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'A Movement Reconsidered'

An examination of how Black Civil Rights in the USA, 1954–1970 has been taught as a senior subject in New Zealand secondary schools, and whether or not it accurately reflects contemporary scholarship and new trends of interpretation.

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Abstract

This thesis examines how Black Civil Rights (BCR)¹ in the USA, 1954–1970 has been taught as a senior subject in New Zealand secondary schools since its introduction into the New Zealand History curriculum in 1988. It provides a historical perspective on the political, economic, and social context in which the National History Curriculum Committee (NHCC) made the decision to introduce this topic into the Form 5 (now Year 11) History curriculum. It is also concerned with whether the conceptions of Black Civil Rights history from 1988 to the present (2013), reflects contemporary scholarship and new trends of interpretation.

This thesis argues that the continued reliance on a classical/master-narrative approach to the teaching and learning of BCR in the USA, 1954–1970, reflects a historiography that is frozen in time. The result is that teachers are disseminating a conception of BCR history that is politically slanted, conservative, and Eurocentric. It is an approach that perpetuates the myth that there is inevitability about America’s progressive history; that its lofty notions of democracy, justice, and the equality of all people, will in the end triumph.

¹ The New Zealand History curriculum calls this topic, Black Civil Rights (BCR). It is more historically accurate to use the term, as Black leaders during the period did, the ‘Freedom Movement.’ I retain the use of BCR and later Civil Rights Movement (CRM) because it is the term used in New Zealand. In my teaching I encourage to use the more accurate term, ‘Freedom Movement.’

Furthermore, this thesis contends that as one of the two most popular Year 11 History topics, this selective, sanitized approach to teaching BCR deprives students the opportunity to understand that historiography is subject to change, that historical events are open to interpretation, and that history as it is written is not always history as it was. As an alternative, this thesis advocates a counter-narrative approach that draws on recent scholarship and new trends of interpretation.

I acknowledge the Massey University Ethics Committee who approved this research on 28 June 2012 as a Low Risk Notification.²

² Please see Appendix A for documentation.

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Glossary

AS	Achievement Standard
AO	Achievement Objective
AHTA.....	Auckland History Teachers' Association
BCR.....	Black Civil Rights
CDD.....	Curriculum Development Division
F5/F6/F7	Forms 5, 6, 7
HOD	Head of Department
MOE	Ministry of Education
NCEA.....	National Certificate in Educational Achievement
NHC	National History Curriculum
NHCC	National History Curriculum Committee
NZCF.....	New Zealand Curriculum Framework
NZHA	New Zealand History Association
NZQA	New Zealand Qualifications Authority
WAHTA.....	Wellington Area History Teachers' Association

Chapter 1

Introduction

Where are we now? And where are we going?

Bruce Taylor

Introduction

This thesis postulates that the continued reliance on a classical/master-narrative conception of history to teach the topic of Black Civil Rights in the USA, 1954–1970, is, given recent scholarship and new trends of interpretation, problematic. In this chapter, I will begin the process of supporting this claim by explaining what a classical/master-narrative is, identifying the weaknesses of this approach, and by examining why so many History teachers are reluctant to venture beyond the shores of this conservative, compartmentalised approach to teaching this topic. This chapter will also examine the historical background to why the topic of Black Civil Rights in the USA, 1954–1970 was introduced into the Form 5 (now Year 11) History curriculum in 1988.

A Classical/Master-Narrative Conception of BCR History

When the BCR, 1954–1970 topic was first introduced into the Form 5 (now Year 11) History curriculum in 1988, it adhered to a rigidly classical/master-narrative conception of the period. In the curriculum, this was enforced by two important impositions: the periodisation of the topic into a 1954–1970 timeframe, and the prescriptions narrow focus. This resulted in the study of

the Modern Civil Rights Movement (CRM)³ being reduced to answering three focusing questions: What position did blacks hold in United States society in the mid-1950s, and why were there moves to bring about change?; How did blacks attempt to bring about change between 1955 and 1965?; and finally, What new directions were pursued in the 1960s? The disadvantage of this approach is that it has a limiting effect on students—it limits the timeframe to a narrow period, and it limits the terrain they get to cover.

Further reinforcing the limitations of periodisation and the prescription are the textbooks used for the teaching and learning of BCR history. In New Zealand, History teachers have relied heavily on the textbook, *Black Civil Rights in the USA, 1954–1970*.⁴ Written by New Zealand History teachers John Rosanowski, Pam O’Connell, and Tim Murdoch, this textbook was first published in 1987 to support the introduction of BCR into the Form 5 History programme the following year.

One feature of this textbook is that throughout the classical/master-narrative, with its focus limited to key events, people and places, dominates. For students new to history, this offers a conception of BCR history that is simple,

³ Students tend to think of this topic as the ‘Black Civil Rights Movement,’ but it is just as accurate to call it the Modern Civil Rights Movement. In this thesis, these terms are used interchangeably, although preference is given to the title, ‘Black Civil Rights Movement’ to reinforce the focus of this thesis.

⁴ Of the 30 teachers surveyed, only one indicated they used Debra Francis book, *Years of the Dream*. The rest indicated they used *Black Civil Rights in the USA, 1954–1970*, by John Rosanowski, Pam O’Connell, and Tony Murdoch.

straightforward, and easy to understand. It places King at the centre of a Movement that was able to dismantle de jure segregation in the South.

A second feature of this textbook is the way the classical/master-narrative conception of BCR history moves unimpeded from one triumphant event to another. Within this conception of history, the Federal Government and the U.S. Supreme Court are forced to reconsider the legality of racial segregation in the light of the U.S. Constitution and its Amendments.⁵ For the most part, these political and judicial institutions are cast in a favourable light; they are supportive of King and the Movement's goal of racial equality.

The major weakness of this approach is that it provides little opportunity for students to grapple with anything that undermines the overly optimistic notion of linear progress, justice, freedom for all, and the triumph of democracy. No attempt is made to expose the corruption of the judicial and political system that played such a significant role in consigning African-Americans to second-class citizenship and the margins of American society.

Two examples serve to support this claim.

First, the U.S. Supreme Court is portrayed as making a landmark legal decision by ruling in *Brown v Board of Education*, that the doctrine of 'separate but equal,' as practiced in southern education, was unconstitutional. There is no mention of the pivotal role that Chief Justice Earl Warren played in

⁵ The 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments are particularly pertinent on the issue of racial equality.

influencing the other justices towards a unanimous decision, and even more disconcertingly, the more nuanced aspects of the case are completely overlooked. There is no mention of the *ex parte* dialogue between U.S. Supreme Court Justice Felix Frankfurter and litigant⁶ Philip Elman that was essential to Thurgood Marshall's eventual victory; a victory that scholars now agree was won at the 'expense of the democratic process [and] at the expense of judicial impartiality,'⁷ nor is there any mention of the practice of the Truman administration during the Cold War era to file *amicus curiae* (friends of the court) briefs in racial cases brought before the U.S. Supreme Court. The motive behind this initiative was the U.S. need to convince the world that democracy was a form of government in which social justice was achievable and, while slow and gradual, was superior to dictatorial impositions inherent in the communist alternative.⁸

Derrick Bell calls this practice interest convergence; in helping to overturn '*separate but equal*' the Court was not only bringing justice and freedom to Blacks, it was also enhancing the U.S. image and international reputation. The amici brief then provides an important backdrop, a broader context, to help explain why after so many years of holding '*separate but equal*,' the Court suddenly struck down public school segregation.

⁶ Elman had been Frankfurter's clerk in the 1940s before serving on the solicitor general's staff as a Justice Department official.

⁷ Paul Craig Roberts & Lawrence M. Stratton, *The Brown Decision*, 1–14 <http://lewrockwell.com/orig/brown>.

⁸ Derrick Bell, *Silent Covenants*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 60. While not mentioned in this thesis, *Brown* converged with President Harry Truman's attempt to be re-elected for a second term. His government's support of *Brown* is another example of Bell's notion of interest convergence.

Secondly, at a political level, *Black Civil Rights in the USA* is guilty of heroification. The classical/master-narrative gives the impression that President John F. Kennedy was sympathetic towards Blacks and supportive of their goal of achieving equality. Supporting this impression is his introduction of the Civil Rights Bill into Congress in 1963. As a result, many hold President Kennedy and his younger U.S. Attorney General brother, Robert Kennedy, up as political heroes acting in support of the CRM.

From an alternative/counter-narrative perspective this is problematic, because it is a fact of history that there was a great deal of conflict between the Kennedys and King. The conflict existed because King refused to heed the President's urgings for delay or restraint when planning protest action; yet this is never teased out in *Black Civil Rights in the USA*. In like-manner, nothing is mentioned of the President acting out of political expediency; siding with King, while at the same time wanting to appease his white constituency in the South. Another fact that casts a shadow over the Kennedys, is the way they sanctioned the violation of King's rights by authorising the FBI to wiretap his phone at home and in hotels in an effort to expose King's personal weaknesses.⁹

Again, the reason the classical/master-narrative omits these facts is because it highlights the glaring hypocrisy of the Kennedy Administration; gaining a

⁹ Derrick P. Alridge. *Teaching the American Civil Rights Movement: Freedom's Bittersweet Song*. Julie Buckener Armstrong, Susan Hult Edwards, Houston Bryan Roberson, Rhonda Y. Williams, 3–8. (New York, Routledge, 2002), 12.

political advantage by supporting efforts to have blacks registered to vote, while at the same time viewing King as a threat to national security.

Students need to be made aware of the inconsistencies within the classical/master-narrative. One danger is that historians supportive of this approach are guilty of myth-making and heroification. They have a tendency to forget that people like John F. Kennedy are less-than-perfect. Sometimes this means the less palatable facts of people's lives and deeds are omitted, because they don't fit American notions of the archetypal hero.

Another weakness of the classical/master-narrative, and the textbook *Black Civil Rights in the USA*, is its indifferent coverage of the period of slavery, the Civil War, Reconstruction, and the Jim Crow years leading up to the 1950s. In total, this period is covered in four pages of which pictures and a diagram take up a significant proportion of space. Nothing is mentioned of how the notion of race became an organising principle in the U.S., nor is any space given to the atrocities visited upon African-Americans in the neo-slavery years that followed the failure of Reconstruction. Again, these periods of American history, except for the courageous historians, are lost to obscurity because they tarnish and tear at notions of progress, justice, freedom, and the inevitable triumph of democracy.

Finally, the classical/master-narrative timeframe usually ends with the assassination of King, or when extended out, the demise of Black militancy.

In *Black Civil Rights in the USA*, only six pages are dedicated to the emergence of Black Power, Black Muslims, and the Black Panthers, with much of that space taken up with a very limited profiling of Black militants like Stokely Carmichael, Angela Davis, and Eldridge Cleaver. Again, the coverage is not detailed and suffers from a lack of depth. There is no attempt to examine how Blacks were themselves thinking in racial terms, nor is there any real effort to place black militancy and notions of revolution in a global context.

Equally, key figures like King and Malcolm X are cast in stone; King is the moderate and Malcolm the militant. As a result, no comparison is made between how King became more militant towards the end of his life, while Malcolm X became more moderate. The danger of the classical/master-narrative is that it portrays both men as intractable in their views and either unable or unwilling to change over time. In reality, both men undergo significant change. By the end of his life, King is somewhat despondent, even depressed; the battle in the North had not met with the success the Movement campaigns in the South did, while Malcolm X emerges from a Hajj to Mecca having had his own racist views and attitudes challenged by the presence of white Muslims.

The purpose of this thesis is to first examine, and then expose, the weakness of teaching and learning a classical/master-narrative conception of history. The contention of this thesis is that students are better served by moving

beyond the key events, people, and places of history. Peter Field suggests that, 'a very good teacher will talk about the nature of movement, or how one will incorporate elements of morality into political movements, because they are great topics.'¹⁰ Pressed to develop his thoughts a little further, Field acknowledges that these are hard issues for teachers not familiar with BCR to tease out, but argues it is important that they do so because they offer transformational possibilities. Field comments:

Education should be transformational. Certainly history, and indeed the Civil Rights struggle in the United States is one of those great avenues because it so clearly intersects with those issues of religion, how one lives, living together, democracy and larger ethical questions about human life.¹¹

The contention of this thesis is that for history to be transformational it also has to be transparent. It has to be a warts and all retelling of history, what Philippa Hunter calls an alternative/counter-narrative.¹² It is to this end that this thesis is committed.

History in Decline

In an October 1980 newsletter editorial of the Wellington Area History Teachers' Association (WAHTA), Bruce Taylor asked the question, 'Where

¹⁰ Interview with Professor Peter Field, 21/06/13.

¹¹ *ibid.*

¹² Dr Philippa Hunter of Waikato University's College of Education first introduced me to this term in January 2013.

are we now? And where are we going?' Taylor was the Secretary/Treasurer of the association and his questions summed up the concerns of History teachers throughout New Zealand; why had History as a senior subject, been in decline over the last several years? It was also a concern to universities because they themselves were experiencing declining numbers, and were worried that the falling trends at schools would exacerbate the problem.

An attempt to address these issues and to reverse the downward trend of students taking History resulted in the establishment of the National History Curriculum Committee (NHCC) in 1982. Two of the committee's earliest decisions were the introduction of a new theme, *Social Change*, and the inclusion of the topic, *Black Civil Rights in the USA, 1954–1970* within that theme.

The committee's decision was logical, and over time has been proven to be successful. BCR is considered, along with the topic *Origins of World War II (WWII)*, as one of the two most popular topics among Form 5 (now Year 11) students. This is attributed to the 1950s–1960s timeframe being relatively recent, and the issue of racism being supported by a range of excellent documentaries, and some not always very historically accurate movies like *Mississippi Burning*, *A Time to Kill*, and *Malcolm X* that resonate with students.

Frozen in Time

While remaining a popular¹³ topic for students, it is the contention of this thesis that despite the permissive nature of the New Zealand Curriculum (NZC) since 1993, the conception of BCR history reflects a historiography frozen in time. There are two reasons for this. The first is the continued reliance of teachers on a classical/master-narrative, event-centred conception of this topic. This is particularly interesting given that since 2007 the NZC has afforded teachers a high degree of autonomy over their programmes.¹⁴

The second reason is that while the current external assessment model for AS91005 and AS91006 gives students the freedom and flexibility to utilise alternative/counter-narrative perspectives in their essays, few do. The reason is that the vast majority of teachers are afraid to venture beyond the safety of what they know and what they do best; inevitably this means adhering to a classical/master-narrative conception of BCR history.

This reluctance can be attributed to four main factors. The first is their lack of subject knowledge. A survey for this thesis indicates that of the 30 respondents, only three indicated they had studied BCR at any depth while at university. This is a continuing concern, because out of the six major universities in New Zealand, only Auckland provides a comprehensive

¹³ Survey results indicate that BCR and Origins of WWII are the two most popular topics for Year 11 students.

¹⁴ Gregor Fountain, *Caught in Between: The Impact of Different Forms of Mandated National Assessment for Qualifications on Teacher Decision, Making in Year 12 History in New Zealand, 1986–2005.* (Med thesis, Victoria University Wellington, 2012) 9.

course on the CRM. Canterbury, Waikato and Victoria have a truncated course which is part of their American studies programme, and Otago and Massey have no programme at all.¹⁵ The second is the lack of meaningful topic related professional development (PD). Again, survey results indicated that there is little on-going PD for BCR. Out of the 30 respondents, only one had undertaken any PD for BCR. Third, anecdotal and research-based evidence suggests there is among History teachers a general reluctance to engage in new content or trends of interpretation unless they have a personal interest or expertise in the proposed area of study. Critically, many indicated they did very little personal reading to enhance their subject knowledge for teaching BCR. A fourth factor is provided by Wood:

Until the new syllabus, the resourcing of History subjects was largely the responsibility of the Department of Education (Head Office, Publishing Division) who worked fairly closely with the Curriculum Officer History, Secondary Inspectors with responsibility for History in school, and independent wholesale/retail book publishers. The outcome was that for most if not all subjects there was at least one 'approved' textbook. Such became the teaching resource in our secondary schools. Teachers

¹⁵ This was ascertained from interviews (Peter Field, Canterbury University, Jennifer Frost, Auckland University), surveys (Waikato University) or by contacting the History departments at Massey University and Otago University.

were not encouraged to debate its content or provide alternative interpretations. Only the most informed did this.¹⁶

Clearly anyone, or a combination of these four factors, has a limiting affect on classroom teaching and learning. The fact that survey respondents indicated they had been affected by all four factors gives rise for concern. Teachers cannot take students where they have not been themselves. If a teacher's subject knowledge is poor, it significantly limits the opportunity for students to explore issues that confront and challenge the classical/master-narrative conception of BCR history. Just as importantly, it hinders their passage into meaningful citizenship. As Peter Field reminded us earlier, history should be transformational, and the anecdotal evidence is that relevance of BCR affords even greater transformational possibilities than many other history topics.

The History Curriculum

Debate over conceptions of history, whose history should be taught, and how students should interpret the past, is not something new. The controversy over the implementation of a standards-based assessment system, the National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA)¹⁷ in 2005, mirrored the kinds of issues and questions that began to emerge in the 1970s and 1980s,

¹⁶ Email from David Wood to the author, 09/07/13.

¹⁷ The standards-based National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) replaced the norm referenced senior examinations for Years 11, 12, and 13 in New Zealand between 2002 and 2005.

when the History curriculum was under review.¹⁸ This thesis examines that history: why BCR was introduced into the Form 5 curriculum in 1988, the issues and debate (if any) surrounding its introduction, and why, over the last 25 years, even with implementation of a new curriculum in 2007, and despite recent scholarship and new trends of interpretation, the conception of BCR history in terms of its content, remains unchallenged and unchanged, frozen in time.

The 'Liberal' verse 'Conservative' Tension

This case study also explores the prevailing political context during the time of the curriculum review in the 1980s, and whether it contributed to the decision to include BCR into the Form 5 History curriculum. Mark Sheehan, a Senior Lecturer at Victoria University's College of Education, notes that 'Curriculum design is typically characterised by hegemonic struggles over competing interests,'¹⁹ and that the framework of the history prescriptions of the late 80s was a 'Cautious response to calls to liberalise the subject and address contemporary social issues.'²⁰

This study will argue that while there was a hegemonic struggle during this period over the shaping of the senior History curriculum, the introduction of BCR into the Form 5 (Year 11 History) programme was not the result of

¹⁸ Mark Sheehan, *"Defending the High Ground The Transformational History into a Senior School Subject in the Late Twentieth Century: A New Zealand Curriculum Debate."* PhD Dissertation, (Massey University, 2008) 3.

¹⁹ Sheehan, 'Defending the High Ground,' 4.

²⁰ *ibid*, 4.

'Conservative' or 'Liberal' interest groups winning the day. Rather, it was the result of an emerging new breed of younger historians who did not feel bound to teach European history as their predecessors had, and they recognised that theme of racism in the BCR topic was a contemporary issue and would provide a popular coupling with the topic, Women's Impact on New Zealand Society: Health 1915–1985. Wood recalls:

After a typically 'settling-down' period, where the individual and competing interests faced off together and jostled for attention, a genuine 'team-spirit' emerged, united by a common desire that would create a syllabus and prescriptions, which would (i) be more attractive and stimulating to teachers and students (and thus contribute to higher intake); (ii) add to the teaching of history in schools richer and abler sets of knowledge, understanding and skills; and (iii) be at the cutting edge of subject pedagogy and educational change.²¹

The Academic Literature of the 1980s

The curriculum review of the 1980s and the decision to include the topic of BCR in the Form 5 History programme requires knowledge of the academic literature available at the time, and the influence it had in shaping the thinking of New Zealand writers of textbooks for classroom use in New

²¹ David Wood email to author, 09/07/13.

Zealand secondary schools. It is a critical issue, because whose history is told and whose history is ignored is typically a contentious and politicised issue, as powerful interest groups struggle to have their knowledge legitimised and their sphere of influence increased. Wood warns of the need not to exaggerate this point:

Most New Zealand educationalists operate from pragmatism than from the findings of research. In the case of BCR, the initiative came from members of the NHCC who were either/both (i) supportive of more places in the New Zealand History syllabus for U.S. topics; and (ii) had personal interest in Martin Luther King Jr and the BCR movement. Those I remember were Bill Rushbrook (a practicing Presbyterian who had concern for the welfare of the underprivileged), John Rosanowski, Eric Olsen (a human rights activist), and myself, who like Rushbrook, was a Christian with a fascination for BCR, as well as an educational desire to create a broader curriculum that was more suited to New Zealand political, economic, and international relations concerns. There were none on the panel from the university as far as I know who had research expertise in American history. One lecturer who

did and whom we did consult, if only briefly was Malcolm MacKinnon from Victoria University.²²

It is the contention of this thesis that while political orthodoxy tends to prevail in the construction of school textbooks in the U.S, this is not true of the orientation of BCR textbooks written in New Zealand. In the U.S., the struggle for a truly colour-blind society is restricted to what is known as a master, or classical conception of BCR history; a narrative that for many years was placed within a Montgomery–Memphis timeframe that paralleled the public life and leadership of Martin Luther King Jr. Bayard Rustin²³ defines this as the classical phase of the struggle but begins with the 1954 *Brown v Board of Education* decision by the U.S. Supreme Court, and ends with the black militancy of the 1970s. Like other historians, he places King at the centre of the movement, the narrative’s defining character, with other events, people and places as background and supporting cast. According to Derrick Alridge, the goal of this conservative, Eurocentric version of history is to portray the United States as a ‘Democratic, patriotic, and religious country that upholds equality for all.’²⁴

²² David Wood email to author, 09/07/13.

²³ Bayard Rustin was an American leader in social movements for civil rights, socialism, pacifism and non-violence, and gay rights during the 1940s until his death in 1987.

²⁴ Derrick Alridge is Director and Professor in the Institute for African-American Studies and Professor of Education at the University of Georgia.

Figure 1: Classical/Master Phase of the Black Civil Rights Movement 1954–1975.



Note. The classical narrative has a timeframe that starts at *Brown v Board of Education* 1951 and ends with the Black Panthers in the mid-1970s. The master narrative has a timeframe that begins with the Montgomery Bus Protest of 1955 and ends with the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr, in 1968.

This case study contends that a classical/master periodization of BCR is problematic. First, it is a top-down conception of history that gives little space or attention to the nameless and faceless grassroots activists, contentious issues, or new trends of interpreting pivotal moments within the 1954–1974 timeframe.

Second, it fails to acknowledge that there is a growing consensus in the Academy that the chronological boundaries need to be pushed back, and then those decades need to be interpreted in the much broader context of American history, if an adequate understanding of the CRM of the 1950s–1960s is to be achieved.

Thirdly, it fails to take cognisance of the longer term ramifications associated with Black protest. A poignant example is the U.S. Supreme Court's ruling in *Brown v Board of Education, 1954*. Initially viewed as a landmark decision that overturned decades of Jim Crow de jure segregation in the South, *Brown* is now viewed rather more pessimistically by many blacks as having achieved integration but not equality.

Dismantling the Myth

As a case study of the BCR movement, this thesis explores, and then explodes many of the myths that underpin the classical/master-narrative and the African and African-American experience throughout American history. More often than not, this popular retelling of history, with its optimism and emphasis on the positive contribution of a select few, has resulted in a sanitised, Eurocentric conception of history with romantic notions of heroism. As noted earlier in this chapter, the less palatable facts are often omitted because they do not fit American notions of the archetypal hero. W.E.B. Dubois,²⁵ the most important black civil rights activist in the U.S. in the first half of the 20th century, notes:

One is astonished in the study of history at the recurrence of the idea that evil must be forgotten, distorted, skimmed over... [and that we are to] ...simply remember the things we regard as

²⁵ Du Bois was one of the co-founders of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in 1909.

creditable and inspiring. The difficulty, of course, with this philosophy is that history loses its value as an incentive and example; it paints perfect men and noble nations, but it does not tell the truth.²⁶

Du Bois' assessment is critical to the aims of this thesis because these myths have acted as an organising principle, a foundation on which the progressive history of America has been interpreted and understood. This thesis will not only debunk these myths as perpetuating a 'lie,'²⁷ but will also provide examples of recent scholarship and new trends of interpretation that shed new light on old issues.

²⁶ W.E.B. Dubois, *Black Reconstruction*, (New York, Harcourt, Brace, c1935). 722.

²⁷ James Loewen, *Lies My Teacher Told Me: Everything Your American History Textbook Got Wrong*. (2nd Edition, New York: Touchstone, 2007). Loewen is a strong critic of the way American history is taught. The title of his book, and in particular the use of the word '*Lies*' reflects his deep concern that American myths are not only a distortion of the truth, but a conscious, deliberate lie.

Chapter 2

Theoretical Framework and Research Methodology

Theoretical analysis should be there to allow us to grasp, understand, and explain—to produce a more adequate knowledge of—the historical world and its processes; and thereby to inform our practice so that we may transform it.

Michael W. Apple

Introduction

McCulloch contends that historians employ a sound theoretical framework to guide their research and protect it from being unconsciously influenced by their own values.²⁸ Heeding McCulloch's advice, this chapter outlines the theoretical orientation and methodological approaches used to guide and inform the research and writing of this thesis.

This case study is an examination of how BCR in the USA, 1954–1970, has been taught as a senior subject in New Zealand secondary schools since it was introduced into the Year 11 History curriculum in 1988. It is also of concern, that despite the permissive nature of the current curriculum (2007), and the presence of recent scholarship and new trends of interpretation, that the topic BCR that sits within the conception of history and teaching pedagogy remains wedded to the past, frozen in time.

²⁸ Gary McCulloch, *Documentary Research in Education, History and the Social Sciences*. (London: Routledge, 2004), 1.

Theoretical Framework

It has been a major challenge to find a theoretical framework and methodological approach that provides insights into the past and posits solutions for the future. To achieve this, I have adopted McCulloch's challenge, 'to recognise the nature and importance of historical thinking and methods and to be more alert to the demands of theory and methodology.'²⁹ Following Sheehan's advice, this thesis is informed by a 'combination of theoretical perspectives' to critique the Form 5 (Year 11) conceptions of BCR history, and the way it is taught by classroom teachers. The advantage of this approach is that it provides an opportunity to draw on the best elements of each perspective without having to accept the fundamental framework of each as a whole. One example of this is the acceptance of Burr's argument that 'forms of knowledge are historically and culturally specific.'³⁰ In other words, knowledge needs to be understood in the political, educational, social, and economic context of the time. Burr is highly critical of 'taken-for-granted knowledge.'³¹ These views are axiomatic to the research and writing of this thesis—it interrogates and critiques.

Conversely, while using the best of the social constructionist methodology, this thesis rejects its anti-essentialism, (the view that 'there are no 'essences'

²⁹ Sheehan, 'Defending the High Ground,' 41.

³⁰ Vivien Burr. *An Introduction to Social Construction*. (London: Routledge, 1995), 6.

