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**Belonging:  
Pākehā women's practices  
in Aotearoa New Zealand**

A thesis presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the  
degree of

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Wilma Penelope Robinson  
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# **Belonging: Pākehā women's practices in Aotearoa New Zealand**

## **Abstract**

This thesis investigates practices of belonging among Pākehā women in Aotearoa New Zealand. Acknowledging their origins through British or European ancestry, the research explored their belonging using a range of methods. It concludes that women actively enabled their belonging using a range of practices, evident in everyday life.

Understanding the women's practices was assisted by combining theoretical concepts of practice with botanical metaphors to describe the complexity of belonging. Extending the metaphor enabled a deeper understanding of belonging in the Aotearoa New Zealand context as an evolving process, influenced by past practices.

Key words: Aotearoa New Zealand, belonging, gender, identity, oral history, practice, visual anthropology.





*To my communities of belonging*



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## REFLECTIONS

The voices contained in this thesis are those of a selected group of Pākehā women who live in Whanganui. While their voices and practices may convey the sense of belonging experienced by many Pākehā women, particularly those living in the provinces, they do not necessarily represent belonging to Aotearoa New Zealand, or to Whanganui, held by **all** Pākehā women. Metropolitan women are likely to engage in similar practices, although their expressions, attachments and outcomes may differ.

The responses of Pākehā academic women scholars, particularly anthropologists, engaging with Aotearoa New Zealand, and the Whanganui River, are revealed in their writings. Their standpoints and perspectives necessarily differ from that of the research participants. They write as cultural scholars, historians and anthropologists engaging with other cultures, usually located within Aotearoa New Zealand's borders. Academics such as Dame Anne Salmond, Judith MacDonald, Judith Binney, Rosemary du Plessis, Robin McKinlay and Trish Laing (Patricia Kinloch) should be included in this scholarship, and consideration given to their practices of belonging, strongly impacted by cross-cultural engagement. I engaged with the work of Pākehā women authors such as Bonisch-Brednich (1999, 2002) and Park et al (1991), and international scholars such as Strathern (1982) and Kohn (2002) because their focus related more directly to my own investigations. I was particularly interested in how 'ordinary' Pākehā women engaged in belonging.

What stood out in the research participants' practices was the tangential nature of their relationship to Māori. The absence of the Whanganui River as an active component in their belonging puzzled me initially, as did their lack of engagement with 'iconic' city spaces with which I felt an affinity. My surprise arose partly because the river, some of its communities, and some river residents, have become part of my Whanganui experience.

Negotiating the different sets of voices, 'academic' and 'ordinary' was challenging. I did so through ongoing reflection for the duration of the project; by explaining to participants the theory behind some of my questions; and by juxtaposition of theoretical knowledge with personal and participant experience as I wrote.

I was aware of the news-mediated and political debates about Māori and Pākehā. These may have raised the awareness among Aotearoa New Zealanders of Māori practices, and impacted subtly upon Pākehā concepts in everyday life. Ultimately, it was the silences evident in, and the fears expressed through, participant practices and narrative, that enabled me to comprehend how the divide continued. For such reasons, I used Māori concepts and ideas to inform my understanding of how the Pākehā research participants practiced belonging.

Bearing in mind that many factors impact on individual belonging, **further** studies could also investigate how Pākehā scholars, female and male, and metropolitan women, practice belonging in Aotearoa New Zealand.

**Penny Robinson**  
**February 2006**

# Chapter One

## Looking to the past to build the future

*Ngā moe moe ā ki tua  
Ngā ara ki naianei  
Ngā tupu wae ki mua*

*The visions of yesterday  
Are today's pathways  
And tomorrow's stepping stones.*

(Rangipo Metekingi 1962, recalled by his son, Manu Metekingi 2004)

*'Belonging' implies very much more than merely having been born in the place... (b)elonging suggests that one is an integral piece of the marvelously complicated fabric which constitutes the community... (t)he depth of such belonging is revealed in the forms of social organization and association in the community...*

(Cohen 1985:21)

### Introduction

This thesis investigates how some Pākehā<sup>1</sup> Aotearoa New Zealand<sup>2</sup> women practice belonging in and to Aotearoa New Zealand. Acknowledging their colonial origins through British or European ancestry, the research suggests that these women regard themselves as belonging to Aotearoa New Zealand, and that they are using active practices to develop and maintain belonging. In this chapter I provide an overview for the thesis, the background to the research and the catalysts for my choice of subject and the location. I describe the research location, then give a brief history of Aotearoa New Zealand's immigrant past, and situate the location within this context.

### The Research Context

As overcrowding and unemployment in the British Isles during the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries forced residents to look elsewhere for opportunities, the prospect of emigration to distant lands generated hope. Britons and Europeans flocked to other lands including Aotearoa New Zealand, Australia, Canada, and the United States. The migrants endured the hardships we have come to associate with 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century migration. These included departure from all that was familiar – long, exhausting journeys, bewildered arrival, lack of material goods or access to them, and little knowledge of what lay ahead. They also experienced the anticipation of a new way of life with greater opportunities than available in the lands they left behind, as I discuss in Chapters Five, Six and Eleven. Those who migrated to Aotearoa New Zealand did so against a background of British international colonization (Belich 1996; 2001; Fraser and Pickles 2002; Simpson 1997). The early migrant settlers were strongly attached to their lands of origin, referring to the British Isles or elsewhere as 'home' (Porter and MacDonald 1996), highlighted in Chapter Seven. In their new locations, migrant settlers often displaced the indigenous

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<sup>1</sup> A term used to describe Aotearoa New Zealanders of British and European origins. The term may be "derived from 'Pakepakeha', a mythical human-like being with fair skin and hair (Ranford 2000). Today 'Pākehā' is used to describe any peoples of non-Māori or non-Polynesian heritage... a way to differentiate between the historical origins of our settlers, the Polynesians and the Europeans, the Māori and the other" (ibid). Whanganui Māori use the term *kōtuku*, a native white egret or heron, meaning white stranger (Taiaroa 2004: personal communication).

<sup>2</sup> The term, Aotearoa New Zealand, reflects an increasing emphasis on national bi-cultural awareness. I use the term throughout but most participants refer only to New Zealand. I have retained this reference in their direct speech.

population, rapidly becoming the dominant group, numerically and politically. In Aotearoa New Zealand, this process “created the Pākehā people and marginalized the Māori<sup>3</sup> in less than half a century” (Belich 2001:11).

Many Pākehā Aotearoa New Zealanders no longer question where ‘home’ is. They claim belonging to Aotearoa New Zealand, although their right to do so has been contested by indigenous people (Tanczos 2004). Why Pākehā claim belonging, and what gives them the right to do so, is a question which has arisen more frequently, as indigenous people internationally assert their own belonging in their native lands (King 2003/2004; Walker 1990). As in other lands, indigenous claims are often based on longevity of residence and/or association, occupation and land use, knowledge of places and spaces, and ancestral connections. This knowledge incorporates ‘myths and legends’ of places and people, recalls past events, and establishes physical, spiritual and relational connections, detailed in Chapters Five through Ten.

Observing indigenous people’s ‘sense of deep belonging’, migrant settlers have been forced to question their own ‘sense/s of belonging/s’.<sup>4</sup> They have asked themselves, and have been asked, how they can have such strong feelings of connection when others claim their own displacement, despite arriving or being ‘here’ first. The immigrant descendants argue that they have no other homeland, despite their origins. They seek ways of explicating connections to enable their own claims to ‘belonging’ (Read 2000:1-5).

Pākehā Aotearoa New Zealanders, especially those born in the land, began asserting their right to belong, more loudly and strongly, during the 1970s and 1980s, when Māori publicly politicized issues surrounding their own belonging, and their subordination within the national context (King 2003/2004; Walker 1990). Wevers argued that “the 1970s were a time of enormous change...an ‘explosive’ period...that shaped who we are today (quoted in ‘Remember the Seventies?’ 2005:20). Some Pākehā recognize that their belonging differs from that experienced by Māori (Snedden 2004). Other Pākehā argue that their belonging is similar (Turner 2004).

During library research, I became aware that belonging was often conflated with, or discussed in association with, identity (Cohen 1982, 1994; Giddens 1998; Mathews 2000), and also with concepts of ‘home’ (Battaglia 1996). Their theories provided insights into belonging, what it was and how it was constructed, but were contained within explorations of identity. More recently, belonging has been investigated as a topic in its own right (Dominy 2001; Read 2000), often in the transnational context (Chamberlain and Leydesdorff 2004; Pratt and Yeoh 2003), as discussed in Chapter Two.

In this thesis, I argue that developing and maintaining belonging is an active process, involving a range of practices. These incorporate embodiment, performativity and inscription. Belonging often appears to be deeply embedded, according to relational, environmental, physical and metaphysical influences. It appears to develop temporally, becoming layered and interwoven horizontally and vertically. Because of the diverse factors impacting upon belonging, it appears to be multiple, flexible, mutable, fluid and emotional, with the accompanying implications of attachment and connections. Belonging appears also to be contextual, positional, and subjective. Impacting factors include gender, ethnicity, and social, and cultural, habitus. Belonging seems to involve the interrelationship of personal agency impacted by cultural mores, working in conjunction with one another, so that as agents create themselves, they also create community and vice versa (Bourdieu

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<sup>3</sup> Aotearoa New Zealand’s indigenous people.

<sup>4</sup> I use the term, ‘sense/s of belonging/s’, deliberately, here, but generally use the less cumbersome term, ‘belonging’. Where it seems to convey the meaning better, I use ‘sense of belonging’. This assists in indicating that I regard belonging as being multiple, flexible and mutable, transferable, layered, positional and relational, and subjective.

1982, 1990; Giddens 1991). Understanding belonging more deeply is enabled by extending these concepts and elaborating on particular metaphors which I clarify in Chapter Two. There I discuss belonging, its interrelationship with identity and, to a lesser extent, home, and possible metaphorical approaches.

Belonging appears to be uneven, and to expand and contract, with people belonging only in some areas of life and community. To understand belonging, I focused on processes “conceived less as a matter of ‘ideas’ than of **embodied practices** that shape identities and enable resistances” (Gupta and Ferguson 1997:6, my emphasis). For at least one group of Pākehā Aotearoa New Zealand women, belonging was multiple, linked to their pasts, through immigration or descent from immigrant settlers. This combined with interactions and knowledge of people, places and culture, transmitted intergenerationally, and integrated into everyday practices. This dissertation investigates active practices amongst these Pākehā women in Aotearoa New Zealand. I next outline why I chose to investigate this topic in the particular location.

## Beginnings

My own sense of dislocation, as an incomer to the Whanganui<sup>5</sup> community, provided the catalyst for this dissertation. Aotearoa New Zealand-born, I arrived in Whanganui when I was 22 years old. I grew up nine hours drive to the north. There I became familiar with rounded landforms, soft clouds, and sub-tropical flora. As a third-generation member of a resident farming family, whose maternal ancestors arrived in Aotearoa New Zealand with the earliest British and European immigrants, I was strongly attached to kin and place.

When I took a job as a journalist in Whanganui, I left behind familiar people and places. Whanganui provided stark visual contrasts with its windswept coastline, blocky land forms and narrow valleys. Socially and culturally, the community was similar, as one might expect of a similar-sized city in the same land. The same gendered mores were evident in relationships between men and women. Men, and masculine behaviours, were and, to a large extent, still are, dominant, reflecting Aotearoa New Zealand’s patriarchal origins (Law, Campbell and Dolan 1999).

Marrying, and raising a family in Whanganui, I learned that it can take a very long time to develop the sense that one belongs in, or to, a place and its people, even when one shares the same culture. Although I discovered ancestral connections and the presence of distant kin, became part of an extended family, developed a community profile, engaged in community activities as an employee and volunteer, and was regarded by many residents as ‘belonging’, to the extent of being ‘one of us’, I had not internalized my belonging.

I wondered how other women had coped, whether, when, and how, they perceived that they belonged, and what practices enabled their belonging. As my research progressed, I began to wonder how people could belong if they or their ancestors were not born in a place. If belonging was more than birth, then how did individuals and collectives develop belonging? What if the belonging was so strong that people claimed a right to belong in the land which was not where their ancestors had originated? Did they think they belonged, and, if they did, why did they think that? What did they do that might demonstrate or deepen their belonging?

As I noted earlier, migrant settlers were often strongly attached to their lands of origin, referring to the British Isles, or elsewhere, as ‘home’. Migrants in diasporic and transnational communities appear to feel similarly, that ‘home’ is frequently somewhere else (Baldassar 1997; Fraser and Pickles 2002; Pohl 2001). Such research indicated that migrants had a sense of ‘deep’ belonging within their

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<sup>5</sup> Debates rage about the spelling of Whanganui/Wanganui (Stowell 2004). The awa (river), the National Park, the electorate, and the region, all contain the letter ‘h’, but the city is spelled Wanganui. The tension appears to relate to perceptions of local dialect. I use the spellings, Whanganui and Wanganui, as they occurred in texts, and used my discretion in reporting direct speech. I also use the spelling, Whanganui, when making generic references.



countries of origin. This appeared to be similar to the belonging which indigenous people experience in their native lands (Cohen 1982), for the same sorts of reasons as I felt I belonged in Northland but not in Whanganui, that is, birth combined with relational and environmental connections.

This dissertation, which is based on one year of intensive fieldwork with sixteen Whanganui women, combines with nearly 30 years of personal residence in the city, before, during and after the initial fieldwork. It focuses specifically on Pākehā women, who, like me, are of British or European origin, mostly born and raised in Aotearoa New Zealand. This is expanded in Chapter Three, where I discuss the methodology, and in Chapter Four, where I introduce the participants individually. From Chapters Five to Eleven, I discuss and analyze the ethnographic material drawing on the participants' narratives and discourse, their references to place, people, and material objects including photographs, and their heritage.

Each of those chapters explores particular aspects of participants' belonging. Chapter Five focuses on narratives about their heritage, investigates how aspects of the narrated past is incorporated into belonging in the present, and explores cultural 'games' played within Aotearoa New Zealand. Chapter Six reviews common experiences and shared values. There I argue that experiences, shared temporally although separated geographically, and shared values, arising from similar experiences and/or cultural origins, can broaden connections, and intensify belonging. I also consider decision making, the tension between public concepts and personal behaviour, and how shared values can contribute to the construction of heroes and renegades.

The relevance and meaning of places and spaces in belonging provides the focus for Chapter Seven. The participants' worlds, their responses to various locations through inscription and engagement, and the role of iconic places in their belonging are highlighted. Other practices involved in belonging, and the participants' connections, provide the essence of Chapter Eight. In Chapter Nine, I reflect on codes of hospitality, related particularly to 'taking tea', a generic for a range of related activities. Continuing this theme, in Chapter Ten, I discuss inter- and intra-generational transmission of cultural practices. In Chapter Eleven, the participants reflect directly on belonging, its implications and ramifications. In the final chapter, I draw aspects of several theories together, and expand some theoretical metaphors to provide insights into how these Pākehā women engage in belonging. I also suggest where this research might be located internationally, how it could be used and how it could be extended.

## **Locating Aotearoa New Zealand**

Aotearoa New Zealand (Fig 1) lies in the southern Pacific Ocean. Its nearest neighbour, Australia, lies 1600 km to the west. It is composed of the North and South Islands and several smaller islands (Virtual New Zealand 2004). With just over four million people, "mainly of British, Polynesian and Irish descent" (Belich 1996), the population and land area are "small in international terms" (ibid). "Human settlement probably dates back no further than a thousand years, when the ancestors of the Māori people arrived from tropical Polynesia" (ibid:7). The first permanent European settlers arrived in the 1830s. In 1840, Māori iwi<sup>6</sup> and British Government representatives signed the Treaty of Waitangi/Te Tiriti o Waitangi, described as New Zealand's founding document (Virtual New Zealand 2004). This has differing interpretations. The British signatories assumed it provided 'sovereignty' to Britain, and resulted in vast tracts of land being sold to, and settled by, the white incomers (ibid). This led to 'traumatic interaction' between Māori and Pākehā (Belich 1996). There was much inter-ethnic warfare, government intervention, and often the confiscation of Māori land. Whanganui experienced much

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<sup>6</sup> Tribe.



of this and tensions continue. Recent governments have attempted to resolve this fraught heritage, by establishing a tribunal to hear Māori claims and make financial compensation, return or reallocate land, recognise prior use rights, and sometimes urge reinforcement in legislation, as with recent foreshore legislation (NZ Herald 2003).



**Fig 1: Aotearoa New Zealand (New Zealand Tourism online 2004).**

### **W/h/anganui briefly**

Located in a long, sweeping bight on the west coast of the North Island, Whanganui is prone to battering from strong equinoctial winds. Volcanic cones are visible to the north and west. The city and district are bisected by the Whanganui River which flows through forest to bare eroding hills and across a wide flood plain to the Tasman Sea. The district's proximity to Wellington, and its accessibility by river, made it an ideal location for early European settlement. This began in earnest after 1840 when the pressure grew on land around Wellington (Wanganui District Council 1994). In the early years, friction occurred between Māori and Pākehā over differences in perceptions about land use, land sales and occupation rights (Downes 1922/1976). Once this was resolved, the non-Māori population grew slowly but steadily with a notably prosperous period from approximately 1880 to 1930 (Smart and Bates 1972).

The region's ethnic composition is similar to the nation's, although more residents in Whanganui identify as both Māori and European. The national 2001 census recorded about 84% of Whanganui residents identifying themselves as European compared to 80.1% nationally, and 21% as Māori, compared to 14.7% nationally. Other ethnicities included Samoan, South Asian, South-East Asian and Polynesian (NZ Department of Statistics 2001). At that time, the city was struggling socio-economically. More young and older people lived in the city than elsewhere. Compared to the national figures, residents were generally poorer and less educated. Their households were smaller and more people lived in lone-parent households; unemployment was higher; fewer people had access to a telephone, the internet, and motor vehicles. On the other hand, slightly more Whanganui residents owned their own homes, with or without mortgages than average nationally (ibid). More recent statistics and business commentary suggest that the city's fortunes are improving, in line with national economic improvements (Wanganui District Council 2004).

Wanganui became a city in 1924 (Wanganui District Council 1994).<sup>7</sup> It has a

<sup>7</sup> "With a population of 24,000, (it was) then the fifth largest centre in New Zealand" (Wanganui District Council 1994).

stable population of around 40,000 and the atmosphere of a large country town. Culturally, it is predominantly Pākehā, with limited Māori material or cultural visibility (Laurence 2004). The main street was upgraded during the 1990s, focusing on the central business district's Victorian and Edwardian buildings. Most residents are aware of the Māori population, particularly since the 1995 occupation of an inner city park (Robinson 1995). Frequent social interaction appears to be rare, as does Māori involvement in local government. Superficially, this has altered since the 2004 local government elections, when two people with Māori ethnic connections were elected to the city's governing political body.<sup>8</sup>

As with the nation, agriculture provides the city's economic base. There is some light manufacturing. Modest but successful efforts are being made to develop opportunities for tourism.

## Definitions

In all contexts, migrants are incomers but, as Kohn (2002) asserted, in her Inner Hebridean Island research, incomers can become insiders over time, by adapting their behaviour, adopting certain practices, and making contributions to the community. Within some communities, residents refer to certain people as 'old-timers', 'real' villagers, islanders or residents, implying historical and ancestral connections, and describe others as incomers, strangers or outsiders (Kohn 2002; Mars 1999; Strathern 1982). These terms provide ways of differentiating historical, temporal, and community status.

Kohn's concept of an 'islander/insider/incomer continuum' is useful because it provided a way of locating people within their communities. 'Islanders' were generally those who could claim several centuries of ancestral residence. 'Islander' status was also accorded to those whose ancestors arrived from the 1850s to 1950s, bought properties, farmed cattle and/or married in. They demonstrated commitment to the community through action and residence. Islanders were always insiders. Incomers could become insiders, through actions and practice, because these demonstrated commitment. Incomers who did not demonstrate commitment, or remained aloof, continued to be regarded as outsiders, despite long-term residence, externally imposed commitments (i.e. financial contributions like rates payments), and use of public facilities (Kohn 2002). Such 'outsiders' were likely to be spoken of disparagingly, as were 'old' or 'real' residents if they appeared old-fashioned, culturally inept or too conservative for the present day (Strathern 1982).

To differentiate stages in movement along the continuum of acceptance, and people's origins, as well as emic and etic perceptions, I use four specific terms - Old Whanganui, insider, incomer and outsider. Old Whanganui implies people who were descended from early settlers and whose family had unbroken residency. They were likely to regard themselves as 'real' insiders and to be perceived as such by incomers. Incomers sometimes described such people as 'born and breds'. Insiders nearly always implied Old Whanganui residents, and their kin – those who were born and raised in the area, but lived elsewhere. Insider could also be applied to incomers who had developed inside knowledge of the city, its people and its history, through residential longevity, and demonstrated commitment. Incomers were people who had lived elsewhere, and relocated for a variety of reasons i.e. employment, retirement, kin, lifestyle. Outsiders described recent arrivals and/or visitors with no apparent connections to the area, and residents who made no commitment or rejected belonging.

## Conclusion

Bearing my own subject position in mind, Aotearoa New Zealand born, educated, Pākehā, female, in a stable economic and marital situation, this

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<sup>8</sup> Neither campaigned actively from a Māori perspective.

dissertation investigates Pākehā belonging against a background of British colonization during the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. In this context<sup>9</sup>, Aotearoa New Zealand, like Hawaii, could be described as a “postcolonial entit(y) in which the politics of indigeneity are tense...varied historical connections, as well as the different configurations in which domination, resistance, and everything in between are embedded, have contributed to the sociopolitical diversity of both regions” (Besnier 2004:1725).<sup>10</sup> It is one of few settler colonies to have signed a treaty with the indigenous people around the time of settlement. In the first 120 years or so of settlement, Aotearoa New Zealand maintained strong cultural and economic links to its ancestral homelands. Colonial settler attitudes, such as a sense of cultural inferiority, and ‘limited colonial characteristics’, seem to parallel those described in other settler colonies (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin 2000: 4). Links to the ‘homeland’ reduced during the 1970s (Belich 2001:12), as political awareness of indigenous rights increased. Acknowledging this background, this thesis investigates the active practices some Pākehā women used in belonging.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> As opposed to transnational or diasporic dislocation and belonging.

<sup>10</sup> Although Besnier (2004) refers to Hawaii and Aotearoa New Zealand as postcolonial entities, the latter, at least, is heavily imbued with colonial institutions and attitudes.

<sup>11</sup> I am aware that the practices I am investigating are those of a specific group – immigrants, incomers, Pākehā, middleclass, women, members of the dominant culture, with the gendered, cultural and social expectations and qualifications that apply. While their belonging may differ from those of the indigenous population, their attachment to land, place and people is no less valid, although as Read (2000) and King (1999) have noted, some people feel guilty for ancestral actions.

## Chapter Two

### Disentangling identity from belonging

*You have to have something to belong to, a family, a heritage.*

Israeli Jewish settler (McNeish 1980:167)

#### Introduction

Living requires action. Actions are observable, and replicable. Individually and collectively, we perform our culture, embody our emotions, and engage in living. We demonstrate who we are in a variety of ways, including our codes of conduct, environmental engagement, and relationships with people and places. We observe, learn, copy, engage and/or perform in the presence of elders, peers and juniors. Once learned, we continue some practices alone and others collectively. We continually assess and reassess our practices, consciously and subconsciously. We engage in being, evolving continuously, never static even when still. We discover how people practice belonging through similar means - by observation, engagement and reflection on what we are told, observe or do ourselves.

Within anthropology, concepts of identity and belonging in places and spaces through time have become increasingly debated. Often the concepts are conflated with a third, that of home, implying that the three are one, apparently inseparable, and always interwoven. Similarities and overlaps are apparent and definite inter-relationships exist. Therefore, they are, understandably, not always easily separated. In this chapter, I discuss their interweaving, and argue that it is possible to study the concepts separately. Home, it seems, can be incorporated in discussions about either one. Doing so enables a deeper understanding of belonging. I work mostly from an anthropological perspective, but also draw on cultural studies, communications theory, and human geography. I explain why I believe it is desirable to investigate belonging separately, and argue that it is engaged in and revealed through practice, as well as discourse.

Since conducting my initial research in 2000, I am more convinced than ever that belonging deserves separate investigation from identity. To argue that they should be completely separated would be reductionist, not a direction I wish to pursue. But considering belonging independently assists in gaining a better understanding of its complexity and construction in practice. Doing so may also deepen our understanding of identity and its formation.

This chapter is divided into four parts. Firstly, I refer briefly to the history of identity theory, then, in light of recent debates, I discuss the work the term, identity, did. Secondly, I describe how identity theorists have discussed belonging. I argue that belonging can be better understood by combining theories which focus on active practices and their associated environmental, emotional, relational, positional and genealogical aspects. In association with this I discuss aspects of home and the emotional content of belonging. Thirdly, I discuss how scholars have sharpened the focus on belonging, with particular reference to research into belonging in Western colonized lands like Canada, Australia, and Aotearoa New Zealand. Lastly, I discuss how several metaphors might be combined to extend our understanding of belonging.

#### Identity and belonging

In discussing belonging, it is useful and necessary to discuss the theoretical debates and the historical contexts in which the concepts of identity, home, and belonging are situated. In identity theory, belonging is often used to imply similarity and attachment. As I noted above, the concepts are often conflated, used interchangeably, and investigated accordingly. This also occurred in cultural studies. A myriad of meanings can be found in various works (Berger and Luckmann 1967;

Cohen 1985, 2000; Giddens 1998) while lay people also attribute a variety of meanings to identity.

Brubaker and Cooper (2000), Calhoun (2003), Brubaker (2003) and Sokefeld (2001) refer to 'belonging' in discussions about identity, and describe it as a part of being connected to, or living within a community, or culture, or in the world. Brubaker and Cooper (2000) provided a detailed description of the work the term, identity, has done since its rise in use since the 1960s. At that time, Erik H. Erikson described identity as "a kind of consolidation of self" (Erikson 1963:159, noted in Luhmann 2001:7154). Today, identity theorists have moved away from the early focus on indigenous people. They consider identity across a range of cultures and social groups, and are more likely to argue that identity is "a kind of mastery of multiple narratives of self-representation" (Luhmann 2001:7154-7159). Luhmann argued that the "literary, 'postmodern' turn in the social sciences, with its emphasis on narrative and performance (and)...power and agency" had been a major influence (with) identity being understood as being "perform(ed), enact(ed) and present(ed)" (ibid). These terms highlighted the active nature of belonging as well as an understanding that identity was actively constructed.

In substantially detailing the meanings and use of the term, 'identity', Brubaker & Cooper argued that it had lost "its analytical purchase" (2000:1). Their arguments highlighted the work the term, identity, had done, and the difficulties that arose when various meanings were used interchangeably. They asserted that it was useful to disentangle a number of terms from their conflation with, inclusion in, or confusion with, the term, identity. Belonging was one such term. Contending that "(s)ocial analysis...requires relatively unambiguous categories"(ibid:2), they argued that "identity" is too ambiguous, too torn between 'hard' and 'soft' meanings, essentialist connotations and constructivist qualifiers, to serve well the demands of social analysis" (ibid:2). It had been used in many ways, some of which contradicted others. The main uses were

to highlight non-instrumental **modes of action**; to focus on self-understanding rather than self-interest; to designate sameness across persons or sameness over time; to capture allegedly core, foundational aspects of self-hood; to deny that such core, foundational aspects exist; to highlight the *processual, interactive development of solidarity and collective self-understanding*; and to stress the fragmented quality of the contemporary experience of "self" (ibid:8, my emphasis).

They noted that the first was "general enough to be compatible with all of the others" (ibid), affinities were apparent between some, and strong tensions evident between others. Identity was used to highlight 'fundamental sameness' or reject such notions, invoke a sense of action, or imply staticity (ibid). Clarifying the diverse uses of the term, identity, enabled an understanding that identity construction was an active process, involving agents and solidarities. The processes involved are the practices through which belonging is constructed, demonstrated and can be observed.

Brubaker and Cooper (2000) suggested that "alternative terms might stand in for 'identity', enabling theoretical work to continue without the current confusion (ibid:14), partly to avoid the reification which 'identity' had suffered. They proposed using "active, processual terms" (ibid:17) such as

**identification** – of self and others – (as being) intrinsic to social life...and fundamentally situational and contextual" (ibid:14); "**self-understanding** ...a dispositional term that designates what might be

called “situated subjectivity”<sup>12</sup>; “**commonality, connectedness, groupness**” to convey “**the emotionally laden sense of belonging to a distinctive, bounded group, involving both a felt solidarity or oneness with fellow group members and a felt difference from or even antipathy to specified outsiders**” (ibid:19, my emphasis).

The third cluster was aimed at avoiding “stirring all self-understandings based on race, religion, ethnicity, and so on into the great conceptual melting pot of ‘identity’”. Doing so would encourage using “a more differentiated analytical language; ...**(c)ommonality**” denotes the sharing of some common attribute (and) ...**connectedness** the relational ties that link people”. These terms, in combination, may engender “groupness” – **the sense of belonging** to a distinctive, bounded, solidary group” (ibid:20, my emphasis). They argued that they needed supplementation by

a third element, what Max Weber called a **Zusammengehorigkeitsgefühl, a feeling of belonging together. Such a feeling may...depend...on** the degrees and forms of **commonality and connectedness...**(and) **other factors** such as particular **events, their encoding in compelling public narratives, prevailing discursive frames** and so on (ibid, my emphasis). (They aimed) to develop an analytical idiom sensitive **to the multiple forms and degrees of commonality and connectedness, and to the widely varying ways in which actors...attribute meaning and significance to them** (ibid:21, my emphasis).

Brubaker and Cooper asserted that doing so would make it possible to differentiate between lesser and greater forms of affinity i.e. groupness. Like them, I am “not persuaded that the term, identity, is indispensable” (ibid:9). Their adding Weber’s concept to the third cluster deepened the concept of the belonging to which I refer. This enabled an understanding of belonging as being affected by factors in common, and by relational ties, as well as events, their “encoding in...public narratives, prevailing discursive narratives and so on” (ibid:21). Understanding these as influences on belonging enabled the development of a way of understanding belonging as active, and involving individual and collective practices. It still did not allow for understanding how people develop belonging, especially when they may exhibit evident differences in ethnicity, culture, religion, language within the same geographical spaces. Nor does it explain why people who are apparently similar may lack a sense of belonging.

