?
10. What have been the rewards for you of working cross-culturally/biculturally?
11. What are the most demanding aspects (tensions? difficulties?)?
12. What is the most important advice you would give another non-Māori principal about working with Māori?

Appendix D

CRITICAL STUDIES IN EDUCATION
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The University of Auckland
Private Bag 92601, Symonds Street
Auckland 1150, New Zealand

Title:

**Looking both ways: Pākehā secondary principals and cross-cultural engagement
with Māori**

Researcher: Rose Yukich

I agree to transcribe the audiotapes for the above research project and understand that
the information contained within them is absolutely confidential and may not be
disclosed to, or discussed with anyone other than the researcher, Rose Yukich.

Signed: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____

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