³¹ *ibid*, 3.

inside things or people that make them what they are.')³² This is a postmodernist perspective that rejects the notion 'that there can be an ultimate truth... [and that] the individual person, rather than God and the church, become the focus for the issues of truth and morality.'³³ The problem with this view is that judgments of truth and morality now rest in the hands of individuals whose judgments are entirely subjective, and potentially self-serving. It is an assumption about God (his non-existence) and people (are not spiritual beings) and the world people live in (it is not the result of hidden structures) that invalidates any notion of faith, and the contribution of a theological, religious perspective. Fraser and Campolo provide the balanced approach present in this thesis:

There is only one truth. It belongs neither to science nor to Christian faith. Nor do humans have a neat map with science in one corner of their intellectual world and religious faith at a different zip code. For better or worse, faith and science intertwine in actual practice.³⁴

Following Fraser and Campolo, this thesis employs the positive contribution of secular sociology and a Christian worldview. First, because there is 'widespread agreement that the Christian tradition was the soil from which

³² *ibid*, 5.

³³ *ibid*, 12.

³⁴ David Fraser & Tony Campolo, *Sociology Through the Eyes of Faith*. (New York: HarperOne, 1992), xi.

modern Western science sprang and flourished.’³⁵ While acknowledging that not all modernists follow an essentially secularist, non-God, or anti-God view of history,³⁶ this case study rejects the ideology of the symbolic universe of modernity, which rejects the Christian worldview as primitive and anachronistic. Secondly, the African and African-American experience in the United States is as much about their ‘spiritual journey’ as it is their ‘physical journey.’ It is a remarkable feature that African-Americans have so wholeheartedly embraced Christianity, the religion and faith of their white oppressor. There were fundamental differences however; while Anglo-Americans used the Bible as an instrument to enslave, African-Americans saw it as an instrument to escape that slavery. This posed a dilemma for white slave owners in particular; to acknowledge that a Black could be ‘saved’ or set on an equal spiritual footing as a white meant that the same possibility existed for them in every other sphere of their lives. The idea that a black slave could be on an equal footing as a white, even a poor white, was anathema to Southern whites and a good number of Northern whites. In the South, this resulted in plantation owners refusing itinerant preachers from visiting their slaves.

³⁵ *ibid*, xi.

³⁶ David Wood email to author, 09/07/13.

This thesis holds that the spiritual and the secular are inseparable, that you cannot refer to one without making reference to the other.³⁷ Synthesising the best of both the secular and the sacred is important to the aims of this case study; a fundamental argument of this thesis is that teaching BCR history (or any history for that matter), is not just about the transference of information (facts and figures), but the transformation of lives (responsible citizenship).

This case study then employs two major theories, sociology through the eyes of faith (a Christian worldview) and a modified form of social constructionism. It also relies on the best features of a critical theory paradigm, and a disciplinary approach to education. It takes the form of a case study; adopts a historical-faith perspective; and employs qualitative research methods of documentary analysis, semi-structured interviews with teachers, textbook writers, and curriculum leaders.

Finally, my own extensive reading of contemporary scholarship and new trends of interpretation that challenged a Eurocentric 'whitewashed,' conception of BCR history, a Fulbright scholarship to the U.S. in 2007, a U.S. State Department scholarship to the U.S. in 2009, and a lecture tour with civil rights icon Julian Bond, have also informed me.

³⁷ It is a truly remarkable feature of the African and African-American experience in the U.S.; that Christianity, the religion and faith of their white oppressor, has become so deeply embedded in their culture.

Sociology through the Eyes of Faith

In principle, the Christian worldview and secular sociology contain overlapping cognitive models and moral ideas about human beings. Both attempt to speak about human nature, social institutions, cultural practices, and historical development. This is an important issue, because if students are to understand American history they have to understand the role of Christian values in the shaping of America. In particular, it is important to understand the process that gave rise to the appeal of Christianity and the Bible, and the view held by many Americans, that theirs is a 'Christian' nation.

Achieving some semblance of understanding of this and related issues affords an excellent site of investigation for students, suffice to say here that a faith or Christian perspective, has a valid and vital contribution to make to any discussion about the African and African-American experience in the what we now call the United States, because their story, as previously, is spiritual as well physical.

This thesis then stands apart from postmodern historians such as Hayden White who rejects truth statements and argues that in regard to history, 'There are no grounds to be found in the record itself for preferring one way of construing meaning rather than another.'³⁸ Critically, the postmodern

³⁸ Sheehan. *'Defending the High Ground,'* 45.

rejection of ultimate truth, our ability to know that truth, and the promotion of relativism marginalise the 'religious voice' so central to the Black experience in the United States; a voice that in terms of contemporary religion has many faces. Fraser and Campolo note that:

Sociology helps one realize how narrow and limited his or her own social experience is. It takes readers to other worlds of culture and customs, social habits and arrangements that lie beyond the horizon of their own experience and imagination. It poses large questions that demand the clear, coherent, careful answers on which the very future of modern civilization depends. It also points out how difficult it is to construct answers.³⁹

The complexity of achieving this should not be underestimated given that 'no social order fulfils the best of its own cultural ideals.'⁴⁰ Hence the theoretical framework for this thesis is reliant on a range of research methodologies because each has strengths and weaknesses, and together they can help us deal with 'difficulties of discovering sociological truth.'⁴¹ To achieve this aim, this thesis is underpinned by a non-negotiable commitment to the ethical and political principle that 'no inhuman act should be used as a shortcut to a better day,'⁴² and that every social act, be it economic, political, social or

³⁹ Fraser & Campolo. *Sociology Through the Eyes of Faith*, 3.

⁴⁰ *ibid*, xiii.

⁴¹ *ibid*, 3.

⁴² *ibid*, 3.

educational, 'will serve to dignify human life.'⁴³ Inherent in this position is an aversion to any form of manipulation by dominant powers and institutions.

Social Constructionism

The second framework this case study draws on is the theoretical approach of social constructionism. Wolterstorff argues that sociology is 'modernity struggling to come to self-understanding.'⁴⁴ Certainly the issue of 'race' has permeated and informed every part of the American way of life. Loewen claims that 'Perhaps the most pervasive theme in our history is the domination of black America by white America. Race is the sharpest and deepest division in American life.'⁴⁵ Studs Terkel calls it the 'American obsession,'⁴⁶ an obsession that was based on a racial ideology that divided the world into black and white, and explained white dominance as the inevitable and proper consequence of history. Fred Gray, the lawyer for Rosa Parks, describes it as the attempt to 'include virtually every white while excluding virtually every black.'⁴⁷

Yet not everyone agrees with these assessments, especially when it is applied to the first two centuries of U.S history. In his book, *Anti-Racism in the U.S History: The First Two Hundred Years*, Herbert Aptheker challenges the notion that racism was a universal attribute of white people in the U.S. He uses

⁴³ *ibid*, 3.

⁴⁴ *ibid*, Title of Loewen's book.

⁴⁵ Loewen. *Lies Our Teachers Told Us*, 136.

⁴⁶ Roydon Agent. *Public Image Private Shame*, (Auckland, Pearson, 2012).

⁴⁷ Fred Gray, Lecture to Kamo High Students, 20 September 2010, Tuskegee Institute, Tuskegee, USA.

literature from the period to demonstrate the ‘very widespread questioning among white people in all sections of the nation and in all periods of its history of the myth of ‘Negro inferiority.’”⁴⁸ The value of Aptheker’s work is that he is able to show that there have always been those who held that racism was not consistent with the values upon which America was founded and built. In contrast, their vision had been for an all-inclusive interracial society with a democracy predicated on the belief that in the U.S., equal rights, liberty, and justice were guaranteed for all people; a hope that would be enshrined for all time by the lofty notions of the U.S. Constitution.

Reconciling the disparity between the vision espoused by those who walked beyond the colour line, and the reality of four-hundred years of slavery and servitude, of de facto and de jure racism for Africans and African-Americans, is the central focus of this thesis. It is central, because so often the black narrative that describes the systematic brutalisation of Africans and African-Americans, and portrays them as invisible, is either sidelined or sanitised to make way for a version of history deemed more acceptable for public consumption.

Unfortunately in the U.S. through a politically driven process of de-selection, BCR has become a ‘socially constructed artifact that has been shaped by the

⁴⁸ Herbert Aptheker, *Anti-Racism in U.S. History: The First Two Hundred Years*. (London, Praeger, 1993), 1–2.

actions of individuals and groups⁴⁹ who are intent on perpetuating an essentially elitist and Eurocentric worldview of their national history. This case study argues that in New Zealand, the replication of the classical/master-narrative, as modelled on the U.S. approach, has resulted in what Goodson describes as a 'peaceful co-existence between the two worlds of 'prescription rhetoric and schooling practice,'⁵⁰ that has remained unchanged and unchallenged since its introduction in 1988. Goodson also notes that any 'transgression and occasional transcendence [of the curriculum] is permissible as long as the rhetoric of prescription and management is not challenged.'⁵¹

In this thesis, the social constructionism approach is employed because it is a model that has several features that allows for a thorough and transparent critique of the conventional classical/master-narrative conception of BCR history. First, it invites the researcher to be suspicious of historical knowledge that is 'taken-for-granted,'⁵² or assumed to be a 'given' rather than a 'cultural artefact.'⁵³ It argues instead for a critical stance towards conventional views of the world, its categories and concepts, as being not only specific to particular cultures and period of history [but also] dependent upon the particular social and economic [religious and political] arrangements prevailing in that culture

⁴⁹ Sheehan. 'Defending the High Ground', 47.

⁵⁰ Ivor F. Goodson, *Learning, Curriculum and Life Politics: The Selected Works of Ivor F. Goodson*. (New York: RoutledgeFalmer, 2005), 133.

⁵¹ *ibid*, 133.

⁵² Burr, *An Introduction to Social Constructionism*, 3.

⁵³ Ivor F. Goodson, *Studying Curriculum*. Buckingham: (Open University Press, 1994) 30.

at the time.⁵⁴ This thesis contends the rationale for the introduction and perpetuation of the Form 5 (Year 11) conception of BCR in its past and current form, can only be understood, in any comprehensive sense, if it is contextualised socially, economically, and politically.⁵⁵

Secondly, social constructionism argues that because people construct their knowledge through a variety of everyday social interactions, their knowledge is not a product of objective observation.⁵⁶ Supporting this view, Burr contends that ‘...it is not possible to write about something in a completely impartial and dispassionate way that is, taking up no personal stance at all with respect to the subject matter...’⁵⁷ To this, can be added, that while historians should strive to be objective, the human frailties render humans incapable of attaining pure objectivity.⁵⁸

This thesis insists the assumption that the conventional knowledge about the African and African-American experience in the U.S. is based upon objective, unbiased observation of the world,⁵⁹ be challenged, deconstructed, and then reconstructed.⁶⁰ Importantly for History students, providing an alternative/counter-narrative approach that moves beyond the BCR

⁵⁴ Burr, *An Introduction to Social Constructionism*, 3.

⁵⁵ W.F. Pinar, W.M. Reynolds, P. Slattery, P.M. Taubman, *Understanding Curriculum* (New York: Peter Lang, 1995), 244.

⁵⁶ Burr, *An Introduction to Social Constructionism*, 2.

⁵⁷ *ibid*, vii.

⁵⁸ David Wood email to author, 09/07/13.

⁵⁹ *ibid*, 2.

⁶⁰ Fountain, ‘*Caught In-Between*,’ 16.

classical/master-narrative will facilitate innovative links to racism in New Zealand history.

Thirdly, social constructionism opens the way for this thesis to argue that the classical/master-narrative, as perpetuated in the Year 11 (previously Form 5) conception of BCR history is not 'neutral or a value free process of social and cultural reproduction.'⁶¹ Rather, it is a fabricated, white over black rendering of history that has been used to maintain the illusion of truth. This uncritical attachment to a view of American history reflects the values and aspirations of society's dominant white elite; a rendering of history that more recent scholarship has exposed as self-serving and motivated by political, social, economic, and tragically, religious expediency. Bernstein contends it is 'how a society selects, classifies, distributes, transmits and evaluates the educational knowledge it considers to be public, reflects both the distribution of power and the principles of social control.'⁶²

To this, we may add the view of Gregor Fountain who notes that the way in which 'aspects of the past are emphasised in school History programs are believed to influence the ways in which citizens view the present,'⁶³ and Mark Sheehan who asserts that, 'even the process of defining the curriculum is a

⁶¹ Sheehan, *'Defending the High Ground,'* 48.

⁶² *ibid*, 48.

⁶³ Fountain, *'Caught In-Between,'* 15.

political act that allows the policy maker to decide what form of culture (or society) is desirable.’⁶⁴

This is a useful perspective when examining a single subject such as BCR, because the classical/master-narrative approach to teaching and learning is ‘often accepted by teachers as a ‘given’ rather than a ‘cultural artifact.’⁶⁵ The value of employing social constructionism is that it demonstrates that ‘knowledge is sustained by social process, that people construct knowledge through negotiated understandings,’⁶⁶ and that these negotiations are often self-serving.

Fourthly, social constructionism is also suspicious of the motives of the architects, implementers, and sustainers of the classical/master-narrative conception of BCR history. In saying this, it is not the intention of this thesis to hold a pessimistic and cynical view of the ‘selected and able humanity’ who comprised the NHCC, and I am deeply indebted to David Wood for drawing this to my attention when reviewing this thesis.⁶⁷ Rather, this is a reference to the American context where the classical/master-narrative conception of BCR history has historically served those with a vested interest in its success; the dominant members of the school subject community who want to protect their subject, and academic historians who have made their

⁶⁴ Sheehan, ‘*Defending the High Ground*,’ 48.

⁶⁵ *ibid*, 48.

⁶⁶ *ibid*, 48.

⁶⁷ David Wood email to author, 09/07/13.

name by perpetuating conservative conceptions of history through their writing.

The point, expressed more strongly in chapter 6, is that the continued unchallenged, unchanged use of a traditional conception of BCR history in New Zealand secondary schools, places curriculum developers and educators in New Zealand under suspicion, especially given recent scholarship and new trends of interpretation.

Finally, social constructionism provides a framework to critique teacher subject knowledge and classroom pedagogy. Teachers' ideas about BCR are socially constructed and their topic choices are not derived from unquestionable principles about what aspects of the past students should learn. Rather, they are derived from their own values, background, assumptions, and subject expertise.⁶⁸ Mandated examinations such as internal assessments and external examinations also reflect the values, beliefs, and assumptions of curriculum leaders and inform teacher pedagogy. Social constructionism provides an important theoretical framework to separate the mandatory requirements of curriculum and examination prescription from the values, beliefs, and assumptions that informed them. This deconstruction followed by a reconstruction based on contemporary scholarship and new trends of interpretation has the potential to facilitate meaningful change to

⁶⁸ Fountain. *'Caught In-Between,'* 16.

the current conception of BCR history; a change that would reinvigorate the teaching of this topic, and provide a meaningful link for students seeking to understand New Zealand's own cultural and racial issues.

Critical Theory

In this case study, a critical theory approach has been employed because it accepts the modernist idea that progress can be achieved through interrogation and critique. Apple contends that being prepared to criticize 'is itself an affirmation... one of the ultimate gestures of citizenship.'⁶⁹ In the context of this thesis, the use of critical theory ensures the voices of social conscience that challenge exploitation and those who conspire to marginalise minority groups, is heard. It is important to note that in the context of this case study, the use of critical theory is not just about fault-finding. As Apple points out, 'it also involves understanding the sets of historically contingent circumstances and contradictory power relationships that create the conditions in which we live.'⁷⁰

For the purposes of this thesis, it means recognising the emergence over the last two decades of a right leaning hegemonic alliance in New Zealand that makes this study both timely and pertinent. At issue, is whether successive governments from the mid-1980s to the present time, (2013), have intervened in shaping classical/master conceptions of history, and in so doing, defined

⁶⁹Apple, Michael. *Official Knowledge: Democratic Education in a Conservative Age*. (London: Routledge, 1993) 4.

⁷⁰ *ibid*, 179.

what constitutes official knowledge. Finally, this thesis contends that the consultation, criticisms and compromises that were a feature of the shaping the conception of BCR history in the early to mid-1980s by the NHCC, means there is within this formulation, space for an alternative/counter-narrative renderings of BCR; a formulation that will resonate with students because it is inherently more accurate, and more truthful. Apple challenges:

That no matter how grounded our critical investigations are (and *must* be) in an equally critical understanding of the larger relations of dominance and subordination of this society and in the micro politics of our institutions, it ultimately comes down to a recognition that we, as persons, participate in these relations. We have [therefore] a responsibility to say 'no' to as many of them that are antidemocratic as we can and to act to affirm what is less dominative and more caring.⁷¹

Disciplinary Approach

The current conception of BCR history taught at Year 11 gives status to a traditional, Eurocentric interpretation of the period, while ignoring contemporary scholarship and new trends of interpretation. On this point, Wood provides some valuable insights that indicate that there was nothing

⁷¹ *ibid*, 13.

sinister about the exclusion of an alternative/counter-narrative conception of BCR history:

The reality is that there was no person on the committee with specialised skills (that included familiarity with the most recent research-based findings). The topic has been selected in the early 80s. The 70s, from my knowledge, had seen the beginnings of deconstructionist history, mostly from the feminist and women's movement. Academics and educators who were from non-European races and living in countries dominated by Europeans were to pick up on this momentum. But it was not really being felt strongly enough in New Zealand until the 1980s.⁷²

Exploring the reasons for this disparity between old and current scholarship on this topic, required an analysis of the political and educational context in which it was introduced and continues to be sustained. This required an examination of how these influences contributed to the conception of BCR history from the time of its introduction into the Form 5 programme unto the present time, (2013).

This case study had to investigate the way History teachers responded to the shaping and sustaining of a conception of BCR history that was reliant on a

⁷² David Wood email to author, 09/07/13.

classical/master-narrative conception of history, especially when it was a new topic and teachers were only one lesson ahead of the students.⁷³

It is the contention of this thesis that history provides a structure of disciplinary thinking, which sometimes unconsciously influences developers to prioritise certain types of knowledge for students⁷⁴ while ignoring other types of knowledge. As well as prioritising the transmission of topic knowledge, an understanding of disciplinary thinking highlights the process by which academic historians interpret historical sources and construct historical arguments about the past.⁷⁵ The evidence of teachers surveyed for this thesis indicates that very few teachers studied BCR at university level, or if they did, it was but a cursory overview squeezed in to a broader study of American history.⁷⁶ Woods recalls that this was probably also true of those teachers who were 'key players in the development of the History syllabus'⁷⁷ for BCR back in the 1980s.

Case Study

This thesis can be regarded as a case study within a qualitative research paradigm.⁷⁸ Feagin, Orum, and Sjoberg, contend that a case study approach is

⁷³ Kunowski interview, 11/12/12.

⁷⁴ Fountain, *'Caught In-Between,'* 17.

⁷⁵ *ibid*, 17.

⁷⁶ Of the six major universities in NZ, only Auckland and Victoria offer a comprehensive study of BCR.

⁷⁷ David Wood email to author, 09/07/13.

⁷⁸ Sheehan, *'Defending the High Ground,'* 50.

an,' ideal methodology when a holistic, in-depth investigation is needed.'⁷⁹ For Berg, the advantage of case study methodology is that it involves, 'the systematic gathering of enough information about a particular person, social setting, event or group to permit the researcher to effectively understand how the subject operates or functions.'⁸⁰ To this definition, Miles and Huberman add that, 'research qualifies as a case study if the topic is specific to a particular place and time and if there is a limit to the number of individuals to be interviewed and documentary sources to be examined.'⁸¹

Another characteristic of case study methodology, is that it is a multi-perspectival analysis that is 'designed to bring out the details from the viewpoint of the participants by using multiple sources of data.'⁸² This means that the researcher considers not just the one voice and perspective of the actors, but also of the relevant groups of actors and the interaction between them.⁸³ This is a salient point, because it is a methodology that provides a platform for the voices of those previously lost to the margins of history.

The contention of this thesis is the classical/master-narrative only achieves this in part, and poorly. The black version is eschewed because it has, up until the last decade or so, been viewed as an inconvenient sideshow to the main

⁷⁹ Winston Tellis, *Application of a Case Study Methodology*, citing Feagin, J., Orum, A., & Sjoberg, G. (Eds.). (1991), *A Case for Case study*, (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press) <http://www.nova.edu/ssss/OR/OR3-3/tellis2>.

⁸⁰ Bruce L Berg, *Qualitative Research Methods in the Social Sciences*. (Boston: Pearson Education, 2007) 283.

⁸¹ Sheehan, 'Defending the High Ground,' 50.

⁸² Winston Tellis, *Application of a Case Study Methodology*, *The Quantitative Report*, Vol 3, Number 3, September, 1997 <http://www.nova.edu/ssss/OR/OR3-3/tellis2.html>.

⁸³ Tellis, *Application of a Case Study Methodology*, 1.

event.⁸⁴ The way this viewpoint has been perpetuated in the Year 11 conception of history of BCR since its introduction in 1988 to the present time, (2013), gives this case study intrinsic value as it is of contemporary and continuing interest to subject teachers, curriculum developers, and resource writers of this topic.

Sheehan also considers case studies to be valuable because they allow for a 'close description and analysis of the actions, interpretations, perceptions of the individuals concerned as well as the historical context.'⁸⁵ As such, it provides a historical perspective on the context in which BCR was introduced into the Form 5 conception of History. McCulloch and Richardson argue that an understanding of context is essential in evaluating the importance and meaning to particular phenomenon⁸⁶ (in this case conceptions of BCR history). McCulloch also notes that to 'explain and understand curriculum change we need to take into account... the time during which it occurs and the changing educational, social, and political context [and cultural transformations] within which it has taken place.'⁸⁷

Case studies also provide a historical perspective on the context in which early historians perceived their history and formulated their ideas about past

⁸⁴David Wood email to author, 09/07/13. Woods expressed in his email that this was a crucial observation; that those on the NHCC who first chose and then developed the BCR topic did so in the early 1980s, before the move among USA historians to consider an alternative construction.

⁸⁵ Sheehan, *'Defending the High Ground,'* 50

⁸⁶ *ibid*, 51.

⁸⁷ *ibid*, 51.

events. The challenge for all historians is to get as close to the truth about these past events as is possible. The value of this case study is that hindsight, and the important contribution of recent scholarship and new trends of interpretation, can afford new insights to inform, challenge, and possibly change traditional white over black historical perspectives and explanations. This thesis contends that while most historians agree on the facts of an event or an individual's life, there is less agreement within contemporary scholarship as to the motives, reasons, and explanations for the actions of these people or groups in the past.⁸⁸

While this case study offers an alternative/counter-narrative approach for teaching BCR, it is not claiming to be epistemologically objective or to hold perspectives on the past that are entirely neutral; that would be an impossible task and place 'unrealistically high expectations on the authority of the historian.'⁸⁹ What this thesis does is to demonstrate the educational advantages afforded by utilising an alternative/counter-narrative approach. Berg contends that a case study approach permits the researcher to 'capture various nuances, patterns and more latent elements that other researcher approaches might overlook.'⁹⁰ Another advantage is that it retrieves from the margins of obscurity, the faceless and nameless, and gives them a place to be seen and a voice to be heard.

⁸⁸ Modified from Mark Sheehan, '*Defending the High Ground*,' 51.

⁸⁹ Sheehan, '*Defending the High Ground*,' 51.

⁹⁰ Berg, *Qualitative Research Methods*, 284.

Anecdotally, I can bear witness to the value of this. When I was undertaking research in the U.S. for my book, *Public Image, Private Shame*, I deliberately sought to meet and interview people who were grassroots activists during the Civil Rights era. One of those was a Mr Pettway, an elderly African-American gentleman who lived in Selma, Alabama. He had been denied the right to register to vote twenty-seven times before eventually being able to gain the right to vote. What is most remarkable about Mr Pettway's story is that for almost fifty-five years it has remained untold. When I play a video of my interview with Mr Pettway, his out of the spotlight recalling of events, told in his gravely southern drawl, really does resonate with my students. Importantly, it reminds them of the too often obscured but important-to-know fact that the Movements success was contingent not just upon the dynamic leadership of King, but also of the grassroots activism of the Mr Pettways of this world.

Finally, a major strength of a case study is that it employs a triangulated research strategy. By using a range of protocols, as enunciated in this chapter, the ethical need to confirm the validity of the findings are guaranteed.

Documentary Analysis

Documentary analysis for this case study has focused on primary sources provided by Professor Peter Lineham. The primary sources utilised for this case study were produced by those directly involved in the curriculum

revision of Years 11–13 senior History during the 1980s. Lineham’s extensive range of material relevant to the NHCC included minutes of meetings, History Association reports/minutes, private and public correspondence, and Department newsletters and discussion papers.

Surveys and Semi-Structured Interviews

Surveys⁹¹ and semi-structured interviews were critical to this research project. The recollection of teachers, their conversations about their academic qualifications to teach BCR, the nature and extent of their university training, how much BCR PD they had had during their time of their teaching, their familiarity with recent scholarship and new trends of interpretation were a major focus of the interview process.

The semi-structured interviews were invaluable to my research, and I was humbled by the willingness of people to participate, and by the wealth of knowledge they processed. In each interview I was able to attain critical information from those at the coal-face of curriculum change in the 1980s, and from teachers from that period onwards. As a result, I was able to explore the motives and rationale behind the introduction of BCR into the Form 5 (Year 11) conception of History in 1988. Interviews with current teachers also provided fertile ground to determine the degree to which student assessment, internal and external, continues to confine the teaching of

⁹¹ See Appendix D for survey information.

BCR to a selective, sanitised, white over black, classical/master-narrative conception of history.

Survey results, along with anecdotal evidence, were insightful—remarkable even. Despite the external examination prescription no longer containing mandated assessment for AS91005, the majority of teachers surveyed remained shackled to a frozen in time approach to teaching BCR. Few had ventured beyond the safe shores of the tried and true classical/master-narrative. The survey and interviews indicate three main reasons for this ‘same ol, same ol’ approach. First, with renewed focus on statistical analysis of examination results teachers could better guarantee student success by teaching what they knew best, hence their continued reliance on a classical/master-narrative conception of BCR. Venturing into the unknown regions of an alternative/counter-narrative would threaten the perception, driven by statistical analysis, of their being a successful teacher. It would also bring into question their departmental programme and goals.

Secondly, most teachers did not feel confident in exploring the hinterlands of an alternative/counter-narrative. It was beyond their academic expertise and teaching experience, so ‘why rock the boat’ seems to have been the prevailing adage. Anecdotally, the evidence implies that a good number of History teachers had forgotten what history was all about. In one case, I examined a private document of a trainee teacher who was forbidden by his associate

teacher while on placement, from linking BCR with New Zealand Maori; it was deemed too controversial. Woods also adds another key point:

Very few teachers, from my experience, are knowledgeable about, even concerned for, curriculum development and change, unless such is seen as a vital answer to a crisis situation (falling rolls). Most teachers, I argue want to teach what is put in front of them, to prepare students effectively for examinations, and to provide students with stimulating and effective learning experiences. Curriculum development, per se, is the reserve of the specialist few!⁹²

Thirdly, there is some disquiet among History teachers that the marking criteria applied by NCEA marking panels for AS91005 is yet to reach a satisfactory level. The following is a part summary of concerns expressed at an AHTA (Auckland History Teachers' Association) post-mortem day⁹³

Again there was an issue of good answers not achieving good results. Markers have increased expectations and some degree of inconsistency was arguably present. Choice of event is important and must be specific. Issue – high merits instead of awards of excellence. Some essays were moderated down to high Merit

⁹² David Wood email to author, 09/07/13.