Unlike Brubaker and Cooper, Calhoun preferred the concept of social solidarities, claiming that “(t)o speak only of identifications...implies that individual persons are real in a sense in which groups and social relationships are not” (2003:536). He asserted that people must belong “to social groups, relations or culture. The idea of individuals abstract enough to be able to choose all their ‘identifications’ is deeply misleading” (ibid). He argued, as Geertz (1973) did before him, also influenced by Weber, that people “are necessarily situated in particular webs of belonging, with access to particular others but not to humanity in general” (ibid). Calhoun argued that the fixity or fluidity of identity and belonging varied according to circumstances, and that “**differential resources give people differential capacities to reach beyond particular belongings to other social connections** – including very broad ones like nations, civilizations or humanity as a whole” (2003:537). He argued that there was no one “basic identity common to all members of a group” (ibid), but that any group was “internally differentiated in a variety of ways, and overlap(ped) with, and (was) crosscut by, various other

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<sup>12</sup> “One’s sense of who one is, of one’s social location, and of how (given the first two) one is prepared to act. As a dispositional term, it belongs to the realm of what Pierre Bourdieu has called *sens pratique*, the practical sense – at once cognitive and emotional – that persons have of themselves and their social world” (Brubaker & Cooper 2000:17).



identities" (ibid:546-547). One or another might come to the fore depending on circumstances.

These claims can be aligned with factors other scholars, such as Cohen (1982), Pohl (2001), and Yus (2001), have asserted were important in identity formation. These included language, ethnicity, kin ties, regional connections and/or culture. Similar factors are involved in constructing belonging, often linked with emotions of attachment and connection. Brubaker (2003) rebutted much of Calhoun's argument, asserting that in many respects their stances were similar. The difference, perhaps, was that the former tended towards individualism and bounded attachments, the latter towards collectivism and the allowance for belonging to incorporate a range of connections, dependent on situation. Combining these arguments with Bourdieuan concepts of structure and agency, and theories developed by Deleuze and Guattari (1987), Ingold (2000) and Kohn (2002) enables a deeper understanding of belonging, and the linkages between collective and individual perspectives, because together they encompass a range of possibilities. I discuss these theories with their associated metaphors later in this chapter.

Sokefeld (2001) asserted that anthropologists often had difficulty with concepts because "not all human beings employ the same concepts", and that "(c)oncepts originate from specific contexts in which they have more or less precise meanings" (ibid:528). In the past, one problem was that concepts were often used out of context for comparative purposes, and "become increasingly difficult to define" (ibid). What was initially emic, encapsulated in 'particular cultural circumstances' became etic. With meaning assigned externally (ibid:529), a concept might be attributed an incorrect meaning because it was considered out of context. Identity was one such concept.

Similarly, conflating belonging with identity creates problems for at least three reasons: firstly, because doing so can suggest that one concept is another; secondly, because different cultures might conceptualize the concepts differently; and thirdly, because it becomes more difficult to understand how the concepts of identity, home and belonging are intertwined, where, and why, they are similar, or different. Sokefeld claimed that "(i)identity was not selfsameness but sameness in terms of a shared difference from others" (ibid:536). This definition does not fully explain belonging because belonging implies a degree of sharing and connectedness but does not always reveal itself as self-sameness. Belonging has emotional connotations, some of which occur during, result from, or deepen during practice, the sharing of events, engagement in similar processes, and the resultant movement along a temporal continuum (Kohn 2002) as well as experiences of common, yet temporally or geographically distant, experiences.

I argue that the term, identity, does not enable a clear understanding of belonging because it is interwoven with too many other concepts. Like Brubaker and Cooper (2000), I agree that 'identity' has had to work overtime, and that breaking the concept into components may enable a deeper understanding of the world. I concur with their claims that using 'identity' as a term to cover a range of meanings and understandings has become confusing. I found some of their suggestions useful, but prefer to refer to 'belonging' or, as noted in the introduction, 'sense/s of belonging/s' to imply the multitude of meanings people apply to what they might refer to as 'groupness', and what Calhoun described as 'social solidarities'. By these he meant those greater or lesser forms of affinity which individuals, social groups, communities and cultures develop, or are encouraged, politically, to develop. Weber's concept of *Zusammengehörigkeitsgefühl*, a feeling of belonging together" (2000:20), indicated the importance of emotion and connectedness in belonging. It extends our understanding of belonging to internalized and emotional as well as being externally observable.

In a recent study, Savage, Bagnall and Longhurst (2005) argued in favour of a concept they termed 'elective' belonging. In their late 1990s British research, the

interweaving of the concepts of identity, home and belonging was apparent as they focused on discovering how belonging was articulated, perceived and constructed in Manchester, England. They aimed to elaborate empirically the impact of globalisation on concepts of local belonging, using narrative and discourse to discover how the residents regarded belonging from the perspective of their dwelling places. They argued that their research revealed that “the power of place is defined by a large group of those who ‘electively belong’ to the specific residential location which they can make congruent with their lives” (Savage et al. 2005:203). Globalization impacted more strongly on fields like music and cinema, but other fields, specifically residence, did not allow for ‘considerable spatial extension’ (ibid). Respondents defined ‘their social position’ through residential space, with ‘one’s residence’ being crucial in identity construction. People deliberately chose where to live and often used this to “announce their identities” (ibid:207). Different places appealed according to one’s degree of cultural and economic capital (ibid).

Savage et al. (2005) preferred the term, ‘elective belonging’, to ‘outside belonging’. They argued that “the latter depend(ed) for its analytical power on an alternative notion of ‘inside belonging’...largely absent” from responses (ibid:207-208). Elective belonging “involves people moving to a place and putting down roots” (ibid:207), and provided “a way of dealing...with people’s relative fixity in the local routines of work, household relationships, and leisure...and the mobility of their cultural imaginations” (ibid). The respondents developed “identities...through the networked geography of places articulated together” (ibid:208). These included feeling “at home among the cultural values and objects of English, American and...Australian and Canadian nations...networks of global urban space” (ibid), and within a broadly defined northern region where respondents “had kinship ties and emotional connections” (ibid), “(t)he national frame of reference” featuring little in the respondents’ ‘cultural imaginaries’ (ibid). The emphasis they placed on belonging, and the importance they attributed to its contribution to identity construction, demonstrated that belonging could be the research focus rather than being contained in and tagged onto research directed towards identity.

Other research has indicated that belonging was sometimes ascribed. This involved acceptance by ‘locals’, as Mars (1999) argued within the context of his Welsh research. Reflecting on community response to the retirement of a particular long-term incomer, Mars argued that, temporally, committed incomers could develop connections and attachments. Eventually, they might be ascribed belonging. This was almost opposite to elective belonging. It developed differently. It arose not from a personal decision to belong, but through insider acknowledgement that the incomer had demonstrated commitment, interest and involvement. This combined with temporal longevity to enable belonging. While ‘elective’ and ‘ascribed’ belonging may differ from ‘indigenous’ belonging, they are forms of belonging, also revealed through attachments and connections to people and places.

## Belonging

Having argued that belonging can be researched and discussed separately from identity, I now suggest how aspects of several theoretical concepts might be fused to provide deeper understanding of what belonging means individually and collectively, and how emotion and practice could be included. I draw on theories which incorporate practice, expanding Bourdieu’s approach to understanding culture and society (1982, 2001) with approaches promulgated by Cohen (1982, 2000), Deleuze & Guattari (1987), Geertz (1973), Ingold (2000), and Kohn (2002).

Bourdieu (1982) asserted that society and culture could best be understood by investigating practice. To better understand the interaction of cultural structures and individual agency, he developed a theory which incorporated concepts of habitus, field, capital and practice. He argued that people reproduced what they were socialised into through their behaviours. This occurred “**without**



***presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary to attain them***" (ibid:72, my emphasis). People also responded to specific situations in ways which might generate new and different behaviours. Within a range of responses, no particular response could be expected. To respond differently would mean acting outside pre-defined boundaries and was less likely to occur (ibid:23).

Suggesting that field could be viewed like a force field, dynamic and with differing potentials (ibid:7), Bourdieu asserted that the concept of practice was created by combining habitus with capital. Human action occurred within these fields. They were sites where agents battled for resources and power (economic capital). Within those sites, agents aimed to differentiate themselves from others and acquire useful capital, of which Bourdieu identified two forms, one economic, the other cultural (or symbolic). Economic capital was predicated upon money and property, with position and power contingent upon these. Cultural capital determined one's status and could be strengthened through judicious use of economic capital i.e. for education, which furthered one's ability to comprehend cultural capital. This could also be turned into economic capital i.e. through employment. Most importantly, cultural or symbolic capital could be used to signify social position and therefore assisted in indicating one's own, or determining another person's, status, obliquely (Bourdieu 1982, 1984, 1990; Kato 2004; Pierre Bourdieu (1930-2002) 2002).

Bourdieu argued that people developed strategies to explain what happened in their social world, claiming that agents "respond to the invitation or threats of a world whose meaning they have helped produce" (1997:18). Structure was deeply embedded, internalised, and embodied, "constituted in the course of collective history," (but) "acquired in the course of individual history" (1984:467). Resonating with these arguments were Ingold's (2000) contentions that people grow and develop "relationally as a movement along a way of life" (ibid), and Epstein's (1978) assertion that childhood influences were so deeply embedded that they affected one's world view.

Ortner sounded a warning about adopting a solely Bourdieuan approach and "writing in terms of the old binaries – structure/event, structure/agency, habitus/practice" (1996:2). She argued that the "challenge is...to recognise the ways in which the subject is part of larger social and cultural webs, and in which social and cultural 'systems' are predicated upon human desires and projects" (ibid). She proposed a "model of practice that embodies agency but does not begin with, or pivot upon, the agent, actor, or individual" (ibid). To go beyond the concept of 'free agents', Ortner adapted the concept of the 'game', (Bourdieu 1990), and 'play' (Geertz 1973). She introduced the concept of 'serious games', asserting there was "never only one game". That the game was 'serious' added "the idea that power and inequality pervade the games of life in multiple ways...the stakes are often very high...(and) must be played with intensity and sometimes deadly earnestness" (1996:12-13).

She highlighted gender differentiation in game playing, recalling the view that women had been regarded as "having no autonomous point of view or intentionality" but were associated with male games, or seen as 'pawns' in those games (ibid:16). It was important to find a way to discover women as agents, without casting women as "enacting wholly different...projects", and to examine the contradictions which arose, partly because male and female agency may be "differently organized: women's agency may be seen as bound into a contradiction that undermines its possibility for enactment" (ibid:17). I discuss some aspects of cultural games in Chapters Five and Six.

Ingold's (2000) assertion that agents were constructed through their own experiences aligned with this, providing a means of understanding how differential agency could arise from experience, and be demonstrated in action. Like Bourdieu

(1982), Ingold (2000) developed a theory of practice, moving from a genealogical to a relational model, and promulgating “an ecological approach that situates practitioners in the context of an active engagement with the constituents of their surroundings” (cover). This provided some fluidity because it enabled the inclusion of environmental interaction and engagement, in conjunction with social and cultural structures. Ingold argued that this model of inhabitation (dwelling) and instantiation explained the world better than a genealogical model, i.e. a tree, from the perspective of hunter/gatherer (foraging) communities, at least.

Focusing on indigenous people, he used five key terms - ancestry, generation, substance, memory, and land - in his analysis. He argued that the genealogical model assumed

that original ancestry lies at the point where history rises from an ahistorical substrate of ‘nature’; that the generation of persons involves the transmission of biogenetic substance, prior to their life in the world; that ancestral experience can be passed off as the stuff of cultural memory, enshrined in language and tradition; and that the land is merely a surface to be occupied, serving to support inhabitants rather than to bring them in to being. (ibid:132)

He contended that people whom anthropologists classified as indigenous “actually constitute their identity, knowledgeability, and the environments in which they live” (ibid:133). He suggested “an alternative *relational* approach...more consonant with these people’s lived experience...cultural knowledge and bodily substance are seen to undergo continuous generation in the context of an ongoing engagement with the land and with the beings – human and non-human – that dwell therein” (ibid). In developing this approach, Ingold adapted Deleuze and Guattari’s (1987) model of a rhizome, while not ruling out the possibility that some growth may be dendritic (2000:140). The rhizome allowed for connections and heterogeneity, multiplicity, and rupture (Deleuze and Guattari 1987:8-9). They argued that

(a) rhizome as a subterranean stem is absolutely different from roots and radicles. Bulbs and tubers are rhizomes. Plants with roots or radicles may be rhizomorphic in others respects...(e)ven some animals are, in their pack form...(b)urrows are too, in all of their functions of shelter, supply, movement, evasion and breakout. The rhizome itself assumes very diverse forms, from ramified surface extension in all directions to concretion into bulbs and tubers. (Deleuze and Guattari 1987:6-7)

They contended that a rhizome “connects any point to any other point...has neither beginning nor end, but always a middle (milieu) from which it grows and overflows” (ibid). It is “another way of traveling and moving...coming and going rather than starting and finishing...a stream without beginning or end that undermines its banks and picks up speed in the middle (ibid:25). Their description favoured growth, movement, fluidity, and continuous change. It also moved from the ‘what you see is what is there’ understanding of the environment, to incorporate structures and systems which occur below the surface. Extending the concept botanically, it is pertinent to note that rhizomes present above the surface as leaf, flower and seed. They expand and grow, shrink, wither and/or die, depending on their environment. Their “concretion into bulbs and tubers” (ibid) suggests bounded belonging, while its “ramified surface extension in all directions” (ibid) suggests extensive, fluid belonging, mobility and mutability. I use this expanded metaphor in Chapter Twelve to articulate my understanding of belonging.

Unconcerned about botanical accuracy, Ingold asserted that the rhizome was “(t)o be envisaged as a dense and tangled cluster of interlaced threads or filaments, any point in which can be connected to any other”(2000:140). It provided a means “to conceive of a world in movement, wherein every part or region enfolds, in its growth, its relations with all the others...it is a progeneration, a continually

raveling and unraveling relational manifold" (ibid).

Although Ingold (2000) applied the concept to indigenous societies, it could be applied to any society. It offers an extension of agency, less evident in Bourdieuan theory. Bourdieu's (1982) theory of practice favoured interplay between agents and structures, with underlying regulation of agents arising from self-regulation due to their subconscious awareness of the underlying systems and structures. Ingold's (2000) theory extends individual agency, impacted by engagement with, and within, the environment. He argued that agents engage in, and move through the environment, and that, through this process and engagement in living, people generated themselves and others. He asserted

***Through conception, birth or long-term residence a person incorporates the essence of a locality into his or her own being, even to the extent of a substantial identity.*** Every being is instantiated in the world as the line of its own movement and activity: not a movement from point to point as though the life course was already laid out as the route between them, but a continual 'moving around' or coming and going – lifelines of different beings cross, interpenetrate, appear or disappear (and reappear). They intertwine...(p)ersons are "continually coming into being.

Rather than encompassing lives

within generations...generation is encompassed within the process of life...***living makes people***...(t)hrough their actions (people) contribute to the substantive make-up of others...they *grow*...(and) are *grown* ...within...a sphere of nurture...(by) ancestors...and ordinary living persons (who) contribute reciprocally to the conditions of each other's growth as embodied beings...***people exchange substance at the places where their respective paths cross or commingle...with knowledge being generated in the course of lived experience.*** (In this way) ***one shares in the process of knowing.*** (ibid:141-146, bold italics, my emphasis)

The emphasised terms highlight the importance in this theory of active engagement with people and places. It suggests that we come into being through practice. In doing so, we 'make' belonging because we engage in life and the world. The processes Ingold described involved actions and outcomes which depended on individuals and their encounters i.e. the formation of connections and relationships, aspects important to the development of belonging. While I do not think that only 'living makes people', any more than 'structures' and 'structuring structures' and 'agency' makes people or society, Ingold's arguments enabled an understanding that belonging is an active process.

His assertion - that people incorporated the essence of a place "(t)hrough conception, birth or long-term residence" (ibid) and that people 'grow' and were 'grown', the lines crossing, interpenetrating, appearing and disappearing - provided a way of understanding how belonging developed. The points at which individual paths crossed can be read as nodes, or spaces of communication, moments or positions where connections occur, spaces where relationships form and knowledge is transmitted. In later chapters, I discuss this in the light of participant concepts, comments and their behaviours/practices.

Ingold claimed that, by adopting the relational perspective, people were rendered "more or less the same or different (by) the extent to which their own life-histories are intertwined through the shared experience of inhabiting particular places and following particular paths in an environment. ***Common involvement in spheres of nurture...creates likeness***" (ibid:149, my emphasis). This requires action, and entails practice, showing how and where people might develop, maintain, acquire, accept, or create belonging. In the relational model, "there is no room" (ibid) for classifying people by inner attributes such as ethnicity or race, but

“by their positions *vis-à-vis* one another in the relational field (Ingold 1993a:229). The relational model...*renders difference not as diversity but as positionality*” (Ingold 2000:149).

By arguing that difference is positionality, it follows that belonging might also be positional, developing temporally through ‘common involvement’ in regularly, and irregularly, inhabited places and spaces. What Ingold highlighted was the importance of active engagement i.e. practices. His emphasis on ‘coming and going’, ‘becoming, being ‘grown’ and ‘growing’, conveys action, emphasising living as processual.

His contention that “(t)hrough conception, birth or long-term residence a person incorporates the essence of a locality into his or her own being, even to the extent of a substantial identity” (ibid:141), resonated with Cohen’s (1985) concepts about belonging within established British communities. Cohen asserted, “The sense of belonging, of what it means to belong, is constantly evoked by whatever means comes to hand; ***the use of language, the shared knowledge of genealogy, ecology, joking, the solidarity of sect, the aesthetics of subsistence skills***” (ibid, my emphasis). The highlighted items indicated what Cohen regarded as necessary to decipher and describe belonging, i.e. shared attributes. This suggested that a combination of discourse and practice was necessary for transmitting knowledge and increasing understanding. In most respects, the components Cohen referred to are what comprise anthropological and sociological definitions of identity and/or ethnicity (Giddens 1998; Kottak 1997; Pohl 2001) i.e. language, ancestral knowledge, group solidarity, knowledge of practice, and development of practical skills.

In long-established communities, belonging is understood to incorporate aspects of individual and collective experience, interpersonal relationships, practice, gender, commitment and interests (Cohen 1982; Strathern 1982; Larsen 1982). They argued that in small British communities, mostly islands or villages, belonging involved the interrelationship of personal agency impacted by cultural mores, i.e. habitus. These appeared to interact so that, as agents created themselves, they created community and vice versa. The status, claims and emotional attachments of islanders and villagers in these communities seemed little different from other indigenous groups whose ancestors were most likely autochthonous, or first settlers. Like many ‘indigenous’ groups within anthropological scholarship, the islander and villager constructions of belonging were contingent on kinship, temporality, longevity of residence, and familiarity with places and people. Most likely indigenous themselves, such people presented a collective identity derived from their own belonging, i.e. collective memories, shared activities, experiences, history and culture. They too had their own stories, often misted through time, described as myths or legends, and located within places and spaces.<sup>13</sup> Kahn’s contentions about the Papua New Guinea Wamira people described how attachments could be revealed. She asserted,

Meaning attached to landscape unfolds in language, names, stories, myths and rituals. These meanings crystallize into shared symbols and ultimately link people to a sense of common history and individual identity...If meaning attached to landscape can unfold in these ways, then it seems appropriate to me to extend the statement to acknowledge that ‘meaning/s’ generally “unfold in language, names, stories, myths and rituals. (1996:168)

Just as Kahn observed the relationship between landscape and meaning, so Ingold’s term, ‘history congealed’ (2000:150), applied to land, not as a stage for performing history, or a surface on which it was inscribed. He too suggested a similar interrelationship between people and places.

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<sup>13</sup> Cf. Scots, Irish, Welsh or English fairytales, myths and legends.



In contrast, Savage et al.'s (2005) exploration of people's relationship of residential location to spatial organization, discussed earlier, suggested that incoming residents paid little regard to local history, even though some respondents were 'locals' (ibid:45). Savage et al argued that "the perceptions and values of incoming migrant groups...more powerfully establish(ed) dominant place identities and attachments" (ibid:30). They criticized "standard post-war views of community studies" and

the idea that places are characterized by tension between 'born and bred' locals and migrant incomers. People's sense of being at home...(was) related to reflexive processes in which they can satisfactorily account to themselves how they come to live where they do. (ibid)

They incorporated Bourdieu's concepts of habitus and capital in exploring "local belonging as fluid and contingent" arguing that

***(b)elonging should be seen neither in existential terms*** (as primordial attachment to some kind of face-to-face community), ***nor as discursively constructed, but as a socially constructed, embedded process***...Residential place continues to matter since people feel some sense of 'being at home' in an increasingly turbulent world. (ibid:11-12, my emphasis)

They argued that belonging "articulated senses of spatial attachment, social position, and forms of connectivity to other places. Belonging was not to a fixed community, with the implication of closed boundaries, but was more fluid, with places viewed as sites for *performing* identities" (ibid, my emphasis). While this might be so for their sample and the apparent lack of engagement between incomers and 'born and bred's', this is unlikely to be so for every population. Their concepts fit with those who argue that belonging is complex, multiple, relational and positional. The argument that belonging should be seen as socially rather than discursively constructed, with their reference to 'performing identities' also emphasised practice.

The various arguments discussed so far indicate that belonging is being researched discursively, and as a practice. Participant-observation, cultural and social engagement, and visual material can also clarify and deepen experiences, and knowledge of events or locations. Cohen (1982), Feld and Basso (1996) and Kohn (2002) investigated place and practice directly, as did Geertz (1996), Morley (2001) and Tuan (1977). I discuss aspects of their arguments below.

## **Development and practice**

Kohn (2002) reflected on her own performativity and community engagement to argue that a continuum could be used to describe how belonging altered. Studying a Scottish Hebridean Island community, she used Ardener's (1989) argument that "'(i)ncomerness' in both a past and present context fits within the notion of 'the social space'...the social space has been able to accommodate positions for people anywhere along the incomer-islander continuum" (2002:144). She asserted that "various local identities and ***the movements*** between them...were ***demonstrated through action*** in the present" (ibid:145, my emphasis). Embodiment, performativity and action were ways of gaining, asserting, demonstrating and reading belonging. She recognised and described her own embodiment and performativity, as she argued that 'incomers' could be seen to relocate themselves, through action, on an 'islander/incomer' continuum. Where people had limited temporal or ancestral connections, they, and others, sensed that belonging differently, or engaged in active processes as they developed it. This relates to the definitions I proposed in Chapter One – Old Whanganui, 'born and bred's', insiders, incomers, and outsiders. Kohn's argument also links with Ingold's argument, that difference is positionality. Belonging appears also to be positional,

developed temporally through common involvement and practice in regularly, and irregularly, inhabited places and spaces. Kohn's argument also resonated with Read's (2000) contention that belonging was personal, a notion I discuss later in this chapter.

In light of the above, I suggest that, although belonging is often conflated with identity, belonging encompasses other factors. Similar in many ways to identity, often arising from through similar combinations of factors, belonging is not identical and is separable. It contains other factors, including the requirement for active engagement. It is ongoing, emotionally experienced, and often internal. It is a 'feeling', a way of 'being', or 'becoming'. It can be enacted, embodied and performed, externally observed and described. It implies living 'in the world around here' (Geertz 1996), however 'the world around here' is constructed. That may arise through dwelling, birth, or connections to communities in particular, and communities in general. It contains a sense of being 'at home', wherever and whatever 'home' is. I next discuss the emotional content of belonging followed by concepts about home and place.

## Emotion

As I noted earlier, conflating identity with belonging can imply that shared identity necessarily means shared belonging. This tends to overlook the emotional component of belonging, a factor which can enable or disable belonging, despite differences or similarities. It also implies that people with different identities cannot, or are unlikely to 'belong', or be able to belong, out of their cultural, social or national context. Research into diasporic groups and/or migrant individuals tends to negate this implication (Kohn 2002; Mars 1999; Olwig 1997), suggesting that, while people are most at ease with their 'cultural familiars', they could belong in other places, spaces and cultures, even without sharing identities. This often depended on familiarity and temporality. In time, connections developed which enabled local knowledge, and people and place attachment. Emotion and belonging are interwoven conceptually, and have been highlighted more recently (Bradford, Burrell and Mabry 2004; Nussbaum 2001; Read 2000).

Nussbaum argued that since "emotions shaped the landscapes of our mental and social lives" (2001:1), they should be recognised for their impact on our lives, "and be recognised and acknowledged as active agents in our thoughts, attitudes and behaviour" (cited in Chamberlain and Leydesdorff 2004:237). Drawing on Nussbaum, they asserted that one way of better understanding "contemporary migrant life (was to) "engage with memories" since doing so would enable an understanding of how migrants "reflected on their lives and the families that surround them often (and often only) in the emotional and imaginative world" (2004:237). Bradford et al. (2004) argued that "the relationship between belonging and cultural identity negotiation has been somewhat understated in past discussions of cultural identity, perhaps due to tendencies...of earlier scholars to focus more on the identity development process than its *emotional and relational outcomes* (ibid:316). They asserted,

(t)he notion of belonging results in a "double-binding conundrum" for identity negotiation. There are...good reasons for belonging to groups including: strength in numbers, teamwork and distribution of labour; self-esteem; pride; personal support; and resources for learning...(l)imitations associated with belonging in a particular group include: possible rejection of out-of-group members, conformity, minimization of personal responsibility and subjection to peer pressure (Carnes 1995, as cited in Bradford et al. 2004:323).

Tensions may arise when boundaries are "perceived as immutable or inflexible", the group as 'impermeable to others' or the members "unresponsive to contextual changes" (ibid). This highlighted "the tension of belonging

(was)...balanced between inclusion versus exclusion" (ibid). Savage et al. (2005) highlighted how respondents combined local with regional belonging and, sometimes, to distant cities. They managed and constructed belonging with "social networks of residence, work, and friendship rarely overlapping (ibid:207). The researchers argued that this was "consistent with a view that current globalisation is...a deepening of long-term trends towards social differentiation" (ibid). It also implied the development of belonging through networks of choice, a process which may disable the concept of deliberate exclusion or ascribed belonging. Instead, people chose to 'opt' in rather than waiting to be 'let' in.<sup>14</sup>

## Home and Place

Concepts about home and its associated emotions are often incorporated into discussions about belonging with lay people and scholars both conveying a sense that belonging incorporates home. Their concepts of 'home' often imply ease, comfort or familiarity. Even when 'home' has been destroyed through natural or people-perpetrated disasters, like war or abuse, home is associated with particular spaces, places, and relationships. It is regarded as a dense, meaningful, idealized 'space', physical, metaphysical, metaphorical, psychic, cultural, historical and social (Casey 1996; Morley 2001; Stefano 2002; Tuan 1977). It can be physical and symbolic in the same moment. Morley (2001) described it as having notions of emotion and active engagement.

(T)he physical place – the domestic household" also contains "symbolic ideas of *Heimat* – the 'spaces of belonging' (and identity)...the local, national or transnational communities in which people think of themselves as being 'at home'. This is to speak of home not simply as a physical place but also as a virtual or rhetorical space...(t)his is an idea – or perhaps, better, a fantasy – of that ultimately *heimlich* place where, to put it more prosaically in the words of the old *Cheers* theme tune – 'everybody knows your name'. (Morley 2001:425)

'Home' was not necessarily where one originated, but was a 'space of belonging'. Stefano contended similarly, arguing that 'home' could be described as imaginary. He argued that it was integrated into, and vital to, concepts and practices of belonging, asserting,

home is not necessarily a fixed notion. It is a space or structure of activity and beliefs around which we construct a ***narrative of belonging***. More than a physical space, home might be understood as a familiarity and regularity of *activities* and structures of time. ***"Being at home" may have more to do with how people get along*** with each other – how they understand and are understood by others, as opposed to being in an actual space – so that ***feeling included and accounted for becomes a means of defining a sense of belonging***. (2002:38, my emphasis)

Stefano's argument that "home might be understood as...activities" (ibid) bespeaks practice, as does his contention that "(b)eing at home may have more to do with how people get along"(ibid). His contention that "feeling included and accounted for becomes a means of defining a sense of belonging" (ibid) warmed the concept since it incorporated emotion. His and Morley's reflections also signalled the possibility of choosing one's identity (Mathews 2000), highlighted the importance of connecting with others through active engagement, and signalled the possibility of belonging in a wider arena than the local, of 'being at home in the world' (Jackson 1995).

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<sup>14</sup> This resonated with Berne's (1964) arguments that people engage with those who 'play' similar 'games' to themselves, and remove themselves from groups where the members are too different.

Geertz argued that “no one *lives* in the world in general, everybody...*lives in some confined and limited stretch of it - ‘the world around here’*” (1996:262, my emphasis). His contention is a useful reminder that daily life is locationally constrained. “The sense of interconnectedness imposed...by the mass media, by rapid travel, and by long-distance communication obscures this as does the featurelessness and interchangeability of...public spaces, the standardization of...products, and the routinization...of our daily existence” (ibid).

It is useful to recall, in the context of a continuum and a rhizome, Geertz’s (1973) earlier argument that culture is like a ‘web’ even though a web is one-dimensional. Geertz argued, like Weber, that humankind was “an animal suspended in webs of significance he (sic) himself has spun,” with culture being those webs (1973:5). The webs, which individuals create, attach them to, and form, their worlds. If one superimposes web on web, with the points of connection being read as nodes, one has another way of understanding the concept of the rhizome with its multiple internal entanglements.

While the metaphor of the web can be extended to indicate the nature of belonging, the metaphor is limited by the web’s precise form and structure. The rhizome extended understanding to incorporate the possibility of boundlessness, fluidity and movement. The rhizome also enabled an understanding of how ‘the world around here’ can extend beyond the local and regional to national and international spaces and places. While physical presence may be the substantial factor in being in ‘the world around here’, personal experiences impact on how and where one conceives of one’s world. With the expansion in mass global communications (Massey 1991, 1994), travel to distant lands has become faster and less expensive. More people travel and return home with knowledge and material goods which can affect local life. This coincides with Savage et al’s (2005) preference for elective belonging, where belonging was “more fluid...(with) places as sites for performing identities (and) ...spatial attachments, social position and forms of connectivity to other places” (ibid:30) rather than “to a fixed community with...closed boundaries” (ibid).

Tuan’s contentions are pertinent in this context as they reveal earlier theory about belonging and place attachment. He argued that places were “centers of felt value” (1977:3), suggesting that people developed attachment (a sense of belonging) to places temporally, since “space becomes place as we get to know it better and endow it with value” (ibid:6). As Ingold (2000) asserted later, Tuan argued

*Human beings, like other animals, feel at home on earth. We are, most of the time, at ease in our part of the world. Life in its daily round is thoroughly familiar...We are oriented...(i)n time, what was strange in a place becomes, if we spend enough time there, familiar...(a)bstractive space, lacking significance other than strangeness, becomes concrete place, filled with meaning.* (ibid:199, my emphasis)

Again, life is conceived as cyclical, with ‘ease’ experienced as place becomes familiar. Just as Tuan (1973) and Kohn (2002) proposed that belonging required action, engagement and time, Casey (1996) did similarly, arguing that places were created through practice. He ‘enlivened’ place, relevant because engagement in and around place are linked to belonging, intertwined and further complicating the whole. Casey argued that place was “something for which we continually have to discover or invent new forms of understanding...(a) place is more an *event* than a *thing* to be assimilated to known categories” (1996:26). He suggested that we “get back into place” the same way as we “are always already there – by our own lived body”...(places) ‘gather’...things in their midst – where “things” connote various animate and inanimate entities. Places also gather experiences and histories, even languages and thoughts” (ibid:21).

These approaches are dynamic. They emphasized that belonging required



engagement, connection and communication and involved embodiment, performance and memory. People engage in and perform routines and processes daily and/or seasonally, socially and culturally. Living and belonging can be viewed as evolving and revolving, ebbing and flowing, thickening and thinning, continuous or dissolving into a different realm when circumstances alter. When we die, life as we know it, as earthly living beings, ends. Whether we continue in another realm or not, is not something I wish to debate here. But, in Ingold's terms, we don't stop being. We continue 'becoming', 'growing' and 'being grown' in some way or other, just as the animal which meets the forager gives itself up to death to enable other life to continue (2000:143). These are not oppositions but progressions. In Ingold's conception, "birth and death...are merely moments in the progenerative process, points of transition in the circulation of life" (ibid). With this in mind, it can be argued that Pākehā claims to belonging and their practices involve this progenerative process, aspects of which I discuss in the following section. I also detail historical aspects of indigenous, colonial and post-colonial belonging, and the changes which are occurring in some colonized lands.

### **Indigenous/settler belonging**

As I noted in the introduction, within the past twenty to one hundred years, depending on the geographical location and era of colonization, descendants of colonizing 'settlers' have begun to claim 'belonging/s' to the lands their ancestors colonized. Recognising that there was no 'home' for them to return to, and acknowledging that they 'felt at home' in the land of their birth, their awareness of the impact of colonization increased as colonial history was revisited (Bluck 1999; King 1999; Read 2000:1-5). The altered emphasis, highlighting injustices which occurred with the arrival of increasing numbers of white settlers, demanded reflection on what it meant to belong to Aotearoa New Zealand. This forced Pākehā to consider their claims to belonging and to review their validity. As I noted in Chapter One, some Pākehā understood their belonging as different to indigenous belonging (Tanczos 2004) while others claimed it was the same (Turner 2004).

Scholars who have investigated colonial and post-colonial notions of belonging more recently include Dominy (2001), Read (2000) and Strang (1997). In the Commonwealth countries of Canada, Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand, such scholars are often of colonial descent themselves, sufficiently culturally similar or culturally cognizant, to have experienced or to be aware of similar attachments and arguments in their homelands. Dominy (2001) and Strang (1997) researched concepts surrounding colonial and indigenous senses of place, which they demonstrated was emotionally fraught. They did not investigate people who were 'relatively disadvantaged' as indigenous people often are, but groups who could be perceived as advantaged through land ownership, and membership of the dominant social, cultural and political group. Carrier (2003) argued, accurately I believe, that Dominy's and Strang's investigations pertained to somewhat anachronistic and isolated communities, with strong land attachment generated through time, residence and active physical engagement. It seems logical to argue that such people would have a deeply ingrained 'sense of belonging', or place attachment. This probably arose from environmental engagement which occurred during everyday life. Constant observation and engagement combined with repetitive, ongoing movement through the landscape embeds knowledge. It appeared similar to the way indigenous foragers (Ingold 2000) generated belonging.

Read (2000) investigated belonging through discourse and practice, surveying Australian poetry, song, art, and history, and through interviews and discussions with a wide range of Australians. He argued that, for non-indigenous residents of colonized lands, in particular, the problem which confronted them was how to reconcile their own belonging with that of indigenous people, given the issues that have arisen over indigenous rights. This was partly because, "those

places which we loved, lost and grieved for were wrested from the Indigenous people who loved them, lost them and grieve for them still" (2000:2). His research provided emic insights into how non-indigenous Australians conceived of 'deep belonging'. Their reflections encompassed aspects of identity, place attachment, environmental engagement, and practice, combined to create a sense of belonging to a conceptual Australia. Read argued that belonging was better understood by allowing for "emotions and intuitions (as) part of deep belonging" (ibid:5). Doing so would enable scholars to "move across the boundary of rationality to an acceptance of the metaphysical and spiritual", used also in discussions about 'home' (Morley 2001; Stefano 2002). As I noted earlier, Read's final contention was that "belonging...is personal. There are as many routes to belonging as there are non-Aboriginal Australians to find them" (ibid:223). He contended that "(t)he ultimate question of a migrant's belonging is not where or how one belongs in a new country, but the relationship between the old and the new (ibid:148), a factor which seems pertinent to this research, since some participants are direct migrants, the others descended from migrants.

Like Australian Aborigines, Māori, and other indigenous groups, incomers often developed an attachment to land, places and people (Dominy 2001; Read 2000; Strang 1997). Sokefeld (2001) and McDowell (1999) argued that people who occupy the same geographical territory might not share the same sense of it, nor might their geographical propinquity imply social propinquity. Drawing on these arguments, it seems reasonable to argue that different groups might conceive of, and engage in, 'belonging' differently, even though they may occupy the same geographical territory.

These contentions lead to the question of how incomers understand and enact belonging. Pākehā, with shorter temporal claims, occupy the same geographical locations as Māori. I do not suggest that Pākehā concepts are identical to those held by Māori but argue that they are likely to be revealed through similar processes, i.e. narrative, daily practices, cultural games, codes of hospitality, observation of, and engagement in, shared activities, and their connections to places and people. The relative invisibility of belonging, and its need for temporal longevity, may answer questions about why deep belonging in these colonies is only being investigated now. These factors combined with earlier political encouragement of assimilation in Aotearoa New Zealand might provide the answers about why settler migrants have only recently begun to claim belonging publicly.

## **Metaphors**

In this chapter I discussed the conceptualization and evolution of the term, identity, and its frequent conflation with belonging. I argued that doing so muddled the meaning of belonging and its practice, and that researching concepts of identity, home, and belonging separately could enhance understanding. I agreed that developing and maintaining belonging was active, involving a range of practices, including embodiment, performativity and inscription. Often deeply embedded according to relational, environmental, physical and metaphysical influences, belonging appeared to develop temporally, and could be vertically and/or horizontally layered. Because of the diverse factors impacting upon belonging, it was best described as multiple, mutable, flexible, fluid and dense with emotional meaning.

Belonging implied attachment and connections. It was contextual, positional, and subjective, inflected by gender, ethnicity, and social and cultural habitus. It involved personal agency impacted by cultural mores and could be simultaneously positive and negative, involving feelings of emotional ease, familiarity, comfort and sometimes frustration. Not belonging could arguably be the opposite of belonging, but mostly, because belonging involved so many factors, it appeared to ebb and flow rather than disappear completely.

Belonging was more than *Zusammengehörigkeitsgefühl* (Weber) 'groupness' (Brubaker and Cooper 2000) or "(b)eing at home in the world" (Jackson 1995). It seemed to require stronger, deeper articulation, a blend of these concepts. Internalized by individuals, externalized in practice, and made visible in the everyday life of collectives, belonging could be understood metaphorically, particularly by combining aspects of the rhizome with elements of the continuum and, to a small degree, the web, as detailed throughout this thesis, and drawn together in the conclusion (Chapter Twelve).

## Conclusion

Like identity, belonging prove to be might be a useful cross-cultural concept, provided we approach comparison cautiously, recognising that people and cultures probably sense and describe belonging differently, even though the practices involved – embodiment, engagement, performance, inscription, narrative, language and so on – are similar. Jackson contended that "(i)identity is a by-product of *interrelationships*" (1996:27). Belonging might be a similar 'by-product', developed within the processes and practices of relating to other people and places.

In the chapters which follow, I tease out the layered multiplicity of belonging, revealed through a range of Pakeha women's practices. I use the rhizomatic concept as a metaphor to enable an understanding of the depth, breadth, extensiveness, and temporality of belonging. I explored participant practices from a range of perspectives. These included ancestry and heritage, common experiences and shared values, attachment to places with contingent processes such as inscription, other active behaviour, engagements in codes of hospitality, and the intergenerational transmission of knowledge. I argue that these activities reveal and provide some of the rhizomatic threads which enable belonging.

Each thread provides different insights into varying aspects of belonging. Each forms a fibre within the rhizome, thickening and thinning to form the embedded practices which are belonging. These fibres include belongings emotional aspects. They enable an examination of belonging as a 'by-product of interrelationships' (ibid). The participants' practices revealed belonging as it had been described by others, with its sense of being 'at ease', 'at home', of being 'within the familiar'. They also revealed that it went beyond Weber's concept of *Zusammengehörigkeitsgefühl*, and Brubaker and Cooper's (2000) concept of 'groupness'. It not only involves 'being at home in the world' (Jackson 1995) but combines these things and goes beyond them, possibly similar to the way Gestalt theory explains how the whole is more than the sum of the parts. In belonging, many factors are involved, including commitment and frustration. To extend understanding, I use a rhizomatic metaphor, combining Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) botanical arguments with Ingold's (2000) approach.

The next chapter describes and discusses the methodologies used to investigate belonging through observation of, and engagement in, everyday life. I discuss my research practices, including verbal and visual methods, personal engagement, the ethics of engaging in human research, and those associated with creating and publishing pictorial representations of participants.

## Chapter Three

### Methodology

*(I)t's good getting yourself in like that. Joan B*

#### Introduction

Conducting research in one's own community of residence, where one anticipates remaining when the research is completed, creates different tensions to conducting research in a distant community. This is partly because one is likely to encounter participants during the daily round. In this chapter I discuss, firstly, the rationale for choosing to conduct research in my community of residence; secondly, why I describe myself as a 'native' anthropologist; thirdly, entering and establishing myself in the field, and how I found a way to leave, without relocating; fourthly, the ethics and dilemmas of conducting research in one's own community and culture. Lastly, I outline my methodology, and discuss benefits and concerns around naming rather than anonymising participants, and using photographs and videotapes in published material.

#### Motivating Factors

When I first decided to conduct post-graduate research, I felt constrained by family obligations to remain in Whanganui<sup>15</sup>. This precluded my doing, as anthropologists frequently do, investigating 'another' culture in a distant land. Studying other cultures 'at home' has become more common since the 1970s (Messerschmidt 1981; Wolcott 1981). I was aware that a range of people with differing cultural origins lived in Whanganui. I had conducted cross-cultural research among them (Robinson 1996) and was aware that, since the early 1990s, Māori had openly preferred to conduct their own research. They argued against Pākehā conducting research among them, except in specific or controlled situations (Berg 2004; Dekker 2004:B7). Recognising that problems could arise if I ignored this preference reduced my options. Conducting research in my own culture became the place to begin.

As I detail later, I was aware of constraints and benefits that could arise through being a 'native' anthropologist; and that my own dislocation was behind my choice of dissertation topic – how did other resident Whanganui women construct a sense of belonging? Did their sense of belonging extend to Whanganui itself? If it did, then how did they regard belonging? After discussion with my supervisors, I chose to gather information using a combination of participant observation, life stories (oral narrative), conversation, photo-elicitation and focused interviews. Using a range of methods with which I was familiar (Robinson 1996, 1998) seemed a useful way of intensifying the research, and provided a means of cross-referencing, enabling comparisons between discourse and practice. The photo-elicitation progressed from using researcher-selected and researcher-generated photographs to include participant-generated photographs to extend the research.

#### Generating skills

Although I was once a technophobe, my fascination with combining textual, visual, and oral imagery forced me to abandon my gendered ideas about women not being good with gadgets. Since the early 1980s, I had learned to use cameras, audio-tape recorders, and video-cameras, without fear. I developed some of these skills as a practicing photo-journalist (1983-1995), using a camera to compose photographs deliberately and convey a message. I also learned how to combine text

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<sup>15</sup> Our four school-age children lived with my husband and me. My conditioning emphasised mothers as primary caregivers, and completing what one began.



with photographs to tell a story. As a reporter (1973-1995), I learned how to interview and interact with people from diverse backgrounds. I have loved being told stories since I was a small. Two elderly aunts told my siblings and me stories about their English childhood, and the myths and legends of our Scots and English origin cultures. My mother encouraged reading, and brought home library books about Māori and other cultures. Subtly, I learned how stories, mythical and factual, enable us to connect with people and cultures in ways which extend our understanding.

## **Native anthropology**

Before I began this research, I was aware that studying my own culture in my own community could create some anxiety. I was unsure of what they would be but doing so had its own problems and rewards. One could argue that I do not fit a frequently-used definition of 'native' anthropologist because I am not a 'third-world' native investigating my own world<sup>16</sup>, but a 'first-world' native investigating her own life and culture. Aotearoa New Zealand is my native land. Aside from brief international forays, I have lived all my life t/here. For that reason, I describe myself, in this research context, as a native anthropologist.

Like others before me, (McKenna 2003, Narayan 1989, Visweswaran 1994), I discovered the benefits and dilemmas of being a native anthropologist. Some strain occurred partly because of my positioning and engagement within my own culture. Visweswaran (1994) and McKenna (2003) addressed the difficulties of being resident insider researchers. Each was fearful of imposing upon the research participants or over-emphasising their similarities, for fear, "of abusing my 'powerful' position as interviewer (McKenna 2003:abstract). Like her, I was aware of "the complex power dynamics at work in the interview encounter" (ibid). Such experiences reminded me of the possibilities of unevenness, and encouraged me to continue a practice of non-insistence, and self-reflection. Sometimes, I felt like an equal, and sometimes as a pupil, being instructed in the ways of my culture.<sup>17</sup> Narayan warned of a further possible disadvantage, when she argued that being tagged as 'a native anthropologist' might cloud others' perceptions that our own experience can "represent an unproblematic and authentic insider's perspective" (1989:672).

Entering the field for me was direct yet surprised me because of its complexity. Like Panourgia (1995) and Meyerhoff (1980),<sup>18</sup> I was 'the field'. I had to overcome my own preconceptions, that to be a worthwhile anthropologist, I needed to conduct study among people unlike me, preferably in another land. Okely questioned the 'complacency' of Westerners about investigating 'seemingly familiar territory' (1996:5). By conducting her own research in such spaces, she demonstrated how investigations could be conducted at home, recalling "Malinowski's plea to look at the 'imponderabilia of everyday life' (1922) which may...be more extraordinary than anything so already framed" (ibid:1). Mead argued that for her "moving and staying at home, travelling and arriving, are all of a piece" (1972:9). In the absence of travel, staying at home did not seem 'all of a piece' to me. Messerschmidt (1981) provided some reassurance, clarifying that researching 'at home' was valid, frequently engaged in, and produced valuable insights. Certain constraints occurred because of one's familiarity with the culture. For me, one of these was finding a way of disconnecting so that I could understand my culture differently. Because I 'lived' in the 'field', I understood that I needed to disinter my own "solidly entrenched...cultural presuppositions...for inspection" (Martin 1987:11).

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<sup>16</sup> Others who write about aspects of this include anthropologists /ethnographers such as Kamala Visweswaran (1994), Lila Abu-Lughod (1986, 1993), Nita Kumar (1992) and Sondra Hale (1991). Cf. Davies (1999) for a detailed discussion.

<sup>17</sup> The reasons for this varied. Sometimes it was age difference or my lack of particular skills. The learning and teaching which ensued facilitated a sense of partnership.

<sup>18</sup> Panourgia (1995) researched death in Greek culture from the perspective of her grandfather's death. Meyerhoff (1980) researched elderly Jewish people, like the person she anticipated she would become.

These included my ethnicity as a member of the 'dominant' Pākehā culture, and my gender as a woman in a patriarchal, evolving society. Like the children, and grandchildren, of New Zealand educator, Jack Shallcrass, I "think of (myself) as (a) New Zealander who belong(s) in the Pacific, not in Europe" (1988:22).

Being a native anthropologist was possibly easier at the beginning of research, because I remained in regular contact with, and continued within, the familiar, rather than engaging with the processes anthropologists in foreign communities face (i.e. different language, culture, religion, politics, economics and living conditions). Davies argued that the ethnographer became more "intimately a part of the research process when (they) are members of the collectivity they are researching" (1999:189), while Narayan argued that knowledge "is situated, negotiated and part of an ongoing process" (1989:682). Messerschmidt asserted that "the extent of relative 'insidedness'...between researcher and subjects is best conceived of as a continuum from virtual oneness to a marginal nearness" (1981:8). My own position altered according to age, education, socio-economic situation and life experience, relative to individual participants. I further learned that within the research context, one needs to consider how one's own knowledge changes, and to question one's behaviours, within ethical guidelines, as one determines how to interact – as friend, researcher, resident, adviser, sometimes even as confidante. I often asked myself questions like, is this research? Is this confidential to our friendship? Is this relevant to the community, or to the research? By disclosing information, shared in that strange borderland of friendship, which is not within the research, and yet not beyond the research, am I transgressing the bounds and bonds of friendship?

At times, I felt as if I was living three lives, my own, the researcher's, and another, interwoven life which integrated aspects of both. In one's own residential community, one has the burden of incorporating research into familiar, daily life, switching from researcher to resident and back again, sometimes within the hour. Eventually, research and personal life seem to meld, not always easily, but possibly as an imperative for personal survival. This melding may signal the decreasing of the 'uneasy distance' researchers can experience between their own and "what to others is taken-for-granted reality" (Narayan 1989:682). It may later be subsumed by the "intensity of the research" (ibid) relationship, and developing friendships.

Distancing oneself can be difficult when the initial research phase is completed, because one does not actually 'leave' the field, and because one is intensely familiar with one's own culture. One has to decide how, and when, to leave the field, how to put down friendships, and enjoy recalling the experience. It is more difficult to detach from the research community when it remains within easy access (Martin 1987). Distancing does not mean one loses interest in the participants but that, in one's 'home place', life exerts other pressures. Self-preservation is vital, and slow distancing enabled me to involve myself more deeply in ongoing analysis and writing. In general, my experience was positive and, I hope, so was the participants. The friendly conversations we have when we meet, occasional in-depth contacts in the past four years, and their willingness to be interviewed again in 2004, suggest this was so. The advantages and disadvantages of researching 'at home' were probably balanced, in the same way as the problems and rewards of researching 'away' find their own equilibrium. Wolcott's (1981) reflections on researching and writing about 'here' and 'there' highlighted the differences between working in the two locations.

## **Limits**

I limited the research by gender and ethnicity, which resolved several personal conflicts. Firstly, it allayed my discomfort at conducting research on 'others', before investigating my own culture and society. Secondly, it resolved concerns I had about including men at this stage. I feared that doing so could cause

others to give more credence to the male than the female experience (Oakley 1982; Jaggar and Struhl eds. 1978) and, thirdly, I disliked the gendered power relations I had experienced previously. I was reluctant to engage in those dynamics if I could avoid them. I was uncertain whether I could overcome my diffidence, and confront authority effectively. I also feared my own enculturation might weaken the research, as I enacted women 'doing nice' (Shopes 2003).

Unlike the self-imposed limits just described, external constraints also impacted. Some related to my extensive community knowledge and the contacts made through kin, employment, business, and community interests. In some instances, these precluded research involvement for reasons of privacy. This led to my seeking participants elsewhere to avoid mutual discomfort and/or accidental disclosure of knowledge. Other constraints related to being a lone researcher and my cultural and social positioning. There were many groups amongst whom similar research could be conducted, but with whom I did not engage. I address this in the final chapter.

## Ethics

Before I began field research, I considered the ethics involved in engaging in anthropological research. I discuss firstly, those which related specifically to working in my own community, and secondly, more generic ethical processes. Most ethnographies of fieldwork conducted 'at home' (Dempsey 1990; Lovelock 1999) were unable to prepare me for research in my own community because anthropologists who conduct research in their homelands do not usually engage as directly in their own long-term residential communities. Panourgia's ethnography about "rituals of mourning and memory in modern urban Greece" (1995:cover) assisted. Returning to her Greek homeland, she explored the topic "within the context of her own family" (ibid). Her discussion of difficulties which can arise when people close to you are research participants enabled me to understand that involvement and disengagement were possible.

Before entering the field, I discussed ethics with my supervisors and prepared consent forms, interview guidelines, and letters to send to participants outlining my proposal (Appendix 1). These outlined the research, explained the methods I proposed to use, and indicated to participants what their engagement could involve. The research was conducted in accordance with ASAA/NZ<sup>19</sup> (Appendix 2) and NOHANZ<sup>20</sup> (Appendix 3) principles. Their approaches and principles are similar. After discussing my approach with my supervisors, my proposals were reviewed during a session with the Chair of the ASAA/NZ Ethics Committee, Dr Jeff Sluka.

The consent form enabled participants to withdraw from the research at any stage, the right to view their own material, and to veto all or parts of its publication.<sup>21</sup> While this approach might seem risky, because participants have such control over what is published, it forces researchers to behave openly and honestly at all times. It means they must develop transparent procedures and build trust effectively, if they want to succeed. I felt anxious at the beginning, because there was a remote possibility that all participants could withdraw permission for use of their material. I still regarded it as an approach which would ultimately benefit me and the participants. The steps, built into the process, stopped me worrying about the impact the material might have on participants, and other people's perceptions of them, because the participants had the final say.

This approach may also assist in overcoming the problems caused when academic directives insist that social scientists dispose of material once the

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<sup>19</sup> Association of Social Anthropologists of Aotearoa New Zealand – Code of Practice.

<sup>20</sup> National Oral History Association of New Zealand – Code of Practice.

<sup>21</sup> This happened twice, once when a participant concluded the photograph did not convey truthfully the essence of an individual, and once when a participant's relationship with the people photographed changed.

research process is completed, or within five years of doing so. Such directives can leave researchers feeling frustrated and participants feeling rejected, particularly if the latter perceive that their material was 'not good enough' (Laurie 2000/2001).<sup>22</sup> Oral historians adopt a practice which can resolve researcher frustration and participant feelings of rejection and/or initial mistrust. They argue that a recorded life narrative only becomes an oral history when it is archived. Archiving recorded and associated material means it becomes "available for research, subject to any conditions placed on it by the person interviewed" (NOHANZ 1997:3). Problems of confidentiality are overcome by treating interviews as "confidential conversations, the contents of which are only available as determined by written or recorded agreement with the person interviewed" (ibid).

The concept of archiving material raises questions about an academic institution's ethical directives and attitudes towards participants. The participants' agreements to being identified by name and photograph, and to the archiving their material, suggested that we can become over-protective in our efforts to behave ethically. We may fail to acknowledge the participants' abilities to make their own judgments. I do not mean that ethics should be disposed of. They must not be. But nor should we, as researchers, behave autocratically, imposing our views of what has worked elsewhere on other situations.<sup>23</sup>

Like Laurie (2000/2001) and Rudge (1996), I suggest that participants are often more willing to be identified than is sometimes assumed. Their experiences (Laurie 2000/2001; Rudge 1996) and mine suggested that it was important to consider situations and participants individually. Several factors must not be overlooked. These include people's genuine goodwill; their willingness to contribute to the development of knowledge; excitement at being involved; and the desire for public, as well as private, acknowledgment. Being involved in research often enables people to validate life-changing decisions, and signals their willingness to support others. Sometimes, the invitation to become involved empowers participants, signaling that others respect what they have to offer. The opportunity to speak, to be heard, and to be seen may be regarded by participants as a gift, unlikely to occur without researcher facilitation.

Involvement in research can enable marginal groups to share their experiences further afield, and benefit from wider understanding or acceptance. While this might suggest coercion, whether it is, or not, depends on each situation and each individual researcher's approach. When research deals with difficult personal situations and experiences, such as abuse, the situation alters. Essentially, if safety and similar issues have been met, identification by participant choice can be respectful, and empowering. Consent forms can make this a choice, or include a suggestion that, although the requirement for anonymity may be an institutional practice, participants can nominate their preference later.<sup>24</sup>

I discussed anthropological concepts of anonymity with participants, and explained that they could nominate a pseudonym if they wished. All elected to use their real names, bearing out Katz's contention, in the Jul'hoansi context, that naming ourselves "is an act of cultural and personal affirmation and political liberation. The ability to name oneself is an indicator of...the power to determine how one is represented to oneself and the world" (Katz, Biesele & St Denis 1997:166). It also suggested that academic directives that research participants must be anonymised are autocratic, and potentially damaging of research participants. It is appropriate to consider each case on its merits, according to

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<sup>22</sup> Destroying material is not an ASAA/NZ directive.

<sup>23</sup> Where participants have referred to people by name, I used a pseudonym to provide some privacy, except where the reference was to a participant's contact, directly involved in the research, such as family members taking photographs.

<sup>24</sup> In her oral history research consent forms about immunization in Aotearoa New Zealand, Elaine Ellis-Pegler made provision for participants to request their names be used (Personal communication June 2005).



participant preference, enabling their discretion. I have used participants' names, except when the material seemed controversial or discomforting to participants, their families or friends. If naming seemed likely to cause problems, I combined similar comments without identifying the commentators. The participants concurred with this action.

Oral historian Paul Thompson argued against creating "semi-fictional informants, by exchanging quotations between them, or dividing two from one, or creating one out of two...(a)n oral documentary which does this may gain in effect, but it becomes imaginative literature, a different kind of historical evidence" (2000:263). The approach I adopted (of combining without identifying) seems to serve the purpose of both disciplines without creating a dilemma for the participants or the evidence. Participants later agreed independently to their material being archived (Appendix 4). They were aware that it might be used by other researchers, and were willing to allow that to happen, within the constraints of the archiving institution.<sup>25</sup> Their agreement suggests that the research did not threaten them, though some were hesitant initially. This process also highlighted the importance of providing clear information before finalizing participant involvement; the value of trust; the confidence given when insiders introduce researchers to other participants; and the wisdom in seeking approval for actions like archiving after participants have reviewed their material. When participants know what they are agreeing to, mystery is removed. Some were surprised at the quantity of material used, commenting later, "I didn't realize that all that would be in print, but that's all right".

Seeking approval in two stages, the first for the research and the second for archiving material seems to have made the process smoother. The participants had time to get to know me, develop trust, and review their material, according to our agreement. None refused permission to archive material, unlike a situation reported during student research in the United States. An oral history research participant was asked to sign an agreement about publishing and archiving prior to the material being recorded. Initially, the participant refused archiving permission, and demanded that all material be destroyed once the thesis was completed. Further discussion, and clarification of the participant's concerns, reversed the request (Kuhn 2004 a, b).

I communicated with participants in several ways: in preliminary face-to-face discussions; telephone conversations; meeting them informally at home; attending formal meetings of organizations they belonged to,<sup>26</sup> and interacting with them in the meeting spaces; by mail; providing copies of photographs and videotapes; asking them to amend, or add to their transcripts; confirming approval to present material to their own, and the academic community, if the presentations might go beyond those originally discussed. The women agreed, usually adding that they were 'glad to help'. Occasionally, participants revealed that they did not fully appreciate what presenting the material meant. One day, when I was preparing boards for display, a participant visited me. She was startled to see an image of herself being used, and asked why. She may have been surprised because she was not expecting to see a photograph of herself that day, and perhaps, had not fully understood the scope of the research. After I explained, she understood, but the experience suggests that participants may not always understand what they are agreeing to. This is another reason for seeking permission for different aspects as the research proceeds.

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<sup>25</sup> Whanganui Regional Museum

<sup>26</sup> These included local government sessions and personal interest groups.

## Gathering information

In Aotearoa New Zealand gathering oral histories became publicly encouraged during the 1980s.<sup>27</sup> I developed my skills by recording personal narratives on audio-tape, and video-tape (Robinson 1994, 1999). I learned how to transcribe those stories and to craft family and community histories, containing personal and historical narratives, diary excerpts and photographs (Robinson 1998, 2001). These practices involved researcher and participants in frequent dialogue, encouraged trust and required ongoing association for completion. I did not realize how embedded the skills had become until I developed the initial proposal for my dissertation. Combining inter-related visual, textual and oral information-gathering methods was valuable, and assisted in comparing, confirming, and expanding information. I collected material using video and still cameras, handwritten, and head, notes. The methods are summarised below.

### Continuous

- 1 Participant observation.
- 2 Home visits, attending meetings.<sup>28</sup>
- 3 Informal conversations.
- 4 Collating items from daily and weekly local newspapers, bulletins, posters, leaflets etc.
- 5 Field note, made at the time of experience.
- 6 Field journal, made after the experience, including events and reflections related to the research focus.
- 7 Personal diary. This provided me with a means of debriefing. Notes often recorded my health, emotional events, my life beyond the research and confidential material which could not be used for publication.

### First Stage

- 1 Collecting life stories/ personal narratives/ oral histories.<sup>29</sup>
- 2 Individual interviews/conversations.