⁹³ Email from AHTA to its members 19/02/13. The post-mortem was held on Saturday 16 February, 2013 at Diocesan School and was attended by 41 teachers from Whangarei to Taupo.

when they appeared to be just as good as those getting excellence
– mark downs suspected to be due to the need to achieve PEPs...
There was a perception that Excellences and Merits are being
squeezed as a consequence. Students are writing really well and
should be rewarded for it if the criteria are being met.⁹⁴

Anecdotal evidence indicates teachers are concerned that if they venture beyond the knowledge of panel markers it may jeopardise their students' chances of success. Another sentiment expressed was concern that NCEA marking panels for AS91005 are not sufficiently familiar with the nuances and subtleties present in an essay where a student utilises, in part or fully, an alternative/counter-narrative approach. While this is a technical, rather than a curriculum issue, teachers indicated that when students did this it had a detrimental impact on their grade. An example of this is student use of the word 'Protest,' as in the Montgomery Bus Protest, instead of the commonly used, Montgomery Bus Boycott. I was first alerted to this important distinction after reading about it in my research for my book *Public Image Private Shame* and had it confirmed in a conversation with the Rev. Bob Graetz, who was a central figure throughout the protest.

The reason for the use of the word 'Protest' as opposed to the word 'Boycott' was that it circumnavigated a city ordinance that made boycotts illegal. When

⁹⁴ *ibid.*

King and ninety-seven other protest leaders were arrested, they avoided prison terms because they had not broken the 'boycott' law. It is a subtle but useful example of the legal subtleties used by protestors to triumph over institutional racism.

The Complex Nature of Semi-Structured Interviews

The complexity of the interview process was compounded by the fact that the subject matter was historical.⁹⁵ The formulation of questions, especially those that were the spontaneous probing of a participant's response, required being alert to the concern, that memory, knowingly or subconsciously, could be moulded to reflect or justify the interviewees' own assumptions or bias.⁹⁶ A range of strategies were employed to safeguard against this concern.

First, Fontana and Frey warn that interviewing is not simply a neutral exchange of asking questions and getting answers.⁹⁷ Similarly, Scheurich makes the observation that the interviewer is historically and contextually located and carries conscious and unconscious biased motives.⁹⁸ One danger inherent in the interview process was assuming that my experience was common to other History teachers. To safeguard against this, and on the advice of my supervisor, Professor Peter Lineham, I arranged to interview participants who would reflect diverse perspectives and offer the potential

⁹⁵ Fountain, *'Caught In-Between,'* 22.

⁹⁶ *ibid*, 22.

⁹⁷ *ibid*, 22.

⁹⁸ *ibid*, 22.

for comparison. The value of semi-structured interviews is that they have high validity as a research methodology because they enable the interviewees to talk in depth and detail.⁹⁹ The result was the compilation of a range of insightful perspectives not available in any documentary source on this topic.

Secondly, it was important to cross-reference my interviews and focus group discussions with documentary analysis of the curriculum. In particular, it allowed a comparison between the intention of the BCR conception of history and classroom implementation. This approach is informed by Ball, Bowe, and Gold, who point out that although the government relies on its teachers to deliver policy, the complex relationship between the state and schools leaves scope for teacher 'ad hocery,' initiative, and creativity.¹⁰⁰ If there is one good thing about the current curriculum, 2007, it is the degree of autonomy and flexibility accorded to teachers. While concerns remain over 'ad hocery,' and 'slippage,'¹⁰¹ and whether conceptions of history do not get delivered in the classroom, it may be that over time the former might be viewed as a creative, normative, ex officio member of the curriculum.

Another issue identified by John Pipe is that of 'perverse' teaching. Pipe is referring to teachers who deliberately set out to test the system by getting their students to write on obscure, unknown topics in their NCEA 91005

⁹⁹ *ibid*, 21.

¹⁰⁰ *ibid*, 23.

¹⁰¹ R Phillips, *History Teaching, Nationhood and the State: A Study in Educational Politics*. (London: Cassell, 1998) 6.

external examination. While anecdotal evidence indicates the presence of this practice, teachers were not prepared to admit to it in a formal sense.

Ethical Issues

Massey University Human Ethics Committee approved this project as Low Risk on 1 June, 2012, and prior to the commencement of data gathering.¹⁰² The one ethical issue related to this research project was obtaining informed consent for the semi-structured interviews.¹⁰³ All interviewees were initially contacted by email where I introduced myself, outlined my research focus, and ascertained their willingness to participate in an interview. Prior to conducting the semi-structured interviews an email was sent to each participant with a survey attached to be completed prior to the interview; for the most part it proved to be a useful practice and gave the interviewee time to consider the questions, formulate answers, and to explore other issues. Also included in the survey was a statement, required by Massey University on all public documents for this project, inviting breaches of conduct in either the survey or interview process to be directed to Professor John O'Neill, Chair, Human Ethics Chairs Committee and Director (Research Ethics).¹⁰⁴ The email explained that individual participants would be requested to sign a consent form, which gave me permission to use the information generated in

¹⁰² See Appendix A for a copy of the ethics letter.

¹⁰³ Though not stated in the ethics approval notification, I have adopted the common historical practice of naming the individual interviewees.

¹⁰⁴ See Appendix A.

the semi-structured interviews and surveys where appropriate, and with their permission, direct quotes to be acknowledged in the footnotes or by attaching their name to it. The interviews were recorded on a digital recording device, usually my mobile, and kept on digital file. Throughout the writing of this thesis I would email the interviewees to double-check with them on their quotes, amend them where necessary, and to gain their approval. I also undertook that a final draft would be sent to them as a courtesy, and to seek their final approval.¹⁰⁵ I also used a truncated survey¹⁰⁶ to gain statistical evidence from History teachers. This was a useful tool when teachers felt too press for time to complete the more comprehensive survey. It also allowed me to gather important information from teachers new to History. Their feedback was critical in drawing the conclusion that the content they used to teach BCR was remained largely unchanged from that used since BCR was introduced into the History curriculum in 1989.

Referencing

Due to the prevalence of documentary evidence and oral interviews this thesis employs the Chicago Manual of Style (Sixteenth Edition) of footnotes. Following the convention of the Chicago style, short notes are used throughout the thesis, with the bibliography providing full details of sources

¹⁰⁵ See Appendix F.

¹⁰⁶ See Appendix E.

utilised.¹⁰⁷ Direct quotations taken from a written source are acknowledged with a page reference if available. I have attempted to acknowledge all my sources.

Conclusion

Establishing a clear and concise methodological approach has not only ensured that I maintain focus in my research, it has also kept me accountable in the way I examine and interpret information. In particular, it helped me maintain a sense of integrity when the facts collided with my own bias. The most profound example of this was recognising the distinction between the kind of political pressure that helps shape the way BCR is taught and textbooks written in the U.S., to that in New Zealand.

Given New Zealand's lurch to neo-liberalism from the mid 1980s on, I had assumed that the hegemonic pressure applied to teachers and writers of BCR in the U.S. would spill over into a New Zealand context; not so. Through the methodology of triangulation, I was able to determine that if New Zealand teachers and textbooks writers are guilty of disseminating a whitewashed conception of history it was more a matter of replicating information without serious thought to alternative approaches, complacency, and neglect. This does not mean that the effect on minority groups and the marginalised in New Zealand is not similar or the same, as in the U.S. While it can be argued

¹⁰⁷ <http://owll.massey.ac.nz/main/referencing.php>.

that hegemonic forces have held sway in terms of education reform and curriculum development, the same cannot be said of the present conception of BCR history.

This has been an insightful and useful distinction to make; not all teachers and textbooks writers, or curriculum developers for that matter, can be tarred with the same brush, when clearly the evidence points elsewhere. This is an issue that is addressed with more purpose in chapter 5.

Chapter 3

Reshaping the Form 5 History Syllabus in the 1980s

The history we select in classrooms and how we choose to engage students with it send students powerful messages both about the world - how it was, and how it is, [and] how it could be.

Avner Segall

Introduction

This chapter provides a historical perspective on the reshaping of the Form 5 (Year 11) conception of BCR history in the early 1980s. In particular, it examines why there were growing calls for a revision of the History curriculum towards the late 1970s and the early 1980s. It also explains the process that led to the formation of the NHCC in 1982, and the rationale behind the NHCC's decision to introduce the topic of Black Civil Rights in the USA, 1954–1970 within the Form 5 History curriculum.

The Political and Social Context of the 1980s

The 1980s represents a turbulent period in New Zealand history. It was a decade of protest, a period in which New Zealanders, young and old, and of every ethnic persuasion, and to an unprecedented level, were prepared to challenge traditional norms. Sheehan notes it was a period in New Zealand history that witnessed, 'a series of changes that shattered many of the fundamental values and aspirations that New Zealanders had adhered to since 1945, including the breakdown of any consensus over social and

economic policy, foreign affairs and race relations.¹⁰⁸ The visit of the 1981 Springbok rugby team to New Zealand raised the spectre of race within sport, and generated some of the worst civil unrest the country had witnessed since the Waterfront Workers dispute in 1951. There was also discontent generated by a fundamental realignment of New Zealand's foreign policy over issues that included ANZUS and nuclear ship visits, support for Britain in the Falklands war, the sinking of the Rainbow Warrior by French agents, and French nuclear testing in the Pacific.¹⁰⁹ Furthermore, spending in health, welfare, and education came under scrutiny as the 'Oil shocks' of the 1970s and Great Britain's entry into the European Economic Community (EEC) contributed to a dramatic economic decline that saw a spiral of high inflation, growing unemployment, and industrial militancy in New Zealand.¹¹⁰ It is into this broader context, and the immediate socio-political context of the late 1970s–1980s that we must understand the history revision of the 1980s.

A Climate for Change

Revision of the national school curriculum was a feature of New Zealand education in the post-WWII era. David Wood, facilitator of the NHCC from 1985 onwards, recalls that the period from 1945 through to the 1980s was a 'great period,' because the focus was on 'progressive education.'¹¹¹

¹⁰⁸ Sheehan, *"Defending the High Ground,"* 68.

¹⁰⁹ *ibid*, 69.

¹¹⁰ *ibid*, 69.

¹¹¹ David Wood interview, 04/11/12.

The reshaping of the Form 5 curriculum was part of a wider context in which the Department of Education's policy of rolling syllabus¹¹² revision saw Forms 5–7 History (Years 11–13) come up for review in the 1980s.¹¹³ The announcement of the review was opportune, because of mounting pressure from teachers and other educationalists to establish a Form 5–7 History Curriculum Committee.¹¹⁴ The pressure, which reached its peak 1981–82, centred on teacher concern that the number of students taking senior History had been in a continuous rate of decline for almost a decade. Wood also recalls:

Though I was not part of this initial development, I would surmise that another pressure for developing a History syllabus was that geographers had recently been given the green light to do so, and that, like its cousin, History never had had a formally developed national syllabus statement. The only nationally developed and approved 'statements' for History teachers at each of the Forms 5–7 levels were the examination prescriptions.¹¹⁵

¹¹² This practice was first introduced by Clarence Beeby after he was appointed as the Director-General of Education, 1 May 1940, by the Peter Fraser led Labour government.

¹¹³ Sheehan, *'Defending the High Ground'*, 28.

¹¹⁴ Peter Lineham files. Department of Education Letter 14 February 1983. Peter Whitelock was writing for the Director-General for Education. Whitelock, the first facilitator of the NHCC, acknowledged to High School principals, Heads of Department (HODs) and teachers with a position of responsibility for History (PRs), that History was in a state of decline and in need of urgent revision.

¹¹⁵ David Wood email to author, 09/07/13.

Table 1: Proportion of Forms 5–7 taking History 1974–1982

Year	Formula for each Form		No F5 History		F5 Roll	
	Form 5 Roll	Percent taking History	Form 6 Roll	Percent taking History	Form 7 Roll	Percent taking History
1974	15521 52141	29.8*	8973 25468	35.2	2235 7089	31.5
1975	15117 56067	27.0	9352 27561	33.9	2346 7379	31.8
1976	15565 60968	25.5	10041 30014	33.5	2510 8156	30.8
1977	15198 62897	24.2	9681 31576	30.7	2596 8422	30.8
1978	14901 66575	22.4	9125 33685	27.1	2797 9206	30.4
1979	13665 64045	21.3	8825 34301	25.7	2812 9560	29.4
1980	13041 62399	20.9	2145 33802	6.3^	2839 9781	29.0
1981	12063 61723	19.5	7430 33081	22.5	2802 10086	27.8
1982	11304 60354	18.7	6992 33054	21.2	2679 9750	27.5

Note. This table provides the figures indicating the decline of students taking senior History in New Zealand secondary schools between 1974 and 1982.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁶ Source: NHCC Newsletter, Number 5, 1983. The figures from Table 1 indicate that between 1974 and 1982, the number of students taking Form 5 History declined by 10.5%. More disconcerting were the Form 6 History figures which indicated an alarming 14% rate of decline over the same period. The decline at Form 7 was significantly less, only 4%.

* Percentage changed from original to ensure more accurate %.

* ^ This figure seems wrong even when double checked against original documentation. In all probability this reflects an incorrect record.

Why the Decline in History?

As noted earlier, there was concern from secondary schools and universities at the decline in students taking History in Forms 5–7. Bruce Taylor, Secretary of the WAHTA, was highly critical of his colleague’s collective lethargy towards reversing the trend.¹¹⁷ Universities were also alarmed; they anticipated correctly that the decline in the numbers taking History, particularly at Form 7 (Year 13), would have a direct and detrimental effect on the number of students continuing their History studies at university level; a fact that proved motivational for their expert involvement in the curriculum revision.

It is clear from the data in Table 1 that the NHCC had to identify the reasons behind the steady decline in student numbers taking History, and to initiate measures to staunch, and then reverse the trend. On the issue of cause, Tony Murdoch, a History teacher from the period, cautions against easily arrived at explanations, ‘You can’t measure why subjects decline and in reality you need a multi-layered analysis.’¹¹⁸ He does however offer four possibilities, the first of which is the part played by school politics:

Subjects decline often in relation to what is happening in schools and has a lot to do with internal school politics. In most subject lines, history is competing with maths, English, and science,

¹¹⁷ Wellington Area History Teachers Association (WAHTA) newsletter, No 2 September, 1984.

¹¹⁸ Tony Murdoch interview, 13/12/13.

which at Form 5 are compulsory subjects. So the issue is what's next? HODs and History teachers really have to lobby for their subject to be in a certain line to make it a viable option for students.¹¹⁹

For a second possibility, Murdoch notes that subjects often rise or fall on student perception of the teacher and the programme they provide, 'You have got to have good teachers; if you haven't got good teachers you will struggle with attracting students to History.'¹²⁰ Thirdly, History is seen as 'hard work,'¹²¹ an assessment that Murdoch based on his own experience of sitting school certificate when he was a student in 1968, and which morphed into the curriculum changes of the 70s and 80s.¹²² Finally, the lack of relevance of topics being studied, in particular the emphasis on European history, helps explain the decline of interest in history. Murdoch recalls:

There were different social pressures coming to bear in New Zealand in the 1980s, which you have got to remember was the post-feminist revolution period. There was a lot of focus around the Treaty of Waitangi, the Springbok rugby tour, but probably more importantly, overriding a lot of these things, was a strong sense of nationalism in the people who were now HODs, the

¹¹⁹ *ibid.*

¹²⁰ *ibid.*

¹²¹ *ibid.*

¹²² *ibid.*

movers and shapers within the subject; they are almost your first generation of teachers who focused on New Zealand history. The guys that had come through after World War II who were still teaching in the 1960s, were very much steeped in the European tradition... it was Europe and Europe and Europe.¹²³

There is much about what Murdoch says, especially on the first two points, and to a lesser degree, the third point, that continues to place the promotion and popularity of History, as a subject in secondary schools, in jeopardy. This is particularly true in schools that only offer five subjects at senior level. With the emphasis on meeting market demands and achieving positive statistical outcomes, the beneficiaries of this particular policy are the core subjects of English, science, and maths. Compounding this problem is the anecdotal evidence that some departments/faculties will harvest student numbers by promoting their own learning area without regard to what is best for the student and without consideration or courtesy to other learning areas. Because of this, the vocational future of these students is compromised, and as an approach, borders on being professionally unethical.

A Timely Response

By the 1970s, the almost exclusive focus on European history Murdoch refers to was being challenged by university lecturers who had a greater interest in

¹²³ *ibid.*

New Zealand and who wanted to put into context their own nationalistic experiences.¹²⁴ This led to the emergence of a new generation of History teachers who were 'the natural descendants [politically and ideologically] of that wave of New Zealand historians... people like Keith Sinclair and Bill Oliver.'¹²⁵ After graduating, a number entered teacher training colleges where they brought with them their new ideas. Often with a master's degree, these teachers had a high level of academic ability, and according to Murdoch made 'very, very, good teachers.'¹²⁶ By the 1980s, many of the new generation teachers were in positions of responsibility and influence as HODs, members of syllabus committees, or involved in running their regional history associations. Murdoch recalls it was a time when many of these 'shakers and shapers'¹²⁷ were questioning the relevance of European history for New Zealand students. Hence, the topic changes of the 1980s more accurately reflected the times and the interests of these teachers and what they stood for. As a result, *Women in Health* was coupled with *Black Civil Rights in the USA* and embedded into the Form 5 prescription. Sheehan notes, however, that while BCR was deemed by teachers to be more engaging and of greater interest to students, there was little interest in teaching *Women in Health*.¹²⁸

¹²⁴ *ibid.*

¹²⁵ *ibid.*

¹²⁶ *ibid.*

¹²⁷ *ibid.*

¹²⁸ Sheehan, '*Defending the High Ground*,' 168.

In the light of these developments, the establishment of the NHCC¹²⁹ was both welcomed and opportune. David Wood, the facilitator of the NHCC after 1984 recalls:

The main motivation was that history [as a subject] was declining in schools and universities at that stage, and it was felt very much that there was a need for a new syllabus that would reinvigorate history teaching, would bring fresh excitement that would result in increased numbers in schools and in universities.¹³⁰

To this end, Peter Whitelock, the first facilitator of the NHCC, sent a letter to schools throughout the country to announce the establishment of the NHCC; he also outlined the two major aims of the committee. The first was, 'To canvas teacher and student needs in senior classes; and to effect any changes where teachers reach[ed] consensus.'¹³¹ To that end Whitelock attached a comprehensive SURVEY OF NEEDS – Forms 5–7 HISTORY that schools would complete and return to the NHCC. It was hoped the survey would provide the committee with information to help in their revision of the existing curriculum and to initiate improvements moving forward.¹³²

¹²⁹ The announcement by Peter Whitelock, the first facilitator of the NHCC, formally was made in a letter to secondary schools throughout New Zealand. Letter dated 14 February, 1983.

¹³⁰ Wood interview 04/11/12.

¹³¹ Department of Education, Letter 14 February, 1983.

¹³² Whitelock wrote the letter on the 14 February, 1983 and expected the accompanying survey to be completed and returned to the Statistics Division, Department of Education in Wellington, by 23 March, 1983.

The recently established New Zealand History Association (NZHA) also provided momentum for a review. In 1981, they requested that the Department of Education rationalise 'the aims, objectives and content of the separate Forms 5–7 History prescriptions.'¹³³ Wood sums up the concerns many felt:

There was some disquiet within education at the lack of rigour in the curriculum; that it had been 'captured' by liberal or left-wing sympathisers, who had social agendas more than intellectual ones. A number viewed social studies as weak and washy, and lacking strong academic support from university faculties. History was regarded by those wanting a more academically reliable subject to be superior to social studies. Some even wanted to replace Social Studies with History in Form 3 (Year 9) and Form 4 (Year 10).¹³⁴

The Minister of Education, Merv Wellington, shared these concerns. A former History teacher, Wellington was a conservative politician and wanted to avoid any approach that might undermine academic rigor.¹³⁵ Like many conservatives in the National Government of the time, he was suspicious of social studies as a loose social engineering discipline; he believed he could get

¹³³ Department of Education, *History Forms 5–7 syllabus for schools* (Wellington: Learning Media, 1989), Forward.

¹³⁴ Email from David Wood to the author, 11/11/12.

¹³⁵ Wood email, 11/11/12.

more rigour into the subject by including more history;¹³⁶ his aim was to have, 'a narrow range of changes to the History syllabus that reflected his wider attempts to stem what he saw as the increasing liberalisation of education.'¹³⁷ However, Wellington's tenure as Minister of Education was unexpectedly curtailed in July 1984 when the National Party Prime Minister, Robert Muldoon, called a 'snap election.' The result saw the David Lange led New Zealand Labour Party elected to office, and Russell Marshall appointed Minister of Education.

As a former Methodist Minister, Marshall's views on education were shaped by his liberal theological training and his denomination's historical commitment to social justice. Kunowski remembers that whereas Wellington was an interventionist about what should or should not be included as History topics, Marshall's approach was more liberal and inclusive.¹³⁸ This resulted in the NHCC being directed to focus on issues of social inequality, and to introduce conceptions of history that included perspectives from marginalised groups like women, Maori, and Pasifika. It was a focus that resonated with Committee members.

¹³⁶ Wood interview 03/11/12.

¹³⁷ Sheehan, *'Defending the High Ground,'* 29.

¹³⁸ Email from Myra Kunowski to the author, 11/12/12.

The National History Curriculum Committee: Setting the Scene

After the NHCC was established in November, 1982 by Merv Wellington, the committee began to meet to review the Form 5–7 History curriculum.¹³⁹ It was not a new initiative. Since the 1960s, curriculum committees had become formalised and included representation from interest groups like subject associations, the Department of Education, the Post-Primary Teachers' Association (PPTA), Teachers' Training Colleges, independent schools, subject advisors and university academics.¹⁴⁰ Examination boards prescribed the content guidelines, while a bipartisan political approach of consensus was used by the Department of Education, with the assistance of the PPTA, for providing the syllabus guidelines for school certificate.¹⁴¹ There was considerable kudos attached to schools whose teachers were involved in national curriculum initiatives.¹⁴² However, O'Neill points out that this development process, which was essentially driven from within the sector, was 'extensive, lengthy, incremental, cumbersome and expensive.'¹⁴³

¹³⁹ It would prove to be the last time the rolling cyclical revision of school subjects would be used after being introduced in the 1940s by Clarence Beeby.

¹⁴⁰ O'Neill, Anne-Marie, John Clark and Roger Openshaw. 'Mapping the Field: An Introduction to Curriculum Politics in Aotearoa/New Zealand.' In *Reshaping Culture, Knowledge and Learning? Policy and Content in the New Zealand Curriculum Framework* edited by Anne-Marie O'Neill, John Clark and Roger Openshaw, (Palmerston North: Dunmore Press, 2004.), 31–32.

¹⁴¹ Fountain, "Caught In-Between," 30.

¹⁴² Harvey McQueen, Harvey. 'Once Were Curriculum Developers.' *Curriculum Matters* 2 (2006): 182–94, <http://www.nzcer.org.nz/nzcerpress/curriculum-matters/articles/once-were-curriculum-developers>, 185.

¹⁴³ O'Neill, Mapping the Field, 32.

The Composition of the National History Curriculum Committee

Wood recalls that the Committee was a 'formidable team' which represented three stakeholder groups.¹⁴⁴ The first group comprised leading history teachers in New Zealand from the various regions; most were highly qualified, (many had master's degrees) and were regarded by their peers as having made a meaningful contribution to education.¹⁴⁵ From an official perspective, the Department of Education perceived the credibility of teachers within the history teaching community as an important aspect of successful development [and implementation].¹⁴⁶ The usurping of this approach by later governments would result in widespread disillusionment amongst teachers.

The second group were representatives from the Department of Education's CDD, the Post Primary Teachers' Association (PPTA), the Secondary School Inspectorate, and the University Entrance Board. The third group came from universities. Wood recalls, 'An interesting feature of the NHCC was how heavily loaded, relative to other subject areas, it was with university people. It was uncommon to have so many university people on a syllabus committee.'¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁴ Wood interview, 03/11/12.

¹⁴⁵ The teachers were chosen by the Curriculum Development Division (CDD), Peter Whitelock (or, after 1984, by David Wood) and Gresham Poole and Greg Taylor who were secondary school inspectors responsible for History.

¹⁴⁶ Sheehan, *'Defending the High Ground,'* 35.

¹⁴⁷ Wood interview 03/11/12. Of the universities represented at the first NHCC meeting, Auckland University was represented by Russell Stone (who also wore the hat of the New Zealand History

Table 2: Those who attended the first NHCC meeting/s and the organisation they represented.¹⁴⁸

Name	Institution	Organisation
David Gledhill	Naenae College	PPTA
Don Hamilton	Christ's College	AHISS
Russell Stone	Auckland University	NZHA
Robin Gwynn	Massey University	UEB
Gresham Poole	Auckland University	SCEB
Erik Olssen	Otago University	Universities
Colin Davis	Victoria University	Universities
Clyde Downes	Auckland University	Teachers Colleges
Cynthia Shaw	Correspondence School	Teachers
Marcia Stensen	Lynfield College, Auckland	Teachers
Bill Rushbrook	Western Heights, Rotorua	Teachers
Bruce Cathro	Kaikorai Valley, Dunedin	Teachers
Myra Kunowski	Avonside Girls High, Christchurch Teachers College	Teachers
Harvey McQueen		Department of Education
Peter Whitelock		Department of Education

The National History Curriculum Committee: Its Work and Aims

The NHCC held revision meetings between the periods June 20, 1983 to March, 1987. Its first meeting was held at the Lopdell Centre, North Shore, Auckland 20–24 June, 1983 and was facilitated by CDD History curriculum official Peter Whitelock. The objectives of the first meeting were to examine the findings of the Needs Survey conducted earlier in the year, receive

Association) and Gresham Poole, Massey by Robin Gwynn, Otago by Erik Olssen and Colin Davis from Victoria.

¹⁴⁸ Lineham files, National History Curriculum Committee (NHCC Newsletter, Number 5), 1983.

submissions from NHCC members, and to plan courses of action and identify responsibilities.¹⁴⁹

Survey of Needs

As noted earlier, the Survey of Needs was designed to gather information on senior History in secondary schools and on teacher and student perceptions of existing courses in Forms 5–7 History.¹⁵⁰ As a result of this process, the committee was able to identify a range of important issues and resolved to consult further with teachers. With regard to the Form 5 History curriculum, the most pressing issues identified were whether: to reduce the number of themes to be examined; the pairing of topics should be split?; topics be confined to the twentieth century?; the committee be more aware of multicultural needs? The committee also wanted to determine what were the present inadequacies and future needs and constraints in resources?¹⁵¹ To assist them in addressing these issues, the committee prepared a set of discussion papers¹⁵² for wider dissemination, and suggested further research be undertaken. It was an approach that provided the committee with the opportunity to signal its initial thinking on a range of issues to stakeholders

¹⁴⁹ *ibid*, 1.

¹⁵⁰ At the first meeting the committee (a standard reference to the NHCC) were able to consider survey returns, receive submissions from its own members, and hear submissions from the PPTA, AHISS, UEB, and history associations.

¹⁵¹ The committee also wanted to know if there were pressing needs requiring immediate changes and if so, how quickly could that be achieved, and could they precede the emergence of the final curriculum if it was deemed necessary?¹⁵¹

¹⁵² NHCC Newsletter, Number 5, 1983, 3. The papers were: the place of History in the curriculum; the role of History in meeting the needs of its constituents; the framework for a statement of aims and objectives; aims and objectives; objectives, understanding and skills; Form 5 proposals, Form 6 proposals, Form 7 proposals, and draft guidelines for local history.

and stimulated further discussion, provided an opportunity for feedback, and encouraged further proposals and additional submissions.