### Second Stage

- 3 Photo-elicitation with researcher-selected historical photographs.
- 4 Photo-elicitation with researcher-selected recent photographs of public places, sites and events.
- 5 Photo-elicitation with researcher-generated photographs made during research.

### Third Stage

- 6 Participants generated their own images specific to events, places, people, in their own lives.
- 7 Conversations around participant-generated photographs.
- 8 Individual focused interviews.

I asked participants where they would prefer to be interviewed, their home or mine, their office or mine. For the initial research, most chose their own homes. Four years later, local cafés provided another venue and were selected by three participants. Each interview lasted for about an hour, and, if recorded, began with a light and sound check, a statement about the recording equipment, and interview location. Participants recorded their full name, basic biographical details and some ancestral information. They continued by talking about their lives. During the next visit or visits we discussed their perceptions of belonging, identity and home, and

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<sup>27</sup> The National Oral History Association of New Zealand was established in 1986 (NOHANZ 1997).

<sup>28</sup> Scheduled regular organisation meetings, mostly monthly, sometimes weekly.

<sup>29</sup> At times it is difficult to decide whether and how these differ. The participants provided not only bare facts, but narratives filled with rich, warm, human stories. All have agreed to archive their research material. Following Laurie's argument (2000/2001) that audio-taped personal narratives/life stories become oral histories when they are archived and available for future research, then, once the narratives have been archived, they could be described as oral histories. Cf. H-Oralhist for a discussion thread about contexts for using the terms oral history and life story.

clarified earlier material.

I interviewed or talked with most participants formally at least twice, and some up to five times, as well as engaging in informal, face-to-face, and telephone conversations. This resulted in about 40 hours of video-taped conversation; several hours of video-taped activities in domestic and public locations; detailed hand-recorded notes; field, and head, notes; and a reflective, personal diary. I prepared a list of questions (Appendices 5 and 6), but most conversations proceeded without referring to these. Some participants asked me to mail the questions beforehand so they could reassure themselves that they could contribute. Some worried about answering questions, but relaxed when I explained that the process was like having a conversation.

I often made still and moving images during the same event, using video and still cameras. I used two video cameras, a Panasonic RX3, and a Sony digital Hi-8 TRV520E. I purchased the latter partway through the research. It had a wider range of options, including the ability to attach a microphone for improved sound, and produced finer images. I used a Minolta 7000i still camera with two lenses (28 – 80mm, and 100 – 300 mm lens), detachable flash, and colour print film.<sup>30</sup>



**Fig 2: Research equipment in a participant's home.**

As researchers, we often become so familiar with our 'tools', tripod, cameras and their containers, audio tape recorders, notebooks and pens, that we forget how daunting they may appear to participants. The photograph (Fig 2, above) with tripod (right), and two camera bags (on the window seat) reminded me of the quantity and size of the 'tools'. Re/viewing them enabled me to understand why some people reacted nervously to their presence. They were not ordinary domestic objects, but high-tech work tools. On the table is an image used for photo-elicitation.

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<sup>30</sup> The brand depended on price/value. I preferred ASA 100 and ASA 200 for sensitivity and reproductive quality. Films were processed in Whanganui.



Most filming occurred indoors in artificial, or low, natural light (Figs 2 & 3).<sup>31</sup> Some material was recorded outdoors, mostly when I was an active participant-observer, and my involvement was integrated. Sometimes, participants, or interested non-participants, photographed me and gave me copies. These photographs, the videotaped meetings, and encounters, formed an important and valuable part of my research diary. They triggered my memory, provided visual descriptions, and situated people in social, cultural and community contexts, as Fig 3 (below) demonstrates.



**Fig 3: Margaret Mary at the Thistle Sweet Shop.**

Margaret Mary asked me to accompany her to a specialist store to buy decorations for her 80<sup>th</sup> birthday cake. She is putting change in her purse after completing her purchases. They are the green paper parcels on the counter (front left). The photograph exemplifies the items I described above, acting as a mnemonic for an event, and providing context, location and lighting conditions.

To make their own records, participants used Agfa<sup>32</sup> 27-shot disposable cameras with flash.<sup>33</sup> Such cameras have several constraints. They are small, and can be mislaid, but their size and light weight enabled participants to carry them easily. The flash enabled them to make images indoors. The fixed-lens meant cameras worked best for middle and long distance shots, rather than close-ups. This did not prevent participants from taking close-ups to make statements about important objects.

The research processes were inter-related and often overlapped. It took time for participants to become accustomed to the presence of my equipment, particularly the still camera, which clicked loudly when the shutter button was depressed. The length and blackness of the 100-300mm lens sometimes disconcerted people, particularly non-participants. Even when members had agreed

<sup>31</sup> I did not use additional artificial lighting, although with the still cameras I used the flash. I have altered the brightness and contrast of some photographs to make them clearer.

<sup>32</sup> Brand name.

<sup>33</sup> Their purchase was funded by the Graduate Research Fund.

to filming, I noticed that sometimes non-participant women avoided me. When I had completed filming, the same women relaxed and talked with me at length. Others were relaxed about my presence with the equipment, curious about the research, and enjoyed reviewing photographs, often with them included. Participants shared photographs with non-participants, mine and their own.



**Fig 4: Margaret Mary sharing photographs with Eileen, an interested non-participant.**

### **Life histories and photo-elicitation**

I used photo-elicitation<sup>34</sup> extensively because, firstly, I had used it successfully in previous research (Robinson 1999); and, secondly, I had a growing interest in social history, and sought ways of discovering how participants recalled the past. Photo-elicitation included using historic photographs of Whanganui, and recent photographs of places in, and near, the city. I selected or made the photographs, and included some family images. Early on, I realized that most of the participants were telling me, indirectly, that this was not particularly effective. Their responses varied but many photographs did not facilitate dialogue. I concluded that they were either too old (1900-1950) or too public, and therefore not relevant to participants. When they responded positively, it was either because they had experienced places actively, or because the photographs led to them recalling similar events or experiences from their own lives.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. Caldarola (1985), Collier & Collier (1986) and Niessen (1991) for detailed information on photo-elicitation.



I re-confirmed to myself that my real interest lay in conducting active research. I had already engaged in active processes, recording participant stories and focused interviews. I was involved at different levels in three groups, as a participant-observer, an active presenter (Fig 5), and a researcher.



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**Fig 5: During a Multicultural Women's Group meeting, a friend photographed me (in blue) showing members how to make Victorian posies.**

I had helped to plan and purchase items for individual celebrations, contributed food, cleared tables and tidied up after meetings. My change of focus enabled me to build on these activities. I adopted more inclusive participatory methods. Following a colleague's suggestion, I incorporated a practice known as photo-novella (Wang and & Burris 1994). It was used to enable illiterate rural Chinese women to take their own photographs, and generate information about community health needs. They decided what was important to them. By photographing their own lives, and using these as the basis for discussion in seeking solutions to community problems, particularly their own and their children's needs, participants were empowered. The process enabled them to relate their own experiences through their own eyes, rather than other people's.

The Whanganui participant-generated photographs were like 'cultural inventories', which "some anthropologists collect of homes and possessions when doing research...a cultural inventory explores space and the way in which objects around homes are positioned in relation to each other" (Olliver-Richardson 2002:49). They are similar to the 'personal inventories' Japanese American women presented during Olliver-Richardson's research in Hawai'i. Combined with participant discussions, the photographs operate like photo novella, because this method "uses people's photographic documentation of their everyday lives as an educational tool to record and to reflect their needs, promote dialogue, encourage action and inform" (Wang & Burris 1994:179)<sup>35</sup>.

<sup>35</sup> Using researcher-generated images, anthropologists have used photo-elicitation effectively (Caldarola 1985; Harper 1987; Niessen 1991). Using specifically participant-generated images was less usual. It had been used by Wang & Burris (1994), Burke (2004) and McIntyre (2003).

Although I hesitated to ask participants to photograph their own lives, not wanting to impose further on their goodwill, only one participant declined. She was fully committed and felt awkward at the prospect of photographing in her workplace. She suggested that her mother, a participant, who lived with the family, take the photographs, suggesting that these would provide insights. They did so, although the perspective was not as full of the younger woman's practices as her own photographs might have provided. Another participant offered access to her own extensive, life-long collection of photographs. Anticipating that these would provide valuable insights, I accepted.

McIntyre (2003) argued that when a project has a specific focus, careful planning was desirable. I suspected that, in the Whanganui research, a fluid approach would reveal more about the participants' lives than if I directed them strongly. I felt empowerment was missing for us all, due, I suspect, to the way the research was originally conceived.

From early December 2000 to late January 2001, participants photographed places, people, and events of importance to them. They live in what might be referred to as a 'camera' culture,<sup>36</sup> were familiar with using cameras, and required minimal instruction. The two months coincided with the summer vacation, and included Christmas and New Year celebrations. It was long enough for participants to reflect on their lives, and short enough for them to recall why they had taken specific photographs. I had two sets of photographs developed, and gave each participant their own copies.

With their agreement, I videotaped our conversations as we discussed them. Although participants initially found the video-camera on its tripod off-putting, they often forgot about it after we started talking. During earlier interviews, I departed from my previous practice of sitting opposite the participant.<sup>37</sup> Instead, I placed the video-camera on a tripod and included myself visually in filming. Doing so meant I experienced the discomforts of filming, and the disconcerting experience of seeing myself on screen. Participants approved of this, commenting, "(i)t's good getting yourself in like that". Continuing this practice was useful when discussing participants' photographs. We sat side by side, sometimes rearranging the furniture first<sup>38</sup>. We reviewed photographs together, and ensured they were recorded on tape. Participants often 'showed the camera' the photographs, chuckling when they did so. Some dealt with the camera presence directly, as when Joan B asked whether she should "address the camera or me or both". We agreed she would acknowledge my presence by calling me by my given name. Participants became so comfortable that at times they remarked that they "forgot that thing was still on". Sometimes participants asked me to turn the camera off before they disclosed particular information, usually of a gynaecological or uncomplimentary nature; their reticence reflecting cultural mores about the impropriety of discussing female biology, and speaking ill of others.<sup>39</sup> Occasionally, participants asked me to leave the video-camera recording when they talked about situations where they had been upset, insulted or offended, and had dealt with the situation assertively. They actively created a record to ensure that eventually they might be heard and respected for contravening social expectations of passivity amongst women. Their speaking about these events indicated self-respect and how it could be developed or enhanced.

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<sup>36</sup> All had photograph albums, framed photographs and, sometimes home photo "galleries", with images of their ancestors, themselves and their descendants.

<sup>37</sup> MacDougall & MacDougall (workshop suggestion, August, 1998) suggested interviewing people involved in activities. Participants seemed to expect that we would sit together and talk. My initial reference to 'interviews' might have encouraged this expectation, as might participant exposure to television.

<sup>38</sup> I sought permission to move furniture, and replaced it afterwards.

<sup>39</sup> Sometimes participants chose to disclose the information off the record. When they did, I made a mental note only. Turning the camera off enabled trust to develop, because participants saw that their wishes were being respected. The silences speak loudly of social and cultural mores, and are perhaps more telling for being unspoken, or revealed off the record.



As well as providing participants with copies of photographs, I also gave them copies of their video-taped interviews and transcripts. All checked the transcripts, made minor amendments, and corrected spelling. They appeared satisfied that the tapes accurately reflected their lives and their thoughts. Several participants expressed pleasure at viewing interviews with kin and reporting positive reactions, partly because the viewing enabled kin to “learn more about me and their family history”. Some families asked for extra copies and reviewed them to learn more about themselves.

During their December-January 2000 photography, participants adopted various approaches to their visual research, taking most photographs within the city – ‘the world around here’ (Geertz 1996) – understandable because it was where they resided. Photographs were usually, but not always, made in private or semi-private spaces, such as their homes, yards, the home and yards of kin and/or friends, or meeting rooms. If they had traveled, nationally or internationally, they included photographs taken during the journey.

Several carried the camera most of the time, and photographed activities wherever they went. Others chose specific activities to photograph. Some put the camera in a visible place at home, and asked family and friends take photographs whenever they thought activities were significant. One asked her extended family to help by choosing representative situations, and taking photographs which included her. Some family members became very involved, suggesting images which featured important aspects of the participant’s life, such as “Your car, grandma. You love your little car.” The participant recalled, “And I do. It’s my independence.” Another spent an afternoon with a less mobile friend, driving around to photograph meaningful buildings and spaces in the city and district. These acted as mnemonics for special people, moments, or stages, in her life.

Many photographs were like those people have in their family albums (Chalfen 1987). They included celebrations and happy moments. The participants extended this range as they viewed their lives purposefully. Some expressed humour visually. Others recorded photographs which feature less often in family albums - like a Bible, garden tools and produce, and people sleeping, sometimes with pets napping beside them. Photographs reflected daily life, and death – with gravestones photographed as mnemonics of family members.



© Margaret McCosh

**Fig 6: Gravestones with flowers.**

Margaret McC photographed her father's gravestone (left) – unusual in the family album context in Aotearoa New Zealand because it recalled sadness and loss, and an often unspoken practice, visiting the cemetery. While such photographs might be shared within the family, I had not experienced them being shared beyond the family. Margaret made a special trip.

(Do you go and visit very often or just on special...?) Special occasions more...but this day wasn't a special occasion. I was going because I needed to take the photos. So I took flowers, lots of flowers and, I mean, I always do. If I go up, I go to Dad's, I go to Granddad's and I go to my other grandparents as well. I do the lot.<sup>40</sup>

Margaret centred the gravestone as best she could, within the constraints of the camera, indicating her father's centrality in her life. Making a special trip highlighted the particular importance of her father and grandfather. The photograph also showed how difficult it was to select one item only when using a disposable fixed-lens camera.

Combining the information gained from conversations about the participants' photographs with earlier material deepened my knowledge of their lives and practices immensely, as indicated above. As Olliver-Richardson observed, following research she conducted in Hawai'i, "(w)e operate in a western society which discourages constant observation and following people about" (2002:34). By gathering life histories through interviews with participant-created 'personal inventories' of objects and photographs, she was able to perceive common themes without intruding on people's lives. The Whanganui participant-generated photographs and conversations achieved a similar aim. They revealed, emphasized, and/or confirmed aspects of everyday life, the presence and/or use of material objects, and engagement in cultural practices of belonging. Most importantly, the participants reflected on their own lives, and selected what they regarded as important. I noticed a change in atmosphere when participants discussed their own

<sup>40</sup> At least six of Margaret's ancestors, spanning three generations, were interred in this cemetery.

rather than the researcher-selected photographs, something which Collier and Collier (1986) might have predicted. When images recorded around people's homes were included for discussion, the atmosphere became warmer and more emotional, enthusiasm increased, and the discussion broadened. Collier and Collier asserted that such situations were "not an interview" (ibid:102), but "mutual communication in which we returned as much as we were given...(w)e parted feeling friends" (ibid). I felt similarly.

## Finding participants

As I noted earlier, living in Whanganui meant I 'knew' the city, and had established connections. This influenced the way I sought participants. Instead of working through a network of introductions, I first approached a group where I had recently been guest speaker. I anticipated that members would be long-established Whanganui residents, likely to have descended from early Whanganui settlers, and be able to provide insights into belonging from a 'born and bred' perspective. The person I contacted rejected my approach, causing me to recognise that, in some situations, I remained an outsider.

Seeking participants elsewhere, I reviewed the city's list of 1200 clubs and organisations (Wanganui Community Diary 2000),<sup>41</sup> and the local newspapers. After approaching a craft group, I discovered I held privileged knowledge which made me uncomfortable about continuing. I next approached a group I had worked with for several months as a co-opted researcher. I had not spoken to them about this research, because I was worried about imposing on friendship. After the first group declined involvement, I realized that prior contact did not always mean people had a sense of obligation. As a result, I thought the FOHCC<sup>42</sup> members knew me well enough to decline if they did not want to be involved. All agreed, although group dynamics might have swayed two, who appeared hesitant. One later told me she was surprised that I had only asked her to be involved in two interviews. The other refused involvement indirectly after an initial interview. I read her lack of response to my requests for another interview as 'silent refusal' (Visweswaran 1994). Visweswaran argued that women used silence as a form of agency, expressing resistance subtly, and that we needed to read "acts of omission (as) acts of commission" (ibid:48). Once I understood the participant's response this way, I realized that she had distanced our relationship in a culturally acceptable way. This enabled us to meet informally, and infrequently, without embarrassment. Four years later, both participants agreed to another focused interview.

Through the FOHCC, I was introduced to other prospective participants, including members' kin, usually of a different generation. The mother of one of the members lived with her daughter, son-in-law and their three children, and was involved in a number of family and committee activities. This woman facilitated my entry into other groups, including two groups of older women – the CoF<sup>43</sup> and the Live Alones.<sup>44</sup> Other contacts linked me with other networks of women, including the Wanganui Multicultural Women's Group,<sup>45</sup> a rest-home social group, and the Cardiac Rehabilitation Walking Group.<sup>46</sup> Membership sometimes overlapped and

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<sup>41</sup> Whanganui is reputed anecdotally to have the highest recorded numbers of clubs and organizations in Aotearoa New Zealand.

<sup>42</sup> Friends of the Opera House centennial committee. It formed to co-ordinate the Royal Wanganui Opera House centennial celebrations during 1999-2000 (Robinson 1999).

<sup>43</sup> The Circle of Friends (CoF) evolved from the League of Mothers. This was a national non-denominational group aimed at supporting women, particularly mothers. The League disbanded in 1993 (Labrum 1993). The Whanganui group continued as the Circle of Friends.

<sup>44</sup> A Presbyterian Church group which Margaret Mary joined after her husband died.

<sup>45</sup> The Wanganui Multicultural Women's group was a voluntary support group for incoming non-Aotearoa New Zealand women, associated with teaching English to speakers of other languages.

<sup>46</sup> The Cardiac Rehabilitation Walking Group was formed in association with a Good Health Wanganui Hospital cardiac education group. Walking group members had usually experienced what is termed a 'cardiac event'. They maintained regular fitness, encouraged through weekly group attendance.

was revealed as research progressed. The networks often integrated research participants into the wider population, highlighting a form of 'elective belonging' (Savage et al. 2005), extending the research boundaries, and increasing my contacts.

Combining the research methods deepened the research, and confirmed women's perspectives on their practices of belonging in Aotearoa New Zealand. Photo-elicitation combined with narrative and participant-observation expanded insights into everyday lives. As an active, participatory method, it empowered the participants and the researcher, in accordance with feminist preferences. Adapting Wang & Burris's photo-novella approach to the Aotearoa New Zealand situation provided a way of extending the geographical and relational breadth of the research. Participant-generated photographs revealed a wide range of practices and constructions of belonging.

## **Narrative**

Narratives and ordinary conversations provided useful information and understandings during research and analysis. They were active processes engaged in to construct, affirm, reaffirm or clarify connections and belonging. Personal narratives indicated how participants conceived of their connections, and what they regarded as important. They conveyed participants' thoughts and words clearly (Laurie 2000/2001). They have been used to provide people previously silenced with a platform for being heard (Gluck & Patai 1991; Josselson 1987; Lieblich, Tuval-Maschiach & Zilber 1998). Bonisch-Brednich asserted, "narratives are...important for everyday life (at all levels)...provid(ing) pictures of our lives and the society around us in ways that can be neatly framed. But (they) represent just one set of pictures; others are stored away...seldom to emerge in public" (2002:76). She referred to the 'neatly framed' stories as 'Ready Mades' and the others as 'linen cupboard stories' (ibid). The Whanganui research participants were mostly "English, Scottish and even Irish women (whose)...migrant experiences have become insider stories and a part of dominant Pākehā settler narratives" (Fraser & Pickles 2002:10). As women living in a changing, but still patriarchal society, Pākehā women have experienced their own silences. They do not necessarily equate with those experienced by migrants of minority cultures, Asian and Oceanic (ibid), but that does not mean they do not have value, or that they should not be told.

Treating ordinary conversations as narrative provided another way of discovering how belonging is practiced in daily life because it revealed the 'ordinary' (Norrick 2000). I have combined extracts from informal conversations with material from structured interviews to demonstrate how belonging was narrated in everyday discourse. At my request, the participants consciously and deliberately re/told their origin stories, either as they had experienced them, as the stories were told to them, or in combination. I am conscious of Shopes' (2004) assertion that the purposes of an interview, expressed and implied, conscious and unconscious, influenced and shaped narratives. Even so, the participants' constructions of, and their willingness to share, narratives, often relayed through several generations, indicated the value individuals and collectives placed on their own origin and arrival stories. Telling them was one way of nurturing their belonging. As in much research, participants selected their stories, and structured their narratives (Hinchman & Hinchman 1997:xvi), but I too have been selective to emphasize aspects of behaviour.

In moving from speech to text, I have followed various guidelines, and "adopted many of the techniques of humanistic writing...(leaving) traces of myself throughout...I did not make the encounter...central, (but) did not remove questions I asked or pretend that certain discussions were not directed specifically at me" (Abu-Lughod 1993). In quoting participants, I followed Frisch's guidelines, and abandoned "the pretense of literal reproduction...(while being aware that) conversation and talk

have their own structure and logic" which differed from the written word (1990:84-85). I removed the ums, ahs, ers and other parts of speech, which impeded the flow for the reader, and my own questions and comments, unless they seemed important, revealing, or provided a context. They are bracketed within the participants' comments. I have avoided reordering "if it results in a new meaning, unintended by the speaker" (Thompson 2000). I have also tried "to communicate without distortion the information and insights given to me so generously" (Metge 1986/1989:20). For this reason, again using brackets, I have inserted occasional phrases or words of explanation to assist understanding or increase clarity.

Although participants sometimes spoke in a way that seemed accented to the Aotearoa New Zealand ear, I have presented our conversations in standard written English to enable them to be read and understood clearly. I did so after one participant reacted with embarrassment to the way I had recorded her speech. Adopting standard written English overcame participant self-consciousness, preserved dignity, "and improved the...flow" (ibid). It also helped to convey belonging, partly because using this form blurred differences which the participants seemed to be unaware of, or to pay no attention to, in regular life. Other than these items, the words and phrasings are the participants' own.

## **Conclusion**

In this chapter, I have discussed the methods I used to explore belonging. They included participant-observation, various approaches to photo-elicitation, recording of life histories and conversations, and participant engagement in photographing their own lives. I contextualized myself as a native anthropologist because I engaged with women much like myself within my community of residence. The research was limited by gender – to women; by ethnicity – to Pākehā; and by my positioning – as educated and middle-class. I then discussed the ethics of research and argued that maintaining participant anonymity was not always the most desirable approach to adopt.

In the next chapter I introduce the participants and locate them within the Aotearoa New Zealand context. Since I have been one of my major informants, and have adopted an inclusive approach, I introduce myself there in the same way.



## Chapter Four

### Defining Selves

*In my own thinking, I pin no labels on myself at all...I'm an individual, I am and I exist, and they call me Joan...that's really the only label I'll willingly wear.* Joan B

#### Introduction

Before describing, defining and discussing the participants' practices of belonging, it is necessary to introduce them. Doing so provides a glimpse of each person, and enables their contextualization nationally and internationally. The women I worked with were similar to the woman I was, am, and/or like the woman I could become (Meyerhoff 1980). The participants and I shared connections to Aotearoa New Zealand through ethnicity, origins and culture. Most were born in Aotearoa New Zealand. As Pākehā, they were members of the dominant culture. They generally lived a middle-class lifestyle, espoused middle-class aspirations, were variously educated, and variously skilled.<sup>47</sup> They lived within the gendered, patriarchal and geographically isolated constraints of Aotearoa New Zealand society.

While people's histories suggest similarities their life experiences render them unique.<sup>48</sup> Below I introduce the participants by their given names and sign them off by their given, married and/or family names. Each is accompanied by a photograph, a quotation which each agreed summarised an essential quality, and a brief biography. These are designed to give readers a glimpse into participants' lives, insights into their experiences and decisive moments or events. Their brief biographies enable them to be seen and heard more clearly. The chapter also enabled me to indicate their general similarities to the Pākehā population as a whole. Since there were many, it seems possible to suggest some broad conclusions, although further research would be required to confirm them.

#### The participants

Sixteen women, self-selected except for two, were directly involved in the research. When I began, their ages ranged from the late thirties to the late eighties. The age range might have impacted on the data, because of altering health in older participants, and the different political, economic, social and cultural environments they experienced, with their lives influenced accordingly. All but four were born in Aotearoa New Zealand. Four were born, and raised, in Whanganui. The others had lived in Whanganui from periods ranging from three to seventy years. Their cultural and ancestral origins, education and circumstances were similar. They could be described as Pākehā. Most had British ancestral connections.

School leaving age increased with younger participants, rising from 13 years old for oldest participants to 18 years old for the younger ones. Most had gained

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<sup>47</sup> Before choosing how to describe the participants, I discussed concepts of class with several. One said directly, "I have no problem with being described as middle-class." Others seemed less willing to use the term as a descriptor for others than for themselves. They did not like labels being imposed on people and argued that some people would be uncomfortable being described as upper or working class. Some suggested describing the participants as representative of "a broad cross-section of the community". The research involved a small number, with nobody at either end of the spectrum, partly because Wanganui is relatively homogeneous economically. Because participant aspirations, moral codes, practices, aspirations, and lifestyles suggested 'middle-class' mores, I opted for the middle-class reference to convey a sense of their socio-economic situations, attitudes and aspirations. A magazine poll revealed that Aotearoa New Zealanders believe class exists within the shores, "mostly based on money, but that education, where you live, your ethnicity, occupation and family background also play important roles" (Black 2005:16).

<sup>48</sup> Basil Avery suggested that "everyone is remarkable, really" (1998).

post-secondary school training or education. Three had engaged in university study. Many acquired specialist skills through voluntary activities or employment. Their partners were male and included self-employed businessmen, farmers, teachers, administrators, managers, and professionals. While some began life in families which might be described as 'blue collar' by occupation, most had, through experience or education, moved to different occupational levels. Bonisch-Brednich asserted that "the myth of the 'classless society' itself" had long been debated by New Zealand scholars who suggested "two general phases, one before the 1930s and the other" recently, with "an intermediate phase where there was a high degree of social justice and a subculture of elite society" (2002:214).

Some participants had stable economic and domestic situations. Others had experienced financial, and/or other struggles, due to circumstances generated by others e.g. gambling, desertion, government policy, family size, or relocation. Participants were either Aotearoa New Zealand-born and raised, or shared a British historical or colonial background. They shared a migrant experience, either immediately personal, or ancestral. One participant, who emigrated, aged five, with her family from South Africa, shared the experience of ancestral familial migration from northern Europe and overall, the experience of ancestral and personal migration.

All participants had been, or were, in paid employment. The older women were from a generation where they were required to resign from paid work when they married (Montgomerie 2001:171-187). Economic need and/or social changes meant most women participated, during marriage, in paid employment, mostly part-time, casual or permanent. As their forebears had done, they fitted "their employment into the structure of domesticity, and particularly the demands of motherhood" (ibid:135). Savage et al. (2005) asserted that motherhood and childrearing has a role in the "achievement of elective belonging. It can become "a means of...attaching women – and, indirectly, men – to place and...of sedimenting different kinds of gendered cultures of place" (ibid:54).

The participants' community connections included myriad links to a variety of groups and organisations. These ranged from church-based through sports, recreational and leisure to political. They encompassed pursuits like theatre, bridge, mah-jong, choral singing, prayer groups, Bible Study and/or volunteer community work. Other interests reflected general community interests such as gardening and walking, leisure activities high on New Zealanders' lists of interest. Those involved in paid employment had a narrower range of leisure interests, due to less spare time and more involvement in children's activities. They were usually involved in at least one community activity. This echoed the cultural ethos that urges that Aotearoa New Zealanders to work hard and demonstrate commitment. Ailsa highlighted this when she recalled, "My father was always very strict that we give back to the community what we get out of (it), and that we never ever leave a job that we couldn't return to."

All were alive in 2005. Several had experienced major life changes. Two, due to age-related frailty, no longer lived independently but had relocated to single rooms in rest-homes. Three had relocated from Wanganui, two for employment after marital separations, the third to be closer to kin. Adult children and older teens had left home for marriage, employment or study.

Names reflect Aotearoa New Zealand cultural practice, where women mostly adopted their male partner's family name upon marriage. Given names precede married family name and original family name. Until the 1970s and the impact of feminism, taking one's male partner's name was an almost unquestioned cultural practice. In 2000, it was becoming more common for women to retain their original family name on marriage, or to hyphenate their own family name with that of their spouse. The younger participants were only just young enough to have considered doing so, but none had. Marital status seems to have directed where women relocated during their lives. Later, familiarity with place, similarity to positively



experienced places and/or the presence (or absence) of kin and community networks, seemed to dictate where women eventually settled. Unless otherwise noted, participants were born in Aotearoa New Zealand. References to paid employment begin with the most recent. Private domestic work was common to all. Community involvement was current. Even those born in Whanganui had lived elsewhere, for varying lengths of time, for the same reasons as non-city born participants – study; personal, spousal or parental workplace employment; or the desire to travel and work.

**Jill**



**Fig 7: Jill in her preferred chair in her living room.**

From Timaru we went...my husband was very interested in the church and there was a church job going with the Māori Synod...he got it...he was secretary of the Māori Synod<sup>49</sup> and we were entirely working with Māoris (sic). And it was very nice. (That was)...in Whakatane. My two aunts, you know, of the big number of ten girls, had been teachers with the Māori Synod, in Māori schools, at Mangapohatu which was way in the heart of the Urewera<sup>50</sup>...and I'll never forget going to be welcomed at the marae,<sup>51</sup> and my heart was throbbing because that's where my aunts'd been."<sup>52</sup> (It was sort of like coming home?) In a way.

**Jill Kirk /Fanny Gertrude Chapman<sup>53</sup>**

Born 1914, Morrinsville. Two siblings. Lived in several provincial centres, Aotearoa New Zealand. Left school aged 14. Trained and worked as a nurse. Widowed 1997. Four daughters, one died aged 42. Practicing member, Presbyterian Church. Member, Founders Society, Genealogical Society. Order of St Luke, CoF. Extensive community involvement reduced with age.

<sup>49</sup> One of several synods within The Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand (Presbyterian Church 2004).

<sup>50</sup> A remote mountainous region in the North Island.

<sup>51</sup> Enclosed ground used as meeting place (Reed & Brougham 1978:197).

<sup>52</sup> Her aunts had been welcomed on the same marae, and had lived and worked in the area.

<sup>53</sup> Known as Gertie or Chappie as a young woman, she has been called Jill 'for 62 years', since her husband said he was going to call her Jill.

## Ruth G



**Fig 8: Ruth demonstrating sweet, and jam, making.**

She was showing members of the Wanganui Multicultural Women's Group how to make fudge and marmalade. As did her forebears, she wears an apron<sup>54</sup> tied at the waist to keep her clothes clean while preparing food.

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<sup>54</sup> McLeod (2005:30) argued that feminists often saw aprons as 'symbols of servitude, but they are also practical...easier to wash...than a frock' (2005:30). Cf. Okely (1996) for an extended discussion on the symbolism of aprons worn by Gypsy women.

So what sort of things would you do...that your mother and your ancestors might have done?) I sort of follow my own mother's pattern in cooking. And my sister said, "(o)h, you sound like a Dane." (What did she mean?) Well, I think they speak sort of aggressively...(w)e've just written up the history of my mum and dad...I didn't put that I was aggressive. I put that I was assertive...(Is being assertive a good thing?) Yes. Well, that's what she said. She said, "Well, you put in there that you were the only one of the daughters in the family that will drive." She said that if I wanted to do something I did it and I got it done. That's true about me. ... (n)ow my mother was the same.

**Ruth Elizabeth Gedye/Andersen**

Born 1917, Levin. Nine siblings. Left school aged 14. Businesswoman, cookery demonstrator, housemaid. Married. Six children. One grandchild drowned aged four. Widowed. Lived metropolitan, provincial and rural locations. Practicing member, Lutheran Church. Active, ongoing, community and business involvement.

## Margaret Mary



**Fig 9: Margaret Mary arriving for a function at the Opera House.**

Her clothing, a fine woven jersey and skirt, indicates that the occasion is relatively casual, but because it is in a public place, needs to be smart and tidy. Behind her, the doorman, Joe, ensures she climbs the steps safely.

I like Wanganui. I feel at home here. It's familiar. It's a friendly place, easy to get around, our climate's nice. It's neither one thing nor another. Yes, it has a lot going for it. But it's the family really, and the fact that I can get around, even though I don't drive...(y)ou feel secure. You know if you were sick that somebody'd make sure you got looked after. It's nice to know what the (grand) children are doing...you do live through them. What they do is important...I do what I can to help Pamela<sup>55</sup>...I enjoy St John's Ladies' Group.<sup>56</sup> We meet once a month. We go on outings and we have a general get together and it's nice...(y)ou're seeing faces that you're familiar with, because I've belonged to that group since 1970.

**Margaret Mary Watt/Hick**

Born 1920, Auckland. One sibling. Raised Unitarian, practicing member Presbyterian Church. Left school aged 13. Learned dressmaking from mother and aunts. Toll room operator. Lived metropolitan and provincial centres. Married. Two children. Widowed 1995. Lives with daughter and family. Active community involvement reducing due to ill health associated with ageing.

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<sup>55</sup> Her daughter.

<sup>56</sup> CoF.





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**Fig 10: Great-nana Joan Hallett and her great-grand-daughter, Violet Rose, on Joan's eightieth birthday.**

Four generations celebrated Joan's eightieth birthday. Joan's and Violet Rose's personal presentation emphasised the importance attributed, in Aotearoa New Zealand society, to attaining so many years. Joan has had her hair 'done', by making a special trip to the hairdresser. Her clothing is made of delicate fabrics which indicate that she will not be working physically. The baby is dressed in matching suit and cap, indicating that her parents made a particular effort to dress her stylishly for the occasion.

We really feel as if we'll never leave here...(w)hen we shifted (here) we'd had ten houses in our first ten years of married life...(w)e started with Napier, went to Hamilton, then to Wellington then to Balclutha and then up here...(i)t's hard going when you move to a new place, as I know, because we've moved to so many places...(w)e found, that by going to church, and getting to know people, and going to the Parent/Teachers, (we) gradually (got) to know people...(i)t's surprising how hard it is when you shift to another place. You have to work twice as hard to get to know people. ...(y)ou're not accepted straight away. I found that I had to work twice as hard to get into these different groups.

**Joan Hallett/ Tinney**

Born 1920, Lower Hutt. 2 siblings. Left school aged 16. Office assistant. Trained nurse. Married. Four children. Lived metropolitan and provincial centres. Practicing member, Anglican Church. Active community involvement, church and sports focus.

## June



**Fig 11: June (facing) playing mahjong with friends at home.**

She took classes to learn to play mahjong after arriving in Whanganui. Being involved in group leisure activities introduced her to other people and enhanced her belonging.

(Moving to Whanganui) was a big step, after being in Hamilton for forty-nine years. But I've got a sort of nature that probably holds back on a lot of things, but sometimes when my brain gets into gear at whatever, I can't stop myself, you see. And if I've made a decision to do something, I sort of go on and do it. It's a strange sort of feeling. Then I decided to buy a house here...(m)y son in Hamilton said, "They'll move. What're you going to do if they move?" I said, "I can always come back to Hamilton." So always at the back of my mind was that I can pack my bag and go back to Hamilton...(b)ut now I've been here five years and I'm settled here and I love it.

**June Priscilla Sheppard/Dixon**

Born 1923, Atherstone, England. Orphaned around the age of 13. Two siblings. Left school aged 14. Worked as window dresser. Administrative assistant, industrial site. War bride. Emigrated Aotearoa New Zealand, 1946. Lived villages, provincial cities, England, major and provincial centres, Aotearoa New Zealand. Three children. Widowed 1990. Relocated Wanganui 1992. Extensive community involvement altered from service to leisure with age.

## Joan G



**Fig 12: Joan in her sunroom.**

Joan prepared afternoon tea before I arrived and served it before we talked. Although there was more food than we could eat, the warmth of Joan's welcome was signified by the wide selection of attractively arranged biscuits and cakes.

We had a business in Greymouth<sup>57</sup> for quite a few years...We sold that. We didn't quite know what to do then...(m)y husband said, well, he'd go back to the mine...(t)here was a lot of tunneling going on in those

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<sup>57</sup> West Coast, South Island, settlement.

days...that was the time of the big explosion...he was the only survivor out of about 20 people...(i)t was a terrible day...(h)e won't forget it. Nor will I. I was at work. They called me and said, "Which mine does your husband work at, Joan?"...(h)e said, "I hate to tell you, but there's been a big explosion"...I said, "Oh, that won't be the mine he's in. It'll be such and such a mine. That's the gassy mine." But it was that mine...some of them, they never ever got them out...(t)hat was enough for me. I didn't want to leave the Coast 'cause I had my parents there. So he went to Christchurch<sup>58</sup> and he got a job there and we just moved over.

**Joan Gray/Jefferson**

Born 1927 ("I say it quietly.") Loftus, Yorkshire, England. Emigrated with parents to Aotearoa New Zealand aged two. No siblings. Left school aged 16. Married. No children. Office administrator, cashier, receptionist. Lived provincial and metropolitan centres, Aotearoa New Zealand. Extensive community involvement. Husband's escape from death in mine accident led to relocation from childhood town.

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<sup>58</sup> Aotearoa New Zealand's largest South Island city.



**Joan B**



**Fig 13: Joan in her garden with her faithful border collie, Tui.**

Native flax behind and beside the seat reflect Joan's efforts to recreate the garden of her childhood, and encourage the birds.



I was the eldest by three years. So I was pretty much on my own and I was quite happy...I'm still quite happy on my own. In fact, it's necessary for me if I'm going to do something a bit creative to have a little period of isolation...(i)t's almost a brooding...(i)n my dreams...one day I would be an artist or a writer, or both, I could never decide which and I still can't. I do both and have done both for many years...I went...through many times of...sort of intellectual isolation...one night, confronting this situation of isolation, I just asked myself what is it that one needs to do in isolation...I thought, well, writing or sculpture or art. I gradually came to that which took me right back to my early years when those were the things I wanted to do anyway. My childhood dream. I didn't quite realize it at the time but that's how it evolved.<sup>59</sup>

**Joan Bullock/Morrell**

Born Whanganui "many, many years ago now." Two siblings. Left school aged 18. Worked in family business as office administrator and accounts clerk. Self-employed sculptor, poet, artist, writer. Married. Three children. Divorced. Raised children alone. Extensive, active community involvement.

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<sup>59</sup> Joan has published several books of poetry and stories. Her sculptures grace city parks, and personal and public collections, nationally and internationally.

Ruth J



**Fig 14: Ruth J pouring tea, after completing a video-taped interview.**

The cup on the left contains milk poured before adding the tea. The fine, knitted jersey Ruth is wearing, and the tray set with cloth, cups, saucers, plates and milk jug, indicated careful preparation. The careful, contained setting is one way in which Pākehā honour their guests.

I changed my name from my original name in 1979...(m)y (twin) sister's name was Doreen Florence...I was (born) second. (Mum) turned that round and called me Florence Doreen...I never felt that I had my own name...I chose Ruth...Ruth in the Bible was a worker. She...went with Naomi, her mother-in-law, and...she gleaned in the fields and sustained herself and her family that way. And she was rewarded for that. (Tell me why. What was it about Ruth that felt right?) Because...I suppose at an adult age I felt that I had been able to sustain myself and my family on very little and do it well. I felt by that stage that I had done very well, that managing on very little.

**Ruth Florence Jane/Florence Doreen Daly**

Born 1933, England. Several siblings. Left school aged 14. Worked as home help, nanny. Learned to drive at 17. Married at 19. Nine children. Immigrated to Aotearoa New Zealand via Australia. Divorced, remarried, widowed. Lived metropolitan and provincial centres, England and New Zealand. Deep spiritual beliefs. No current church affiliations. Reducing community involvements due to ageing. Trained and qualified as nurse aged 38. Relocated Whanganui 1997.

## Diane



**Fig 15: Diane in her favourite chair in her living room.**

Diane's beloved Cavalier King Charles spaniel, Khan, is on her lap. Close by are the telephone and her electronic organ. The silver cups on the heater, awarded for success in cultural competitions, reflect Diane's quiet pride in her family's achievements. It is acceptable to display the awards at home as this provides an opening for discussion about achievement in a non-boastful way. Many urban Aotearoa New Zealanders let dogs live indoors. This is different from the rural attitude where dogs are regarded as working animals.

Don was a major influence. ...I always say he made me the woman I am now. He had to be very patient at times, because he was thirty when we got married and I (was not quite) nineteen...(t)he other big influence on my life...is probably my theatre background. I can go into...any type of situation and I never worry about it. I just seem to be able to slot into it...I think that has got me through these past twelve years...I was only 48 when I was widowed. Oh, it was the loss, the absolute loss. You think about it...you literally feel as if you've been cut in half. (After) about three-and-a-half years, I was sitting here one night and...I looked up at that photo of Don, that one up the top, and I thought, "For the first time, I'm starting to look forward again."

**Diane Margaret-Rose Moreland/McCabe**

Born 1940, Wellington. Two siblings. Left school aged 16. Secretary, administrative assistant, receptionist, advertising salesperson, motel management. Married, two children. Widowed, aged 48. Active community involvement. Severe health problems aged 62 led to unexpected early retirement.

## Roselene



**Fig 16: Roselene at her kitchen table.**

We drank morning tea from tea cups and saucers like the one on the table. Roselene laid the cloth for morning tea. It protected the table from spilled liquid and food crumbs. Her garb is casual but smart indicating that, though our meeting was informal, and occurred in a private home environment, it was important to be well-presented. Roselene moved to this chair for the photograph because the window light was too bright. We moved the fern, which can be glimpsed, from behind her.



My first husband had a nervous breakdown...he went on a benefit and...I got a part-time job...I ended up having to get a full-time job...then my mum took ill so I went back to part-time...in the end Mum was terminally ill so I took turns with my elder sister looking after her. I gave up working then for a while...(a)fter that, I got (a job) in a supermarket out in the suburbs...then I got shifted...that closed down. I was made redundant. So I walked the streets in town looking for a job and got the one in the shoe shop where I am now. I've been there nineteen years... so I've been lucky...I don't like being in a rut but I don't really like a lot of change so this is why I stick with things.

**Roselene Kerr/Sturrock**

Born 1941, Krugendorp, Randfontein, South Africa. Four siblings. Migrated to Aotearoa New Zealand in 1948. Left school aged 16. Lived provincial and metropolitan centres, Aotearoa New Zealand. Retail sales assistant, retail manager, checkout operator. Married. Two children. Divorced. Remarried. Practicing member, Presbyterian Church. Active community involvement.

## Ailsa



**Fig 17: Ailsa, chairing a meeting.**

She described making herself available for election as a positive action. It reflected cultural mores embedded during her childhood, emphasising that commitment to one's community was necessary and desirable.

My granddad had been the longest serving Beadle in the Church of Scotland...he was that for fifty-three years. Our family tree's gone right, right back to 1600-odd...so that's how I came to have a strong association...I'm named after the Ailsa Craig light-house off the west coast of Scotland. Crawford is...there's a Scottish custom that your grandparent's maiden name or surname is your middle name, and that's carried right through our family. (So you have very strong ...awareness of your Scottish connections?) Oh, extremely strong, especially on the last day of the year. You never leave any bill unpaid. If the gas bill comes in the morning, you go and pay it. You never go into the New Year owing anything. (Laughs.) It's a bit of a nuisance, sometimes.

**Ailsa Crawford Stewart.**

Born 1943, Whanganui. Two siblings, twins. Single. No children. Left school aged 17. Trained and practiced as nurse and midwife. Health professional and administrator. Practicing member, Presbyterian church. Active community involvement. Lived major cities, provincial centres, New Zealand, Australia, Scotland, Solomon Islands. Experienced redundancy aged 50. Relocated to Solomon Islands for one year. Developed own business as health provider. Major illness aged 60.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Ailsa retired from council just before the October, 2004, elections.

## Kathy



© Kim Olsen

**Fig 18: Kathy in her garden.**

She chose to be photographed with these orchids beside the native tree fern. "It's taken me years to grow them. This is a whole saga of growing where I've got flowers coming and their heads get whacked off by the boys with the cricket bats."

There was no way I wanted to go into the mill...I was really quite determined then, as a child, that I was going to be a nurse, and I joined the St John's Ambulance and I did really well with that...it was obvious to my mum and dad that I was going to be a nurse...I can remember making the garage into a hospital and playing doctors and nurses...I came out of school with one GCE<sup>61</sup>...(s)o I got a job as a cadet nurse and went to night school and got another GCE.<sup>62</sup> You could get in with two. (Laughs.) I wanted to travel...so I went into the army at eighteen...I was paid for the training...I was stationed in Germany and they'd fly you home for holidays. ...(w)e were dropped in it. You found yourself...being in charge of a ward with sixty patients...without backup...you didn't complain. You just got on with it.

**Kathleen Joyce Olsen/Sutton**

Born 1947, Lancashire, England. Two siblings. Left school aged 16. Trained as nurse with British Army in Germany. Travelled and worked as nurse in Australia. Travelled overland through Asia. Married a New Zealander. Emigrated 1977. Practiced as general nurse, rest-home nurse manager, specialist nurse. Three children, one died aged 19 in 2003. Separated. Attached to Presbyterian and Spiritualist churches. Extensive, work-related, community involvement.

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<sup>61</sup> General Certificate of Education, an English secondary school qualification.

<sup>62</sup> Two GCEs were required for entry into nursing training.

Yvonne



© Yvonne O'Connor

**Fig 19: Yvonne in her 'new' office.**

Yvonne is in her freshly-painted office in the central business district. She had recently gained a contract as the city's arts festival coordinator. This was a significant because it included money for office rental, and meant she no longer had to work from home. The relocation enabled her to increase her public profile. The poster (right) advertised the festival while the flowers were a gift congratulating her on the move. Aotearoa New Zealanders send flowers to mark momentous occasions.



I left school at 15-and-a-half and went to work as a secretary as I'd always planned to...the Trust instigated the...Arts Centre...I got to attend openings and exhibitions and serve the sherry...(She smiled.) and (wear) long skirts...and I loved it. I believe now that that's where my art interest began. It was absolutely foreign to my family. Couldn't cope. Went home one night after an opening and said to Mum, "Guess what I've done?" She said, "What?" I said, "I've bought a picture." (Shook her head). "Yeah...I still have it...I just completely broke the mould...I did that for four years and then I went away. It was time to move on because all my friends were getting married and having babies and doing things I had no intention of doing.

**Yvonne Marie O'Connor**

Born 1949, Masterton. Two siblings. Left school aged fifteen-and-a-half. Conference organiser, festival manager, theatre receptionist, sales representative, secretary/clerk/administrator. Lived metropolitan and provincial centres. Long-term partner. Two children. Relocated self and children to Wanganui in 1992. Completed correspondence degree in theatre administration 1998. Extensive work-related community involvement. Feminist focus.

Penny



© Jahanara Begum

**Fig 20: Penny, with Noushin Hafiz, at a Christmas Party.**

I met Noushin when she was four months old after her mother joined the Multicultural Women's Group. We became close friends, and remain in contact since the family's relocation to another city. Noushin enjoyed copying the adults. She had 'borrowed' her mother's sunglasses to play a game.

I seem to have grown up in an immediate family where women did women things, and men did men things. When I reviewed that impression, I realized that even though the men did men things, the women often stepped outside the so-called feminine roles...(m)y grandmother helped on their farms when my grandfather was away at war...(s)he helped with milking...(m)y great-aunts lived near us. We learned many behaviours from them, quietness, and listening, and Aunty Ruth told wonderful stories...(t)hey preserved and made jam and jellies, and tended flower and vegetable gardens. They taught me to knit, crochet, and sew. They...swept the table with a silver handled crumb brush and pan. The oddest thing is seeing their furniture in my cousins' homes - when we, my siblings and I, were the ones who saw it so often. Slowly, I began to realize that the aunts belonged to them, too.

**Wilma Penelope Robinson/Grove<sup>63</sup>**

Born 1951, Whangarei. Three siblings. Left school aged 18. First completed university study in 1972. Journalist. Small business operator. Married 1976. Four children. Early involvement Anglican Church; later involvement, Presbyterian Church. Lived international, metropolitan, provincial and rural locations. Active, ongoing community involvement.

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<sup>63</sup> I have always been known as Penny.

**Pamela**



**Fig 21: Pamela, and her older daughter, Karen.**

Pamela arrived to collect another daughter, just as I had taken some photographs. There was one left so she and Karen agreed to be photographed. Pamela's arm around Karen's shoulder embodied her affection through contact.

I don't know what it was that made me feel it was my own responsibility to look after myself...I've always felt that...as a child I never had any sense of having to go without, although we didn't have many extras. I s'pose I thought it was unfair that my mother had to resort to earning a little bit of extra money behind my father's back...but I was very conscious...that it was her little bits of extra...that made the difference...the women in the family had always been able to stand on their own two feet to some extent. My grandmother, Mum's mum, was a dressmaker and when my grandparents married straight after the war, the First World War, I know my grandfather was ill...he had to work...outdoors because he was gassed...my grandmother...had largely been the income-earner through her dressmaking.

**Pamela Richardson/Watt**

Born 1954, Auckland. One sibling. Left school aged 17. Trained on job as information analyst. Lived metropolitan and provincial centres. Divorced, remarried, three children. Early involvement with Anglican Church. Active community involvement related to husband's occupation. Mother lives with family.

## Debbie



**Fig 22: Debbie ushered in 1950s costume at an Opera House film festival.**

Joking, Debbie raised the doorman's trouser leg to reveal a white sock. This signaled his membership of the Opera House group since he had also dressed in the spirit of the festival. Instead of dark socks, more usual with dark trousers, he donned white socks.



(Work is) peaceful. It's me. It's my own time...I helped out at primary school...I'm still doing it, even though the kids have left...I help out with PE doing gymnastics and dance...(i)t's voluntary...I would love a full-time job...I think I'll wait till the kids are a bit older...(b)ut I still like my theatre work, you know...it's Amdram<sup>64</sup> and the Opera House,<sup>65</sup> 'n working backstage...I'm on follow spot box,<sup>66</sup> because I like the lighting and technical stuff...the colours and seeing the effects...I've done a bit of choreography work. It's fun meeting (the stars). To say I'm this far away from Tim Finn<sup>67</sup> (indicates a small space) (is) oh, cool...(i)t changes nothing. It just feels good that I've met them.

**Deborah Anne London/Spence**

Born 1959, Wanganui. Four siblings. Left school aged 17. Retail assistant, café and bar assistant. Married, three children. Extensive ongoing community involvement. Engaged in tertiary study. Unprovoked physical attack in early working life by customer led to lengthy period of recovery and reduced employment options.

<sup>64</sup> Wanganui Amateur Operatic and Dramatic Society.

<sup>65</sup> Royal Wanganui Opera House – a working Victorian theatre.

<sup>66</sup> The follow spot box is a small room in a theatre that houses the large lights that are manually operated to spotlight performers on the stage. It is large enough to house both the lights and their operators (Richardson: email 16 Sept, 2004).

<sup>67</sup> An Aotearoa New Zealand singer/song-writer (© NZMusic.com 1997, 1998-2002).

## Margaret McC



**Fig 23: Margaret McC on stage during an Opera House fundraiser.**

Margaret's costume reflects her willingness to identify with the group, while her presence at the fundraiser indicates her acceptance of deeply embedded cultural mores to community commitment.

I was the kid that was picked on. I had red, curly hair...and freckly skin and (was) fair. (I got called) Gingernuts...I was quite quiet and well behaved... (Laughs). I think I managed. But...it was tough sometimes...I always enjoyed Girl's College...I s'pose you weren't competing against the guys...(a) lot of my friends went there as well...there was a group of us, about half-a-dozen...that got round together...we were probably in the top part of our class. We studied and that, and didn't go to parties and stuff like that. Our parents were quite strict...I did the seventh form year...that's when I became (interested in) computers...I also got an interview for the computer centre (at Wanganui)...I was the only one that stayed in Wanganui...they've...trained me since. I've been fortunate in that respect. ...it's been a good career in that way.

**Margaret Gaye McCosh/Moreland**

Born 1961, Wanganui. One brother. Left school aged 17. Trained on job as computer operator/administrator. Aged 27 when father died suddenly. Divorced 2002. No children. Raised Presbyterian. Lived Wanganui until relocation to metropolitan city in Aotearoa New Zealand in 2004. Extensive community involvement.

## **Aotearoa New Zealander, Kiwi, Pākehā or European**

If one wanted to find out whether the participants defined themselves as belonging to a particular, bounded group through ethnicity, one would need to ask them, since few described themselves in the terms demanded by bureaucracies. Within the constraints of the national census, people living in Aotearoa New Zealand can officially claim association with several ethnicities. The census uses the terms, Māori, European, Pacific Peoples, Asian and other (NZ Dept of Statistics 2005).<sup>68</sup> Spasmodically, the public and politicians debate about how different ethnic groups within the nation should describe themselves. Claims vary from “we are all New Zealanders”; to prefacing choices with the term, New Zealander, Māori or Pākehā; or using terms drawn from the Māori language, such as Tangata whenua, Tauīwi or Manuhiri.<sup>69</sup> A term which occurs frequently in conversation but which does not appear on the census forms is the term Kiwi.<sup>70</sup> The way participants used the term, Kiwi, suggested that it has been in use, nationally and internationally, for at least sixty years, probably longer. It may offer a unifying term for people who live in Aotearoa New Zealand and have citizenship, regardless of their origins.<sup>71</sup>

Several participants used both terms, New Zealander and Kiwi, to describe themselves. Only one used the term Pākehā, suggesting that in dominant Aotearoa New Zealand society, the question of personal ethnic identity rarely occurred. Participants were aware of ethnic identity, but their infrequent mention of it suggested that they rarely related it to themselves. When I asked Debbie about her, “(Ethnic origin? How would you describe it?), she replied, “I’m a Kiwi”. June S, an English war bride, referred to ‘wealthy Kiwis’, a lot of Kiwis” and “Kiwis (being) not so tall as Australians.” Kathy remembered arriving “at home (in England) with a backpack and... a Kiwi with a beard.”

Kathy and Joan G defined England as ‘home’, Joan arguing that she felt more strongly aligned culturally to the land of her birth, despite having lived all but two years of her life in Aotearoa New Zealand. She ‘knew’ she belonged ‘really’ in Aotearoa New Zealand. Kathy said England was home, but she belonged in Aotearoa New Zealand. “I am originally from England, and have been living here for thirty years. (Does that mean you are English?) Probably, but I have New Zealand citizenship, but I suppose that, in my heart of hearts, I am still English.” After a visit to Australia, Kathy returned to Aotearoa New Zealand, saying that, after 28 years, she felt like “I am a Kiwi now.”

Diane, June and Ruth G, the latter of Danish origins, used the term, New Zealander. When I asked Diane how she would describe herself beyond the borders, she responded, “I’d say very proudly, I’m a New Zealander”. Beyond these references, participants did not often use ethnic labels for themselves in conversation. They occasionally referred to Pākehā and Māori people generically as in “I first got to see how Māoris (sic) and Pākehās (sic) got on so well together,” or “It’s in the Pākehā world too.” Joan B asserted, “I pin no labels on myself at all...I’m an individual. I am and I exist and they call me Joan. And that’s really the only label I’ll willingly wear.” Ruth J reflected similarly when she said, “I suppose really I see myself as just a person like anyone else. But – I identify as a child of God.” She included a photograph of her King James Bible (Fig 24) in her personal inventory. Doing so emphasized the value she placed on belonging to the world through God. Although other participants rarely labeled themselves, Ruth’s photograph demonstrated clearly how she located herself in the world. Ruth positioned the Bible in the centre of the image, emphasizing the centrality of her Christian beliefs,

<sup>68</sup> The census allows people to record themselves as being of more than one ethnicity (NZ Dept of Statistics 2005).

<sup>69</sup> Tangata whenua – original inhabitants (people of the land); Tauīwi – foreign race, strange tribe. Sometimes used to describe person who is not Māori; Manuhiri – guest (Reed & Brougham 1978).

<sup>70</sup> The term is derived from the national emblem, the kiwi, (<http://www.kiwirecovery2002>), a flightless, nocturnal native bird, Apteryx spp. (Herbert & Daugherty post-1992).

<sup>71</sup> Cf. Bonisch-Brednich 2002 for a discussion of the term from the perspective of German immigrants.

despite the difficulties of using disposable cameras for close shots. She is included (note the blur at the lower edge).



© Ruth Jane

**Fig 24: Ruth's King James' Bible.**

With these comments in mind, I use the term, Pākehā, to describe the ethnic origins of the participants. I noted earlier that the term, Pākehā, was used in Aotearoa New Zealand by the indigenous population to describe white incomers, and later as a collective term to describe the settlers. The meaning of the term has been debated regularly with some people accepting it as a description of Aotearoa New Zealanders whose ancestors derive from Britain and Europe (Belich 1996, 2001; King 1999). Others rejected it, arguing that it was a derogatory term (Ranford 2000; Tanczos 2004). *Tauīwi* is another term used to describe incomers, and incorporates any non-indigenous person (Rudge 1993). I believe the term Pākehā best described the participants. It was a term they would recognise, although they might not use it to refer to themselves. The term, *Tauīwi*, was recent, not used in everyday discourse, and described a broader spectrum of ethnicities than Pākehā. *Kiwi* also implied a broader range of New Zealanders than Pākehā. Recent debates have also centred on whether Pākehā is an ethnicity. Ranford (2000) contended that it was not. I suggest that the definitions of ethnicity and regional identity are so close (Pohl 2001) that it is appropriate, in this context at least, to use the term, Pākehā, to describe an evolving ethnicity.

In investigating the continued impact of colonial relations between the indigenous Māori and colonial Pākehā settler in Aotearoa New Zealand, Bell (2004) asserted that however Aotearoa New Zealanders felt about the labels of Māori and Pākehā, because of the colonial origins of the labels, maintaining “some distinction between the *tāngata whenua* of Aotearoa and the New Zealanders who came later, seems crucial to the rejection of colonialism”. She argued that recognising “the ‘longue duree’ of the indigene” (Clifford 2000:16, as cited in Bell 2004:232) required

Pākehā to “assert their own relationship to New Zealand (sic) in a language that marks, rather than denies, Māori difference. What that language might be remains a subject for future research” (Bell 2004:232).

## **Conclusion**

The material above contextualizes the participants in the Aotearoa New Zealand context by providing an overview, followed by biographical information about each participant, with a photograph and a quotation. I suggested that, though few participants referred to themselves directly as Pākehā, this term seemed to best describe them in the national context in terms of ethnicity and migration. In the following chapters, I discuss their practices of belonging.



## Chapter Five

### Origin stories

*In recounting the past, they kept that early life alive, weaving it into their present. (Meyerhoff 1980:34)*

#### Introduction

Storytelling has an important role in the construction and practice of belonging. It enables participants to recognise similarities and connections as they reveal common and/or shared experiences.<sup>72</sup> 'Recounting the past' through myths, legends and personal narratives provides a means of relaying temporally separated origin stories. Each enables an understanding of the past and one's place in the present, although myths and legends relate to a more distant past than the narratives of everyday life. As I noted in the first chapter, gaining knowledge of other cultures through their myths and legends can enhance our understanding of those others. Gaining knowledge of our own cultures through our own myths and legends can increase insights into our own cultures. Related to but different from one another, myths and legends, and narratives, often serve a similar purpose. All enable the acknowledgement of the past and can assist people in understanding their connections to the present through clarifying their cultural and ancestral origins.

In this chapter I firstly discuss the role of myths and legends in developing social understanding, the parallels between ancient forms of wisdom and personal narrative practices, and their links to immigrant origin narratives. Secondly, I locate Pākehā origin narratives within an international colonial context, and discuss their similarities. Thirdly, I discuss and analyse the ethnographic material pertaining to participant origin stories to highlight how the participants related and practiced belonging. The final section discusses some of the cultural 'games' participants played using inherited connections.