Table 3: Survey of Needs sent to New Zealand Secondary Schools in 1983.¹⁵³

F5 QUESTIONNAIRE	Approve	Approve with Reservations	Disapprove	Comment
6. Draft aims and objectives	47	5	0	A
7. Reducing content How many teachers favour the following options:				
<i>a.</i> Reduce examinable content of topics within present framework of four themes, 8 topics	144	31	61	A
<i>b.</i> Reduce examinable content and reduce minimum themes studied from four to three.	62	36	129	D?
<i>c.</i> Reduce examinable content and break pairing of topics to themes so that only 6–7 topics need be studied.	127	44	83	A?
8. Introducing new content Indicate the number of teachers approving or disapproving				
<i>a.</i> Indonesia be dropped and Sukarno be replaced by Martin Luther King	196	29	40	A
<i>b.</i> Britain be dropped and be replaced by Australia 1931–75 under the government theme	114	45	73	–
<i>c.</i> Some new themes be introduced : Please specify below:	32	21	52	–
9. Changing dates Some dates would be modified to ensure an appropriate emphasis	185	45	10	A

Key: A = definite approval A? = possible approval D = definite disapproval – balanced viewpoint

¹⁵³ Lineham files.

Survey Shortcomings

The survey proved vital to the deliberations of the NHCC, because it gave them a snapshot of the numbers of students taking History regionally and nationally. However, it exposed one glaring shortcoming which tends to skew the results. While the feedback of teachers on courses and content was invaluable, there is no evidence that students were surveyed. This thesis argues that the teacher-only response is overly optimistic. The data indicates that 79.5% of respondents were generally satisfied with the Form 5 course, while 98.5% were satisfied with the aims and objectives of the course. Yet, History as a subject in secondary schools throughout the nation was in decline. It would have been an interesting exercise to compare student responses using the same survey, or something very similar, as Whitelock had requested in his letter to schools. Attempts to ascertain a definitive answer as to why this never happened resulted in an empty field of research. People from the time simply could not give an account of why students were not surveyed.

Fortunately, there is one statistic that more accurately reflects one possible reason for the decline. Of the teachers surveyed, only 59.9% were satisfied with the content for Form 5 History topics. Additional comments were also critical of the short length of time in which to teach detailed content over several topics. Reading between the lines, and in the absence of an

explanation, this thesis contends that the almost 60/40 split reflects a changing of the guard; that is, by 1983 while many of the post-WWII teachers were still teaching history and happy with the curriculum status quo, it seems reasonable to suggest that there were now a significant number of the new generation teachers (as noted earlier) who wanted change. This split therefore reflects a period of change; the transition from the old guard to the new guard of history teacher, at a reasonably well advanced stage.

Deliberations and Decisions

Throughout the review process, the NHCC issued a series of newsletters to keep stakeholders informed of its progress and to provide a written forum for issues to be discussed. At the same time, a series of meetings were held throughout the country where members of the NHCC met with teachers to hear their views on the issues raised in the newsletters or through submissions.¹⁵⁴ In response to these issues and the findings of the Needs Survey, the committee decided to concentrate on long-term developments, feeling that short-term changes would only complicate curriculum revision.¹⁵⁵ Woods recalls that, 'this was the prevailing direction of the Curriculum Development Division of the Department of Education at the time. The Division was being 'steered' to develop curriculum with broader directives

¹⁵⁴ Meetings were held throughout the country and the views of teachers considered at a second meeting, (28 November–2 December, 1983) and a third meeting (18–22 June, 1984). A fourth meeting was also held at Lopdell House 4–8 February, 1985.

¹⁵⁵ NHCC Newsletter, Number 6, 1984, 2.

such as skills, values, and attitudes; and (more) coherent/cohesive content over the years being covered.¹⁵⁶ The committee also felt that any major changes should be phased in to enable teachers to consider implications and to develop resources.¹⁵⁷

Aims and Objectives

A carefully crafted overarching preamble as a basis for history revision of the Form 5–7 curriculum was an important feature to emerge from the early NHCC meetings. Included in the preamble was a summary of the committee's aims, a succinct statement of the purpose of History in the curriculum, a summary of the importance of developing the skills of History, and finally, a brief statement claiming that 'the knowledge and skills of history are necessary for people living in a multicultural society undergoing rapid change,' and that 'history integrates the understanding of such changes.'¹⁵⁸

Aims and objectives specific to Form 5–7 history were also established. For Form 5, these included the need to help students further their historical understanding of some major trends and developments in New Zealand society and elsewhere; understand people of the past in their context; build on the skills of historical inquiry and interpretation introduced in social studies; and to help students to present ideas and information in logical,

¹⁵⁶ David Wood email to author, 09/07/13.

¹⁵⁷ *ibid*, 2.

¹⁵⁸ NHCC Newsletter, Number 6, 1984, 5.

coherent, and varied forms.¹⁵⁹ The committee also included information gathering, information processing and presentation as the three types of skills they wanted students to develop. They considered the three skills were interrelated and would develop their research, comprehension, critical thinking, and their oral, visual, and written presentation skills.¹⁶⁰

A Logical Starting Point

The initial focus of the NHCC was the Form 5 syllabus, because it was logically the least contentious of all the areas and given that 79.5% of respondents were happy with the Form 5 syllabus, the committee suggested few changes at this level.¹⁶¹ The focus then was limited to the reduction of content, the reduction of themes, the introduction of new themes, the pairing of topics, topic changes, and New Zealand and 20th century content.¹⁶² Once the committee had decided on themes, some of which were already being taught in schools, it began to introduce new thoughts and ideas that reflected their personal interests, political orientation, and humanitarian concerns. Several teachers on the committee were interested in BCR, and they met together and constructed an outline which was then 'presented to the NHCC who then queried and refined it, added to it, questioned the detail, and when

¹⁵⁹ *ibid*, 5–7.

¹⁶⁰ *ibid*, 7.

¹⁶¹ NHCC Newsletter, Number 6, 1984, 16.

¹⁶² *ibid*, 16–ff.

satisfied, approved of it.¹⁶³ Sometimes these small working groups would frequently co-opt people from universities to draw on their expertise.

Rosonowski recalls:

There was a desire to introduce some new more recent topics. Black Civil Rights was inherently interesting because Martin Luther King Jr was a heroic, inspiring, international figure and the story of black struggle had a trajectory of prejudice, discrimination, drama, struggle, tragedy and seeming (i.e., a legal if not completely social) victory.¹⁶⁴

The driving impulse of virtually everyone was to create a syllabus that would hopefully attract more students to History; the CRM was considered a recent and relevant topic. Initially, the intention of the committee was to couple Martin Luther King Jr as a new topic with Mao Tse-tung under the *Leadership* theme. The consensus at the time was that students found President Sukarno (the President of Indonesia) difficult and irrelevant.¹⁶⁵ By contrast, it was felt that King was an interesting and inspiring personality to study and the issue of racism, were of continuing relevance and importance, and that suitable resources were already available in many schools.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶³ Wood interview 03/11/12.

¹⁶⁴ Email from John Rosanowski to the author, 29/10/12.

¹⁶⁵ NHCC, Newsletter #6, 20–21.

¹⁶⁶ *ibid*, 21.

It must be noted, however, that the inclusion of BCR in the Form 5 syllabus, though well supported by several on the NHCC, was not assured. By 1986, the committee had coupled *BCR* with *Women in Health in New Zealand 1915–1985*; BCR because it was recent and relevant, and because there was a very strong group on the NHCC interested in the topic and they cohered together; *Women in Health*, because it was right on the cutting edge at that stage, as it was one of the great talking points at that particular time (1980s)¹⁶⁷ and there was concern that the current conception of history was preoccupied with history written by men and about men's experiences.

With little emphasis on presenting women as active, contributing participants in society, the NHCC felt the need to adjust the Form 5 conception of history to encompass the totality of society. This meant including women and viewing the past through their eyes, not just that of political leaders. Logically, this required placing greater emphasis on social history, something that was achieved by coupling BCR with *Women in Health*, under the theme, *Social Change*. The decision was aided by the fact there was a range of different women, including several teachers, most notably Myra Kunowski, and one from most of the universities on the committee. While not quite equal in representation, it was as wide a group of women as any history committee had ever had up until that stage.¹⁶⁸ Their interest in women's

¹⁶⁷ Wood interview 03/11/12.

¹⁶⁸ *ibid.*

studies also meant that they had an interest in BCR; the coupling of the two topics was a logical development of the Form 5 curriculum. It helped that the NHCC was left-leaning in their political orientation and inherently sympathetic to minority groups and the marginalised. Kunowski recalls:

I could be wrong but I thought it was just that there was general agreement it was a good area of world history that would appeal to Year 11s, a topical, interesting story line, with charismatic figures. I can't remember any philosophical underlying reason for its inclusion being debated.¹⁶⁹

The second reason for the inclusion of BCR was the political orientation of the NHCC. BCR was being espoused by people who wanted change and who sought change, particularly on behalf of under-represented groups in current conception of history in the early 1980s. It helped too, that university History departments, particularly those in Auckland, Victoria, and Otago were largely staffed by people with left-wing political allegiances; people like Keith Sinclair, Robert Chapman, Barry Gustafson, Michael Bassett, and Jonathan Hunt; Auckland in particular was well known for being left-wing. This meant there was a natural inclination to espouse the interests of left-wing politics,

¹⁶⁹ Email from Myra Kunowski to the author, 11/12/12.

and the Black Civil Rights Movement was one of these areas.¹⁷⁰ Woods remembers:

Most on the committee were left-wing, with very few sympathetic to more conservative politics. The natural inclination of this particular syllabus committee was to support those types of causes [Black Civil Rights and women's studies] to change the education system in New Zealand in that regard. It was also felt that this was where the interest of students was and very good history teaching could take place in these particular subject areas. That was the primary focus.¹⁷¹

The third major reason for the Black Civil Rights/Women in Health coupling was the strongly humanitarian orientation of those on the NHCC. This not only reflected the influence of the university committee members had attended or worked at, but also the fact that some came from relatively poor families, went through university with little, and valued the work of the Labour party during the Depression.¹⁷² Again, Wood recalls:

There were a number on the committee who came from groups that you would expect to espouse such interest; Christian groups, other groups of that nature, and we looked to people like Gandhi,

¹⁷⁰ Modified from Wood interview, 03/11/12.

¹⁷¹ *ibid.*

¹⁷² *ibid.*

Nelson Mandela, Martin Luther King Jnr; in our own country we would look to the young Maori Party, and would very much espouse Aparana Ngata. These were men, and at times women, we looked to, who had stood up for human rights, the ones who were lacking political power, and had against the odds, had achieved remarkable things. And our natural inclination was not to just espouse these people, but to see these people as good models for students and others in the curriculum.¹⁷³

Among this liberal humanitarian group on the NHCC there was also an acknowledgement that while there are different strands in New Zealand history, there is a strong strand that stretches back to our country's origins, both European and Maori, of coming to a relatively undeveloped country where there was no class system or structures, as we understand them, compared to that of more sophisticated Western societies which developed ranks of people in different ways. New Zealand's sense of egalitarian values was an important factor in the shaping of conceptions of history during the 1980s. Wood comments:

We've inherited as a result of this background, both a distain for such ranks and a determination that everybody is relatively equal or should have at least equal opportunity. We tend to have a

¹⁷³ *ibid.*

natural support for the underdogs of society, to give them an opportunity.¹⁷⁴

Anecdotal evidence indicates that teachers are more purposeful in making this link today than they were when BCR was first introduced. In part, this can be explained by the greater acceptance of, and concern for dealing with racial issues; within education it is acknowledged as a legitimate paralleling between the racial issues in the U.S. with those in New Zealand.

Concerns and Criticism

The process of change is often accompanied by huge challenges. Sometimes these challenges can be anticipated, often they cannot. Few would doubt the revision of the senior History curriculum throughout the 1980s was a huge undertaking, made the more so by the presence of regional parochialism and the proclivity of individual teachers. Tension was inevitable; the anecdotal evidence indicates there were often lively, sometimes heated, discussions over the proposed changes. While the degree of criticism varied from concern to highly critical,¹⁷⁵ there were particular issues that kept reoccurring.

For the purposes of this thesis, the most notable concerns were to do with the need to reduce the content, the number of themes to be taught from four to

¹⁷⁴ *ibid.*

¹⁷⁵ One teacher commented: 'I am astonished by the disorganised approach; I am shocked by the lack of vision and imagination amongst those who should be the leaders of their profession; I am appalled by the prospect of having to teach some of the proposed topics. As things stand, an unparalleled opportunity has been lost.' I did not see any advantage in identifying this teacher even though their name is in the public domain for making this comment. I was more concerned to note the sentiment.

three, the number of topics from eight to six; and finally, the need for improved consultation between the NHCC and teachers.

On the issue of how many themes should be included in the History curriculum, many reasoned that less was better than more because the number of compulsory themes impinged on the issue of content. Common sense argued that a reduction in the number of themes from four to three would address this issue. With the exception of the Auckland History Teachers' Association, which strongly favoured the reducing of content but within the existing framework of four themes, eight topics, the general consensus from history groups around the country was to reduce the number of themes.¹⁷⁶

The issues were clearly contentious, and for many, became disconcertingly personal. While some individuals and associations felt demands needed to be made, others responded by demeaning their colleagues.¹⁷⁷ From the minutes of the History in-service course held at Hasting Boys' High School on 28 September, 1984, it is clear that advocates of the three theme, six topic option, took umbrage at the often expressed sentiment by their colleagues, that the inability to complete a course in the time allotted reflected on their lack of

¹⁷⁶ Wanganui History Teacher's Meeting, 13 June, 1984. In some cases, the views on this were unequivocal. For example, the Wanganui History teachers meeting passed a resolution, 'That this meeting demands that the school certificate prescription require the study of only three themes in view of the fact it is impossible to do justice to the present four themes in the teaching time that schools have available.'

¹⁷⁷ History In-service Report, Hastings Boys' High School, 28 September, 1984,1.

professional competency and lack of organisation.¹⁷⁸ The slighting of their colleagues in this way is indicative to how emotional charged and emotive people's reactions had become.

The Complex Nature of Change

In part, these concerns and criticisms reflect the complex nature of change and the teacher's place in, and reaction to, the process by which change is achieved. First, teachers tend, rightly or wrongly, to be resentful of change that is imposed 'from on high,' especially if their perception is that the consultation process has been inadequate. In particular they resent any perceived assault on their subject area or questioning of their ability to teach.

Secondly, teachers are concerned with the recent emphasis of using statistical analysis to measure student achievement, gauge programme delivery, and determine teacher competency. Clearly the use of public funds in education means teachers have to be accountable. The Hawthorne Effect¹⁷⁹ indicates that when people are measured against criteria that keeps them accountable, it lifts their performance. The downside, to paraphrase Einstein, is that not everything that matters can be measured, and not everything that can be measured, matters.¹⁸⁰ It is an anomaly then, that in this complex modern age,

¹⁷⁸ *ibid*, 1.

¹⁷⁹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hawthorne_effect: The Hawthorne effect is a form of reactivity whereby subjects improve or modify an aspect of their behaviour being experimentally measured simply in response to the fact that they know they are being studied, not in response to any particular experimental manipulation.

¹⁸⁰ *ibid*.

teachers, in addition to being educators, are being asked to be mentors, counsellors, and social workers, yet this is seemingly ignored when their effectiveness as teachers is being gauged.

Thirdly, there will always be some teachers who resist or seek to absolve themselves from the need to change. They argue, with a degree of logic, that student needs are best served when teachers are able to teach to their strengths. This argument is often supported and sustained with reference to examination results; the ensuing logic is 'why rock the boat if it ain't broke?' One result of this attitude is that teachers simply do not see the need to stay on the cutting edge of new scholarship and recent trends of interpretation. As noted before, this attitude is indicative of those teachers who have forgotten what teaching history is all about; instead of being at the coal face of new scholarship and recent trends of interpretation, they retreated into academic and intellectual hibernation from which there may be no immediate awakening.

Fourthly, meaningful change takes time and energy and some teachers, regardless of their passion for their subject, feel they have as much on their plate as they can cope with. Anecdotally, teachers are frustrated by increased administrative demands that distract and diminish their ability to read and reflect around the topics they teach, or to prepare lesson plans and classroom activities that engage students in learning. The reality for many teachers is

that the very thing they desire, time to be effective classroom teachers, is denied.

Confidence and Concerns

While Form 7 proved more contentious and problematic, Peter Lineham, now associate professor at Massey University, Auckland, and a co-opted member of the NHCC, was cautiously optimistic that the changes to the Form 5 conception of History were 'well timed,' especially given current concerns over declining numbers, and were 'quite a good introduction to the contemporary world.'¹⁸¹ He also acknowledged the value of the new theme of *Social Change* and noted that the identification of skills objectives 'represented a very important advance which will be valuable in promoting the value of the subject.'¹⁸² However, Lineham expressed concern that the 'discussions did not challenge the existing structure of the course... and the changes were not radical [enough].'¹⁸³ Questions over the choice of two topics illustrating each theme and the overall range of the topics also remained a concern.¹⁸⁴

¹⁸¹ NZHA Report, #3.

¹⁸² *ibid* 3.

¹⁸³ Lineham files. Report by Peter Lineham, 1–2. The proposal to reduce the number of themes studied did not meet with general support. In other words, teachers were expected to teach four themes from the several available, and that two topics would be included in each theme.

¹⁸⁴ *ibid* 2.

Table 4: Form 5 (Year 11) School Certificate History Topics 1975–1988

<p style="text-align: center;">1975 Students studied 4 themes</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">1982 Students studied 4 themes</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">1988 Students studied 3 themes</p>
<p>Social Welfare: New Zealand since 1891 USA 1932–64</p> <p>Cultural Interaction: New Zealand 1911–1975 South Africa 1919–1961 Economic Development New Zealand 1918–1980 Japan 1918–1970</p> <p>International Relations: New Zealand and the World 1945–1980 Origins of World War II 1919–1941</p> <p>Leadership: China 1921–1949 Indonesia 1945–1967</p> <p>Conflict: a) Ireland 1910–1949 b) Palestine/Israel 1945–1967</p> <p>Government: Britain 1931–1951 USSR 1924–1957</p>	<p>Social Welfare: New Zealand since 1891–1975 USA 1932–64</p> <p>Cultural Interaction: New Zealand 1911–1975 South Africa 1919–1961</p> <p>Economic Development: New Zealand 1918–1980 Japan 1918–1970</p> <p>International Relations: New Zealand and the World 1945–1980 Origins of World War II 1919–1941</p> <p>Leadership: China 1921–1949 Indonesia 1945–1967</p> <p>Conflict: a) Ireland 1910–1949 b) Palestine/Israel 1945–1967</p> <p>Government: Britain 1931–1951 USSR 1924–1957</p>	<p>Social Welfare: New Zealand since 1891–1980 USA 1932–64</p> <p>Race Relations: New Zealand 1912–1980 South Africa 1938–1976</p> <p>Economic Development: New Zealand 1918–1980 Japan 1918–1970</p> <p>International Relations: New Zealand and the World 1945–1980* Origins of World War II 1919–1941*</p> <p>Leadership: China 1921–1949 <i>USSR 1924–1957 (1)</i></p> <p>Conflict: a) Ireland 1909–1922 b) Palestine/Israel 1935–1967</p> <p>Social Change: <i>Women’s Impact on New Zealand Society: Health 1915–85 (1)</i> Black Civil Rights in the USA 1954–1970*</p>

Note. *Italics*: new topics in 1988; **Bold/*** = three most widely taught topics in 2005.

Conclusion

Examining the past offers insights to understanding the present and planning for the future. As a subject, History will always face the challenge of finding its way in the present market-driven environment. To avoid a decline in student interest similar to that of 1974–1982, and in particular, to enhance student interest in BCR, it is imperative that those responsible for developing and teaching conceptions of BCR history initiate innovative pre-emptory

measures. The average student taking Year 11–13 History is sophisticated and intelligent; they have to be to make their way in an increasingly complex world. It is to their detriment, and that of society, to regard them as anything less; hence the title of this thesis, 'A Movement Reconsidered,' is a bold approach, an invitation, an open letter, for the current conceptions of BCR history to be revised. In his book *Invisible Man*, Ralph Waldo Ellison writes:

The white folk have newspapers, magazines, radios, spokesmen [curriculum and textbooks] to get their ideas across. If they want to tell the world a lie, they can tell it so well it becomes the truth; and if I tell them that you're lying, they'll tell the world even if you prove you're telling the truth. Because it's the kind of lie they want to hear.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸⁵ Ralph Ellison. *Invisible Man*. (New York: The Modern Library, 1947), 141.

Chapter 4

The Form 5 (Year 11) History Curriculum 1989 to 2013

Unfortunately the most recent iteration of the curriculum, 2007, has siloed history off into a kind of odd little corner.

Philippa Hunter

Introduction

In policy-making, conceptions of what constitutes history in the secondary school curriculum involve competing ideologies.¹⁸⁶ As discourses in practice, these ideologies act to co-construct distinctive forms of history in the national curriculum.¹⁸⁷ This chapter examines conceptions of BCR history at Form 5 (now Year 11), and the impact of policy reforms and contestable curriculum development issues¹⁸⁸ from 1989 to 2013. A cursory examination of the *The National Curriculum Framework of New Zealand (NZCF)*¹⁸⁹ is made to provide a historical context in which to understand the implementation and impact of the *New Zealand Curriculum (NZC)* History. The primary focus of the chapter, as elsewhere in this thesis, is not the *NZCF* or the *NZC*, but rather the content used for the teaching and learning of BCR history, and how that content impacts on teaching and learning history in New Zealand secondary schools.

¹⁸⁶ Philippa Hunter. Negotiating discourses in play in New Zealand's History curriculum: Shaping critical pedagogy in teacher education. *Curriculum Perspectives: (Journal Edition, 3 (3), 11–24)*, 1. Chapter sent to author by email. Therefore, page numbers do not relate to journal page numbers.

¹⁸⁷ *ibid*, 1.

¹⁸⁸ *ibid*, 1.

¹⁸⁹ <http://nzcurriculum.tki.org.nz>.

Educational Restructuring Since 1987

Between 1984 and 1993, New Zealand underwent radical economic reform. Known as 'Rogernomics' after the Finance Minister Roger Douglas, the reforms moved New Zealand from being one of the most protected, regulated, and state-dominated systems of any capitalist democracy, to an extreme position at the open, competitive, free-market end of the spectrum.¹⁹⁰

When the National Government led by Jim Bolger was elected to power in 1990, they continued the neo-liberal reforms initiated by their predecessors. The reforms were based on an ideological assumption that education is a private not a public good, it facilitates middle-class capture, is inefficient, expensive, cumbersome, captured by teachers for their advantage, and excludes parents.¹⁹¹ Driven primarily by Treasury and the State Services Commission, the restructuring involved rationalising the costly and inefficient education bureaucracy, eliminating the 'provider capture' of the teacher unions over education policy and practice, and increasing parental voice and choice.¹⁹² This meant opening education to a market-driven model that was touted by the government as more equitable.¹⁹³

¹⁹⁰ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fourth_Labour_Government_of_New_Zealand#Education

¹⁹¹ O'Neill, *Mapping the Field*, 35.

¹⁹² Jane Kelsey. *The New Zealand Experiment*. (Auckland University Press, 1997), 219.

¹⁹³ The groundwork for these changes was done by the Picot review of education in 1987.

The new regime, known as Tomorrow's Schools, was introduced by the Education Act 1989,¹⁹⁴ and reinforces Hunter's contention that 'Educational policies are ideological and purpose-orientated, and reflect socio-economic and political influences in time and place.'¹⁹⁵ The ideological restructuring and the role of education intensified, as people were encouraged to embrace the reconstruction of a new economically driven culture and society.¹⁹⁶ The Minister of Education, Lockwood Smith, placed the reform of curriculum at the centre of the reconstruction directly under his control.¹⁹⁷

For History, there were a number of consequences. The first was the curtailing of some NHCC initiatives and the dismantling of the CDD. The second was that 'History's curriculum and assessment goals appear to take on a life of their own, as regulations and procedures trickle-down as policy decisions'¹⁹⁸ that maintain a frozen in time conception of BCR history. This is problematic, because the social, political, and cultural notions as expressed and represented in a classical/master conception of BCR history, work to construct internal rules of formation.¹⁹⁹ Hunter explains how this leads to the retention of a frozen in time rendering of BCR history:

¹⁹⁴ <http://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/1989/0080/latest/DLM175959.html>

¹⁹⁵ Hunter, *Curriculum Perspectives*, 5.

¹⁹⁶ O'Neill, *Mapping the Field*, 37.

¹⁹⁷ *ibid*, 37.

¹⁹⁸ Hunter, *Curriculum Perspectives*, 5.

¹⁹⁹ *ibid*, 5.

Discursive practice or *production* refers to self-texts as internalised and active processes by which cultural meanings are understood and produced, History teachers take on discursive positions that play out in the pedagogy their students engage in. The cultural theorist Joe Kinscheloe viewed discursive practices as ‘a set of tacit rules that regulate what can and cannot be said, who can speak with the blessing of authority, [usually elite whites with regard to BCR] and who must listen.’²⁰⁰

A third consequence was the exclusion of teachers from curriculum development. It was a decision based on the belief that teachers have a particular way of doing things and wanting things that is ultimately in their interests and not necessarily in the interest of the country, or even parents, or the business community. Wood recalls:

Under NHCC the main emphasis was to have links with schools and colleges of education who worked closely with the inspectorate and universities. In contrast the newly created Ministry of Education, and in particular, the new Minister of Education, Lockwood Smith, held the view that teachers had captured the curriculum out of self-serving interests. I was told

²⁰⁰ *ibid*, 5.

that my job now was to look to Treasury, the Ministry of Labour and the Minister himself.²⁰¹

Wood's reflection of Lockwood Smith's comments, with its trademark attack on education and teachers, mirror what has become the everyday rhetoric of proponents of the marketisation of education in New Zealand. This view is unremitting in laying the blame for educational failure, be it policy or pedagogy, at the feet of teachers and other professional educators. Advocates of right-leaning ideology believe that educational decline can only be arrested through the implementation of market-driven reforms that promoted the notion, 'that private is the sphere of smooth-running and efficient organisation, of autonomy and individual choices... [whereas the public is viewed as] out of control, messy, heterogeneous.'²⁰²

The major criticism of the devolutionary educational reforms of the late 1980s and 1990s was that successive governments had divested themselves of responsibility and accountability for the delivery of educational services.²⁰³ While these devolutionary reforms were considered radical by those within education, the innovations were more structural than anything else; they did not have any bearing on the content used to teach and learn BCR. Hunter believes the reforms resulted in curriculum tensions that act to discursively position, and possibly serve to 'capture' teachers' and students' historical

²⁰¹ Amended from Wood interview 03/11/12.

²⁰² Apple, *Official Knowledge*, xxiv.