#### Generating history

In telling their stories, participants made connections to the past, and through those, better comprehend themselves and their existence in the present. Their behaviours bore out Tonkin's argument that narratives could "be seen as social actions" (1992:97) and Somer's assertion that "(s)ocial life is itself 'storied' and (that)...narrative (is)...an 'ontological' condition of social life" (1994:38). Beckman strengthened this perspective when he asserted,

Origin stories are for the present and the future as much as they are about the past. The way in which we view where and how we began is also essentially tied to who we are in the present, as well as whom we will become. It is important to have an anchor; but having a rudder is of even greater value. (Beckman 1997, 1998:2)

Learning about one's own culture's origin myths and legends can provide that 'rudder', and intensify insights. Māori remind themselves and others of the value of narrative and the impact of origin stories in using a whakatauki<sup>73</sup> which translates as, "look to the past to build for the future" (Tangaroa, personal communication, 11 March, 1995). In doing so, Māori provide themselves with a rudder, directing themselves towards recounting stories of the past, finding ways to learn from them, which can assist in constructing a desirable future. Pākehā act similarly, using stories to impart wisdom and knowledge of the past to their youth, to create their

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<sup>72</sup> In this thesis common experiences or experiences in common are those which participants have experienced separately from one another, in different places, and/or at different times. Shared experiences are those which people have engaged in together.

<sup>73</sup> Proverb, wise saying.

own spaces and explain the unexplainable. Recalling our own ancestral and personal origin stories seems to serve a similar purpose to origin myths because, though we seldom have occasion to realize it, we live within our stories. The major overviews and cultural myths of origin shape our world views and directly impact (on) how we approach life's meanings, cross-cultural interactions, relationships to people, to creatures, to the earth and the stars. Our moral, economic, psychological and social selves constantly bump into the invisible but guiding 'walls' of these stories. (Serpentina 2004:1)

Although the above quotation refers to myths of the distant past, participants' origin stories, set in tangible historic time, seemed to impact on and enable their understanding of their relationships in, and to, the present. Their narratives were not 'origin stories' in the sense of 'creation myths or legends' (Riese 2002), but stories recalled by individuals and collectives about ancestral and personal migration.

As Tonkin asserted, "cognition and memory are partly constituted by social relations and...are also constitutive of society. (We are) all simultaneously bearers and makers of history, with discursive representations of pastness as one element in this **generation and reproduction of social life**" (Tonkin 1992:97, my emphasis). Her argument that we bear and make history, as we generate and reproduce social life, parallels Ingold's (2000) argument that life is an active process of regeneration and progeneration. Tonkin (1992) highlighted the importance of social interactions, just as Ingold highlighted environmental/human interactions and connections. She reminded us that when telling our origin stories, within and beyond the family, we reiterated our pasts and created ourselves in the present. We learned where we came from and, possibly, why we were the way we were. Telling our origin stories provides nodal points – places/spaces where we connect and exchange information. In the process we 'grow' others and/or ourselves and/or are 'grown' (Ingold 2000).

### Immigrant origin stories

It is likely that residents in colonized lands will recognise similarities within their own histories, particularly when their family histories include migration stories, regardless of time or place. Historical studies suggest that throughout the ages people have immigrated or relocated for similar reasons – war, economics, a sense of adventure, hope for a better future, or to be closer to kin. Belich argued that Pākehā migrants formed several distinct streams, each with a different balance. They immigrated for the reasons noted above - to acquire land, fight wars, make their fortunes from gold or timber, to escape poverty at 'home', to join relatives, or find husbands (1996:278-337). The ensuing experiences were often similar (Thomas 1993).

Participants' narratives reflected these publicly recorded reasons and, despite temporal distance between ancestral and contemporary arrivals, the reasons remained similar. Boenisch-Brednich (2002)<sup>74</sup> asserted that, in the past decade or two, European migrants had relocated to Aotearoa New Zealand for lifestyle and leisure, some with a view to moving several times, before finally settling. Although the concept differed somewhat from the reasons for earlier migrations, the intention seemed the same, since it was aimed at improving one's life, and creating a better future for oneself and, often, one's kin.

As I detail later, the participants' responses also answered some of the questions raised in Boenisch-Brednich's (2002) Aotearoa New Zealand-based research into the experiences of German immigrants over an extended period. She argued that immigration was central to "New Zealand history and...a very important

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<sup>74</sup> Also listed as Bonisch-Brednich and Bönisch-Brednich.

part of peoples' identity. It seems to be crucial to know where you or your ancestors came from, to be able to identity yourself in New Zealand and in your overseas ancestry" (2002:65).

She added, "(m)igration is part of an autobiography...never told as a whole, but emerges in short entities, connected to stimulation that arises in conversation" (ibid: 68). It would be worthwhile, she asserted, to conduct research to discover whether there was "a reservoir of immigrant narratives that New Zealanders as a nation prefer to tell" (ibid:76), and to determine the silences. The challenge would be to discover "narratives of a more fundamental significance" (ibid), particularly on the topic of 'Who came first?' (ibid). She argued that

(t)he narratives of the first canoes, the first ships, of assuring special groups of people of the right to be here and to stay here is a crucial story that is told...narratives are...important for everyday life...because they give a comforting assurance about our existence. They can provide pictures of our lives and the society around us in a way that can be neatly framed (ibid).

Describing these stories as 'Ready-Mades', the stories "New Zealanders (sic) like to tell about themselves and their young country" (ibid), Boenisch-Brednich described other narratives, those "unlikely to be told...which might reveal failure, uneasiness and mishaps" as being "stored away in the family linen cupboard, seldom to emerge in public" (ibid). Her comments reiterated the importance of origin stories in the cultural lexicon of any group, partly because they grounded people in their present location and time period.

As might be expected, the participants had "one thing in common: the long voyage out" (Belich 1996:312), unsurprising in a land colonized before the advent of aircraft, surrounded by water, and almost 20,000 kilometres/12,000 miles distant from most people's lands of origin (Virtual New Zealand 2004). Participant ancestors arrived across an extensive time period. Arrivals occurred in three waves – the middle to late 19<sup>th</sup> century; between 1910 and 1930; and after 1945. These dates replicated historical national migration demographics (Belich 1996; King 2003/2004). While participant stories were similar to those documented in published textual and audio-visual histories (Belich 1996, 2001; King 1988, 2001, 2003/2004), such material was often presented from a historical perspective. Others, such as Park (1991), provided an anthropological perspective, following investigations into the impact of past social and cultural mores on women's practices and attitudes. Many women, participant and otherwise, arrived in Aotearoa New Zealand, and Whanganui, as a result of gendered relationships, spousal or parental relocation, frequently employment-related.

Delving beneath the surface of migration stories sometimes provided other, deeply personal, reasons for relocation, with decisions taken in consultation with spouses or families. I discuss these in combination with their narratives.

## **Telling stories**

One way in which participants engaged in belonging was through telling their origin stories, ancestral and personal. In doing so, they explicated and reiterated their connections and claimed belonging to Aotearoa New Zealand. Ingold asserted that speech was a practice. He argued that

a way of speaking is, in itself, a way of living in the land...language celebrates an embodied knowledge of the world that is already shared thanks to people's mutual involvement in the tasks of habitation...knowledge subsists in practical activities...including activities of speaking. (2000:147)

I experienced narrative as an active process, involving memory and constructing connections. Narrative could be described as an oral, aural and visual performance, like drama (Bourdieu 1999). While narrative can appear to privilege

discourse, by reviewing videotaped oral histories, interviews and conversations, one begins to understand how much is conveyed bodily and performatively. Torso, limbs, and face move. Listeners demonstrate engagement by leaning forward, or sitting back, crossing and uncrossing arms and legs, changing their expressions and participating vocally or silently, according to the narrative's ebb and flow. It can be difficult to view narrative as embodied and performative because, when viewed on the printed page, it appears static. However, reading is a dynamic process requiring engagement of mind and body in a similar way to listening and telling. What one reads often generates an emotional response; similar to the response to an oral account (ibid).

In recalling the distant and experienced past, participants used narrative, conversations, photographs and material objects. Although I asked some participants to tell me about their ancestral past, others raised it independently. Conversations about ancestors also arose seemingly spontaneously during informal gatherings. While this might have related in part to participant awareness of my interest, it also occurred on other occasions when I was present but not involved in the conversation. Ancestral photographs on walls and in photograph albums reiterated and reminded participants at a glance of their origins and their communities of connection. The images were usually of kin, sometimes of friends, often geographically and/or temporally distant.



**Fig 25: Diane's sewing room and 'Rogue's Gallery'.**

Like other participants' photographic displays, Diane's included ancestors from her own and her husband's families, and recorded momentous personal events. These included Diane wearing her wedding gown on her wedding day, her daughter, Margaret McC, wearing the same gown on her wedding day, and numerous other photographs of Diane's children, and grandchildren. The display enabled Diane to demonstrate clear connections to her past, and provided opportunities to relate them to family and friends. Most other participants had photographs of immediate family members, and often of ancestors, displayed in their homes. They were like a virtual community (Lysloff 2003; Mirzoeff 1998), a visual representation of one's past and current kin connections. Although 40 years



ago few households had extensive photo-galleries, the availability and affordability of cameras and film has made this type of representation more frequent. Diane's husband was a photographer and developed his own prints, one reason why Diane had so many more to display than other women of her generation. Displaying them demonstrated her pride in his skills, and her continued regeneration of his memory. It provided elusive social and cultural capital, through Diane's ability to claim prior belonging, by demonstrating her husband's skill, and their ability to afford a relatively expensive hobby, as well as highlighting her former wifely position in a society which valued marriage.

Just as many participants used photographic displays to demonstrate connections, their narratives demonstrated bonds arising through their own or ancestral, journeys. The stories they told, and which I discuss next, are most likely the sorts of stories Boenisch-Brednich (2002) suggested exploring, the 'Ready-Mades'. The stories revealed 'trails' (Ingold 2000) of knowledge, highlighting the importance of finding or creating connections. Narratives could be separated into four stages: ancestors and their origins; points of departure and the journey; arrival and relocation; and settlement. These were like the stages others have identified and discussed in similar contexts, nationally and internationally (Boenisch-Brednich 2002; Buijs 1993; Phillips 1987). A fifth stage, a noted transnational migrant practice, featured the 'return home', a practice engaged in by and researched amongst transnational migrants (Baldassar 1997; Panourgia 1995). Many Aotearoa New Zealanders, particularly youth, engage in what is termed 'OE', overseas experience. They travel to Britain and Europe for the experience. Some also make an effort to uncover their 'roots', and, using knowledge transmitted by older generations, visit ancestral sites and sometimes met distant blood kin. Participants revealed their origins in several ways, including replying to direct questions about ancestral or personal arrival; in casual conversation, sometimes travel-related; after my own, or other people's inquiries about material objects; and/or through photo-elicitation.

### Origins and journeys

The phrases participants used in referring to ancestral travel indicated looking ahead as well as looking back. Most described the journeys as '**coming from, to or out**'. This applied whether it was their own or ancestral arrival, and regardless of the decade. With Danish origins, Ruth G remembered, "My mum and dad **came out** to New Zealand in 1906." Margaret Mary's family arrived about the same time but from a different country. "My mother's parents **came from** England. (They) **came to** New Zealand in 1908, I think it was. They **came out** because my grandfather was a lithographic printer. My father's parents' **came out** in about 1915." Joan G's family arrived later, around 1930. She remembered "I was born in Loftus, Yorkshire...(my father) did various things. But since we **came to** New Zealand, he was a coalminer" (my emphasis).

Similar constructions began all the migration stories, whether ancestral or personal. By directly referring to ancestral villages, regions, or countries of origin, participants reiterated their international connections. These included British and Scandinavian, as referred to above, and European locations, referred to obliquely, as when Jill described her great-grandmother as "a little German woman", and Joan G's recollection that one of her first known ancestors "was a French lady", doubly connected because they had shared given and family names. In this way, participants delineated their connections to the past, temporally, culturally and geographically. By providing dates for maternal and paternal arrivals, as Margaret

Mary did, participants indicated how, with time and through marriage, migration histories began to be interwoven.<sup>75</sup>

Ruth G acknowledged her Scandinavian ties when she said, "I've just written a history of my parents for records for the rest of the family, back in Denmark." She revealed ongoing, distant connections when she showed me folders and photos of a recent family reunion. They "came from South Africa, America and England as well as New Zealand." She explained who was in the photos – "children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren." Her telling was a process which further highlighted ancestral trails and extended her belonging through heritage to other locations. Ailsa's narrative incorporated her parental Scots origin, her birth in Aotearoa New Zealand and, like Joan G, later parental arrival. "I had the great privilege of having Scottish parents who came out from Scotland in 1933," she said. Her given name linked her firmly to her ancestral land. "I'm named after the Ailsa Craig lighthouse off the west coast of Scotland."

Diane's narrative extended these origin areas and concepts in three ways, indicating how migrant links to distant lands proliferated, as the nation matured. She had ancestral connections to all four countries in the British Isles.<sup>76</sup> She added travel via Australia, and the birth of the family's first Aotearoa New Zealand-born child.

I've got a good mix of Irish and Scottish there...(m)y father was brought out from Scotland, a toddler...my father's youngest brother was actually born here in New Zealand...(m)y mother was born here...(h)er mother was born in Australia...to English parents. Her father was of Irish extraction and he had been born in Ireland, but...brought out here as quite a small child...I think I've got a little bit of Welsh in me somewhere too.

Her narrative highlighted the alternative paths some Pākehā ancestors followed, traveling first to other countries, which included Canada and South Africa. Again, in naming the lands her ancestors originated in or traveled through, she extended her connections, and her belonging, not only to other parts of the globe, but also in describing experiences and travel paths which were familiar to other Aotearoa New Zealanders. Participants involved in more recent migrations told similar stories of traveling first to other lands before eventual migration across the world. During the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, Joan G's father traveled to Canada, then returned to England, where he married and then immigrated to Aotearoa New Zealand. After World War II, English-born Ruth J immigrated with her husband and children, first to Australia, and then settled in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Important points of connection were the sailing ships that participants or their ancestors had traveled on, the ports they arrived in, and the places where they settled. As Bonisch-Brednich (2002) noted, the earlier the ships arrived, the more cultural capital people gained. Jill's narrative linked her family's arrival to the 'first immigrant ships' (Flude 2001). Naming ships which arrived early, usually before 1865, was an indirect way of claiming cultural capital (Bourdieu 1982), because the further back one's ancestors arrived, the more 'belonging' one could claim. This implies that Māori have the most belonging because they were here first. The first Pākehā arrivals tend to claim more valid belonging than later arrivals because they have been here longer. This seems to be because belonging rests partly on residential longevity, as Cohen indicated even though he argued that "(b)elonging is about more than being born in a place" (1982:21). What he did not say, and perhaps

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<sup>75</sup> Belich argued that "It is quite possible that English, Scottish and Irish descent each extend to half or more of today's New Zealanders (2001:217). He noted earlier that "The most striking ethnic distinction between the populations of the British Isles and Pākehā New Zealand is the great over-representation of Scots in the latter. Scots made up about 10 per cent of the population of the British Isles in the mid-nineteenth century, but up to 24 per cent of Pākehā" (1996:315).

<sup>76</sup> England, Ireland, Scotland, Wales.



could not know, was how, in other contexts, including Aotearoa New Zealand, belonging could be enhanced by being born in the land. The further back in time one could claim ancestral birth, the more strongly and inherently one perceived one's belonging. This is sometimes to one's advantage, sometimes not (Strathern 1982). With a population of only 4 million and several generations of settlement later, it is probably to be expected that many people 'touch' one another, through ancestral arrival on the same ship,<sup>77</sup> and through marriage.

That more recent arrivals named the ships they sailed on was understandable, since the event formed part of personal experience and memories. They also discussed events which occurred during the journey, and emotions and events which arose during or after arrival. Sometimes participants recalled the weather, their impressions of the harbour, or the way people looked and/or dressed. Naming could occur spontaneously, as when Joan G corrected my perception that she grew up in England.

Well, I didn't actually grow up in England. I came here as a toddler. We came out on a ship called the Corinthic...(i)t took us six weeks to get here...(t)hey had...something went wrong...and there was a delay...(a)nd my father was already in New Zealand...waiting for us in Wellington. He probably thought we'd never arrive.

Her reflections were probably derived from stories her parents told her but she incorporated her own recollections, since relocation is a memorable event (Pillemer 1998:1-3), and one-off events, such as migration, have a profound impact. Pillemer argued that most memories drift from one's consciousness, but "for truly momentous events, memory longevity is expected" (ibid). They often describe a particular "one-moment-in-time-event... (with a) focus on the rememberer's personal circumstances at the time of the event... (they) contain specific details....and retain a vivid, life-like quality" (ibid).

Recalling migration often prompted vivid narratives, providing other contextual links to Pākehā women, as Joan G's recall during a photo-interview demonstrated. I showed her a photograph of me with my daughter, dressed for her baptism in a family christening robe (Fig 26), and asked Joan whether there was anything similar in her family.

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<sup>77</sup> Māori claim the deepest belonging because their ancestors arrived by waka (canoe) centuries before Pākehā. The latter's claims to the earliest possible Pākehā arrival might indicate their recognition that Māori practice belonging through connections to ancestors through waka; and intra-Pākehā competitiveness for authentic belonging.



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**Fig 26: My daughter, Emily, and me, after her christening in 1981.**

The gown my six-week-old daughter wore was made by a paternal great-great-grandmother during the journey from England. Several generations have worn the robe at their baptism. Using the white handmade robe (symbolic of purity and cleanliness), signifies the sanctity of the occasion, respect for family and social practices (Christian baptism), and connects the family materially to the past, as does this photograph and the fact that it was made. On seeing it, Joan said,

No, no. I haven't. I still have quite a pretty dress that my father bought for me. I think I may have told you that he came to New Zealand first and Mum and I came later. He met us in Wellington and I can still remember him taking me out and buying this dress and some socks. I can remember sitting on the counter even when he did it...it was beautiful. But my mother said, "Oh?" I think she thought it was gross extravagance. I think that's why we kept it...then it came down to me," Joan laughed. "It was really lovely because most people didn't have very much money in those days and, to ...splash out on this elaborate dress that you'd grow out of in one year or something, just seemed extravagant.

The contrast in her words, the rapid change from denial to providing minute detail emphasised the importance of the experience. Her memory of 'sitting on the counter', her mother's horror at the 'gross extravagance', and the lack of money to spend on an 'elaborate dress', brought the moment and economic conditions alive. Joan's next comment showed how memories shared could strengthen, or create connections. She fetched her glasses, put them on, drew the photograph close and inspected the gown. Excitedly and gladly, she remarked that the needlework was like stitching she had done with her mother. She talked about making such gowns.

They get a long piece of material and they put all the tucks in. They work for three or four yards, and then they cut it. They've cut it one way, and then cut it the other...and it looks as if they've done it with faggoting. Have you ever done faggoting? (No. I've watched my great aunts do it. Have you done it?) Yes I have...it's very, very effective. (It is. It's really pretty.) So that's what that looks like. That's why I thought I'd get my glasses and have a look at that. Because I haven't seen anyone else do faggoting, bar myself and my mother...you're the only person – I've never seen anyone else do it. It can be very fancy. But mostly my mother used to do it on blouses and so on. It was usually fairly plain but it's very effective...it's very easy to do, too."

This excerpt demonstrated how two Aotearoa New Zealanders connected, despite being from different generations, through past and ongoing practices. Joan learned hand-sewing from her mother, who was of a similar age to my great-aunts. This encounter enabled us both to understand shared skills as one source for our mutual connection. The image also prompted Joan to recall, vividly, her arrival in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Other participants shared different memories, which demonstrated similarly, how connections could be made and/or knowledge expanded. Viewing the same photograph, Ailsa recalled the Scots habit of embroidering on the gown's hem the names of babies baptised in a particular robe. Other participants combined their recollections of the journey with memories of arrival and landing. Ruth J remembered her trans-Tasman journey, saying,

(t)alking about arriving in New Zealand (sic), we came on the Oriental Queen, a Japanese ship from Sydney. I can remember arriving in Auckland and getting off the boat and being in Queen St, and being absolutely amazed at all these pretty young fresh-faced young girls in their dirndl skirts and everyone seemed to be relaxed and happy.

June S recalled, "The trip itself could have been a nightmare, but...I'd been through lots myself so that didn't matter...to that extent. The sky, everything's so beautiful about...coming into Wellington Harbour...we struck a fine day, too." Only five years old at the time, Roselene remembered, "We had fun. There were parties on board".

While naming ships occurred frequently, others, like Diane, referred to ships by location or state of repair. She said, "You know the ship that's being restored (in Picton) – that's the ship my grandparents came out on." This sort of comment established material and emotional connections. They demonstrated physical links to an arrival date through historical material evidence. They also connected them materially to others whose ancestors had experienced similar hardships, including the long, often unpleasant voyage 'out'. Diane's comments demonstrated that participants valued 'knowing' about their ancestors, and being able to claim 'solid' belonging through 'touching' the past, physically and emotionally.

Material objects in public locations became nodal points, physical locations for gathering, and a public means of recording events. In Sontag's terms, participants could be described as manufacturing 'collective' memory through 'collective instruction' (2003:85) by "stipulating: that this is important" (ibid:86). The ship's physical public presence and its restoration affirmed family narratives by

providing recognisable, publicly-located, physical evidence. Material objects performed in a similar way to photographs, by reminding people that this “is the story about how it happened” (ibid). Objects replaced “the pictures that lock the stories in our minds” (ibid).

## Attachments

Naming occurred in other contexts as well. In some instances, naming indicated personal awareness of ancestral mobility, internationally, nationally and locally. Historic texts record the mobility of Aotearoa New Zealanders, and, as I have indicated, participants’ settler ancestors and their descendants were geographically mobile, often resettling hundreds of kilometers distant from their original ports of disembarkation. Their mobility reflected the movement of their British ancestors where “rural labourers...moved residence quite regularly but normally within a radius of no more than 10 miles” (Phillips 1987:19). The distances immigrants traveled and “(t)he longer inter-regional journeying of the colonial was of a different order” (ibid).

Participants referred to the locations where their ancestors arrived and/or settled more matter-of-factly than they named ancestral ships, perhaps because the locations still existed but many ships did not. In addition, the ocean journey was fraught with danger in a way that being on the land was not. Naming locations where participants had ancestral connections became another way of claiming belonging. Many women revealed connections to national geographical locations distant from Whanganui. They also revealed associations between various ancestral arrival dates, where ancestors landed and where they had lived.

Knowledge of such locations enabled settler descendants to claim belonging to Aotearoa New Zealand. Jill’s ancestors arrived in Aotearoa New Zealand before 1850. A member of the ~~to~~ New Zealand Founders’ Society,<sup>78</sup> Jill had membership because “(m)y great-grandfather, Dr Crokum, came to New Zealand in 1838...(h)e was a doctor in Otago”. Joan H’s family arrived at a similar time, and settled in Wellington. With delight, Joan noted a current link, which occurred because “some of my grandchildren recently bought a house in the same street as (their earliest Aotearoa New Zealand ancestors). They are living there now.”

Jill also referred to the central North Island, and other South Island locations like Waitaki, Dunedin and Kurow, where her ancestors had settled, and/or she and her parents had lived. Like most participants, she and/or her husband had lived in a variety of settlements. She named Nelson, Timaru, and Gisborne. Joan G mentioned Yorkshire, Greymouth, Christchurch, and Dunedin. Diane referred to Westport, the West Coast, and Wellington. Margaret Mary demonstrated her own range when she noted, “I’ve lived in a few places, Auckland, Taranaki as a small child – New Plymouth – then back to Auckland. For a little while I lived in Kerikeri, in the Bay of Islands, when Noel and I first got married.”

When participants or their ancestors arrived in Aotearoa New Zealand, some remained at the port of entry to establish businesses or obtain employment. Describing journeys beyond the port of disembarkation, participants recorded ongoing personal and ancestral mobility. Diane’s grandparents traveled further afield to take up pre-arranged employment. “My grandfather was sponsored out by the Stockton coalmine...in Westport.” Ruth G remarked,

My mum and dad came out to Wellington in 1906, and went...to Palmerston North where there was a Danish society and Lutheran Church.<sup>79</sup> From there they went down to a little place called Buckley, just south of Shannon, a little farming area, and that was where they first

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<sup>78</sup> “The New Zealand Founders Society was established at Wellington in March 1939...with the purpose of remembering the immigration and settlement of the islands to develop the provinces and nation of New Zealand...the Society...sought membership from those persons whose ancestors arrived before 1850 (later extended to 1865)” (New Zealand Founders Society Inc. 2000).

<sup>79</sup> A group of Danish migrants had settled in the Manawatu by 1880 (King 2003:229).



lived and worked...(m)y brother says we lived in Shannon for some years. I don't recall that part of it. But I recall going out to a little place called Makarua. Mum and Dad had bought a farm.

Other participants developed knowledge of places where ancestors settled through personal experience. Diane and Jill spent their early childhood in the North Island. Both had strong recollections of ancestral settler locations in the South Island for two reasons: firstly, it was where ancestors had settled; and, secondly, they themselves had lived there for long enough to become familiar with kin, their properties, and surrounding areas. Diane highlighted the importance of kin connections in developing personal relationships to place when remembered,

We lived in Wellington...(m)y grandparents...lived down in Westport...we went down there when I was three because Dad thought we'd be safer down on the coast (during World War II)...we came back to Wellington in 1945. But my first memories are of the coast and all the cousins, and aunties and uncles.

Jill conveyed a similar sense of mobility when she noted that she and her childhood family

were in several farms...three up in the North Island. We were all born in the North Island...I was still at primary school when we came back down to Kurow to live...(w)hen we shifted away from Kurow, the main thing was to go back and stay with our grandmother...she was quite an influence on our lives...we had cousins round the corner. We used to go and visit them.

These narratives highlighted how kin drew people to places and that their presence made a place memorable. Jill's narrative also highlighted how kin call family back. Her comments suggest that 'people make place', supporting Kahn's contention that "ultimately places are...profoundly emotional territories" (1996:168), developed through personal relationships. This seems probable because other participants rarely mentioned visiting locations where they had lived or holidayed with relatives if none remained.

Later generations might name or visit areas, particularly if ancestors had lived in a location for a long time, and engaged in community development, or material construction. In journeys to ancestral residential or employment sites, people regenerated ancestral trails and generated their own. One family recalled making a planned trip to a historic South Island coalmining village where, five generations previously, an ancestor had lived and worked, designing revolutionary mining equipment. The trio brought home a chunk of coal – a material connection and physical reminder of the journey. They extended the ancestral story by combining their knowledge of a story transmitted by a parent with a deliberate visit. They reinforced the ancestor's importance in the family lexicon by bringing home a material object and presenting it to the elderly kin, who had transmitted the knowledge gained from previous generations.

Often we discuss inscription, but in the situation described above, its opposite occurred before inscription could occur. Through excision and presentation, belonging was reiterated, linking the ancestor and descendants, and the descendants with the immediately older generation, the story having been relayed by a parent. The layers of belonging thickened and intensified through reengagement with place through memory, and action in place. While these actions related to a 'journey' and entailed visiting a site dwelled in by an ancestor, it was not what might be described as 'returning home'. It involved intra-border rather than international journeying, usually required when Aotearoa New Zealanders seek temporally distant ancestral origins.

These narratives were notable as much for their content which reflected national and international migrant patterns, as for revealing an altering habitus, a change in attitude towards the past, with pride being shown by acknowledging

descent from early settlers. The ancestors who survived the hardships of migration and settled successfully in their new country showed adaptability in what was a strange, challenging and unfamiliar environment. I detail aspects of this pride in the next chapter, in association with construction of heroes and renegades. This altering habitus seemed to not only require pride in ancestral achievements, but to demand that people learned about, and could elaborate on, past connections. The narratives highlighted an increasing importance given to the past, and a desire among Pākehā to know more about their own origins. They had moved from ignoring or lightly acknowledging their origins to desire for detailed ancestral knowledge. Perhaps this was because it enabled people to specify how they belonged, temporally, geographically and socially. It also demonstrated that specific benefits could arise from intergenerational transmission of origin stories. These included the ability to establish connections in distant places, environmental engagement, extended travel opportunities, and deepened intergenerational family connections.

### **Why Aotearoa New Zealand?**

Most participants knew why their ancestors, parents or spouses had relocated, indicating transmission of information had occurred for up to six generations. More recent migrants provided insights into social and economic conditions behind migration choices. Most often, as I noted above, it was to improve one's own life and/or the prospects for one's family (Ip 2002; Simpson 1997). Less apparent in the literature were the reasons for choosing particular destinations. By detailing these, the participants provided insights into political, economic and personal choices. Sometimes, the reasons for immigrating to Aotearoa New Zealand were straightforward, such as when individuals applied to immigrate to more than one country and went to whichever approved their entry first. Sometimes the decision was precipitated by what was regarded as a fortuitous meeting. Joan G's father and his friend,

John decided they might come to New Zealand. When they were in Canada, the lady they boarded with had a sister in New Zealand...she said, "If you ever decide to go to New Zealand, I'll get my sister to nominate you," because you had to have a nomination to be able to come to New Zealand. And so, through going to Canada, he got a nomination to come to New Zealand.

Joan's narrative provided another reason for rejecting particular destinations, such as when partners vetoed their options.

My father wanted to go to Alaska because that was starting to open up and there were various minerals and so on. "It's going to boom," (he said). My mother said, "If you go there, you go on your own," because she didn't want to go to Alaska.

Sometimes, migrants disliked a particular climate.

My grandfather said Canada was too cold...so he came to New Zealand. He went to the King Country first, but it was too cold...so he went way up north to the Hokianga, where it was warmer. It was still really isolated."

For some migrants, the choice was political as well as kin-related, an aspect not always mentioned in early Aotearoa New Zealand migration stories, but evident in refugee narratives globally (Jansen 1990; Meyerhoff 1980). Roselene's parents emigrated

just before South Africa became a republic. My Dad could foresee problems there, and...probably, the main reason was that his sister died. His Mum and his sister were in New Zealand, and he came out here to be with his Mum...and perhaps the lifestyle, to raise children perhaps.