²⁰³ Kelsey. *The New Zealand Experiment*, 222.

thinking.’²⁰⁴ With the exception of a few innovative teachers who sourced and utilised alternative/counter-narratives that had begun to emerge during the period, most teachers retained the conservative status quo, frozen in time classical/master-narrative conception of BCR. It is little surprise then, that Hunter claims that ‘the History curriculum with New Zealand educational policy contexts is no chance or benign positioning.’²⁰⁵ Citing Schneider and Ingram (1997), Hunter also contends that:

Policy makers’ visions of a History curriculum for New Zealand’s citizens in the making, are articulated in policies that describe ‘someone’s hope for the way something should be... revealed through various texts, practices and discourses that define and deliver these values.’²⁰⁶

Hunter’s point is that policy-making decisions serve to construct the nature and intent of a History curriculum as embodied in officially sanctioned documentation and schooling cultures of pedagogy. Policy decisions also influence teachers’ professional and private history theorising.²⁰⁷

The National Curriculum Framework of New Zealand

By the mid-1990s, having dismantled and decentralised the educational bureaucracy, the National Government with Lockwood Smith at the helm of

²⁰⁴ Hunter, *Curriculum Perspectives*, 1.

²⁰⁵ *ibid*, 1.

²⁰⁶ *ibid*, 1.

²⁰⁷ *ibid*, 2.

the newly formed Ministry of Education (1989), began to further reassert its control by introducing an outcomes-based, conservatively orientated curriculum framework in April 1993.²⁰⁸ Known as *The National Curriculum Framework of New Zealand (NZCF)*, this politically contentious model encased a core group of subjects in learning areas as an overarching structure.²⁰⁹

Hunter also notes that since the subject construction of history has been placed in the *NZCF*'s broad conception of social sciences 'many experienced teachers view social contexts, or history's link to society in the present, as contrary to their perceptions of history's integrity.

The result is that History has struggled with its identity in the national curriculum.²¹⁰ Hunter's point is important because the alternative/counter-narrative conception of BCR history in the Academy acknowledges History's 'socially constructed and narrative nature'²¹¹ and is deeply committed to making meaningful links from the past to the present for 21st century students.

The contention of this case study, is that a frozen in time rendering of BCR history actually undermines the curriculum's goal to achieve this and is in

²⁰⁸ Advocates of the new NZCF promoted the new innovation as a, 'Seamless education system that would operate through a qualifications framework which allowed people to build up credentials throughout their lives.'

²⁰⁹ David Wood email to author, 09/07/13. The status quo was retained by the NZCF. The seven learning areas were the compulsory learning for all students from entrance through to the end of Year 10, or Form 4. I confess that I sought to persuade the Minister to extend the compulsory band to the end of Year 11, or Form 5, but he opposed that recommendation, as did, I suspect, most of my colleagues in the Ministry.

²¹⁰ Hunter, *Curriculum Perspectives*, 4.

²¹¹ *ibid*, 4.

stark contrast to the American, National History Center (NHC), which strongly endorses history's social purpose in lives: 'History is inherently the study of how societies are constituted, and how people conduct themselves in society, always a chronological perspective, and recognising that these things change over time.'²¹²

Clearly this approach to the teaching and learning of BCR history is more complex and challenging; it is inherently more sophisticated, and perhaps explains why social and ideological concerns are avoided in present conceptions of BCR history; it also supports this thesis' contention that BCR history, employing alternative/counter-narratives would be better suited to Year 12–13 students.

A later corollary of the new framework at secondary level was the implementation between 2002 and 2004 of the National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA)²¹³ which continues to dominate pedagogy and student learning.'²¹⁴ Abbiss notes that these curriculum developments reflected new educational ideas, the ultimate goal of which was to 'better meet the needs of learners in the 21st century.'²¹⁵ It is an approach that follows an international trend over the last decade that is based on the notion that

²¹² *ibid*, 4.

²¹³ <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/qualifications-standards/qualifications/ncea/understanding-ncea/the-facts/factsheet-1/>

²¹⁴ O'Neill, *Mapping the Field*, 39.

²¹⁵ Jane Abbiss. Social sciences in the New Zealand Curriculum: Mixed Messages, *Curriculum Matters*, Ed, Carol Mutch, 118–137 (Wellington: NZCER PRESS, 7:2011), 120.

'educational change is seen as an integral and necessary part of a social transition from modernity and life in an industrial age, to post modernity in a knowledge age and a complex, globalised world.'²¹⁶ From a teacher perspective, these new educational ideas could be then interpreted (perverted or subverted) and enacted by teachers in schools.

For the purposes of this thesis, the major innovation of the *New Zealand Curriculum Framework* in 1993 was the amalgamation of subjects under the broad disciplinary umbrella of social sciences. A feature of this innovation was that the social sciences learning area was structured around four conceptual strands (Identity, Culture, and Organisation; Place and Environment; Continuity and Change; The Economic World, and reinforced by the curriculum achievement objectives (AOs) for each subject area, (social studies, history, geography, economics, and environmental studies).

The National Curriculum Revision: 2003–2007

In the midst of full implementation of the NCEA assessment system by 2004, the History curriculum underwent further policy development.²¹⁷ Feedback from schools had resulted in the Ministry of Education undertaking a stocktake of the curriculum and 'a claim that the NZC revision would be a iterative process.'²¹⁸ Hunter notes however that, 'despite this claim, teachers contracted to revise the History curriculum, appear to have rejected previous

²¹⁶ *ibid*, 120.

²¹⁷ Hunter, *Curriculum Perspectives*, 11

²¹⁸ *ibid*, 11. NZ MoE, 2004.

curriculum policies that had supported history's social, cultural, and gendered points of reference.'²¹⁹

What Hunter describes is policy and curriculum retrogression, and in part, explains why the Ministry of Education's consultation around history in the social sciences was 'fraught with tension.'²²⁰ Factors contributing to the tension described are that many teachers' qualifications and training reflect the traditions and approaches of 1970s–1980s academic history, and that their discursive practice/production rejects History's location in the social sciences learning area.²²¹

Modernist and exclusive citizenship discourses of history dominated the CMP consultation with groups. As a result, the cultural reproduction of established history pedagogies and power relationships in schools acted to maintain traditional claims to examination-based history knowledge.²²²

Significantly none of these curriculum reforms that were revised and published in late 2007 and implemented in schools in 2010, impacted on the content used to teach and learn BCR in New Zealand secondary schools; in other words, while the *NZCF* and the *NZC* was supposedly structurally

²¹⁹ *ibid*, 12.

²²⁰ *ibid*, 12.

²²¹ *ibid*, 17.

²²² *ibid*, 12.

innovative and representing a fresh start, the same cannot be said of the content used to teach BCR. As Hunter notes:

Whilst the 2007 NZC social sciences learning area remains informed by socio-cultural and social constructivist thinking, the 1993 NZCF's conception of social sciences that resonated with postcolonial, gendered and postmodern thinking, are diminished... These discourses had opened up possibilities for critical pedagogy around expansive conceptions of culture, acknowledgement of social inequalities, and indigenous histories.²²³

A Site of Contestation

As an official curriculum created within specific political and social contexts, and informed by different disciplinary traditions, the NZC social sciences learning area is a site of contestation over what constitutes valuable knowledge and what learning should entail within different subjects.²²⁴ Over the last two and a bit decades (1989–2011) the educational reforms and policy mechanisms indicative of the right-leaning conservative restoration (and the beliefs of national leaders)²²⁵ have been used to embed social efficiency discourses and standards compliance to regulate classroom pedagogy.²²⁶

²²³ *ibid*, 12.

²²⁴ Abbiss, *Curriculum Matters*, 118.

²²⁵ David Wood email to author, 09/07/13.

²²⁶ Hunter, *Curriculum Matters*, 48.

Hence, the current conception of BCR history, like the New Zealand secondary curriculum, is 'a site of cultural (re)production complete with language,²²⁷ and traditions' that are frozen in time, but which continue to inform teacher and learning in the classroom. Wood also adds:

Despite further education statements and reforms issued by the Government (through the Ministry of Education and NZQA) since the launch of the *NZC* in 1993, there has been no (committed) attempt to review the History syllabus and its related examination prescriptions. As a result, the History syllabus remains (one of) the oldest unrevised curriculum subject statement(s) from the days of the pre-*Tomorrow Schools* Department of Education. Possible causes for no revision could be (i) comparatively little criticism from History teachers, associations and university departments; (ii) general high level of acceptance by schools, community and university History departments; (iii) recognition that it was, at the time, one of the clearest and progressive statements of contemporary educational thought in the Department of Education; (iv) other developments, such as *NZC* achievements and objectives and unit standards, which have 'compensated' for syllabus change.

²²⁷ Hunter, *Curriculum Perspectives*, 3.

It is the contention of this thesis that the contestation and negotiation so critical to curriculum development since 1993, has not been extended to the content and conceptions of history used to teach and learn BCR at Year 11 and 12 History. Furthermore, it is argued that the continuing, unquestioning reliance on traditional and conservative (classical/master-narrative) rendering of the BCR history is problematic; in its unchallenged and unchanged form the current conception of BCR history actually diminishes the aims of the NZC History. There are several compelling reasons offered in support of this view.

First, despite talk of teacher development and empowerment, and of meeting the needs unique to students in particular communities,²²⁸ the curriculum has been entirely captured by politicians and ‘backroom networks of influence’;²²⁹ including some very experienced and influential History teachers. This resulted in teachers becoming more controlled and ever more subject to administrative logics that seek to tighten the reins on the processes of teaching and curriculum.²³⁰ It was a development that left teachers openly resentful, not just because they were excluded from the process, or because the government devolved the time consuming implementation, writing of assessment units and resourcing, to schools and teachers, but because of

²²⁸ Kelsey. *The New Zealand Experiment*, 1. Market liberalisation, limited government; a narrow monetarist policy and fiscal restraint were features of the reform. Its proponents believed education should respond to the dictates of the market place and justified restructuring as a means to better meet the demands for educational equality for all children in New Zealand society.

²²⁹ Kelsey. *The New Zealand Experiment*, 223.

²³⁰ Apple, *Official Knowledge*, 114.

concerns over the ideological basis behind the changes. What many do not realise is the curriculum reflects the ideological orientation of the 'new hegemonic bloc' in what has been described as 'conservative modernisation.'²³¹ In reality they were being asked to support a neo-liberal approach to education.

To this we might add Apple's concern that 'educational policy and practice are not simply technical issues, but are *inherently* political and evaluative. They involve competing definitions of ethics and social justice.'²³² A contention of this thesis is that while not as advanced as the U.S. form of conservative restoration, the current NZC History does reflect elements of its educational and institutional ideology by its intentional and continued adherence to a classical/master-narrative conception of BCR history; a conception which is played out as a 'majestic march toward freedom and equality, a position that assumes a view of linear progress.'²³³

This thesis contends that this methodology is fundamentally flawed, because 'from a discursive stance this approach serves to sustain dominant Western male views of subjectivity, agency, and imperatives of nationalism.'²³⁴ An alternative/counter-narrative conception of BCR history challenges this

²³¹ *ibid*, xi.

²³² *ibid*, xii.

²³³ *ibid*, xii.

²³⁴ Hunter, *Curriculum Perspectives*, 6.

'modernist image of progress and history.'²³⁵ As an alternative, it seeks to disrupt traditional perspectives and to find new reference points that 'promote healthy suspiciousness of all boundary-fixing and the hidden ways in which we subordinate, exclude and marginalise.'²³⁶ Hunter acknowledges the benefit of this approach:

It enables students to move beyond the events and their assigned causes to explore their interpretation of agency or people's lived pasts. Historical agency involves people's capacity to act, and to be influential in the light of the power relations they were situated in.²³⁷

Secondly, it is flawed because not only is the event-centred approach contestable, but so too the very meanings of some of the most 'cherished concepts such as freedom and justice'²³⁸ that sit within it. As Apple notes, 'The fixing of the social meanings of such concepts does not come about without political, economic, and cultural struggle.'²³⁹ One example of this contestation is how in the decades before the Civil War, free blacks in the North reversed the white over black coupling of the United States with that of progress and freedom. Having been forcibly barred from celebrating the 4th of July, and excluded from the day in which 'We' celebrated 'Our' freedom,

²³⁵ *ibid*, 7.

²³⁶ *ibid*, 7, Hunter, citing Henry Giroux (1995).

²³⁷ Hunter, *Curriculum Perspectives*, 14.

²³⁸ *ibid* xii.

²³⁹ *ibid*, xii.

many blacks created their own alternative, anti-hegemonic, celebrations. So instead of celebrating the 4th of July, they celebrated January 1, 1808, the date on which the slave trade became illegal.

Thirdly, because right-leaning social efficiency (managerial outcomes-based compliances) curriculum discourses are market-derived and driven, they reflect outcomes-based educational cultures, systems of monitoring and surveillance, and regimes²⁴⁰ that have a strangulating effect on what constitutes official knowledge and classroom pedagogy. What this shows is that 'policy discourses of social efficiency have shaped the national History curriculum as a narrow field of objectives and assessment standards established as measurable outcomes that demand research-based evidence that teachers and their programmes are effective and sustainable.²⁴¹

One of the unsettling corollaries of this approach is that students in New Zealand are now viewed as consumers in the market place rather than as citizens in a community.²⁴² The other unsettling corollary is that experienced teachers stay with the tried and true conservative approach for teaching BCR.

Since the radical reforms first introduced in the 1980s, the blame for educational failure, as noted earlier, has been laid at the feet of teachers and other educators. The accusation has been that teachers were too autonomous;

²⁴⁰ *ibid*, 53.

²⁴¹ *ibid*, 18.

²⁴² *ibid*, xiii.

that they were motivated by self-serving interests and that they were not sufficiently accountable to the parents and community. Driven by economic modernisers, educational efficiency experts, neo-conservatives, segments of the New Right, and many working and lower-middle class parents, the reforms were justified by their concerns that their children's futures were being threatened by a school system that did not guarantee jobs.²⁴³ Wood reflects:

It is easy in hindsight to blame the NHCC for a failure to observe trends that were appearing in the world of academics in the early 1980s. I suspect that when NHCC was involved in the development stage of the syllabus (1982–1986), hardly anybody engaged in education revision and reform at that time was cognisant of such matters. The one body that did identify and communicate the need for schools and universities to address changing times and circumstances (such as declining economics and technological 'revolutionary' changes) was the OECD/CERI. Such reports, to the best of my knowledge, were not presented publically before the mid-1980s, the time when the NHCC had

²⁴³Apple, *Official Knowledge*, 114.

established its boundaries and was in the process of implementing them.²⁴⁴

Table 5: NZC: Level 6 (Year 11) History Achievement Objectives.

NZC Level and Year	Level 6 (Year 11)
<i>Students will gain knowledge, skills and experience to:</i>	
History Achievement Objective	Understand how the causes and consequences of past events that are of significance to New Zealanders shape the lives of people and society. Understand how people’s perspectives on past events that are of significance to New Zealanders.

Sustaining this approach are the NZC’s History achievement objectives that reflect an events-based contextual approach to history indicative of traditional/conservative claims to knowledge.²⁴⁵ The NHCC achievement objectives exercise was to align the Ministry of Education curriculum (syllabuses with the NZQA assessment guidelines). Those who developed the objectives were not expected to review, and certainly not to change, the curriculum (History syllabus), but to create objectives from the curriculum statements which were consistent with the assessment procedures and guidelines.²⁴⁶

As Hunter notes, ‘the history objectives, conceptualised by six achievement objectives across Levels 6–8, Years 11–13 of the social sciences curriculum

²⁴⁴ David Wood email to author, 09/07/13.

²⁴⁵ Philippa Hunter, “Disturbing history’s identity in the New Zealand curriculum to free up historical thinking,” in *Curriculum Matters*, ed Carol Mutch, 48–69 (Wellington: NZCER PRESS, 2011), 58.

²⁴⁶ David Wood email to author, 09/07/13.

embed policy and visions and decisions as anticipated History outcomes.

The problem with this approach, as Hunter makes clear, is that:

The language and tenor of the objectives enables teachers to custom and practice topics and perpetuate traditional knowledge claim. This means school History is often experienced as the reproduction of a body of disconnected experiences and transmitted facts.²⁴⁷

The flow-on effect of this is that teachers are unwittingly being asked to manage and manipulate student learning in a very simplistic product/process way.²⁴⁸ It is an imposition based on the market-driven model; Apple explains that as an educational model it is:

More tightly controlled, more closely linked to the needs of business and industry, more technically orientated, with more stress on traditional values and workplace norms and dispositions, then the problems of achievement, of unemployment, of international economic competitiveness... would disappear.²⁴⁹

This in turn has led to the redefinition of what constitutes education in terms of *what* students should learn, *how* teachers do their job, and *who* determines

²⁴⁷ Philippa Hunter, *History in the New Zealand Curriculum: Discourse Shaping and Key Competencies Possibilities, Teachers and Curriculum*. 2012, 4

²⁴⁸ Apple, *Official Knowledge*, xxii.

²⁴⁹ *ibid*, 114.

whether they are successful at doing it. It is the contention of this case study that a 'contemporary History curriculum needs to be more than objectives based about events in the past. History pedagogy also needs to engage with how what happened is constructed,'²⁵⁰ and critically, how that construction is undergoing re-assessment in the light of new scholarship and recent trends of interpretation.

While it would be unwise to summarily dismiss the market as having no meaningful contribution to make in the field of education, social sciences-orientated teachers baulk at the suggestion of having their programme and performance tested against the statistical achievements of their students, especially when the spectre of performance based pay is thrown into the mix. Anecdotally, History teachers are not necessarily resistant to being accountable, and most would concur that education has to be relevant to the needs of the market place; but they reject market place practices that they view as not being holistic and argue that there is more to education than reducing citizenship to the possessive individualism²⁵¹ of neo-liberalism.

A contention of this case study is that one of the important aims of history is to examine the past in a way that engages learners with the principles and wherewithal, to become people of substance and character, and to be able to handle 'most of life's challenging circumstances irrespective of where they sit

²⁵⁰ Hunter, *History in the NZC*, 4.

²⁵¹ Apple. *Official Knowledge*, xiii.

in relation to the market. The emphasis is on acquiring life skills, establishing values, learning to make moral and ethical decisions, and finally, to interrupt and to disturb the smooth but ultimately shallow conceptions of BCR history espoused in the classical/master-narrative. To achieve this, there is an urgent need to question the assumptions and critique the reproduced and enduring values inherent the classical/master conception of BCR history²⁵².

It is imperative that History teachers challenge the notion that the current conception of BCR history has an exclusive right to occupy the space created by conservative scholars in the U.S. and perpetuated in New Zealand. Rather, they should be encouraged to engage in an alternative/counter-narratives conception of BCR that brings the 'Outside in.'²⁵³ It is a challenge, because at another level, the level that links and then contrasts and compares U.S. history with that of New Zealand history disturbs teacher and student conceptions of history and makes them feel uncomfortable. Racial history for many is permissive so long as it is 'over there' in someone else's back yard; but to have it so close to home, and to have to engage on the issue, is an altogether different matter; often it results in confrontation avoidance; rather than encouraging students to engage and reflect on the parallel grievances visited upon the African and African-American with Maori and other

²⁵² Hunter, *History in the NZ Curriculum*, 6.

²⁵³ Apple. *Official Knowledge*, xix.

indigenous groups. The evidence suggests that some (not all) avoid the issue, consigning it to the too-hard-basket.²⁵⁴

Thirdly, the wording, 'of significance to New Zealanders' (refer to Table 5) for Level 6–8 (Years 11–13) achievement objectives, repeat and reinforce events-based contextual approaches to history that support traditional/conservative claims to knowledge.²⁵⁵ The problem is compounded further, because the wording 'of significance to New Zealanders' is not adequately explained in the *NZC History*, or the *History Learning Guide* for secondary teachers. The problem, as Hunter notes, is that the notion of 'significance' is 'not a neutral objective that can remain uncontested.'²⁵⁶ Furthermore, the concept of linking 'significance' to *events* and *New Zealanders* is also problematic because it promotes 'an exclusive New Zealand identity in the light of the political and conflict based contexts that still dominate the enacted History curriculum.'²⁵⁷ Hunter reasons correctly that the criteria of significance is 'neither a benevolent or inclusive idea,'²⁵⁸ and 'will always reflect the directions and consciousness of society's dominant groups, and this will shape, interpretations and narratives of the past.'²⁵⁹

²⁵⁴ See 54 of this thesis for early argument on this point.

²⁵⁵ Hunter, *Curriculum Perspectives*, 13.

²⁵⁶ Hunter, *Curriculum Matters*, 59.

²⁵⁷ Hunter, *Curriculum Perspectives*, 14.

²⁵⁸ *ibid*, 14.

²⁵⁹ *ibid*, 59.

The absence of textbooks promoting an alternative/counter-narrative from the introduction of BCR into the History curriculum in 1988 until the present time, has resulted in teachers and students being locked into a limited, white over black, approach to the teaching and learning of BCR history. Critically, there is little in the BCR classical/master-narrative that Maori and Pasifika students can identify with; the one exception being the black heroes and occasional black sheroes of the movement. Grassroots activists only appear as supporting cast—an afterthought to the main event.

The reference to *New Zealanders* is forced and can lead to a fabricated history that assumes that historical events during the BCR period were significant to 'all' *New Zealanders* in the same way. No allowance is made for multiple perspectives, or perhaps, no perspective at all except that gained from hindsight, or as a result of academic study. Also, the link to *New Zealanders* 'indicates exclusive cultural and gendered identity in light of the legacy of political and conflict-based contexts of earlier history prescriptions,'²⁶⁰ which continue to dominate BCR teaching and school textbooks.

It is a disconcerting feature of curriculum change that there seems to be no cognisance that the classical/master-narrative should be a site of ideological contestation and negotiation on how it was created (and is sustained) within specific political and social contexts, and informed by different disciplinary

²⁶⁰ Hunter, *Curriculum Matters*, 59.

traditions. Importantly, these traditions reflect different notions of what constitutes official knowledge and what learning could and should take place in BCR history classes.²⁶¹ This is especially pertinent given the mounting contribution of recent scholarship and new trends of interpretation over the last one or so decades.

Furthermore, students are seldom exposed at any great depth to these anti-hegemonic narratives, or the fact that there is much about the traditional narrative of the U.S. that is contestable. If they did, they would be able to challenge the often powerful but unstated ideological assumptions that underpin and weave their way through the classical/master-narrative. It would also allow students to make the connection between what they are learning in class to the 'politics and material conditions in the real, and immensely unequal, world where white over black conditions in its obvious (politicians in the U.S. and in New Zealand who play the race card to stay in the limelight and to gain votes) and nuanced forms.

Fourthly, the NZC (2007) like the curriculum developed in the 1990s is potentially a permissive curriculum in the sense that it gives teachers the freedom and authority to determine what conception of BCR history they teach in the classroom.²⁶² Abbiss makes the point:

²⁶¹ Abbiss, *Curriculum Matters*, 118.

²⁶² Abbiss, *Curriculum Matters*, 118.

The official policy position is that NZC was intentionally designed to give schools 'the scope, flexibility, and authority' to design and shape a meaningful school curriculum, and teachers the 'scope to make interpretations in response to the particular needs, interest, and talents of individuals and groups of students in their classes.'²⁶³

In theory, a permissive curriculum should be welcomed by History teachers because of the 'scope' and 'flexibility' it provides to shape learning for students.²⁶⁴ However appealing words like 'scope' and 'flexibility' may be to teachers who welcome the chance to be liberated from the strict confines of the current conception of BCR history, it raises 'interpretation issues relating to concepts, content and teaching, and learning approaches [of] what should be learnt and how should students engage with different ideas?'²⁶⁵

These are pertinent questions and it is the contention of this thesis that the answer lies in the understanding that teachers have of the theoretical foundations and ideological tensions that underpin the current curriculum, and their personal commitment to either a traditional, transformative, or other educational agenda.²⁶⁶

²⁶³ *ibid*, 132.

²⁶⁴ *ibid*, 133.

²⁶⁵ *ibid*, 133.

²⁶⁶ *ibid*, 133.

Research for this thesis indicates that few teachers have taken advantage of the permissive possibilities afforded in the 2007 curriculum. Rather, research for this thesis, as well as anecdotal evidence, indicates that teachers have interpreted the wording as an invitation to stay with the tried and true of their favoured topics. For those teaching BCR, the majority remained unquestioningly bound to a year in and year out blind repetition²⁶⁷ of what counts as the popular memory of American history.

Sixthly, the optimism of curriculum developers about the 'potential of *NZC* to effect change in teaching and learning in social sciences [History] that reflects 21st century learning and transformative agendas,'²⁶⁸ can be thwarted by the almost exclusive reliance by History teachers on an anachronism—a classical/master-narrative conception of BCR of history. This thesis argues that the failure to successfully implement curriculum change is not simply a matter of teacher resistance to, or rejection of, transformative agendas or other educational innovations. Rather, what often determines the extent to which curriculum change can be cosmetic or transformative in nature, is whether teachers and students have access to content that offers transformative possibilities.²⁶⁹

²⁶⁷ James W. Loewen, *Lies My Teacher Told Me: Everything Your American History Textbook Got Wrong*, (2nd Edition, New York: Touchstone, 2007), 301.

²⁶⁸ *ibid*, 132.

²⁶⁹ *ibid*, 133.

Seventh, the reliance on a classical/master conception of BCR history negates the effective implementation of *NZC History's* key concepts and values in the classroom. The key concepts of the *NZC History* acknowledge 'There are multiple perspectives on the past (both at the time and subsequently). Interpretations of the past are contested—historians base their arguments on historical evidence and draw from a variety of perspectives.'²⁷⁰ Likewise, one of the values promulgated in the *NCZ History* is that 'students are encouraged to question accepted interpretations of the past and to consider contesting theories of historians and commentators [and that] this emphasis reflects contemporary historical scholarship.'²⁷¹

Yet these key concepts and values are not played out to the degree they could be by utilising an alternative/counter-narrative approach to the teaching and learning of BCR. This thesis argues that the reliance on an events-based classical/master-narrative restricts the use of multiple perspectives to the heroes (King and Kennedy) and occasional sheroes²⁷² (Rosa Parks and Jo Ann Robinson) of the BCR movement; sadly grassroots activists, especially women, seldom take centre stage.

As an approach, it limits the degree to which students can genuinely engage in learning about multiple perspectives, and the moral, social, cultural,

²⁷⁰ <http://seniorsecondary.tki.org.nz/Social-sciences/History/Key-concepts>

²⁷¹ *ibid.*

²⁷² Shero is an African-American colloquialism and a play on the word hero. It is used when referring to woman considered a hero of the BCR movement.

aesthetic and economic values of African-Americans. Sadly, it also arrests the development of their ability to 'discuss opposing values and seek solutions and to make ethical decision that they can act on.'²⁷³ Hunter believes it is an approach that is 'stifling history,' a view that is based on her extensive experience of working in a region where the standards are the default curriculum: 'Teachers transmit information, and students regurgitate it in examinations.'²⁷⁴ In a recent interview, Hunter stated:

What alarms me, because I am working with secondary graduates and graduates who are going to be teachers, and I see a lot of classroom teaching in this region, is that teachers are teaching no differently today than twenty years ago because unfortunately the most recent iteration of the curriculum, 2007, has siloed history off into a kind of odd little corner of events-based history. History is not just events-based. What they missed out on was the opportunity, and it was deliberate, was to look at history within the social sciences. I am also concerned that the way in which social science subjects are represented in the *NZC* may reflect a defence of territory by the subject-specific writing groups, and that such protectionism represents a lost opportunity to create a coherent and integrated social sciences learning area through

²⁷³ <http://nzcurriculum.tki.org.nz/Curriculum-documents/The-New-Zealand-Curriculum/Values>

²⁷⁴ Philippa Hunter interview 18/01/13.

inter- and trans-disciplinary explorations. Critically, the *NZC History* missed the opportunity to integrate the kind of thinking around the social, economic, and geographic issues that would encourage a more transformative and richer content approach to teaching BCR.²⁷⁵

Upon further reflection during the interview, Hunter also noted that, 'from a critical pedagogy stance the national curriculum's events-based orientation to history is traditional and played out in pedagogy as exclusive cultural reproduction.'²⁷⁶ Furthermore, she contends it is an approach that limits the study of school History in this country because the *NZC* conceptualisation has reduced the dominant discourse to being about 'chaps and conflict.'²⁷⁷

It really is just about History as a product, it is not about History's purpose or processes. School History has become a peculiar kind of island in the curriculum and that is the way it has established itself. By doing that, it is purely events-based, and unfortunately, by having an events-based theme with students having to examine an event significant to New Zealanders, it is not neutral, it is contestable.²⁷⁸

²⁷⁵ *ibid.*

²⁷⁶ *ibid.*

²⁷⁷ *ibid.*

²⁷⁸ *ibid.*

What this demonstrates is that education is not neutral and all the more reason why it must be based on a set of ethical, moral, and political principles that allow students to overcome the immobility and fatalism of the current frozen in time conception of history in order to become the subjects of their own lives and histories.²⁷⁹ To achieve this requires a degree of intellectual, social and academic maturity on the part of students, and this is why this thesis contends that BCR should be taught at Year 12 or 13. It also opens the door to briefly explain why the NHCC used an events-based approach at Form 5 in the first place. Wood explains:

The History syllabus did not identify clearly the development skills associated with each level of learning. There was a general consensus in the NHCC that Form 5 (Level 1), as the first encounter of students taking History as a subject, should lay the foundations for deeper and more difficult skills and critical appraisal of texts, recognition of different historical perspectives, the ability to argue, to defend or dismiss one interpretation over another, and essay skills. These set of skills were more appropriate for Forms 6 and 7 (Levels 2 and 3). Consequently, the main function of Form 5 History was to develop in student some value of history in time and place; and to develop the ability to make relationships between the topics with a particular theme. A taste

²⁷⁹ Modified from Apple, *Official Knowledge*, xiii.

of different interpretations was useful, but not essential, and certainly not testable. It was to be expected of those more mature students who had already experienced the foundations of history study at Form 5.²⁸⁰

Wood's explanation is helpful, because not only does it place the NHCC's work in a 1980s context, it also allows us to ask why, given it is now 25 years since BCR was introduced into the Form 5 syllabus, and given recent scholarship and new trends of interpretation, does the History syllabus remain (one of) the oldest unrevised curriculum subject statement(s).²⁸¹

Eighthly, a recent policy initiative by the Ministry of Education and the New Zealand Qualifications Authority to align NCEA History achievement standards with the curriculum's History achievement objectives and assessment objectives is also flawed. The attempted alignment is designed to assist History teachers to make sense of curriculum and assessment regulations and guide their implementation.²⁸² As noted earlier, this is problematic, because the attendant retrogression resulting from the revising the NZC, means innovative, alternative/counter-narrative renderings of history continue to remain limited.

²⁸⁰ David Wood email to author 09/07/13.

²⁸¹ See page ciii.

²⁸² Hunter, *Curriculum Perspectives*, 14.

Curriculum and Textbooks

Finally, it is essential to lay some ground work in preparation for the chapter that follows by understanding that the relationship between current conceptions of BCR history textbooks for Year 11–12 is an important one.

Research for this case study indicates that many teachers, perhaps the majority, are not aware that the current conception of BCR history is 'an uncontested and uncontroversial given [that is] a historically located response to particular socio-economic conditions.'²⁸³ In the U.S., its proponents do not accommodate any view that does not support the political and social agenda of the conservative right that seeks to sustain a view of history that is Eurocentric, linear, progressive, and democratic.

It is the contention of this thesis that an alternative/counter-narrative approach that acknowledges the antecedent struggles and nuances that draws on new scholarship and recent trends of interpretation is a more effective method for ensuring student engagement. In particular, it provides an approach that will arouse students interested in paralleling the African and African-American experience of racism and that experienced by Maori and other indigenous groups.

²⁸³ Stuart J. Foster and Keith A. Crawford, editors, *What Shall We Tell the Children?* (Greenwich: IAP, 2006), 2.

Goodson maintains that history textbooks should serve as examples of 'preactive curriculum documents that are socially constructed';²⁸⁴ in other words, textbooks should reflect the way in which individuals and interest groups create and sustain their social world. The corollary for an alternative/counter-narrative conception of BCR history would mean consideration of the setting, the participants, key players and grassroots activists, moderate and militant, their motives and intentions, and the socio-economic, cultural and political context in which the historical events unfold. It is an approach that requires textbooks include a plurality of perspectives, and be as close to being politically and ideologically neutral as possible. If there is a fault with the current conception of BCR history for Year 11–12, it is that it is not preactive; in other words, it conveys a limited, whitewashed sense of historical truth about the African and African-American experience in the U.S.

Conclusion

The current conception of BCR history while continuing to remain a popular topic for Year 11–12 History students, is a rendering of history that is now challenged in the academy as an anachronism. As such, the topic of BCR stands to lose its appeal as society in general, and students in particular, are made increasingly aware that the current conception is a fundamentally

²⁸⁴ *ibid*, 3. Goodson defines the preactive curriculum as, 'The visible, public and changing testimony of selected rationales and legitimating rhetorics of schooling.'

flawed and limited to a Eurocentric perspective. To make any meaningful connection between what has/and is happening in the U.S., and what has/and is happening in New Zealand, will require abandoning this conservative approach in favour of an alternative/counter-narrative approach; an approach that draws on the best of recent scholarship and new trends of interpretation.

Chapter 5

Textbooks and Teachers

School textbooks are a vital element in the implementation of curriculum in schools and are a representation of political, cultural, economic and political battles and compromises.

Stuart J. Foster and Keith A. Crawford

Introduction

Few teachers or students in New Zealand secondary schools would doubt the important contribution history textbooks make to classroom education. For teachers, they serve as a significant resource to guide classroom instruction, while for students, textbooks are a source of knowledge they consider authoritative. This chapter is concerned with the degree to which textbooks influence the teaching and learning of BCR history in New Zealand secondary schools. As such, it seeks to provide an important context for understanding the interplay of power and culture and for 'challenging, remapping and renegotiating those boundaries of knowledge that claim the status of master-narratives, fixed identities and an objective representation of reality.'²⁸⁵

Taken-for-Granted Status

This case study contends the taken-for-granted authoritative status accorded school textbooks used for the teaching and learning of BCR history in New Zealand, should, given recent scholarship and new trends of interpretation,

²⁸⁵ Foster, *What Shall We Tell the Children?* 5.

be subject to renewed scrutiny. In contrast to U.S. history teachers who tend to be less critical of, and more reliant on, the one textbook, New Zealand history teachers have access to a range of textbooks they can use for the teaching and learning of BCR. The fact that most do not²⁸⁶ makes Loewen's assessment of textbooks used to teach and learn American history, including BCR in the U.S.,²⁸⁷ pertinent to our own context on this issue:

Even though school textbooks bulge with detail... our teachers and our textbooks still leave out most of what we need to know about the American past. And despite their emphasis on facts, some of the factoids they present are flatly wrong or unverifiable. Errors often go uncorrected, partly because the history profession does not bother to review high school textbooks. In sum, startling errors of omission and distortion mar American histories.²⁸⁸

Given that the preponderance of BCR literature comes out of the U.S, and that New Zealand written textbooks on BCR are reliant on, and influenced by, the historical perspective they portray, these omissions and distortions conceal the truth that American history is 'more terrible than anything anyone has ever said about it,'²⁸⁹ should, for New Zealand teachers be deeply

²⁸⁶ Of the 40 teachers surveyed, 39 used the New Zealand written textbook, *Black Civil Rights in the USA, 1954–1970*, written by John Rosanowski, Pam O'Connell, and Tony Murdoch.

²⁸⁷ U.S. History teachers of BCR are mostly less critical of, and more reliant, on one textbook for teaching a topic than is the case for New Zealand teachers of BCR.

²⁸⁸ Loewen, *Lies My Teacher Told Me*. 7

²⁸⁹ <http://richgibson.com/talktoteachers.htm>.

disconcerting. Loewen is candid in his assessment claiming that most U.S. history textbooks are, 'marred by an embarrassing combination of blind patriotism, mindless optimism, sheer misinformation, and outright lies, these books omit almost all the ambiguity, passion, conflict, and drama of our past.'²⁹⁰

To avoid being tarred with the same brush, it is important that teachers of BCR in New Zealand understand why Loewen is so critical of the way American history is portrayed, and seek to avoid the inherent shortcomings in that approach.

The Power and Potency of the Textbook

To begin with, it is imperative to understand that textbooks used to teach BCR history in the U.S. have ideological and cultural potency. As cultural artefacts, textbooks serve as the keepers of the political ideas, social values, and cultural knowledge of a nation's skilfully crafted, popular memory. Commenting on this, Foster and Crawford make the observation that, 'no matter how neutral history textbooks may appear, they prove ideologically important because often they seek to imbue in the young a shared set of values, a national ethos, and an incontrovertible sense of political orthodoxy.'²⁹¹ Furthermore, they add:

²⁹⁰ Loewen, *Lies My Teacher Told Me*, Back cover.

²⁹¹ Foster, *What Shall We Tell the Children?* 1.

National pasts are never manufactured within a vacuum. While many national stories exist, powerful individuals and groups, in their pursuit of particular hegemonic goals always construct what is presented as the national story. National governments and their agencies, to varying degrees, frequently lie, misinform and either manipulate, or ignore, the past in pursuit of their own goals.²⁹²

In the U.S., 'there is considerable pressure to '...standardise their content, make certain that the texts place more stress on American themes of patriotism, free enterprise and the Western tradition,'²⁹³ A modern and disturbing example of this is the way textbooks, under the neo-conservative Reagan and Bush Snr administrations, were able to return to a conservative view of the American past having peeled back the gains made by liberal reforms that were generated by the CRM of the 1960s–70s. This appalling fact further demonstrates how history textbooks in the U.S. are an extension of state curriculum and are viewed as 'vehicles through which nations seek to store, transmit and disseminate narratives that define conceptions of nationhood and national culture.'²⁹⁴

In the U.S., this is achieved through the efforts of mainstream historians whose goal it is to portray their nation as a 'democratic, patriotic, and

²⁹² *ibid*, 6.

²⁹³ Apple, *Official Knowledge*, 52.

²⁹⁴ Foster, *What Shall We Tell the Children?* 5.

religious country that upholds equality for all.'²⁹⁵ It is a progressive view of history where the dominant voices constructing the nation's popular memory, has up until the 1980s, been for the most part, exclusively Eurocentric, optimistic, and manifestly racist. It is a view where Americans [read conservative white Americans] 'see history as a straight line and themselves standing at the cutting edge of it as representatives for all mankind.'²⁹⁶ Critically it is a view that serves to reinforce their physical, political and cultural uniqueness in the world while maintaining a sense of being bound together and of belonging.

This process of how nations socially construct, re-negotiate, and re-invent their national image for national and international consumption is highly sophisticated in the way it is able to subvert or sideline truth-telling. Foster and Crawford make the observation that:

The intellectual and emotional relationship between a nation's present, future and past is shaped through the selection, manufacture and transmission of powerful narratives promoting a sense of history and identity based upon a mixture of myth, remembrance and official knowledge.²⁹⁷

²⁹⁵ Derrick P. Alridge. *Teaching the American Civil Rights Movement: Freedom's Bittersweet Song*. Julie Buckener Armstrong, Susan Hult Edwards, Houston Bryan Roberson, Rhonda Y. Williams, 3–8. (New York, Routledge, 2002).

²⁹⁶ Francis Fitzgerald, *Fire in the Lake* (Boston: Atlantic–Little, Brown, 1972), 12.

²⁹⁷ Foster, *What Shall We Tell the Children?* 6.

The use of a classical/master-narrative approach to BCR movement from 1954–1970 is a powerful example of how this is achieved. Hence textbooks written in New Zealand, but reliant on the traditional Eurocentric approach commonly used in the U.S, are an important site for investigation.

Content Constraints and Contestation

Content and the formatting of school textbooks in the U.S. is an area of intense debate and contestation as powerful interest groups²⁹⁸ compete to maintain a collective national memory, national identity and national consciousness intended to meet specific cultural, economic, social and political imperatives. By contrast, textbooks written and published in New Zealand using the classical/master content for the teaching and learning of BCR, face no such contestation. This does not mean that New Zealand writers did not take issue with what curriculum developers wanted. In a recent interview, Tony Murdoch explains the dilemma he faced as a writer:

When we wrote the book, *Black Civil Rights in the USA, 1954–1970*, for Year 11, it was very clear that we had to preface it with a condensed version of U.S. history, particularly black American history, to even make sense of the thing. The arbitrary nature of starting in 1954 confounded us. A lot of these curriculum

²⁹⁸ *ibid*, 10; In many states, textbook adoption is a public process where interest and pressure groups mobilise to exert pressure on the content and format of textbooks. Huyette notes that at one adoption meeting in California over 200 people spoke for two minutes each. Often those who speak represent minority or marginalised groups. Their contribution often results in revisions or the removal of text or illustrations that are considered inappropriate or offensive.

decisions were made in a meeting, in a hurry, but historically, some of them didn't make sense at all.²⁹⁹

Murdoch's comments are insightful and raise two issues. The first is that of time constraint. With BCR having been introduced into the Year 11 History curriculum in 1988 there was an expectation that the topic would be resourced for the following year for classroom use. As Murdoch notes, producing a textbook for teacher and student use in such a short timeframe was always going to be an exacting task.

The second issue is the decision to start BCR at *Brown v Board of Education*.³⁰⁰ Most commentators of the day, both black and white, viewed the court's ruling as a historical watershed. In overturning *Plessy v Ferguson*,³⁰¹ the court struck down for all time the notion that 'separate but equal' was constitutional. Yet, John Pipe, an experienced and respected Auckland History teacher, reasons that *Brown* was not possible without the G.I. Bill of 1944; on that basis he pushes the starting point back for BCR back to WWII and the G.I. Bill.³⁰² In a recent interview he contended:

²⁹⁹ Murdoch interview, 13/12/13.

³⁰⁰ *Brown v Board of Education, Topeka, Kansas* was a consolidated case that went before the U.S. Supreme Court in 1954.

³⁰¹ In the *Plessy v Ferguson* case that went before the U.S. Supreme Court in 1896, the Court upheld the notion that 'separate but equal' was constitutional.

³⁰² Officially, the G.I. Bill was known as the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944. The Bill required veterans to have been on active duty during the war for at least ninety-days, and had not been dishonourably discharged.

The G.I. Bill. opened up education for blacks that before the war they would not have ordinarily got. The G.I. Bill provided a range of benefits for returning World War II veterans; one of those benefits was an entitlement to a sum of money to cover tuition and living expenses to gain a college, high school or vocational education. The Bill was instrumental in advancing the cause of blacks. How could they give the benefit to white G.I's after the war and not to blacks. They had to, and in so doing it paved the way for the gains made a decade later in *Brown*.³⁰³

The issue of where to start will always be a little contentious, because of the tendency to compartmentalise the African and African-American experience in the U.S. For example, I would contend that while Pipe's use of the G.I. Bill is a useful starting point for the teaching and learning of BCR, this event was not created out of nothing; that it too was built on earlier Black activism. While the weakness of this approach (periodisation) is explored in more depth in chapter 6, it is enough to note here that the 1954 starting point was adopted for two reasons. The first was because the sub-topic of BCR that sat within the *Social Welfare in the USA* topic was so popular. Pipe recalls:

When I first began teaching, which was in the 1970s, there was no Black Civil Rights topic, but it was there as a sub-topic within the

³⁰³ John Pipe interview, 20/04/13.

Social Welfare in the USA topic. The chronological parameters for the *Social Welfare in the USA* topic was 1932–1964. Now what I found was that the students were not particularly interested in the social welfare part of it, the New Deal etc., but once we got to America in the 1950s–1960s, they were intensely interested. You had all this material coming out on Martin Luther King Jr etc., and what it did and the students loved it.³⁰⁴

The second is the pragmatic reality of an assessment-driven prescription, such as school certificate. As Daivid Wood notes, 'For each topic to be examined one must start at a fair and reasonable date; one which all students from Kaitaia to Bluff have equitable opportunity to study and pass.'³⁰⁵

In a decision that made perfectly good sense at the time, especially given the popularity of BCR and the emphasis on attracting students back to history, the sub-topic of BCR was taken from *Social Welfare USA 1932–1964* and introduced as a separate topic, under the theme *Social Change*.

While the logic of the process is understandable, as is the retention of the classical/master-narrative for the decade immediately after the introduction of BCR into Year 11 History curriculum in 1989, it is a position, this thesis contends, that is no longer tenable. Indeed, the continued use of a classical/master conception of BCR history can only be described as the blind,

³⁰⁴ John Pipe interview, 20/04/13.

³⁰⁵ David Wood email to author, 09/07/13

year-in year-out repetition of a whitewashed³⁰⁶ Eurocentric rendering of history. As such, it does little to enhance student engagement or to expose them to the complex, sometimes harsh and unpleasant realities of the world in which they live. One teacher echoes this concern:

I love teaching BCR and enjoy researching new sources and articles for the students to use that connect it to modern day America. However, I am getting frustrated with the BCR textbook that seems to have been the standard for a while in New Zealand. Although it covers the main events, I don't feel it is really inspiring the students.³⁰⁷

Again, research data and anecdotal comments confirm this is a sentiment shared by a number of teachers.

The Politics of Official Knowledge

A second imperative to be considered relates to the issue of whose history is told and whose history is ignored. In the U.S. for example, textbook writers have to ask whether:

The experiences of various ethnic groups be portrayed in such a way as to value the various histories of America's multi-racial past... or should history textbooks principally strive to present a

³⁰⁶ The term 'whitewashed' refers to the painting of fences with white paint. African-Americans use the term in reference to the way their history is misrepresented in the master narrative of American history.

³⁰⁷ Confidential feedback from a teacher survey for this thesis.

‘common’ history that places emphasis on a ‘shared’ national identity and an inclusive national history?³⁰⁸

In the U.S., this is a contentious and deeply politicised issue as powerful interest groups struggle to have their knowledge legitimatised and their sphere of power and influence increased. In the field of high school education, the most powerful means to achieve ideological and political dominance is ‘through the control of governmental mechanisms’³⁰⁹ (like textbook adoption committees) that determine and regulate through their policies, whose history is to be included and whose history is to be excluded.³¹⁰ Throughout American history, the content of textbooks reflects the dominant values and ideology of the age in which they were written. For the most part, this has resulted in a conservative conception of history that seeks to create and solidify an idealised image of American values and character.³¹¹

New Zealand writers of BCR textbooks faced no such pressure. First, they have never been compelled to include content that contains the information that society expects students to know.³¹² In the U.S., this expectation has been enunciated most vigorously by white politicians and bureaucrats. The result,

³⁰⁸ Foster, *What We Shall Tell the Children?* 156.

³⁰⁹ Apple. *Official Knowledge*, 10

³¹⁰ <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/03/13/education/13texas.html? r=0> This web site provides an excellent article on the contestation over the Texas Board of Education’s implementation of changes to the content of State History books. In particular, voting along party lines the Republicans wanted to see History textbooks to reflect the perspective of the Right, claiming that present History textbooks were too leftist.

³¹¹ Foster, *What We Shall Tell the Children*, 156–157.

³¹² *ibid*, xiii.

as Apple notes, is ‘the knowledge in almost all [history] textbooks, however written, compiled, and published, properly may be classified as official knowledge.’³¹³ Again, New Zealand writers of BCR textbooks face no such pressure. In a recent interview, Anne Farmer, the Publishing Manager for Pearson Education, New Zealand, makes an important comparison, ‘Clearly, New Zealand authors in today’s environment, are not subject to the kind of political pressure their U.S. counterparts face. In fact, Pearson actively encourages the inclusion of competing perspectives.’³¹⁴

Secondly, public opinion does not exercise the same impressive agency³¹⁵ in New Zealand as it does in the U.S., in determining what text should or should not be included in BCR history textbooks. In the U.S., an array of influential and impressive special interest and watchdog groups that are culturally different, ideologically diverse, monitor textbook adoption in each state. Accordingly, most interest for these groups centres on making their official knowledge palatable, and ensuring their textbooks:

Advocate desired forms of patriotic or religious sentiments and displays, promote the exclusivity of particular economic, political, or religious interpretations, [and] display the equivalence in

³¹³ *ibid*, xiii.

³¹⁴ *ibid*, 3.

³¹⁵ *ibid*, xiii.

textual narrative and accompanying illustrations of individuals of different ethnic groups.³¹⁶

As a potential pressure group, parents in New Zealand, in contrast to those in the U.S., are largely indifferent to what content is used to teach and learn BCR at Year 11–12. Anecdotally, the reason for this is because it is not ‘our history’; the result is that they have no vested interest in ensuring the content in textbooks is appropriate and approved. By contrast, when topics like New Zealand Women in Health and Maori studies were being introduced into the History curriculum in the 1980s, and textbooks were written in support of these topics, there was considerable pressure from lobbyists because it was ‘our history’; understandably teachers like Myra Kunowski (Women’s Health) and Maori took a vested interest in the curriculum development and textbook content.³¹⁷

Clearly, New Zealand writers enjoy a degree of autonomy not afforded to their North American counterparts. As one close to home example, Farmer explains Pearson New Zealand’s approach when I was writing my BCR textbook *Public Image Private Shame*:³¹⁸

If we had not been happy with your viewpoint we would have said so, and during editing we did apply a degree of moderation

³¹⁶ *ibid*, xiii.

³¹⁷ Kunowski interview, 11/12/12.

³¹⁸ Roydon Agent, *Public Image Private Shame*, (Auckland, Pearson, 2012).

to some of your content, but that was more about making the book age appropriate than altering viewpoints. The key thing is that students are given an opportunity to bring their various perspectives to the table and then put those personal perspectives under examination in context of the topic being studied. They might not change their viewpoint but hopefully they will have challenged their thinking or assumptions. From a cultural perspective you could say we are encouraging them to take a step outside of their own ethnocentrism!³¹⁹

Notice, that Farmer indicates Pearson would have expressed concern over a viewpoint had they not been happy. This in itself highlights the difference between a New Zealand and U.S. context. The fact that Pearson were happy with my alternative, counter-narrative approach serves to reinforce the vastly more accommodating approach of education publishers in New Zealand.

Thirdly, the current iteration of the 2007 curriculum, is a permissive curriculum in that it accords teachers the freedom to select their own textbooks and instructional material.

The national curriculum... gives schools the scope, flexibility, and authority they need to design and shape their curriculum so that teaching and learning is meaningful and beneficial to their

³¹⁹ Email from Anne Farmer to the author, 12/11/12.

particular communities of students. In turn, the design of each school's curriculum should allow teachers the scope to make interpretations in response to the particular needs, interests, and talents of individuals and groups of students in their classes.³²⁰

Today, teachers have the autonomy and personal power to create their own official knowledge. The effect of this is three-fold. First, it allows them to be selective about the way they stress or dismiss knowledge, interpretations and/or even entire sections of text according to their warrants and sentiments.³²¹ Secondly, it frees them from the confines of periodisation and allows them to push back the starting point for BCR to the shores of Africa and slavery. Thirdly, it allows teachers to make the topic relevant to what is happening today by contextualising the African and African-American experience to that of New Zealand Maori and other indigenous groups who have been the innocent victims of European exploitation and racism; an issue that is explored more fully in chapter 6.

The Motive behind the Master /Classical-Narrative

A third imperative is the need to understand the motivation for the inclusion, and almost exclusive reliance of a classical/master-narrative for teaching and learning BCR at Year 11–12 in New Zealand secondary schools. It seems peculiar, given the permissive nature of the curriculum since 1993, that, with

³²⁰ Ministry of Education, *The New Zealand Curriculum*, 37.

³²¹ Foster, *What Shall We Tell the Children?* xiii.

only the occasional exception, research for this case study indicates that only a few teachers have given any genuine consideration to alternative/counter-narrative conceptions of BCR history. The result is far-reaching, because not only does this rendering of history remain unchallenged, but so too, the common-sense by which we try to live our lives.³²² It is important to understand the reasons for this.

Certainly it would be easier, perhaps more convenient, to claim the retention of a classical/master conception of BCR history is just another example of the educational system ensuring that cultural transmission preserves the status quo; in other words, it is part of a deliberate, conservative, hegemonic plot; an attempt by the politically powerful to manipulate the minds of young students into accepting the notion that because our nation is constantly progressing there is hope, so why change the status quo. The cynic may even venture the idea that there are controlling elements of our society that keep crucial facts from us to keep us ignorant and stupid.³²³

While it would create a heightened sense of drama, provide the semblance of a political plot, the work of mischievous whites, no such plot can be found—certainly not in New Zealand. In reality, the anecdotal and research evidence points in an entirely different direction; to a lack of interest in updating the content used to teach BCR by curriculum developers; a lack of PD from the

³²² Apple, *Official Knowledge*, 15-16.

³²³ Loewen, *Lies Our Teachers Told Me*, 305.

time BCR was introduced into the curriculum in 1988 to the present time; and finally, the failure of teachers to familiarise themselves with recent scholarship and new trends of interpretation.

The fault then is one of academic and intellectual complacency and neglect; there is nothing intentionally mischievous about restricting BCR to a 1954–1970 classical/master-narrative timeframe.

The other reason for the 1954–1970 classical/master narrative timeframe/conception was the popularity of BCR with students when studying *Social Welfare in the USA, 1932–1960*. The dominant interest for the NHCC was to pick up on this popularity and to design a curriculum that was (i) consistent with the syllabus; (ii) went some distance to addressing the need to create a more attractive set of topics; (iii) reasonably coherent with the twin topics of a theme balanced in time and scope and fairness re-assessment.³²⁴

To this, we may also add that the BCR topic had to be taught within an eight-week, thirty-two lesson timeframe. This truncated approach resulted in a textbook that has nineteen chapters that are condensed into 63 pages. Each chapter has a brief focus on the central issue/s, identifies the key players (e.g., Rosa Parks, Martin Luther King Jr) key groups, (e.g., the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) and describes the outcome of any action taken

³²⁴ David Wood email to author, 09/07/13.

by movement activists, the white power structure and movement antagonists (KKK, White Citizens Council)). Importantly, it is pitched at students coming into history for the first time, is well suited to less-able academic students, and has seventeen skills-based activities. Tony Murdoch, co-author of the textbook *Black Civil Rights in the USA, 1954–1970*, confirms this:

When I helped write that book we worked off the syllabus with the three different headings from the gazette and developed a model that could be taught over 8 weeks or 32 lessons. We included material that would encourage additional study, was relevant to students in low decile schools, and had exercises that would help less competent teachers. The book was designed for students who were interested in history, who could pick up the book and explore particular issues. We were more interested in getting the precursors right bearing in mind that we were restricted by space as much as anything in getting it right, but I think we got enough elements into the story in various places to say that there is not one story, there are profound regional differences in the States. I would like to have talked about the Blues singers etc., but it wasn't in the in the topic, and no one is going to thank me for taking kids on a wild goose-chase down that line. So when you look at the book it is really shaped around

the core themes of the subject and under those three themes there are four bullet points.³²⁵

Clearly Murdoch and his co-writers recognised the need to present multiple-perspectives, and if time permitted, they would have explored other areas of interest (e.g. blues music etc.). But the combination of time constraints in which to write their textbook, and the decision to compartmentalise the topic into a classical/master-narrative timeframe, did not allow this. In defense of John Rosanowski, Pam O'Connell, and Tony Murdoch they did not have access to the plethora of alternative/counter-narrative scholarship available to textbook writers today. By way of direct comparison, it took me three trips to the U.S. and three years of intensive research and writing to produce my textbook *Public Image Private Shame*, which was published in 2012. Exploring and then utilising an alternative/counter-narrative approach, apart from the fact that I was writing in my own time, explains my need for an extended timeframe.