Several participants discussed other motivations for migration, thereby locating migration in the economic and social, as well as political conditions, of ancestral lands. Their own experiences and knowledge assisted in foregrounding the reasons recorded by early settlers. By speaking their knowledge, the participants emphasised ancestral intentions, and renewed their meaning, another advantage of engaging in oral narratives. Joan G observed,

I can understand people coming to New Zealand...you see, some people in Britain were very hard up. My grandfather used to sink pits for mines so he was well off. Mum's father was quite well off, but with eleven children I don't s'pose it went very far. But they never had to really go without. They all had to go to work, that sort of thing, but they were never ever really without. Yorkshire people, Lancashire people, Scottish people, they did have a hard time because there were the haves and the have-nots. And the haves were so very, very wealthy and the other people were very, very poor. In the early days, I thought, "Fancy coming to New Zealand in the 1800s." There was nothing here. But then, you see, women and children were still working in coalmines (in Britain) at the close of the century...I think you would think, "Anything would be better than that for my kids"...and a new world, you know, a new country, and everyone was on an even (platform). In those days, everyone was pretty even pegging, when I was a child. Because the wealthy hadn't sifted to the top, because they were probably making money, but they hadn't sort of come through...(t)hey were doing very well, but they weren't much more - they were well off but they weren't extremely wealthy, compared to their neighbour, if you know what I mean.

She also highlighted what could be behind individual decisions to emigrate, recalling that, like other migrants of the same era, before her parents married

...my father went to Canada, because there was no work, especially in the north-east of England. He and his friend, they'd go off on their bikes. They just about toured all of Yorkshire and they couldn't get work. So (they) decided that they would go to Canada...they spent two years there. They did all kinds of work in Canada just to have a job.

This dependency upon others for employment was emphasised by Ruth J, who highlighted ancestral landlessness, saying "My father was a tenant farmer, which means that... (t)hey weren't given ownership." This provided an insight into why Pākehā, even today, regard land ownership as important.<sup>80</sup> As Ruth G argued,

It's ownership, I think. (Of property?) Yes. I think it's something - it becomes a little personal thing. If you were renting a place, you might say, "I think I'll get out. I'm sick of renting this." It's ownership. You own it and you put a lot of hard work into it to get it how you want it...and...you become attached to it...it's your property...you feel relaxed...comfortable. You know you own it...you feel as if it's your own personal thing.

Concepts surrounding land ownership and occupancy have caused conflict in Aotearoa New Zealand since European settlement. This occurred partly because Māori regarded land as communal, and ranged across extensive areas regularly, but seasonally, gathering natural products for sustenance and survival. European settlers' concepts about land use differed from that of the indigenous foragers, and they applied their own constructs to land occupation and use (King 2003). Putting aside the trickery and treachery involved in some purchases (ibid), it is perhaps

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<sup>80</sup> I noted in the introduction that around 68 per cent of Whanganui people own their own homes, compared to around 67 per cent nationally. Cf. Mitchell (1972) for insights into land ownership amongst Aotearoa New Zealanders, and Land Information (2003) for clarification on Māori land.

unsurprising that conflicts arose and continued, given the tenuous connections of some Pākehā settlers to property in their homelands, and different concepts about use and ownership. As well as detailing the shared concepts that derived from the originating cultures and societies, narratives like the ones above clarified the conceptual chasm that existed between Pākehā and Māori. They also revealed possible origins behind the settlers' desire for security of tenure and individual use to the subsequent bewilderment of the indigenous people with their tradition of collective, communal use.

## Discovering the past

People discover their connections to others formally and informally. In this section, I discuss what happened when people deliberately told family stories in an extended family/friends context, or chatted casually. The conversations related particularly to overseas travel and participants' use of knowledge about ancestral origins. The occasions on which the conversations occurred reflected Boenisch-Brednich's contention that "migration is part of an autobiography...(which) emerges in short entities, connected to stimulation that arises in conversation" (2002:68). Most stories participants related were about ordinary ancestors. They lacked public historical weight or importance but were vital in enabling an understanding of personal and individual history, and assisting participants to understand their collective connections.

During an impromptu gathering, Pamela referred to upcoming travel plans with her husband, John. It was a long-awaited trip to her ancestral homeland, England. Activities included "finding the house where John's great-great-grandfather lived at 59 Southbridge St, Eppingham." Providing assurance that finding distant ancestral sites was possible, an older guest related her experience. "We found my father's family's graves at Ovington (England)...there were three tombstones going back a long way. And then the dates stopped." Her son remembered, "Then you started to find (family) names in the Nelson<sup>81</sup> cemetery." The older guest and her grandson had visited the cemetery in different years, and recorded their visit in photographs.

Similarly, ancestral knowledge could be used to establish belonging in ancestral locations, as the following account demonstrated. Knowledge and disclosure enabled a young man residing in the area where his ancestors originated to make surprising, unanticipated, valuable connections. He was asked, during a year-long visit to Yorkshire, England, where he was from.

"New Zealand," he replied. "No, but **where** are you from?" the questioner demanded. "Wanganui, a small town in the North Island," he replied, puzzled. "No," insisted his questioner, "**before** that. **Where are your folks from?**" "Some are from England. My grandmother's family came from Ovington," the young man told him, naming a village a short distance away. "Oh, so **you're from around here then,**" the questioner stated, pleased to have discovered a connection.

Within the return context, because the young man was familiar with and cared enough to learn the details of his ancestral history, related by his grandmother, he was able to present his credentials. The ancestral connections located him historically enabling his acceptance as 'one of us'. He then slid more readily into the local lexicon. Like the Aotearoa New Zealanders who brought home the coal, the young man visited and photographed ancestral locations. On his return to Aotearoa New Zealand, he laid further trails, and deepened his relational connections by sharing photographs and stories with kin. By sharing stories and experiences with kin and friends, participants indicated similar experiences and interests, engaged with, and provided support for one another.

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<sup>81</sup> Aotearoa New Zealand.

Retracing ancestral trails in the manner described above parallels the way Ingold suggested that old people in indigenous groups created memory through revisiting places, describing ancestors, and/or recognising traces of their presence. He argued that 'the growth of knowledge' was also 'the production of memory' (Ingold 2000: 148), citing Lye, who noted that "trails were routes to remembrance just as they are routes to knowledge" (Lye 1997:149, as cited in Ingold 2000:148). Ingold argued that the "progeneration of the future is also a regeneration of the past" (ibid). In a turnaround, participants and others used narrative and embodiment to create a path into the past. By doing so, they connected themselves to the past, walked the ancestral trails, and regenerated memory. The rhizome thickened and belonging flourished through being actively revealed and links made.

As well as knowing where or to what one belongs, physically or relationally, some participants indicated that knowledge of, and engagement with, their heritage through place was an important component of their belonging. Like Pam's and the young man's narratives, above, other narratives contained references to specific locations. Again, though perhaps unsurprising, the detailed descriptions were notable because of the depth of knowledge and detail which participants had learned about ancestral locations. They had visited, walked through and photographing ancestral homes, streets and graveyards. After visiting England, Pamela said,

I had a sense of belonging in parts of England, like York, because I had grown up with my grandfather. I was interested in walking down streets my grandfather had walked down...when they came out it was a time when they couldn't go back or it was very unlikely. And the centre of York is still so much as it was when my grandfather left...I don't feel the same about Paisley. But I only think that my father's side came from Paisley. And it would have changed more.

Traveling to ancestral sites heightened participants' belonging to Aotearoa New Zealand and their ancestral lands. The experience deepened their knowledge and enabled them to better locate themselves in the land of their birth since they understood their origins more clearly. Through affirming belonging through visiting and gaining familiarity with their ancestral realms, their self-esteem, another pertinent feature of belonging (Carnes 1995, as cited in Bradford et al. 2004:323) was probably boosted. I suggest this since people evinced pride in, and increased their cultural capital through having gained and/or retained knowledge about ancestors.

Traveling was a dynamic process. Young Pākehā making the 'return' journey, usually by air, to Britain and/or Europe, remains a regular feature of Aotearoa New Zealand life (xtramsn 2004). It could be described as a rite of passage for people under 30 years old. For those who also made contact with distant kin in ancestral places and spaces, the journey was more than travel for travel's sake. It was purposeful because it combined the experience of travel with discovering their origins.

Younger participants like Yvonne and Debbie did not always elaborate on their ancestral history. It may have been a reflection of their age, as younger participants, but seems unlikely since other, similarly-aged participants were intensely interested in their heritage. It was more likely due to my not pursuing information about their origins. It may also reflect deliberate detachment from the past, and a desire to place oneself more completely in the present, reflecting an oft-stated 'Kiwi' maxim that one should 'just get on with things', without thinking too hard about them or analyzing them at all.<sup>82</sup> Yvonne recalled that

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<sup>82</sup> Older Aotearoa New Zealanders regard displays of emotion as self-indulgent. Cf. Nussbaum for a discussion on similar responses (to death) in the United States (2001:19-88).

I discovered when I got my birth certificate for my passport the other day, at the time of my birth, he (my father) was listed as a freezing worker...I never knew that. (To me) he was just always a truck driver...he eventually owned his own business...a top-dressing contractor, as in a truck-sort-of-top-dressing contractor. I was quite surprised.

Later comments indicated that it was not Yvonne who had deliberately detached from the past, but her kin, who had avoided disclosure during her childhood. She eventually sought ancestral information herself, learning about genealogical processes proactively and directly.

The matter-of-fact approach to ancestral history which some participants adopted paralleled the pragmatism several participants evinced in discussing migration, the need for relocation, and their acceptance of ancestral life style. Yvonne's comments about her father also hinted at a claim for cultural capital. In Aotearoa New Zealand self-employed people were accorded status, derived from perceptions that only people with financial means could establish a business. Regardless of the income people derived from business, merely owning and operating a business seemed to provide status, as could education, cultural knowledge, sporting prowess or other highly developed skills.

Pākehā were interested in retracing their ancestor's trails, as the narratives above indicated. By sharing stories and experiences with kin and unrelated individuals, participants indicated experiences and origins in common. Their actions demonstrated how they built connections to the past. This enabled them to locate themselves, through their origins, in the present. The knowledge explained where they 'came' from. By engaging in practices such as narrative and/or travel, they learned how and why.

Sharing such knowledge publicly was another way of constructing belonging because people could then recognise two things: that their ancestors shared experiences; and that, because their ancestors shared experiences their descendants shared a history. Revealing such knowledge enabled people to understand collective practices and the events which led to those practices, such as unemployment, landlessness, and the desire for a better life. In tracing their ancestors and retracing their paths, by visiting the ancestral homeland or national locations, they enacted similar, parallel activities in the present to those their ancestors had performed, tracing similar paths in reverse. Such knowledge was sometimes used in playing 'games' to enhance cultural capital. I discuss several aspects of the 'heritage' game next.

## Using heritage

A factor which appeared to influence or be incorporated in participants' belonging was engagement in cultural 'games' connected to personal heritage. Disclosing detail about ancestral origins was a frequent focus in participants' narratives. Their histories were reflected in social histories (Daley 1992; Park 1991; Bardsley 2000). As participants told their stories, I was affirmed by the range of narratives. They replicated many told by my families.<sup>83</sup> I did not imagine that these narratives were mine only.<sup>84</sup>

Before I describe games and the rules, I refer briefly to related theories. Berne (1964), Bourdieu (1984), and Ortner (1996) all referred to 'games' as a social activity. Games were 'serious' activities, not to be taken too seriously, with their own rules which varied according to cultural context (Bourdieu 1984:54). Berne explored

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<sup>83</sup> I refer to families rather than family to remind myself of my parental family and siblings and their stories, and of my husband's family and their different stories. While there are confluences and similarities, there are also differences. Together, the narratives form a massive river that flows on through my children, joining them to a more extensive history than any one carries alone.

<sup>84</sup> A rising interest in genealogy, oral histories and family stories, indicates that many people valued their history.

the way people constructed their lives using particular means of interacting. He described this as 'transactional analysis' or 'playing games'. As Bourdieu and Ortner did later, Berne argued that many 'games' had historical, cultural, social, and personal significance. Games were significant intergenerationally, and fitted between concepts of 'pastimes and intimacy'. They enabled people to learn more about one another and "fill(ed) the major part of the more interesting hours of social intercourse" (ibid:171-172). He argued that, on a personal level, "(p)eople pick as friends, associates and intimates, other people who play the same games. Hence 'everybody who is anybody' in a given social circle...behaves in a way which may seem quite foreign to members of a different social circle" (ibid). Those who changed the game, or the way they played, would be outlawed in one group, but welcomed in another (ibid:172).

Ortner proposed 'serious games' as "a model of practice that embodie(d) agency but (did) not begin with, or pivot upon, the agent, actor, or individual...(a)t the same time there is "agency", that is, actors play with skill, intention, wit, knowledge, intelligence" (1996:12). She emphasized 'seriousness' to add "the idea that power and inequality pervade(d) the games of life in multiple ways", often with very high stakes. Games were played solemnly and intensely, and "there (was) never only one game" (ibid:12-13).

In heritage narratives and the subsequent games, one of which I detail later in this section, particular associations came to the fore. They included relationships to historically important international figures; first Pākehā arrivals, particularly those who sailed on First Ships as noted earlier; early pioneers; people who had successfully battled the odds; and kin who had achieved national and/or international firsts. Such claims implied inheritance by association and often enabled an increase in cultural capital (Bourdieu 1982) or honour (Meyerhoff 1980). Honour was gained through ancestors being 'up to diversity', or showing a capacity 'for suffering well'. These were attributes Meyerhoff's elderly United States-based Jewish participants exhibited. She argued that, to be visible, 'suffering well' had to be translated into public display. Others had to acknowledge one's proper suffering, which her participants were usually unwilling to do (ibid:146).

Unlike Meyerhoff's participants, the Whanganui participants appeared willing to acknowledge one another's claims. They gained honour by narrating their associations with particular types of ancestors. They ascribed honour by listening to and acknowledging other people's associations. Their responses suggested the truth of Nussbaum's contention that "emotions link us to items that we regard as important for our wellbeing, but do not fully control" (2001:43). The participants bathed in a reflected glory, which they acknowledged thankfully, almost with relief, rather than boastfully. Theirs was pride drawn from perceptions of ancestors as worthy folk with the necessary physical, moral, mental and emotional attributes to survive and adapt to challenges. Such claims demonstrated participant vulnerability and possible insecurity about their rights to claiming belonging to Aotearoa New Zealand. Their responses again indicated 'collective orchestration' occurring in the absence of a conductor (Bourdieu 1982:72). Massey's (1992) assertion about the impact of the electronic media upon people's sense of place, identity and locality, effectively broadening it, may indicate the source of the 'conductor' in the apparent absence of orchestration.

I do not know how long Pākehā have played 'ancestry and heritage' games. The frequency and intensity seems likely to have increased during the past three decades, coinciding with rising national and political interest in the past (Bell 1996),<sup>85</sup> as Māori, increasingly, publicly emphasized and attributed value to their origins (Moeke-Pickering 1996). This compared with earlier decades when

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<sup>85</sup> Kapferer (1996) noted a similar interest in the past amongst Australian settlers.



homogeneity amongst Pākehā,<sup>86</sup> and assimilation of newcomers and tangata whenua was encouraged (King 1988, 1999; Phillips 1987; Sinclair 1986). Pākehā retellings seemed also to assist “in creating a feeling of safety about having found this place in the South Pacific” (Boenisch-Brednich 2002:76). Their narratives were a practice which enabled them to claim belonging.

I experienced the ‘game’ several times, as observer and participant. It occurred in different locations - private, semi-private and semi-public - and on different types of occasions - first during a meeting, at least twice during scheduled discussions, and often during informal conversations. It was possible to avoid the ‘game’, by refusing to acknowledge the signals. It was a little like the children’s game of ‘hide and seek’. It required disclosing positive aspects of ancestry (the hidden) and finding similarities (seeking) in origin stories. Seeking affirming connections continued until they were discovered. Upon joint recognition of constructive similarities, cultural capital, for those involved, increased. Negative aspects were overlooked in this phase of the game. I discuss them in the following chapter.

The positive phase had at least four different facets, bearing out Ortnner’s (1996) assertion that there was never only one game. The facets were, firstly, describing connections to international historic figures; secondly, describing connections to early arrivals; thirdly, discussing immigrant journeys; and lastly, a variation which involved seeking connections amongst unrelated people. These ‘games’ usually began with references to places.

I next describe my involvement in the first facet, and then, briefly, discuss the content of other facets. I first became aware of the game during a CoF meeting when members were invited to share aspects of their life stories with members. This was perceived as a means ‘getting to know’ one another more rapidly than through socialising at afternoon tea time. Members spoke of their own lives, their families, arrival in or connections in and to Wanganui and/or their ancestral origins. Their brief personal narratives reflected those of the primary research participants. This set the scene for later ‘play’. In an interview, Joan G reiterated what she told the meeting. She had described her connections to Captain James Cook, an English-born sea captain, who mapped much of the New Zealand coastline in 1769 (Rienits & Rienits 1969). After a cup of tea, she said,

Something I didn’t tell you last time...I am descended from Captain Cook’s father. You know, James Cook who sailed round New Zealand...I don’t know how many children he had, but he had James Cook and he had Mary Cook. Captain Cook was apprenticed to Captain Jefferson. Captain Jefferson had a son, and that son, a Jefferson, married Mary Cook. And I came down through the Jeffersons. I mean, I’m not the only descendant. They fan out. It was quite interesting.” I replied, “It is interesting. I think it’s fascinating because we come down on the Wedgwood<sup>87</sup> line. And there’s – I think it’s a marriage connection – to someone like Charles Darwin.<sup>88</sup>

Joan and I exchanged more than mere ancestral information. By indicating our connections to historical figures, we located our families and ourselves in international history. This enabled us to award one another symbolic capital. Although our ancestors were not indigenous, we too revealed connections to ‘important’ international figures as kin. We acknowledged and revealed our origins, emphasising connections to British historical personages. In reaching deeply into

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<sup>86</sup> Belich argued that ethnic difference in Aotearoa New Zealand was rigorously controlled through immigration measures, and minimized, concealed or denied to generate a homogenous non-Māori New Zealand identity in the period from the 1880s to the 1920s, and continued in the national ethos at least until the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century ((2001:216-218).

<sup>87</sup> Innovative 18<sup>th</sup> century English potter (Ceramics Today 2004).

<sup>88</sup> 18<sup>th</sup> century British naturalist (Chew 1996).



our pasts and sharing information, we connected in the present. This reiterated our own belonging to Aotearoa New Zealand. Our ancestors had sailed the seas together, including those around the land where we dwelled. Our ancestors' findings were regarded as important in our own historical, educational and cultural context, Cook's for map-making, Darwin's botanically (Rienits & Rienits 1969).

Our course of action, the disclosure of heritage and the awarding of cultural capital, suggested that ancestral excellence reflected positively upon each of us. It also suggested 'collective orchestration' (Bourdieu 1982) combined with 'collective instruction' (Sontag 2003). Applying unrecognised or unacknowledged external influences, we had accepted 'stipulations' about 'what was important' (ibid:86) and engaged accordingly in what had been implied, that the past and our connections within it were important. These gave us a place to stand historically, to make claims similar, in a sense, to the Māori concept of *turangawaewae*<sup>89</sup>.

Another facet of this 'game' involved naming, some of which I discussed earlier in this chapter. This included naming ancestral sites of origin, the ships they sailed on, ports of disembarkation and sites for settlement. Linked with these were recollections of arrival dates, stories of ancestral hardship and survival, or honour. Sometimes, the tiniest coincidences were greeted with delight, such as sharing family names, ancestors journeying out on the same ship, or traveling to other lands en route to Aotearoa New Zealand. Such disclosures enabled people to recognise themselves, and understand their own connections to culture and place. Sharing knowledge, by playing this 'game', enabled people to connect. Doing so enabled some people to recognise similarities, positionality and diversity, and bond more strongly with others and their communities.

## Conclusion

Participants' narratives and practices revealed an extensive interest in sharing information about their Pākehā heritage. Their narratives incorporated what might be regarded as the usual aspects of migration and shared experiences. Through naming places, people, ships and international and national locations, participants revealed extensive interpersonal, intergenerational, international and inter-regional connections. They revealed four stages in their origin narratives, beginning with ancestral locations, continuing through the journey, arrival, settlement and/or resettlement. These aspects of their narratives highlighted ancestral mobility. They also indicated the disruption caused by departure, and the problems of relocation.

Visits to the ancestral homeland', which had been engaged in for many decades, were incorporated into family narratives. Similar attention was also given to visiting ancestral locations in Aotearoa New Zealand. Both processes enhanced settler descendants' understandings of their origins and often enabled them to realize how they had come to belong to, and in, Aotearoa New Zealand.

By visiting and engaging with ancestral locations, nationally and internationally participants generated their own trails, bringing the past bodily, performatively, and sometimes materially, into the present. Their practices around narrative reflected the Serpentina (2004) contention that stories could provide invisible, guiding walls. Sharing stories enabled participants to 'bump' into themselves and one another, revealed their connections and guided them into understanding who and why they were, who they are now and who they could become. Perhaps Pākehā were beginning to engage in that Māori practice, noted by Tangaroa (1995), and were "looking to the past to build the future." Maybe they were beginning to use their knowledge of their personal origin stories as 'guiding walls' (Serpentina 2004), and so clear and create spaces (or not) for themselves in Aotearoa New Zealand. Maybe Pākehā are picking up on, and engaging in, a

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<sup>89</sup> One's ancestral home place where one has an unalienable right to stand.

cultural game they have observed Māori playing, and are turning it to their own use.

Engagement in cultural 'games' enabled Pākehā to reveal their ancestral histories, discover connections and deepen belonging to people and places. These 'games' enabled them to share stories about "how their arrival and subsequent settlement (was) appropriate to their sense of themselves" (Savage et al. 2005:30), arguing that this approach was involved in 'elective' belonging. The participants used it as a way of confirming belonging to the land in which their ancestors had elected to settle. Games were serious, but not too serious (Berne 1964; Bourdieu 1984; Ortner 1996). They enabled participants to make a range of connections to historical figures, waves of migration, national and international sites, and to claim or ascribe cultural capital.

Participant histories and experiences parallel those of other migrant groups, like Japanese American women in Hawai'i (Olliver-Richardson 2002). Even though Pākehā were members of a dominant cultural group and Japanese Americans members of a minority, within their own communities, their similarities provided historical connections, and enabled both groups to share activities with other migrants with a greater depth of (often unspoken) understanding. In the next chapter I discuss how different common experiences and awareness of similar historical origins shaped practices; enabled the development of shared values; and the construction of 'heroes and renegades'.

## Chapter Six

### Experiences, Values and Practices

*The war affected me quite a lot in lots of ways.* Ruth G.

#### Introduction

In the previous chapter I discussed narrative as an active practice, through which participants' reiterated their belonging to Aotearoa New Zealand via ancestral, and personal knowledge and connections. In this chapter I discuss experiences participants had in common, the revelation of how shared values were acquired, and some social practices which enabled the construction of public and private heroes and renegades.

Experiences in common, some discussed in the previous chapter, included migration, relocation, and ancestral and personal mobility. Other factors providing common bonds included gendered social practices, and the impact of dramatic and/or traumatic international events. Shared values included pride in ancestral achievements, hard physical labour or were derived from Christian teachings.

The ethnographic material I discuss in this chapter highlights how experiences in common, parallel in time, or equivalent in outcome, enabled connections between individuals, and could foster engagement within collectives and larger communities. The participant responses also highlighted how common origins and experiences could generate shared values and aspirations. As I discussed in the previous chapter, these were sometimes revealed through cultural 'games.'

Common experiences were not related to specific geographic locations, i.e. 'unique localities' (Edwards 2000:248, as cited in Savage 2005:31). I focus on participant responses to war to show how global events could create experiences in common, although not shared directly. These experiences were relevant because they indicated other practices involved in, although not essential to, belonging. They enabled a comprehending of how one's own, and other people's, belonging developed and what practices were involved. Changes in participant responses over time possibly reflected a changing political habitus, a movement from right-wing to left-wing government policies, and strong feminist political leadership.

#### Common experiences

Experiences in common included similar ancestral origins, and a subsequent history of migration with its attendant tensions, as discussed in the previous chapter. The impact of large-scale global events, like war, created other experiences in common. War impacted heavily on participants, emotionally, economically and physically, often resulting in later bonds based on emotional understanding, personal experience and the need for adaptation to rapidly changing environments. Without "enacting wholly different...projects" (Ortner 1992:12), participants revealed their own agency through their ability to adapt and to engage in different, unexpected courses of action. Below I firstly discuss war-time experiences which could deepen emotional connections to others; secondly I indicate how these experiences could lead to the use of personal agency; thirdly, I discuss the sources of their shared values; and lastly the way shared values were involved in constructing heroes and renegades.

During war-time, British-based participants and their peers in Aotearoa New Zealand suffered personal losses, economic hardship and experienced major role adjustments (King 2003/2004; [www.historylearningsite.co.uk](http://www.historylearningsite.co.uk) 2004). Based in England, June, and Ruth J, experienced the direct physical impact of war. Their Aotearoa New Zealand peers were impacted by the nation's military involvement in

Europe and the Pacific (McGibbon and Goldstone 2000).<sup>90</sup> A child at the time, Ruth J remembered,

(w)e were in the firing line. Being in the Weald of Kent everything came over the top of us. And (was)...shot down over the top of us...so we were used to the Messerschmitts and things coming down around us...my father was in the Home Guard...we were used to seeing captured German pilots, or air crew...(o)ne day we were playing in the woods...we had one of the evacuees with us, and one of our neighbouring farmers was in the field over the back, ploughing. He had a bit of land...he could plough...so he was reprieved...we went down to say hello to him ...and...an aeroplane came up, and he decided to get rid of all the ammunition, so he was shooting at Mr Moynihan and us. (How did that feel? It must have been terrifying.) No. Children are funny things, aren't they? We did as we were told to if that happened. We ran back into the woods, and lay on the ground. And the thing I remember about that the most is that my sister, who was four at the time, lost her Wellington boot<sup>91</sup> and a pencil. What she wanted to do, screaming her eyes out, was to go back and get that Wellington boot and the pencil.

Even though I thought of the event as terrifying, Ruth rebutted my suggestion. This highlighted the importance of clarifying participant and researcher responses to avoid misinterpretation. Her narrative indicated that she and her siblings either adapted to the changed situation, or accepted matter-of-factly, the circumstances as they lived them. Life continued for them much as before. They still 'played' in the woods, talked with neighbours, and followed parental instructions. Ruth's sister's outrage at the loss of what could be viewed as trifles compared to the possibility of death or injury may have served to embed the event in Ruth's memory (Pillemer 1998), and pointed to a child's perspective of her world. Her references to the Home Guard, the Germans, planes, and other items provided useful historical information about adult and political practices during the war.

Slightly older than Ruth J when the war began, June S was an orphan in her mid-teens. A window-dresser, she was so angry when the city she worked in was bombed, window glass shattered and her careful displays destroyed, that she sought work directly related to the war.

I just felt so bitter against the Germans...I wanted to do something about it. I wasn't old enough to go into the forces. So I thought, 'Well, I'm going to go into munitions'...I went through to the Labour Exchange...and they got (me) a job in a munitions factory...by this time, my husband, I'd met him in Nuneaton...he was an airman in New Zealand, and he'd come to be stationed at the aerodrome near where I lived... he was shot down over Germany. I didn't see him for another two-and-a-half years.

Her husband became a prisoner-of-war, as had kin of some of the Aotearoa New Zealand-born participants. Across the world, in Aotearoa New Zealand, Ruth G's brothers enlisted. One became a prisoner-of-war. Ruth recalled her own and her mother's anxiety, just as others recalled the anxiety of having kin on the battlefields, and/or being taken prisoner-of-war. Her memories were kindled when she viewed this photograph (Fig. 27).

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<sup>90</sup> About 140,000 men and women were dispatched overseas to serve in fighting formations, 104,000 in 2NZEF, the rest in the British or New Zealand naval or air forces. In March 1944, there were just under 70,000 New Zealand personnel serving overseas. Fatal casualties during the conflict numbered 11,625. Post-war calculations indicated that New Zealand's ratio of killed per million of population (at 6684) was the highest in the Commonwealth (with Britain at 5123 and Australia, 3232) (McGibbon 2001).

<sup>91</sup> Waterproof rubber footwear.





Courtesy Athol Kirk / HAPrint 1996

**Fig 27: Farewell to 2<sup>nd</sup> 7 Armoured Vehicles Regiment, Wanganui, 1943.**

I remember the parades. I remember a battalion coming down past the place where we were living...I knew a lot of the boys that were in there from my school days. (Oh, that must've been hard seeing them go.) Yes. It was. It was. Then, of course, I had two brothers that went away to the war. One said before he left here, told his mother, "My army time will be very short, because I'll become a prisoner as soon as I can. And he was. But he had terrible treatment...he was a prisoner of war in Italy. Then he escaped...but before that, the authorities had sent word home to my mother to say that he wouldn't live. He's still alive today. (Why did they think he wouldn't live?) Oh, no food, cholera and all sorts...and my younger brother was wounded in the Middle East. He was sent home...they were sad years...my mum said she used to hate the telephone ringing in case it was word about another who died over there.

Ruth's narrative reflected the emotional hardship inflicted by family involvement in war as she recalled her mother's fears and her own worries. Her comment about 'sad years' described their responses, different to June's and Ruth's sister's rage but generated by the same political factors and the call to arms. Ruth G also highlighted the impact of politics upon herself, her family and their livelihood. When her husband was conscripted, Ruth was pregnant. Rightful concern about herself and her family's survival led Ruth to assert herself in a way that seemed unusual for a woman in the 1940s when male and female roles were clear, with men being publicly accorded dominance.

(The war) affected me quite a lot in lots of ways...we had a ten-acre farm at Aramoho, and my husband got called up...I had three children, and a fourth one was coming along...we were milking cows, and I thought, "I'll never be able to cope with a baby, and milk cows night and

morning, and so on...he applied for extension of time to stay at home until after my baby was born, and they wouldn't grant it...so I wrote to the Minister of Defence myself, and I asked for help. "Could I have someone come and be in the house with me until after my baby was born?" He said he would see what he could do. And the next thing I know, my husband came home.