While we have established there was nothing sinister or manipulative about the choice of the 1954–1970 classical/master-narrative event-centred timeframe, this does not mean New Zealand written textbooks and teachers, and especially curriculum developers, are not guilty of disseminating information that sponsors that feeling of cultural superiority that in the U.S.

³²⁵ Murdoch interview, 11/12/12.

finds its most hideous form in white over black racism. This is further compounded by the blind optimism of the classical/master-narrative; that at the end of the day justice will prevail and equality achieved; importantly, it prevents any understanding of failure other than blaming the victim, which usually results in students of minority groups feeling alienated.³²⁶ Not understanding their past renders many students incapable of thinking effectively about the present and the future.³²⁷

It is the contention of this thesis that the continued unchallenged and unchanged retention of a BCR classical/master-narrative by New Zealand teachers will place them in danger of being subject to a Loewen-like assessment; of perpetuating a history that includes falsehoods and myths, and involves the use of a selection/de-selection tradition that is ideologically, culturally, and politically selective, sanitised, biased, fictional and unashamedly patriotic of our own national history.

Furthermore, this case study argues that given the plethora of alternative/counter-narrative material available within and without the Academy, it is incumbent upon those charged with curriculum development, and teacher PD, to encourage teachers to move beyond delivering history as a

³²⁶ Loewen, *Lies My Teachers Told Me*, 6.

³²⁷ *ibid*, 9.

‘transmissive and substantive body of reconstructed content and facts’³²⁸ that are frozen in time.

Conclusion

Textbooks that promote an event-centred conception of BCR history in the U.S. have tended to ‘champion the capitalist system, endorsed traditional lifestyles, urged unquestioning patriotism, and preached reverence to ‘Western tradition.’³²⁹ It is a view that elevates the status of one race to the detriment of another, and gives little, if any space or encouragement to reflective thought.³³⁰

It is important that textbooks and teachers make a difference to the lives of their students. One way to achieve this is to ensure neither attempt to minimise the truth. Curriculum developers and History teachers can no longer seek to absolve themselves of participating in the process of cultural distortion,³³¹ of applying censorship of convenience,³³² and of being complicit in mis-educating their students about the past.³³³

³²⁸ Hunter, *Curriculum Perspectives*, 5.

³²⁹ Foster, *What Shall We Tell the Children?* 157.

³³⁰ *ibid*, 157.

³³¹ Loewen, *Lies My Teacher Told Me*, 307.

³³² Clearly censorship is warranted if the subject matter is deemed inappropriate because of legal requirements, or because it is blatantly pornographic etc. The term ‘censorship of convenience’ may not be new, but I have never come across it before. I use it here to denote the kind of censorship that is used to promote the racial and political bias (whitewashing) evident in the classical/master rendering of BCR history.

³³³ Loewen, *Lies My Teacher Told Me*, xv.

Reading critically, winnowing fact from fraud, and seeking to understand causes and results in the past, should be integral to teaching BCR.³³⁴ Equally, teachers (and textbooks) should not be afraid to tackle controversial issues. Textbooks and teachers should not keep students in the dark about the nature of history; they should not be hamstrung in their efforts to analyse controversial issues, be they from other grown or home-grown. It is an approach that textbooks and teachers should adopt; a warts and all approach to history because whether one 'deems our present society as wondrous or awful or both, history reveals how we arrived at this point.'³³⁵ Understanding the past is an important process in shaping young lives to be responsible citizens; it makes the topic relevant, and is central to developing a student's ability to understand themselves and the diverse, complex world in which they live.

³³⁴ *ibid*, xviii.

³³⁵ *ibid*, 2.

Chapter 6

Content that Counts

All things, it is said, are duly recorded—all things of importance, that is. But not quite, for actually it is only the known, the seen, the heard and only those events that the recorder regards as important that are put down, those lies his keepers keep their power by.

Ralph Waldo Ellison

Introduction

Chapter 6 concludes this case study by exploring transformation possibilities that exist within an alternative/counter-narrative conception of BCR history that draws on recent scholarship and new trends of interpretation. It is an approach that is predicated on the belief that as a topic, BCR is better suited to Year 12–13 students—hence the more scholastic approach. The examples given, like the chapter itself, are neither comprehensive or exhaustive; space does not allow for such an approach, but rather, illustrative of the possibilities that will resonate with students and be relevant to their own lives and the society and world in which they live.³³⁶

Reconceptualising Black Civil Rights History

Utilising an alternative/counter-narrative conception of history is inherently complex and challenging, yet at the same time a compelling approach for the teaching and learning of BCR history; complex, because it acknowledges

³³⁶ Waldo E. Martin Jr and Patricia A. Sullivan, *Introduction: Teaching the American Civil Rights Movement*, xi–xviii (ed by, Julie Buckner Armstrong, Susan Hult Edwards, Houston Bryan Roberson, Rhonda Y. Williams: New York, Routledge, 2002) xii; Importantly, research for this case study indicates that while a handful of teachers touch on the issues discussed in this chapter, the vast majority do not. In fact, many did not even have a cursory understanding of key issues or terms that are embedded in a alternative/counter-narrative approach for teaching BCR.

history is full of subtleties and nuances, colours of gray as well as black and white; challenging, because it travels to the margins in search of new information, new truths, and new perceptions of history; compelling, because it not only explores the United States' ignoble history of racial bigotry, discrimination, and injustice, it invites students to see 'how people and communities began speaking for themselves, making demands for the kind of society *they* wanted instead of standing aside silently while others... spoke for them and of them.'³³⁷

The CRM of the 1950s and 1960s was a period of intense struggle as African-Americans challenged the entrenched and ineradicable racial practices of the Jim Crow South. Some would say that the period is 'remarkable not only for its political intensity but also for how much was accomplished in so short a time.'³³⁸ The Movement of the 1950s and 1960s changed the face of America and while no one can doubt how far that nation has come on racial issues, there is still some distance to travel if King's dream of a beloved community and colour-blind society is ever to be fully realised.

The advantage of an alternative/master-narrative conception of history advocated in this chapter is that it interrupts and disturbs the whitewashed notions of the classical/master-narrative and its notions of linear progress and triumph of democracy. In particular, it invites students to see that through

³³⁷ Charles E. Cobb Jr, *On the Road to Freedom*, Chapel Hill: Algonquin Books, 2008, xx.

³³⁸ *ibid*, xix.

their words and actions Africans and African-Americans continually refuted any idea they were indifferent, apathetic, or willing to accede to white notions of racial superiority. Their ability to organise themselves to affect change, and their demand for the kind of society in which they wanted to live, is relevant to our students.³³⁹

One of the major challenges for teachers of BCR history is countering the air of inevitability in the popular imagination.³⁴⁰ As Cobb states, 'Images and film footage have frozen the movement in time as an era when people risked their lives to end the crippling system of segregation in the South, and to secure the rights and privileges fundamental to American citizenship.'³⁴¹ In contrast an alternative/counter-narrative conception of history seeks to unshackle students from the belief that historical narratives are static, settled, and set in stone for ever and a day. Rather, it encourages a fluid approach to history by using words, phrases and concepts that shed new light on old stories. There are several benefits in using this as an alternative/counter-narrative conception of BCR history.

First, it is reliant on a critical pedagogy that asks questions and critiques conventional conceptions of BCR history. In particular, it believes that

³³⁹ *ibid*, xxiii.

³⁴⁰ *ibid*, xi.

³⁴¹ *ibid*, xi.

historical knowledge should not only include an understanding of ‘what happened in the past,’ but also how ‘what happened is constructed.’³⁴²

A weakness of the classical/master-narrative is that its focus is limited to an all-too-familiar, uncritical, celebratory repertoire of events, places, and people that promote notions of American democracy, patriotism, and religion.³⁴³ In its attempt to make American history palatable, it ‘simplifies and often distorts a much more complex, rich, and diverse story of protest and change.’³⁴⁴ It is as we shall see throughout the examples used throughout this chapter, just another example of unbridled and unending progress and another example of how American democracy naturally becomes more and more inclusive over time.³⁴⁵

Secondly, it dispels the myth that portrays King as the embodiment of the Civil Rights Movement.³⁴⁶ Conservative historians are guilty of placing too much emphasis on King and other key movement and political leaders in a somewhat top-down approach. In their rendering of history, King takes centre stage with other events and people as background and supporting cast.³⁴⁷

³⁴² Hunter, *Curriculum Perspectives*, 5.

³⁴³ Martin, *Teaching the American Civil Rights Movement*, xiv.

³⁴⁴ *ibid*, xii.

³⁴⁵ Roberson, *Teaching the American Civil Rights Movement*, 37.

³⁴⁶ Martin, *Teaching the American Civil Rights Movement*, iix.

³⁴⁷ Derrick Alridge, *Teaching Martin Luther King Jr. and the Civil Rights Movement in High School History Courses: Rethinking Content and Pedagogy*. *Teaching the American Civil Rights Movement*, 3–17, (New York: Routledge, 2002), 4.

An alternative/counter-narrative approach challenges this approach by emphasising the place and importance of grassroots activists and movements that struggled in and out of the spotlight to affect change. There is growing consensus within the Academy of the invaluable role and contribution of the black working class, black women, and less well-known individuals and groups, the people U.S. Congressman John Lewis identifies as 'the nameless, ordinary people who in extraordinary times did extraordinary things.'³⁴⁸ Historian Vincent Harding makes the point that, 'their very anonymity is a reminder of the broad basis of the struggle, an encouragement to see the relentless surge toward freedom as a movement from the outset that belonged to the people.'³⁴⁹ Martin and Sullivan agree explaining the shortcomings of a one-dimensional approach:

Black women are often marginalized and excluded from the conventional civil rights narrative. Yet it was black women's views on leadership, their activism, methods of protest, and organizing capabilities that often shaped the nature and trajectory of the CRM.³⁵⁰

Placing the spotlight on women challenges the traditional view that men were the architects and anchor of the Civil Rights Movement. It allows for a

³⁴⁸ John Lewis, *Walking with the Wind*, Florida: (Harcourt Brace, 1998).

³⁴⁹ Vincent Harding. *There is a River; The Black Struggle for Freedom in America*, (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1981), 13.

³⁵⁰ Martin, *Teaching the American Civil Rights Movement*, xvi.

more complex and nuanced history that encompasses a multiplicity of participants across an extended timeframe, gender boundaries, and socio-economic backgrounds.³⁵¹ It also allows students to examine the 'vital roles played by African-American women in the freedom struggle, and their impact on subsequent pursuits for civil rights, including the labour and feminist movements.'³⁵²

In fairness to the NHCC, it should be pointed out that there were three factors mitigating against both the neglect and the absence of alternative hypotheses when the NHCC were formulating the History syllabus back in the mid-1980s. First, when BCR was chosen and constructed, few in the NHCC were familiar with recent research coming out of the U.S. which challenged the prevailing classical/master-narrative. Secondly, feminist/women's and black perspectives were arguably at their infancy in NZ; thirdly, Form 5 History was not seen as the level for introducing 15 year old students taking the subject for the first time (whose mental acuity was still maturing from young adolescents to adulthood) to complex and alternative options.³⁵³

The contention of this thesis is that there are now no mitigating factors, like those experienced by the NHCC, that would stymie or stop a complete

³⁵¹ Alridge, *Teaching the American Civil Rights Movement*, 4.

³⁵² Martin, *Teaching the American Civil Rights Movement*, xiv. On this point it is important to note that this is not a criticism of the NHCC; as Wood notes, in the 1980s teachers were not particularly aware of the existence of an alternative/counter narrative that focused on African American women.

³⁵³ David Wood email to author, 09/07/13.

revamp of current conceptions of BCR history, including placing this topic at Year 12, and better still, at Year 13.

Thirdly, it moves beyond the confines and constraints of traditional and reproduced historical approaches. One way this can be achieved is to have students travel to the margins and explore areas of history that shed new light on old stories; or on other occasions, to explore ideas, concepts, and narratives, that disturb and challenge conventional thinking on this topic.

For example, students could challenge the primacy of a familiar movement icon: non-violence.³⁵⁴ In the South, especially the rural South, self-defense was pervasive in the movement. Not only did individuals arm themselves, but, groups like the Louisiana Deacons for Defense and Justice were organised to protect the black community against Klan terrorism when local law enforcement would not.³⁵⁵

The value of this perspective is that it disturbs the 'stereotype of well-behaved African-Americans who petitioned patiently waiting for their citizenship to be granted.'³⁵⁶ It also disrupts the notion that American history is one of linear progress where the movement towards justice and equality is

³⁵⁴ *ibid*, xv.

³⁵⁵ *ibid*, xv.

³⁵⁶ *ibid*, xv.

inevitable, and where American democracy becomes more and more inclusive over time.³⁵⁷

Beyond Periodisation

A significant advantage of an alternative/counter-narrative conception of BCR history is that it is able to 'deterritorialize the map of dominant cultural understanding.'³⁵⁸ It also means finding new reference points to explore, and to have a 'healthy suspiciousness of all boundary-fixing and the hidden ways in which we subordinate, exclude, and marginalise' African-Americans.³⁵⁹ These innovative concepts undergird this thesis contention that what students are taught about U.S. history before and after the Civil Rights Movement proper is as important as what is taught about the movement itself.³⁶⁰ In other words, by changing the point of reference, extending the chronological boundaries for studying BCR both forward and back; it will make the topic more meaningful for students.

Over the last decade, this has been acknowledged within the Academy where the periodisation of the Modern Civil Rights Movement into a limited classical/master-narrative timeframe has undergone significant revision. The

³⁵⁷ Houston Bryan Roberson, *Birth Too Long Delayed is Perspective Too Long Denied: The Importance of 'Before and After' the Traditional American Civil Rights Movement*, *Teaching the American Civil Rights Movement*, 31–46 ed by, Julie Armstrong, Susan Edwards, Houston Bryan Roberson, Rhonda Y. Williams, (New York: Routledge, 2002), 31.

³⁵⁸ Hunter, *Curriculum Perspectives*, 7.

³⁵⁹ *ibid*, 7.

³⁶⁰ *ibid*, 31.

consensus among historians³⁶¹ now is that the traditional boundaries need to be redefined; that the events of the 1950s–1970s did not spring into being out of nothingness, but in fact sit upon layers of events that are connected. This has resulted in a number of historians advocating that the chronological boundaries need to be pushed back, and then those decades need to be interpreted in the much broader context of American history if an adequate understanding of the civil rights movement of the 1950s–1960s is to be achieved.

There are a growing number of historians who are. Eric Arnesen insists that, ‘The 55–65 BCR movement rests on earlier activism; an understanding of earlier activism is essential to understanding the more recent classical [Brown to Black Panthers] movement,’³⁶² while Martin and Sullivan contend that recent and new scholarship ‘offers a broader understanding of how African-Americans pushed against the confines of a racial caste system, and mounted an organised and sustained struggle for freedom and full citizenship’³⁶³ that was multigenerational.

Recognising the need for an extended framework, historian Jacqueline Dowd Hall has developed the notion of a ‘Long Civil Rights Movement.’ It is a development that attempts to capture the history of the movement *before* the

³⁶¹ Howard Zinn, Eric Arnesen, Stan Howard, and Vincent Harding are but a few examples of those who push back the starting point for understanding the broader context in which the BCR movement of the 1950s–1960s sits.

³⁶² Email to the author from Professor Eric Arnesen, University of Illinois at Chicago, 2008.

³⁶³ Martin, *Teaching American Civil Rights*, xii.

movement; what Vincent Harding describes as, 'A movement older and deeper than any one life, any one generation.' Proponents of this view show that prior to the Montgomery Bus Protest³⁶⁴ in 1955, there were plenty of protests, individual and collective, in the 1940s, the 1930s, and some would argue, as early as the 1920s. To this mix can be added the contribution of historians who hold that the fight for freedom began on the rivers and shores of Africa³⁶⁵ and was a 'continuous struggle dating back to when Africans were first enslaved and brought to the United States and continuing on to the challenges and struggles of Blacks in contemporary society.'³⁶⁶ Importantly, pushing back the chronological boundaries is made easier by the fact that the history of American slavery and Black protest is sufficiently recent that there are substantial amounts of extant records available.

The Benefits of an Extended Framework

The benefits of developing an alternative/counter-narrative approach within an extended framework for the teaching and learning of BCR are innumerable. The first is offered by Hunter, who has theorised three dimensions of history conceptualisation that encourage and enhance an alternative/counter-narrative conception of BCR history. The dimensions are:

³⁶⁴ The traditional approach is to label this protest as the Montgomery Bus Boycott. This is in fact incorrect. Black leaders in the *Montgomery Improvement Association* (MIA) never used the word 'boycott'. The reason was to avoid breaking a 1921 City ordinance that made boycotts illegal. As a result, legal action taken against the MIA failed.

³⁶⁵ Vincent Harding, *There is a River: The Black Struggle for Freedom in America*, (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1981), 15.

³⁶⁶ Alridge. *Teaching the American Civil Rights Movement*, 3–8.

'history as *product* (the nature of historical knowledge), history as *process* (the doing of history), and history as *purpose* (the intent of history)'.³⁶⁷ Hunter explains the advantage of this approach:

Each dimension can embed conflicting knowledge or alternative positions and beliefs about what counts as history. Particular dimensions may be integrated or emphasised at the expense of others. Of course, the dimensions cannot be viewed in a vacuum, as they operate holistically.³⁶⁸

Table 7 outlines ways the dimensions of *product*, *process*, and *purpose* can be used to support an alternative/counter-narrative orientation that draws on recent scholarship and new trends of interpretation for the teaching and learning of BCR.

³⁶⁷ Hunter, *Curriculum Matters*, 62.

³⁶⁸ *ibid*, 62.

Table 6: Dimensions of an Alternative/Counter-narrative Orientation for Teaching BCR.

History as product	History as process	History as purpose
<i>Study of how societies are constituted (National History Centre, 2009, p. 43)</i>	<i>“Analytic imperative to step outside oneself.” (National History Centre, 2009, p. 42)</i>	<i>Question the role of history and how it is used in contemporary society (Amirell, 2009)</i>
Exploring history’s relevance for understanding contemporary society	Using active and experiential pedagogy	Using critical pedagogy that questions why we do things the way we do in history
Studying and representing the past as lived experience	Establishing a problem or question or possibility with a historical context and setting/s	Engaging with civic cultures
Intellectually engaging with ideas and human experience	Accessing and critiquing modes of surviving evidence	Expanding social imagination and empathy
Acknowledging history as a culturally pluralistic discipline	Analysing and interpreting evidence	Developing historical consciousness, thinking, and understandings
Acknowledging multiple perspectives and social contexts.	Conceptualising change and continuity of time	Critiquing historical consciousness, thinking, and understandings
Acknowledging history as an open-ended interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary field	Synthesising patterns of evidence	Critiquing historical representations and practices of history—historical constructions, narratives, historian’s scholarship, and interpretation
Developing temporal and spatial consciousness in transnational and global fields	Constructing distinctive historical narrative	Establishing links to life experiences and students’ experiences
Acknowledging how identities are shaped	Identifying and critiquing representations of history	Developing alternative /counter discourses: for example: gendered, cultural, indigenous historical experiences and world views
Representing the history of the present	Deconstructing and un-layering historical narrative	

A second benefit of Hunter’s methodology is that it acts as a catalyst for teachers and students who are committed to moving beyond an uncritical approach and the reproduced knowledge preferences of the classical/master

narrative.³⁶⁹ As noted above, it is an approach that assumes that Year 12–13 History students are sufficiently sophisticated to engage in these more innovative, but more complex, conceptions of history.³⁷⁰ In Table 7, Hunter sets out how this can be achieved in contrast to the custom and practice orientation of the current conception of BCR history with that of an alternative orientation.

Table 7: Curriculum Orientation: Dr P.A. Hunter, SocCon, July 2013.

Custom and Practice Orientation: History's Curriculum Identity

- Emphasis on significant events;
- Cultural (re)production by policy sanction;
- Progress and development of powerful political systems;
- Seeking of an objective verifiable truth;
- Attempting to reconstruct a certain past;
- Deterministic and teleological approaches (Amirell, 2009);
- Narratives of 'sacred' national identities (Waters, 2007);
- Exclusive citizenship identity;
- Avoidance of gendered and cultural historical experiences 'outside' dominant and powerful historical representations;
- Uncontested purpose of history itself;
- Attempting a coherence of human historical experiences;
- Distant from students' lives and experiences of history.

³⁶⁹ *ibid*, 62.

³⁷⁰ *ibid*, 62 Hunter, drawing on the research of Pomson and Hoz into adolescent's ideal historical conceptions, (1998) found that students are unexpectedly sophisticated. Accordingly, they referred to students as 'cognitive agents' in history pedagogy.

Alternative Orientation: History's curriculum Identity as Possibility

- Constructed historical processes, rather than reconstructing a found past;
- Acknowledging history's distinctive forms of narrative;
- Historical consciousness and the social imagination;
- Human agency as a lived experience of the past;
- Acknowledging history as a culturally pluralistic and diverse discipline;
- Engagement with ideas and multiple perspectives;
- Interdisciplinary ways of knowing, and researching;
- Analysis of the nature of contingency;
- Orientating contextual decisions towards students' interests and preferences;
- Problem-solving and active learning;
- Critique of a variety of modes of evidence and representation;
- Critique of inequitable practices, dominant worldviews, and practices.³⁷¹

The Origins and Development of the Word 'Race'

Breaking free of the constraints of periodisation allows students to examine past and present conceptions of race; the past because they can explore the origins of the word and how its use developed over time; the present, to see if race categorisations still apply today. The fact that American history is relatively recent means students have ready access to an array of primary sources and an abundance of recent scholarship that assist them in this endeavour.

³⁷¹ Philippa Hunter, SocCon, July, 2013.

Back to the Present: Post-Blackness in the U.S.

Whenever I am teaching BCR, apartheid in South Africa, or touching on human rights generally, I include in my first lesson two questions: What is racism?, and having stitched together superficial understanding, I then ask: Would any of you consider yourself racist? I have often been amazed at how candid the students are in their responses; without exception there are usually a handful that will answer in the affirmative; they not only know what racism is, they acknowledge their own racist attitudes.³⁷²

The value of these and similar questions is that it opens the way for students to see the connection of the present to the past, and in particular, how the past continues to influence and shape the present. There are a number of examples of how this can be achieved.

First, for a significant period of time racial categorisation of blacks by whites was determined by tenuous means; typically, if a person had 'one drop of black blood,'³⁷³ they were deemed black. This rule of thumb even applied to those were phenotypically European. Certainly this is a far-cry from today where debate continues to surround Barack Obama and whether he is the first authentically African-American president of the U.S. Even more remarkable, it is not whites, but African-Americans who are asking this

³⁷² Anecdotally this has surprised me; not that students acknowledge they are racist but rather who they are racist towards. The most common racism expressed to me is Maori over Asian racism. When this is teased out, students acknowledge that their views are informed by their home life. Usually the examples students give are of Asians taking jobs or setting up a dairy.

³⁷³ Professor Stan Howard, Fulbright lectures, 2007.

question. It bears out Touré's observation that, 'in the age of Obama, [and Oprah] racial attitudes have become more complicated and nuanced than ever before.'³⁷⁴ In part, this can be attributed to the fact that their success has turned 'Blackness inside out and [allowed] it to breathe in the white world on its own with little explanation or apology.'³⁷⁵ This has resulted in African-Americans searching for new ways of understanding Blackness.'³⁷⁶ Michael Dyson agrees:

The sheer plasticity of Blackness, the way it conforms to such a bewildering array of identities and struggles, and defeats the attempt to bond its meanings to any one camp or creature, makes a lot of Black folk nervous and defensive... In some cases where new perceptions of Blackness clashed with old receptions of Blackness, established definitions of race and their defenders often got the bum's rush and got trampled beneath the feet of new Blacks armed with new definitions of the not-the same-old Blackness.³⁷⁷

Touré's thinking on this issue is invaluable for a number of invaluable reasons. First, in asking the question: What does it mean to be Black?, he is

³⁷⁴ Touré, *Who's Afraid of Post-Blackness?* (New York: Free Press, 2011), xii.

³⁷⁵ *ibid*, xii.

³⁷⁶ *ibid*, xii.

³⁷⁷ *ibid*, xii-xiii.

not signifying the end of Blackness, but rather the end of a narrow, single definition and understanding of what Blackness means.³⁷⁸

Secondly, Touré's reasons with compelling logic that given the economic and intellectual diversity in Black American, there are 40 million, or, a multiplicity of ways, to be Black.³⁷⁹ It is a statement designed to challenge those who contend that Black identity is obvious and those who are unforgiving and intolerant of Black heterogeneity and still believe in concepts like 'authentic' or 'legitimate' Blackness. He argues there is no such thing. As an alternative he encourages African-Americans to have 'the freedom to be Black however he or she chooses, and to banish from the collective mind the bankrupt, fraudulent concept of 'authentic' Blackness.'³⁸⁰

Thirdly, in using the term post-Blackness, Touré does not mean 'post-racial'; for that suggests race does not exist, is no longer an issue, and that the people of the U.S. are now colour-blind.³⁸¹ Such a view is naïve and at odds with social realities not only in the U.S. but elsewhere. Rather, post-Blackness is a term that refers to those Blacks who are 'rooted in but not restricted by [their] Blackness.'³⁸² Touré explains it like this:

³⁷⁸ *ibid*, xv.

³⁷⁹ *ibid*, 5.

³⁸⁰ *ibid*, 11.

³⁸¹ *ibid*, 12.

³⁸² *ibid*, 12.

It means we love Blackness but accept the fact that we do not all view or perform the culture the same way given the vast variety of realities of modern Blackness. It's not that some people are post-Black and some are not – and post-Black cannot be used as a replacement for Black or African-American – it's that we're in a post-Black era when our identity options are limitless... Most terms have a confining aspect to them but post-Black is not a box, it's an unbox. It opens the door to everything.³⁸³

The value of Touré's views is the way in which they open up discursive possibilities for students. For example, introducing my Year 13 History students to Touré has resulted in some intensely searching and satisfying class discussion around Maori historical grievances over land confiscation, the allocation of Maori seats in parliament, and whether there should be someone advocating 'post-Maoriness'³⁸⁴ in the same way Touré advocates post-Blackness. As part of these discussions, students have also explored whether Maori, like African-Americans, confine themselves to a narrow definition that is self-limiting.

³⁸³ *ibid*, 12.

³⁸⁴ By this, I do not mean to be disrespectful or to offend Maori as a people, their sense of history or their culture; rather it is an attempt at contextualisation; an attempt to acknowledge that Maori, like African-Americans, and other indigenous groups, have been victims of economic exploitation by Europeans.

Back to the Past: The Origins and Development of Racism in the U.S.

The value of placing the Civil Rights Movement in a broader context is three-fold. First, it makes room for students to understand that African-Americans have a distinctive historical narrative that runs contrary to the larger story of American history. Secondly, it opens the way for a discussion on U.S. concepts of race, its origins, how its meaning changed over time; how it was used to determine social identity and establish social divisions that consigned African-Americans to the margins of society and denied them equal opportunity for almost four-hundred years of American history. Thirdly, it also means acknowledging that African and African-American experience in the U.S. was from the beginning, one of profound struggle for a people whose only 'sin,' absurd as it seems to us now, was the colour of their skin. In the U.S., 'white' came to mean freedom and opportunity while 'black' equated with oppression and discrimination.³⁸⁵

Racism: A Recent Development

In modern history, innumerable attempts have been made to define the term race variously as a fact of history, culture, biology, and even genetics. Amongst scholars there seems to be little agreement as to the seminal origins of the word and what it actually means. Some scholars have warned that it is

³⁸⁵ Roberson, *Teaching the American Civil Rights Movement*, 36.

a myth that intelligent people should discard, while Jaques Barzun claims it the most common, most ambiguous, and most explosive of words,³⁸⁶ and that:

As long as people permit themselves to think of human groups without the vivid sense that groups consist of individuals and that individuals display the full range of human differences the tendency which twenty-eight years ago I named 'race-thinking' will persist.³⁸⁷

Throughout the history of the U.S., the two most noticeable examples of how this 'tendency' has been played out is the attempt by some groups to further their own race while at the same time oppressing others; and secondly, by linking the issue of 'race' to historical grievances when seeking redress. Loewen concurs, 'Although a complicated historical issue, racism in the Western world stems primarily from two related processes, taking land from and destroying indigenous peoples, and enslaving Africans to work the land'.³⁸⁸

As noted in the previous section, the link to European exploitation of Maori, especially the taking of their land by dubious means, is an issue teachers can encourage their students to explore. It is an issue that resonates for Maori students because it offers them a point of identity with other exploited

³⁸⁶ Jaques Barzun, *Race, A Study in Superstition*, New York: Harper Touchbooks, 1937, ix.

³⁸⁷ Barzun, ix.

³⁸⁸ Loewen. *Lies My Teacher Told Me*, 142.

indigenous groups; it also legitimises their own interest in understanding the rationale for Maori grievance.

Race: A Social Construct

Students can also be encouraged to examine race as a cultural construct. In the modern era, the most common and convenient means of racial identification is usually determined by making reference to a person's phenotypical features. However, this approach is limiting, not only because it ignores evidence that many people do not discriminate on the basis of colour, but because it fails to consider the historical context, culture, values, attitudes, motivation, and intentions of those who first formulated the concept of race, and then imposed it on society.

Two examples of this social construction that students can explore are how the English adopted the Spanish word for race. For example, Smedley believes their original usage of the word was in reference to the breeding of animals, in particular horses, of a unique quality, for a distinct purpose, and along hereditary lines.³⁸⁹ Smedley argues strongly that the interplay between the two nations resulted in the British adopting the word, but ominously, filled it with new meaning by using it when referring to humans.

³⁸⁹ Audrey Smedley, *Race in North America, 3rd edition*, (Colorado: Westview Press, 2007), 39–40. Given Spanish hegemony in Europe, and their influence on the English through trade, royal marriage, and political alliances, Smedley believes Spanish notions of race were assimilated by the English.

The second example is linked to the racist attitudes of the English leading up to the period of colonisation. Smedley describes it as cultural or ethnic chauvinism; a notion that stems from their protracted attempts to conquer Ireland and to subjugate, by the most brutal and bloody means, its people.³⁹⁰ Historian James Myers describes this as 'England's first meticulously planned effort to effect the cultural subjugation of an alien people.'³⁹¹ Critically, it was during this period that the English formulated the view that the Irish were savages, devoid of moral virtue, ungodly, unethical, and incapable of being civilised. Smedley notes that, 'The savage came to embody all of those repulsive characteristics that were contrary to English beliefs, habits, laws, and values. The imagery induced hatred of all things Irish.'³⁹² Tragically this view persisted into and beyond the Enlightenment, and provides an explanation for English attitudes towards Native Americans and African slaves.

From this, students can explore how race, as a social construct, became an organising principle within society; it not only made racial identification possible, but also social differentiation. This is was an important development, because while racial identification is a functionally neutral term that has no inherent negative or judgemental elements, the same cannot be said of social differentiation. Social differentiation is inherently negative and

³⁹⁰ *ibid*, 30–31.

³⁹¹ *ibid*, 62–63.

³⁹² *ibid*, 63.

judgemental, and was used by whites, motivated by racial hatred, to confer upon blacks an inferior social status. Underpinning this hatred was the non-negotiable, deep-seated conviction, held by most whites, that these racial differences were fixed, and that social separation was normative; a fact reinforced on a daily basis throughout the South during the years of de jure segregation, by the media and existence of black and white residential areas, churches, political constituencies, educational centres, social and recreational organisations, and music.

Students might also like to examine race as a folk classification. As European explorers established colonies in the New World³⁹³ and penetrated into terra incognita, they encountered people and had experiences that did not fit conveniently into their own worldview. As a result, popular beliefs, imagery, perceptions, and interpretations, what Smedley calls 'folk classification,'³⁹⁴ and what Barzun calls 'superstition,'³⁹⁵ began to emerge as a means of explaining these differences:

Over time, and with no empirical/practical method of determining their veracity/reliability, these folk ideas or superstitions – often embellished – led to the formulation of certain attitudes, usually

³⁹³ This term is used reluctantly because its usage connotes a common understanding. In reality it was only the 'New Word' from a Eurocentric perspective; in reality it was as old as any other part of the planet.

³⁹⁴ *ibid*, 26.

³⁹⁵ Barzun, *Race as a Superstition*, ix–x. As an operation of the mind, race-thinking rests on abstraction—singling out certain traits that are observed, accurately or not, in one or more individuals, and making of these traits a composite character which is then assumed to be uniform, or at least prevailing, throughout the group. This product of thought is properly speaking a superstition – literally, an idea that “stands over” the facts, presumably to explain them or make them coherent and memorable.

disparaging, about these phenotypical differences and cultural behaviours of other ethnic groups.

Barzun notes that; 'All that is needed to make the superstition [folk classification] permanent and powerful is the presence of some easily noted feature—colour of skin or hair, striking appearance of face or body, unusual mode of speech or dress.'

This fusion of phenotypical differences and cultural behaviours, then as now, became the measure by which racial hatred and hostility was expressed.

Barzun notes:

It satisfies a need common in complex societies—the need to give body to vague hostility, to find excuses for what goes wrong, to fear aliens or neighbours and curse them, while enjoying self-approval from within the shelter of one's own group.³⁹⁶

The point students should note, is that feelings of racial superiority are not just plucked out of thin air; they have their origins in an earlier time; the Anglo-Saxon racial worldview was in place and percolating away long before the English encountered people who were dramatically different from themselves; then those views undergo development and refinement, until after a lengthy period they become embedded as normative; a fact that helps

³⁹⁶ *ibid*, x.

explain, but does not excuse, its often bigoted and violent expression during the mid-20th century.

Confronting Racism

In the U.S., there have always been those who in and out of the spotlight have had the courage to confront the evil of racism. Typically, it means swimming against the current of popular opinion and perceptions that have been informed by a classical/master-narrative rendering of American history. It entails dispelling the bland optimism, blind nationalism, and blatant misinformation, that seeks to sideline the real heroes and sheroes to obscurity, and mischievously promotes the selective, sanitised notions inherent in American mythology.

At a personal level, at the level of citizenship, it requires that students challenge themselves and to examine the level of their core decency, and to confront their own prejudices. If indeed they do exist, then they need to interrogate their own hearts to determine the cause, and to decide its future. For Barzun, this means laying aside every vestige of 'naked self-interest,' or as we are more apt to describe, a radical 'change of heart,' and an acknowledgement that dominance of one race over another is an insidious evil!

Silent Covenants

Another benefit of an alternative/counter-narrative conception of history is that it allows students to explore the evil of what Derrick Bell calls, 'Silent Covenants.'³⁹⁷ Little known among secondary History teachers³⁹⁸ this phenomenon is a reoccurring theme that threads its way throughout American racial history. Derrick Bell explains:

To settle potentially costly differences between two opposing groups of whites, a compromise is affected that depends on the involuntary sacrifice of black rights or interests. Even less recognised, these compromises (actually silent covenants) not only harm blacks but also disadvantage large groups of whites [usually the poorer class of white] including those who support the arrangements.³⁹⁹

Bell also notes that these silent covenants are an informal, often secretive, mechanism to settle the potentially explosive differences that sometimes existed between opposing groups of whites. In the first instance silent covenants were used to convince working-class whites to support African enslavement as being in their interests, even though these yeoman workers could never compete with wealthy landowners who could afford slaves.⁴⁰⁰

³⁹⁷ Bell, 'Silent Covenants' is the title of his book.

³⁹⁸ Bell is a former NAACP Legal Defense Fund lawyer.

³⁹⁹ Bell, *Silent Covenants*, 29.

⁴⁰⁰ *ibid*, 30.

Slaveholders achieved this compromise by offering working class whites the right to vote and to have greater involvement in the political process. Importantly, they were able to convince them that their shared 'whiteness' should be a unifying factor to safeguard against the threat of rebellion from the new black subclass.⁴⁰¹

This is an early example of how the powerful and prosperous, be they slaveholders, politicians, or large corporations, seldom did anything other than out of self-interest. These compromises became a means to an end, a trade-off that allowed the rich to retain their advantaged position, while the unpropertied working class were 'willing,' as Bell notes, 'to subordinate their economic hopes for feelings of racial superiority.' What the poor whites were not aware of is that they were unwittingly consigning themselves to a structure that not only kept them economically poor, but politically contained.

A Case-In-Point: The Tilden–Hayes Compromise

Arguably one of the most disturbing, most destructive, examples of a silent covenant is the Hayes–Tilden Compromise of 1877. The Compromise was achieved through the collusion of the Republican Party and the Democrat Party to have Tilden's victory in the U.S. presidential elections overturned in favour of the Republican candidate Hayes. In return for their support, the

⁴⁰¹ *ibid*, 30.

Republicans promised to withdraw the remaining federal troops still stationed in the South. It was an undertaking that ensured the de facto transfer of power in all the Southern states back into the hands of the former slaveholders.⁴⁰² As McAdam notes, 'the compromise serves as a convenient referent marking the point in time at which the question of the socio-political status of black Americans was consciously 'organised out' of national politics.'⁴⁰³

The Tilden–Hayes Compromise was an act of unbelievable, self-serving political expediency; a 'shameful moment'⁴⁰⁴ when the Republican Party, the then party of the black man, turned its back on African-Americans, brought an end to federal attempts at Reconstruction, and ended black aspirations of a new social order that included them as first-class citizens. Control over southern race relations again passed into the hands of the regions political and economic elite and ushered in one of the darkest periods of American history; a period of clandestine and non-clandestine, official and unofficial, forms of seizing and selling of blacks into industrial peonage and obscurity. By the end of the 19th century, there were tens of thousands of black slaves in hundreds of forced labour camps scattered throughout the South. The logging camps, quarries, coal mines, farms and foundries, of the South

⁴⁰² <http://encyclopedia2.thefreedictionary.com/Hayes-Tilden+Compromise+of+1877>

⁴⁰³ Doug McAdam, *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930–1970*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1982), 66.

⁴⁰⁴ Bell, *Silent Covenants*, 39.

became a major weapon in the white man’s physical and psychological arsenal to re-enslave and re-subjugate African-Americans.

Again, the purpose of using this example is to demonstrate how students should be encouraged to disrupt conventional renderings of history that promote notions of linear progress, justice, and freedom for all; notions that are clearly at odds with black narratives. Table 9 provides some of the alternative/counter-narrative possibilities that an informed teacher can explore with their students.

Table 8: Alternative/Counter-narrative possibilities students could use in their study of Black Civil Rights.

Possibility
<p>Tabula Raza</p> <p>The idea that the now U.S. was a blank slate over which the early settlers could overlay their values and beliefs without regard to Native Americans.</p> <p><i>Issue: Students need to discuss how such a view was developed, how it came to be applied in a specific historical context, and the implications for the indigenous people of the U.S.</i></p>
<p>Manifest Destiny</p> <p>This idea, present in the early settlers but not coined as a term until 1846, held that the religious aims of Christianizing the now U.S. was clear to them and part of why their God had opened the way for them to live in this land of ‘savages.’</p> <p><i>Issue: Students need to explore the origins and usage of this term and how it has been used to justify American expansionism within the U.S. and beyond.</i></p>
<p>Cognitive Dissonance</p> <p>This is the term some scholars have used to explain how early settlers in the ‘New World’ changed their thinking (negatively) towards indigenous people to justify their exploitation of them.</p> <p><i>Issue: Students need to understand the usage of this word to explain how early settlers changed their views on indigenous people to justify their exploitation of them.</i></p>

Possibility
<p>Racism in the Federal Government</p> <p>There are repeated examples throughout the history of the U.S. where the Federal Government knowingly acted in a manner that was contradictory to the U.S. Constitution.</p> <p><i>Issue: Students can explore the Federal Government's collusion. How can this happen when the Federal Government was established within a structure of checks and balances. It also opens discussion on how every generation has the ability to interpret the Constitution in the context of the age in which they live.</i></p>
<p>Christianity in the U.S.</p> <p>Many, including the U.S. Supreme Court have contended that the U.S. was established as a Christian nation on Christian principles. Many scholars now dispute this, arguing that men like Thomas Jefferson were more theist than anything else. Yet Christian rhetoric is a constant in presidential elections and among politicians.</p> <p><i>Issue: Students can examine claims the U.S. was founded as a Christian nation and how this seems at odds with its founding documents. They can also explore why African-Americans would adopt the faith of their oppressor.</i></p>
<p>Heroification</p> <p>This is the tendency to omit the less palatable facts because they do not fit American notions of the archetypal hero. The object is to project an image of American heroes as virtuous. Abraham Lincoln is one example. Many scholars now are convinced that while he was opposed to slavery he remained a racist.</p> <p><i>Issue:</i></p> <p><i>Students can explore the shortcomings of heroification; especially how it denies students access to a warts and all portrayal of historical figures.</i></p>
<p>Preconceptions of Brown</p> <p>The ruling of the U.S. Supreme Court in <i>Brown v Board of Education</i>, 1954, has been deemed a watershed moment in American legal history. More recently scholars have challenged this optimistic view, claiming that it was a magnificent mirage.</p> <p><i>Issue: Students can explore reconceptions of Brown, especially its failure to achieve equality in the field of education. They can also explore issues of interest convergence and evidence of ex parte collusion between Justice Frankfurter and the Attorney General's office.</i></p>
<p>Dark Alliance</p> <p>In an attempt to wipe out the Black Panthers, it is argued that President Ronald Reagan was involved in an Arms for Drugs deal with Contra Rebels. The drugs, with the approval of the Reagan administration and with the support of the CIA were imported into the U.S. and distributed among urban blacks.</p> <p><i>Issue: Students need to examine how the Federal Government, with the approval of the President, allowed drugs to be dumped in black areas to undermine black community and radical groups.</i></p>

Conclusion

Historian and activist Howard Zinn contends that if ⁴⁰⁵ you... have to have the faith that if you introduce the history [of the CRM] to your students...it is going to have an effect.' To achieve this means challenging the foundation and organising principles on which the progressive history of America has been interpreted and understood.

This chapter has attempted to do this by providing some examples of the many transformational possibilities that exist in an alternative/counter-narrative conception of BCR. The contention of this thesis is that the current conception of BCR history is an anachronism that needs a major overhaul, especially given the contribution of recent scholarship and new trends of interpretation. Curriculum leaders, encouraged by history associations, should begin initiating a review of the current History curriculum immediately.

Finally, history is not just about head knowledge—it is about heart change. It takes courage for teachers and students to look inside themselves and confront their own prejudices. If prejudices do exist, they need to question their cause and decide their future. Doing this is an important step forward in building a world that is truly colour blind.⁴⁰⁶ This thesis contends that this is

⁴⁰⁵ Martin Sullivan, *Teaching the American Civil Rights Movement*, xvi.

⁴⁰⁶ Roydon Agent, *Public Image Private Shame*, 173.

the ultimate goal of history, to reflect on the past in such a way that it makes for better people who will make a better world.

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Myra Kunowski	11/12/12	Café Metro, Christchurch
David Wood	03/11/12	Interviewee's home
Tony Murdoch	13/12/13	St Bede's College
Philippa Hunter	18/01/13	Waikato College of Education
John Pipe	20/04/13	Interviewee's home
Peter Field	21/06/13	University of Canterbury
Jennifer Frost	08/07/13	Phone interview

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Myra Kunowski

John Rosanowski

John Pipe

Jim Frood

Russell Johnson

David Wood

Tony Murdoch

Peter Lineham

Anne Farmer

Mark Sheehan

Peter Field

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Appendices

Appendix A: Ethics Approval



MASSEY UNIVERSITY
TE KUNENGA KI PŪREHUROA

28 June 2012

Roydon Agent
6A Wrack Street
Kensington
WHANGAREI 0112

Dear Roydon

Re: A Movement Reconsidered

Thank you for your Low Risk Notification which was received on 1 June 2012.

Your project has been recorded on the Low Risk Database which is reported in the Annual Report of the Massey University Human Ethics Committees.

The low risk notification for this project is valid for a maximum of three years.

Please notify me if situations subsequently occur which cause you to reconsider your initial ethical analysis that it is safe to proceed without approval by one of the University's Human Ethics Committees.

Please note that travel undertaken by students must be approved by the supervisor and the relevant Pro Vice-Chancellor and be in accordance with the Policy and Procedures for Course-Related Student Travel Overseas. In addition, the supervisor must advise the University's Insurance Officer.

A reminder to include the following statement on all public documents:

"This project has been evaluated by peer review and judged to be low risk. Consequently, it has not been reviewed by one of the University's Human Ethics Committees. The researcher(s) named above are responsible for the ethical conduct of this research.

If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research that you wish to raise with someone other than the researcher(s), please contact Professor John O'Neill, Director (Research Ethics), telephone 06 350 5249, e-mail humanethics@massey.ac.nz".

Please note that if a sponsoring organisation, funding authority or a journal in which you wish to publish requires evidence of committee approval (with an approval number), you will have to provide a full application to one of the University's Human Ethics Committees. You should also note that such an approval can only be provided prior to the commencement of the research.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "J. O'Neill".

John G O'Neill (Professor)
Chair, Human Ethics Chairs' Committee and
Director (Research Ethics)

cc Assoc Prof Peter Lineham
School of History, Philosophy and Classics
AL206

Dr Kerry Taylor, HoS
School of History, Philosophy and Classics
PN242

Massey University Human Ethics Committee
Accredited by the Health Research Council

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www.massey.ac.nz

roydonagent@gmail.com

09-4351688 (KHS) and 021-848665

Dear

“A Movement Reconsidered” - Information for Participants

I am currently researching a Masters of Philosophy thesis, which examines how Black Civil Rights in the U.S.A. 1954-1974 has been taught as a senior subject in New Zealand secondary schools, and whether or not it accurately reflects contemporary scholarship and new trends of interpretation. My supervisor is Associate Professor Peter Lineham (Regional Director of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences and Associate Professor of History).

The sources of information from this qualitative study include archival material held in the New Zealand Qualifications Authority and Archives New Zealand and a series of semi-structured interviews with educational officials and teachers who were involved in history education between 1988 to the present time.

I appreciate your willingness to participate as one of a cross-section of History teachers who have consented to be interviewed. My intention is to record all interviews digitally and to use the information in my thesis. I expect the interview to last for a maximum of one hour. A series of interview questions is attached. My hope is that they will act as a catalyst to probe into the issues raised in more detail and depth.

After the interview, I will identify information and a selection of quotations that will inform aspects of my thesis. This information will be made available to you to check, amend or delete within a timeframe of three months from the time of interview. It is important to me that my thesis reflects a true and accurate record of your comments and our discussion. If you wish to withdraw your interview data you can do so any time up until February 1, 2013.

Following historical convention it is my intention that if I choose to quote you directly, that you will be named in my thesis. I will send this information to you, including the immediate context in which it is written, for your approval prior to their inclusion in the thesis.

The information (both digital and written) will be stored in a secure location that only my supervisor and I have access to. All data will be destroyed three years after the completion of the research process.

If you require clarification on any aspect of this research, please contact my supervisor Peter Lineham or myself. I also include the Human Ethics Chairs' Committee mandatory statement that must accompany all public documents:

“This project has been evaluated by peer review and judged to be low risk. Consequently, it has not been reviewed by one of the University’s Human Ethics Committees. The researcher(s) named above are responsible for the ethical conduct of this research.

If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research that you wish to raise with someone other than the researcher(s) please contact Professor John O'Neill, Director (Research Ethics), telephone 06 350 5249, email humanethics@massey.ac.nz".

Participation in this research project is entirely voluntary. You have indicated to me that you are happy to be a participant. To formalise this could you please phone or email me or we can make arrangements for the interview.

Yours truly,

Roydon Agent
HOD History
Kamo High School

Appendix C: Interview Consent Form

“A Movement Reconsidered” Interview Informed Consent

This research project has been assessed and approved by the Massey University Ethics Committee (Reference)

I give informed consent for Roydon Agent, Masters student at Massey University (Albany), to use the written and oral information provided in this interview for his thesis on the History of teaching Black Civil Rights 1954-1974, in New Zealand Secondary Schools between 1988 and the present time (2013).

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

I understand that I will also have the opportunity to view a transcript of information and quotations from the interview that will be used in the research. Additionally will have a period of THREE months after the interview to check, amend, delete information, as I deem appropriate. I also can withdraw entirely me interview if I wish to within that Three-month period.

I understand that the information (both digital recording and written material) from this interview will be stored in a secure location at Kamo High School and that the data will be destroyed three years after the completion of this research project.

I understand that my participation in this research project is entirely voluntary and that I may withdraw my data from the project at any time three months

Please provide me with an electronic copy of this thesis upon its completion.

Participant:

Roydon Agent:

Date:

MANDATORY STATEMENT ACCOMPANYING PUBLIC DOCUMENTS

“This project has been evaluated by peer review and judged to be low risk. Consequently, it has not been reviewed by one of the University’s Human Ethics Committees. The researcher(s) named above are responsible for the ethical conduct of this research. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research that you wish to raise with someone other than the researcher(s) please contact Professor John O’Neill, Director (Research Ethics), telephone 06 350 5249, email humanethics@massey.ac.nz”.

Appendix D: Surveys

SURVEY
Teaching Black Civil Rights
in
New Zealand Secondary Schools

My Master's thesis is examining the history of how Black Civil Rights has been taught in New Zealand Secondary Schools in New Zealand from 1988 to the present time. This research project seeks to determine how well prepared teachers feel they have been to teach this topic (University training,), how much professional development they have had while teaching Black Civil Rights, and how familiar they are with recent scholarship and new trends of interpretation on this topic. I appreciate you completing this survey.

Please email survey back to: roydonagent@gmail.com

MANY THANKS FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!

NB: This is a CONFIDENTIAL SURVEY. If you are happy for me to contact you in response to one of your answers, that too will be confidential. Please feel free to add additional comments that will assist me in my research. I've put an * at end of questions where I would appreciate you doing this.

Name: _____

School _____

Area: (CHCH etc.) _____

Email: _____

(details are optional)

1.How long have you been teaching Black Civil Rights?

2.Did you study Black Civil Rights at University? If so please state which University and if possible your lecturer/professor.*

3.Is Black Civil Rights your 'specialist' topic? *

4.Did you take any form of American Studies at University? *
(Please state what University you attended)

5. How much Black Civil Rights specific Professional Development have you had while teaching this topic? (Please state who ran PD in what year)*

6. What textbooks do you use to teach Black Civil Rights to teach Black Civil Rights? * (Please state title and author)

7. What other resources do you use to teach Black Civil Rights? *
(Would you mind sending a copy of these to me please? I promise I will not share these with anyone else.)

8. What books/articles on Black Civil Rights have you read that have enhanced your ability to teach this topic? * (Please state title and author and if possible the focus of the book/article)

9. In terms of your own classroom experience can you rank where the topic Black Civil Rights in comparison to other Level 1 topics:

____ New Zealand Search for Security

____ Origins of World War II

14. Has there ever been a time in teaching Black Civil Rights that you have decided to include or not to include information in a textbook because you thought it represented an incorrect view on the topic, or because you held a different view? If so can you provide an example please?

15. The Black Church and the Christian faith was pivotal to the Black community and to the Black Civil Rights Movement. On the continuums below can you indicate your answer to each of the questions by circling a number.

a) Do you think the Black Church and the Christian faith was important to the Black community and the Civil Rights Movement?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 1= strongly disagree - 10 = strongly agree

b) How much focus on the importance of the Black Church and the Christian faith to the Civil Rights Movement do you include in your teaching?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 1= no focus - 10 = significant focus

c) How much attention do you give in your teaching to applying the lessons of the past, and the values central to the Black Civil Rights Movement, to the present time?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 1= never - 10 = regularly

16. Do you include in your teaching of Black Civil Rights any of the following? Please tick.

_____ basic historiography

_____ race as a social construct

_____ cognitive dissonance

_____ tabula rasa

_____ manifest destiny

_____ silent covenant

17. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

MANDATORY STATEMENT ACCOMPANYING PUBLIC DOCUMENTS

“This project has been evaluated by peer review and judged to be low risk. Consequently, it has not been reviewed by one of the University’s Human Ethics Committees. The researcher(s) named above are responsible for the ethical conduct of this research.

If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research that you wish to raise with someone other than the researcher(s) please contact Professor John O’Neill, Director (Research Ethics), telephone 06 350 5249, email humanethics@massey.ac.nz”.

Appendix E: Quick Survey

Quick Teacher Survey

Roydon Agent
MPhil Thesis

(Please note: details of this survey are confidential. After I have read your response I may want to email, Skype or telephone you. If that's ok can you provide which mode of contact you prefer.)

Teacher name: _____

Email address: _____

Future contact address other than email:

School: _____

1. How long have you been Black Civil Rights ?
2. What university and teachers' college did you attend?
3. Did you take American studies at university or teachers' college?
4. Did you take any BCR at university or teachers' college?
5. Is BCR your specialist subject?

6. Have you ever had PD for teaching BCR?

7. Do you teach any of the following: (tick if you do)
 - A long civil rights
 - Silent covenants
 - Hush harbors
 - Cognitive dissonance
 - Tabula Rasa
 - Black criticism of Brown v Board of Ed decision

8. Have you done any reading on a counter approach to teaching BCR? List books please.

Appendix F: Final Approval of Selected Quotations

'A Movement Reconsidered' –Approval of Selected Quotations

I have had the opportunity to view the excerpts from the interview which have been selected for quotation in the final thesis

I have made the necessary amendments and deletions.

I confirm that the selected quotations (including amendments and deletions) are accurate quotations from the interview.

Participant: _____

Date: _____