These narratives provided information about the personal impact of political decisions of war on individuals and families. Despite participants being separated geographically, the similarity of their emotional experiences could enable them to relate to others. As I noted in Chapter Two, since "emotions shaped the landscapes of our mental and social lives" (Nussbaum 2001:1), emotional understanding of other people's experiences was an important element in facilitating and/or enhancing personal and collective bonds.

Participants narrated their own and other's anxiety, their responses to war, and the methods they adopted for survival during prolonged and traumatic separations. Ruth's and June's narratives indicated how personal agency assisted in overcoming distress or in resolving problems. Changes in habitus, arising from political encouragement aimed at persuading women to engage in 'masculine' factory work, probably opened the way for June to change her type and location of employment. Ruth's need to survive combined with the nurturing role expected of women suggested the reasons for her use of personal agency. She had a solution in mind, but to fulfill the family's needs, she had to contravene expectations that she would cope regardless. She went beyond accepted social practice to enable the family's safety while continuing to follow her expectations of fulfilling a nurturing role, embedded during childhood.

As I argued above, narratives demonstrated that, when making personal decisions, participants sometimes performed in ways which contravened social mores. Their responses to specific situations generated new and different behaviours, using personal agency to push the boundaries (Bourdieu 1982). External and political experiences, like war, which forced immense, sudden and often unforeseen changes, forced participants to move beyond 'the structuring structures' (ibid) to find new ways to survive. By narrating their stories, participants revealed similar responses to traumatic events, and recognising one another's experiences as familiar, may have deepened their understandings of self and others.

In revealing their own agency, participants validated Ortner's warning against assuming that women had "no autonomous point of view or intentionality" (Ortner 1996:12). Many other examples occurred, but space constraints preclude my detailing them here. Generally, narratives revealed that private behaviour did not always reflect public hegemonic expectations. Several participants recalled practices that dispelled myths that men were always the boss, and held the power when it came to making life altering decisions. Participants revealed that women and/or children were consulted, and heeded, when making private decisions about important issues. This was apparent particularly in decisions about relocation. The practices suggested more equality in personal relationships than has been acknowledged.<sup>92</sup> In Aotearoa New Zealand, "an understanding of the Māori orientation to the world provides significant insights into a world view that customarily did not perceive power relations between men and women in terms of gender" (Tomlins-Jahnke 1996:57). While this might not have influenced Pākehā behaviour, I do not reject the possibility that it has.

Together, the narratives supported Ortner's assertion that women could be autonomous agents. They also revealed the economic, political, social and cultural intertwining of women's and men's worlds, and suggested that "multiple forms of

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<sup>92</sup> Cf. Abu-Lughod (1993); Leacock (1986); Weiner (1976) for extended discussions on women, power and authority.



power and resistance" (Ortner 1996) existed in mid-20<sup>th</sup> century Aotearoa New Zealand society. Resistances and/or subversions were demonstrated in a variety of ways, including participants' determination to work, regardless of male partner's opinions; and male refusals to manage farm and family finances. By resisting their partner's perceptions of the norm, or by refusing to accept the status quo, participants and their partners demonstrated personal agency. Common experiences, shared resistances, and individual understandings of private practices provided bonds, even when not shared directly.

### **Shared values**

Just as participants conveyed their awareness of expected behaviour and revealed practices in common, they conveyed information about the attributes valued in Aotearoa New Zealand society. Particularly important attributes were those which pioneer ancestors needed for survival and success. They included physical strength and adaptability (Phillips 1987). These values were referred to directly and indirectly in narratives of everyday life, and in constructions of heroes and renegades. Most narratives indicated the origin of, and ongoing admiration for specific attributes, such as the Aotearoa New Zealander's respect for hard work, dedication to completing tasks, and manual labour (Daley 1992; Hopkins and Riley 1998; Phillips 1987). Jill's doctor "great-grandfather...was a jolly fine man. He'd walk miles and miles." I understood this being to visit patients on remote properties, signifying a devotion to duty and his profession, as well as physical stamina. Ruth's narrative provided extensive insights into this ethos. Her parents originated in Denmark. Her narrative reiterated the contemporary cultural values. She learned first-hand, through engagement and observation, the value attributed to hard physical labour. "My father was a great farmer...and my mother was a marvelous worker, worked hard all her life."

They conveyed their values to their daughter, revealed in her recollection of daily life, which also demonstrated a gendered division of labour. Nowadays, with the mechanization of the dairy, people might regard milking cows as a man's job. That might relate to gendered attitudes about men being machine operators, almost Ortner's nature versus culture argument (1974), referred to during my discussion about my research equipment. Ruth remembered,

I was the fourth child born, the first daughter and fourth child. So being the eldest girl, you know, the work was always there. Milking...I milked cows from the time I was seven...I liked it but...when you come from a big family, you don't have any – you don't think about things...the work is there and you do it, to the best of your ability...and you never thought about...I hear people say today, "Oh, I've had to work so hard, so hard." And I thought, "You don't know what hard work is. You have no idea"...there was no such thing as hard work, or, "I can't do it. I'm not going to do it." It was done. You had to do it. I was only eleven years old, and my mother, the only time I remember, being really ill at home, and I was kept home from school to keep house, for the rest of the children, and my father. And I could do it, probably not as well as what my mother did, probably I wasn't as economical...but it wasn't a problem. I could cook, and I could milk the cows, and clean the wood and coal range, and wash. There was no such a thing as washing machines in those days. And you never looked on it...it seemed to be your duty. That's how I felt about it. It was your duty to do it...we just did it. It had to be done, and it was done. And at night-time when the evening meal was over, and everybody was sitting round the table, then my father would say, "Haven't you girls got anything to do? You can darn the socks, if you haven't anything else to do." We were never allowed to sit idle, never, at any time.

Ruth cannot be idle even now. In response to a question about sitting idle she said, "No," with a firm shake of her head and a laugh. "Definitely not, Penny." She pulled up her current knitting project.

(Our mother) taught us absolutely everything we know. She was a jack-of-all-trades herself. In my story, we didn't have money. We had very little money. We all say we had no money, but we had a wonderful Christian home. We had parents who gave everything they had to their children. We had a little old sewing machine where you had to turn the handle. ...and I said there wouldn't be anybody in New Zealand that could make clothes out of flour bags like my mother did. She made curtains. She made tea towels. She made sheets. Because (we were) a big family, we'd buy 100 pounds of flour in a big linen bag...they were washed and bleached and sewn, and we slept in them. We dressed in them. We used them for tea towels, and there were no sort of cupboards in my early days at home, just shelves, and Mum used to make curtains out of these flour bags, and embroider, like, holly knots all across the bottom, and things like that...so we were taught absolutely everything that was basic in the house, to cook, to make our own clothes, to knit and to sew – all those things – and I've never regretted learning that type of thing...I've also passed that on to my own daughters. All...four...they're all dressmakers, or very clever with their hands, and very good cooks too...my husband taught the two boys how to do things around – you know, general little repair jobs, you know, make this, and do that. My husband himself, well, I say, my late husband, he never ever bought anything that he could make. Never ever bought a gate, or hinges, anything like that. He made them all. He had all the equipment and he made all his own. Yes, of course he said they were better than you could buy in the shops. I dare say they were too.

Her narrative revealed pride in not merely surviving, but managing well. Her mother making curtains for the many shelves highlighted the importance of tidiness and privacy. This was probably a deliberate practice since it enabled families to store, out of sight, material objects, particularly those used every day, or which were intimate, personal and/or profane, such as cleaning items, underwear and feminine necessities.<sup>93</sup> This contrasted with fine objects selected for public display, and through which social and cultural capital was sought and/or attributed. Ruth's awareness of the past, the family's Christian values, the values attributed to, and the acceptance of hard work, resonated in other narratives. English-born Kathy highlighted her acceptance of hard work engrained in her habitus when she recalled trainee army nurses being left in charge of wards of sixty patients "without backup...you didn't complain. You just got on with it."

Their comments demonstrated how and why the Protestant work ethic of Aotearoa New Zealand society might have developed. While it may be rooted in the Christian ethic espoused by early Aotearoa New Zealand society, derived from their Protestant ancestors (Nussbaum 2001) and their lands of origin, Ruth's narrative indicated that the need to work hard physically arose for several other reasons. These included there being no machines, nor money to buy them if they existed. People sustained themselves largely on what they and their neighbours grew. Money was limited. It was regarded as being better spent on necessities than on items people could produce themselves, or on frivolities, like the dress Joan G described her father purchasing. In Kathy's situation, complaining would have been pointless. She was a trainee; there was no-one to help her; the patients needed

<sup>93</sup> I have had discussions with women about the most 'appropriate' way to hang one's washing on the outdoor line. Most argued that underwear, described as 'small' items, should be hung on the inner wires, with large items on the outer wires to conceal them. Others refused to hang underwear outdoors for fear of it being seen, or stolen.

care; it was part of nursing practice; and she needed the income. These attitudes, and Ailsa's, noted earlier about always giving something back to the community, reflect the 'number eight wire', 'can do' attitude many Aotearoa New Zealanders still practice, reinforced in television broadcasts and other advertisements. Even those who do not adopt the practice still regard it as an ideal (Bell 1996), a 'distinctive versatility' (Phillips 1987:20).<sup>94</sup> Some suggested that it was unattainable, but reported subtle pressures to conform and perform; revealing a sense of being 'orchestrated' (Bourdieu 1982:72) even though they might not have consciously recognised it. The values were also reiterated through playing cultural games, discussed in the previous chapter in relation to belonging through ancestral associations, and incorporated into tales about heroes and renegades, which I discuss next.

## Heroes and renegades

Heroes and renegades feature globally in origin myths and legends, and in personal and national constructions of origins and development. Heroes embody the traits we admire, renegades those we despise, or profess to despise, but may secretly admire (Hos-McGrane 2000; Murtagh undated). They reflect our social and cultural habitus and values. They do the same in our personal origin stories. Just as in myths and legends, our family heroes vary from impoverished to wealthy, handsome to ugly, weak to strong. Their actions range from courageous to weak, compassionate to cold, generous to greedy. Depending on one's perspective, an individual may be a hero or a renegade, or may transform over time from renegade to hero, sometimes notorious, rather than glorious.<sup>95</sup> The similarities between mythical and real people arise as we publicly and privately affirm acceptable behaviours, condemn less desirable ones, and acknowledge change in social attitudes. This actively enables us to understand the preservation of, and changes in, social attitudes and customs. As with migration, some constructions are politically driven. Others are born of individual experience, often of oppression, or hardship and successful resolution.

Participants never referred to ancestors directly as heroes or renegades but their narratives reflected, directly or obliquely, upon them, while enabling increased comprehension of past and current values. The heroes and renegades in narratives differed in detail according to the origins, age and gender of participants, but reflected similar values. Sometimes, what the participants valued was valued by society internationally or nationally, and had been emphasized during public education. This hints at what Sontag describes as 'collective instruction' (2003:85).<sup>96</sup> Much of what the participants regarded as important, and therefore narrated, is most likely what they gained from their antecedents, through oral and/or written practice, through formal education, and more recently, via the mass media. In relaying information about earlier values, participants sometimes indicated the historical sources for shared values, many still evident today (Belich 2001; King 2003/2004; Schick and Dolan 1999). The narratives often contained an air of adventure, exhilaration or excitement, derived from ancestral, parental, or personal, willingness to travel such huge distances, geographically and emotionally.

<sup>94</sup> "New Zealanders are known for their ingenuity and inventiveness, an ability to fabricate almost anything from limited resources, from a piece of the legendary 'number 8 wire'. It links to culture and the 'can do' attitudes many people admire (Web Cards 2004:1).

<sup>95</sup> Examples are Australian folk hero, Ned Kelly, regarded as an outlaw by the authorities, revered as a hero by the poor and needy (Hiess Undated), and the legendary Robin Hood, of England and Sherwood Forest fame (The Robin Hood Pages 2004).

<sup>96</sup> Sontag argued. "Strictly speaking, there is no such thing as collective memory - part of the same family of spurious notions as collective guilt. But there is collective instruction...all memory is individual, unreproducible - it dies with each person. What is called collective memory is not a remembering but a stipulating: that *this* is important, and this is the story about how it happened" (2003:85-86).

What the participants might not have recognised was, that in recalling the past, and incorporating their own responses to events (at my request), they sometimes, unwittingly, created a picture of themselves as heroes and/or renegades. It could be argued that heroes, particularly, and renegades, sometimes, demonstrated subtle or overt forms of resistance and/or agency by overcoming the odds to succeed in a new land, or by responding in unforeseen ways to cultural expectations. Equally, it could be argued that assertive practices revealed personal agency, another aspect which, I suspect, is necessary for effective resistance.

Heroes were glorified beings. Renegades were sometimes vilified and often viewed as subversive. The early disclosures about heroes and the guarded, delayed or non-disclosure about renegades indicated the divide between positive and negative, and the probable impact of disclosure on relationships. People first disclosed information that could enhance their position, their self-esteem and personal well-being. Later, and even then, not always, they might reveal more adverse information. This seemed to be because people gained cultural capital through being associated with heroes. Acknowledging familial associations with renegades contained the risk of personal and familial damage. This explained participants' willingness to reveal connections to important historical and heroic figures early in their interviews. If participants disclosed information about renegades, they did so only when they trusted me. Developing our relationship to this point required time and/or frequent or regular contact. Some participants also revealed themselves as renegades, again usually later. One participant disclosed non-conformist renegade-type behaviour in her first interview, probably because her active decision to 'completely break the mould' had a major impact on her life.

Highlighting the positive and finding connections enabled people to establish bonds through common experiences. Sharing the renegade stories (privately) often cemented those bonds. This was because such stories often indicated individual strength in the face of adversity, i.e. Meyerhoff's (1980) argument that suffering needed to be acknowledged. The first stories which participants related were like those relayed in the 'heritage game' I noted in the previous chapter. The protagonists were clearly regarded as heroes, courageous physically or emotionally. They included British and international aristocrats, maritime explorers, professionals, and business people. Nationally-based heroes included the first ancestral settlers; skilled migrants, male and female; people who laboured physically; widows who supported their children in the absence of Government support;<sup>97</sup> and political agitators. They were regarded as 'pioneers', either because they were engaged on the 'frontiers' of danger and/or change. They braved fire on the battlefield, laboured to break in new land, or challenged public, social, cultural or religious mores and battled gendered behaviour. Such heroes were almost always kin or, if not kin, close family friends,<sup>98</sup> like Ailsa's aunt, whose achievements were revealed when Ailsa described her family's church connections. They revealed admirable traits – long-term commitment to an organisation, dedicated involvement, a stand against oppression, and winning a battle, leading to national and international 'firsts'.

My aunt became the first woman elder of the Presbyterian Church in New Zealand in 1951. She was ordained by Professor Geering.<sup>99</sup> When she went home to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland she was the first woman to speak. After that, there was a secret ballot and

<sup>97</sup> Prior to the passage of the Domestic Purposes Benefit in 1973, widows and sole mothers who worked were provided financial assistance by the Government to supplement their wages and support their families. With the passage of the DPB, the Government set the benefit level sufficiently high that sole mothers were able to stay home to care for their children without engaging in paid employment (Knutson 1998).

<sup>98</sup> Aotearoa New Zealand's public heroes were often male and included mountaineers, such as Sir Edmund Hillary, and All Black rugby team members. This style of hero did not feature in participant narratives.

<sup>99</sup> New Zealand's best known and most controversial commentator on theological issues (<http://www.bookcouncil.org.nz/writers/geeringlloyd.html>).

they then allowed women elders into the Presbyterian Church in Scotland. It took a Scottish woman to come and be invited and start the girls' side of Wellington Technical College. ***We were pioneers in our family.*** (My emphasis).

Her statement, "(w)e were pioneers in our family", reflected the Pākehā habitus where pride in pioneer ancestors and their achievements was frequently recalled, and, as noted above, reiterated in national advertising and public discourse. Pamela's story of her grandfather's actions during World War I typified heroic behaviour, and included romantic elements. She related it with a gentle smile.

He was a Yorkshire man. And...a character and...lovely. He must've had a hard time, looking back at it. (Why?) Ooh! He was in the trenches during the First World War and it was horrible...he had a...it's lovely little story. He had a mate who was killed in No-Man's Land, and grandfather crawled out into No-Man's Land to bring back his mate's body, and dragged him back so that he could...I gather the bodies that were left in No-Man's Land that weren't...just stayed there...when he returned to New Zealand, he brought back his mate's personal effects to give to his fiancé who was, of course, my grandmother. He married her about three months later.

In describing her grandfather and the story as 'lovely', Pamela implied respect for his actions. He had honoured his mate by enabling his burial, rescuing his possessions, and delivering them personally. Aside from romance and courage, Grandfather's story combined suffering and honour. Unlike Meyerhoff's (1980) participants, Pamela acknowledged both. She could only have known about the events through being told. She loved her grandfather, recalling him as 'a sweetie'. The source of her stories was her grandmother.

I actually lived with my grandmother for a fair bit of my Form II year...I must even have done it for part of my Form Three year...it was just Gran'ma and I...it was my job to keep Gran'ma company...it meant that she and I had wee chats, were able to talk about some of the things from the past, and what she could remember, because she'd arrived in New Zealand as a very small child, just after the turn of the century.

Pamela's narrative reveals how intergenerational transmission of knowledge assisted in the generation of her belonging. Her tale reiterated the romantic notions venerated in the British and European fairytales many Aotearoa New Zealand children heard or read in the 1950s and 1960s.<sup>100</sup> In these stories, good overcame evil. The handsome prince won the hand of the impoverished princess or beautiful young woman, and couples 'lived happily ever after'. Similar events are related in the romance novels many women read as a pleasurable escape from reality.

Pamela's story reflected the impact of war on Pākehā women, many of whom still had close kin living in Britain and Europe. Even though it occurred in a different time and place to June's experiences – she met her Aotearoa New Zealand airman husband in World War II England – Pamela's narrative indicated how intergenerational understandings developed. By sharing the story of loss, honour, survival and a happy ending with her granddaughter, Pamela's grandmother emphasised particular values. In her turn, Pamela relayed it to her own daughters, continuing to emphasise the same values. In both Pamela's and June's narratives, meetings between women and men resulted in marriage and relocation for one of the partners, one male, one female. A sense of the fairytale 'living happily ever after' was conveyed to the listeners through facial expressions and tone of voice. Emotional warmth was expressed vocally and with smiles. Other values, like constancy, tolerance and dedication were acknowledged through references to the couples spending their lives together and supporting each other through life's

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<sup>100</sup> The Brothers Grimm and Hans Christian Andersen among others.



associated hardships and rewards.

As I noted, revelations about renegades and the darker side of life occurred only after trust and intimacy developed. Often, these revelations occurred at the end of interviews, sometimes when the recorder had been switched off. In my experience this is not uncommon. People tended to relax at the end of the formal process, and intensified the conversation, perhaps because they felt safer when not being taped. Initially, participants hinted at such stories, but rarely provided detail voluntarily. When they eventually did, they were probably unaware that, in describing such behaviours, of others as well as of themselves, they located themselves historically, and, sometimes, implicated themselves as heroes and/or renegades. Their practices indicated how and why private practices can alter public practice.

The most public renegades seemed to be men, sent to the colonies to avoid family shame, or who had frittered family fortunes in the 'home' land. Stories of women who 'shamed' the family, often through pregnancy outside wedlock, were less likely to be told. That they were revealed suggested a change in social habitus. This may have arisen from a combination of factors. These included increased historical social knowledge, perhaps a result of increased research into Aotearoa New Zealand's recent past (Fraser and Pickles 2002; Hastings 2002; Montgomerie 2001), which expanded collective knowledge of past attitudes. A change in research and education emphasis, corresponding with a rise in feminist scholarship, might also be a contributing factor. This scholarship has raised awareness of female vulnerability, and historic social attitudes. One result could be an increased understanding of and sympathy for, non-conforming women. More frequent public discussion of women's struggles might also have influenced the revelations.

At the end of an interview after I had switched the camera off, Pamela and I began chatting about family history. She noted that "most of us have a skeleton or two in the family closet." This was unlike viewing images in most family albums which Chalfen describes as being about 'conspicuous success' (1987). We chuckled, each reflecting on family stories of the not-so-good, or downright foolish. Later, with fascination and some delight, we recalled other family and community stories. They were the hushed stories of blackmail, theatre ghosts, sexual infidelity and/or abuse, pre-marital pregnancy, suicide, and bigamy. We discussed my Victorian-born auntie, who supposedly had an affair with a married man, and the family's uncertainty about whether it was Auntie A or Auntie B. Pamela recalled a family puzzle about a twice-married relative, who bore all her children between marriages. We discussed stories about the early 20<sup>th</sup> century local philanthropist who was allegedly blackmailed by his supposed male lover (Charteris 2000); spendthrift relatives and gamblers; and pregnant brides, unhappy in their wedding photos, bouquets over the bulge.

The stories were myriad but skeletal. Some narratives provided more extensive evidence of social practices which exhibited partial refusal to conform to public mores and general solutions. Diane recalled 1950s pre-nuptial practices where one engaged in 'heavy petting' but usually avoided sexual intercourse for fear of pregnancy outside wedlock, with the subsequent personal shame and family rage. Women who became pregnant were 'sent away',<sup>101</sup> or marched up the aisle to marry the baby's father.

(T)here was one of my big group of girlfriends - there would've been twenty to twenty-five of us - who actually got into trouble and had a baby without getting married, and out of that group there would possibly have been four or five who had to get married. And you got married in those days, dear. You didn't muck around. You went home and you told mother. You risked a storm and then the wedding was on. You still

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<sup>101</sup> Cf. Auckland Medical Aid Trust (2005) for historical background.

marched up the aisle in a white frock.

Diane's narrative, with its references to 'trouble', 'had to get married', and 'risking the storm', reflected the social stigmas pregnancy outside a marriage relationship and infant illegitimacy. Diane also indicated what actions were taken to reduce the loss in social capital i.e. female confession, followed by marriage 'in white'. This signified purity and was worn in an effort to prevent suggestions of improper behaviour, lack of personal restraint, and an undesirable outcome. In many other narratives, socially unacceptable behaviours were hinted at, but were not detailed. The most likely reasons were that the actions of those involved had caused hurt, directly to individuals because of family and community responses, and shamed kin and/or friends. Sometimes, as Pamela noted, the actions of those who contravened social mores could split families, with members siding for or against the renegade. When participants described behaviours which contravened social mores, it appeared to be because the results had been life-altering, and/or were so deeply hurtful that they were etched on personal being. I discuss an episode like this in relation to not belonging in Chapter Seven.

Earlier generations than Diane and Pamela still refused to speak the unspeakable. Discussions about the body, especially of a sexual or gynecological nature, were frowned upon, ignored or avoided. Participant silences spoke volumes, not only about social mores and enculturation. They also indicated quiet engagement in some practices with the necessary information imparted confidentially and privately. As I noted above, revealing information that could result in negative attitudes to oneself or one's ancestors, required a degree of trust and intimacy, usually only acquired through time. The following excerpt incorporated knowledge, silences and tacit acknowledgements about contraception and its use, despite the word never being spoken.<sup>102</sup>

(You went from there, with just one child, or did you have more children by then? When you left...?) I had the three of them. (All at...?) Yes. And the doctor was so worried about me having them so quickly, he decided he'd better tell me about, ah...(She looked at me and grinned, shyly. I raised my eyebrows, chuckled, asked, "Did he?" then nodded.) Yes. (That was quite unusual, was it?) I don't know. He was a nice man. But he felt that three in three years was a little bit quick so...but not something to say. I'm on the TV, aren't I?

By indicating her knowledge of contraception, an unacknowledged and unspoken practice in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century<sup>103</sup>, and her acceptance of the doctor's suggestion, again tacitly, the participant revealed personal agency and resistance to the contemporary mores. In doing so, she showed herself and the doctor as renegades, actively resisting contemporary mores. Her refusal to speak the words aloud and be recorded, instead conveying the information in glances, combined her past and current habitus. This 'silent refusal' signalled a form of agency, clearly an act of commission rather than omission (Visweswaran 1994: 48). It was acceptable for women of her generation to discuss contraception with a married woman with children in private. Recording our conversation would have meant she had publicly acknowledged her involvement in an unspoken method. Therefore she could not speak the words.

Contraception is now promoted publicly, but the participant continued her past practice by refusing public disclosure. Today, she and her doctor might be regarded as heroes. Their reasons for transgressing social mores were 'proper' because they were in the best interests of, on the doctor's part, his patient; and, on the participant's part, herself and her family. By refusing to speak the 'unspeakable', the participant retained her dignity, and continued an embedded practice. This

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<sup>102</sup> I have removed name and place references in deference to the participant's reticence.

<sup>103</sup> Cf. Tolerton (1992).

suggested that the renegades of one generation could transform into heroes for later generations, and indicated how, as habitus alters, we might recognise and celebrate the courage of our predecessors.

Family tragedies, like accidental shootings, drownings, and deliberate actions, like embezzlement or murder, were often buried, but lived on in observable practices and responses. Parr (1995) noted a similar reticence in discussing personal tragedies, intolerance, and suffering. Indicating a photograph (Fig 28) on her sideboard, Ruth G said,



**Fig 28: Ruth's grandson's photo (right).**

"I always keep this little guy there because he was drowned at 23 months old...he's one of my grandsons. I still count him." This comment, the constant presence of the toddler's photograph, Margaret McC's photographs of family graves (Fig 6), and Diane's disclosure of the depths of her sadness after being widowed, suggested that when people died they did not stop belonging. Their belonging was integrated into the life of those who remained, and the memories of those who loved them. These practices and participant descriptions supported Ingold's arguments that "speech is...the embodiment of *feeling*" (2000:146), and that "speaking is...a way of living" (ibid). Like birth, "(a)ctual events of...death...are merely moments in the progenerative process, points of transition in the circulation of life...particular people come and go but the life process continues" (ibid). Memories of specific individuals were incorporated into participant practices, reiterated in material objects, speech and the physical, visual and oral paths participants created to access the objects and the memories.

Participant practices also indicated fears that the predisposition towards bad behaviour could be inherited, suggesting an underlying belief in genetic transmission and highlighting the embedded nature of the genealogical approach. One mother privately and frequently urged her businessman son "not to embezzle client funds like your great-grandfather did". Not only was theft a forbidden, punishable practice but was worse when the thief held a position of trust. The mother added a threat,



recalling, "(h)e went to prison." This story was rarely mentioned outside the family, suggesting fears that wider disclosure could damage the family's reputation; or worse, tarnish the professional's reputation and ruin his business. Telling the story when other family members were present reiterated the importance of honesty and integrity to younger people.

Ruth G revealed modern triggers for exploring family pasts, again referring to events which were infrequently mentioned and highlighting the impact of the electronic media on habitus.

I...was listening to the radio, no I think it was on the television...and they were looking for the graves of stillborn babies. Well, we had one in our family, and I'm going to find out where that stillborn baby is buried...My younger sister said, "Who told you that there was a stillborn baby?" I said, "My mother told us. It was between the two – the eldest brother and the next brother." She said, "Well we don't know anything about it." I said, "Well, you couldn't have been listening or Mum didn't tell you"...but I've always known that.

Crinall (1998) observed similar dissonances in knowledge surrounding family tragedy. Just as telling 'happy' stories reiterated positive values, telling 'dark' stories reiterated social mores, also establishing the importance of positive values. By providing a contrast, such stories also revealed the potential for disaster if one contravened cultural codes. They were important because they enabled increased social and personal understanding, but did not necessarily lead to a rise in social or cultural capital, and could even result in their reduction. Personal redemption might assist in returning capital to its original level, but was unlikely to raise it further. Even then, lapses were likely to be glossed over, since the narrator would wish to present themselves or their ancestors as, 'worthy'. A narrator might increase personal cultural capital by demonstrating compassion, often generated through education, religion or public programmes.

Pamela and I agreed that sharing such stories, enabled us to better understand individuals, families, and the change between historical and current mores. She suggested that our refusal to speak of tragedies highlighted "our attitude of not speaking ill of the dead." In recognising this practice, it was possible to understand why we do not speak loudly about the 'secrets'. 'Raking up the past', speaking of tragedies, could reiterate hurt, shame or embarrassment, especially if the events occurred within living memory. It also suggested unspoken fears of contamination. If heroic ancestral qualities could 'rub off', so perhaps might less desirable traits.

These silences and attitudes accorded with the Pākehā values, admiration for courage, hard work, honesty, integrity, and above all, 'getting on with life', regardless of hardship. Even with heightened public and political awareness, topics such as incest, sexual abuse and domestic violence, were rarely discussed, except indirectly or generally. Perhaps this was because such discussions could rouse bad memories and upset those involved. It might also have been regarded as an invasion of emotional privacy. In addition, most people seemed to prefer to move on once their problems had been resolved. There was also the difficulty of predicting reactions. It was preferable to not disclose negative information and avoid judgment and/or a reduction in cultural capital. Worse, negative reception could reduce one's belonging. Non-disclosure provided some safety, kept belonging intact, and could avoid unpredictable damage to intangibles like reputation.

Participants sometimes told stories about themselves which demonstrated personal growth through contravening social mores. Some identified themselves directly as renegades. Remembering the purchase of her first art work, a painting of a green door, Yvonne said,

(Art was) not something...we had in our house. (We) didn't have pictures on (the) walls. Family photos, yes...studio photos...I (w)ent

home one night after an opening and said to Mum, "Guess what I've done." She said, "What?" I said, "I've bought a picture." (Shakes her head). Yeah...I just completely broke the mould...you didn't do that. My mother was a dressmaker and used to do wonderful sewing for all these lovely people that attended the art gallery and openings and bought art. But...(w)e didn't...I always had nice long skirts and nice blouses, all appropriate to wear to those functions. (She) would send me off...(but) never attend.

Her recollection, including a description of the painting, which she still has, indicated the enormity of her action, and how far removed from family habitus her actions were. Her mother's indirect support was evidenced in preparation of 'appropriate' clothing.

Ruth G told three stories about herself, in which she asserted herself in the face of authority, twice by letter and once face-to-face. She twice wrote to Ministers of the Crown seeking help for the family. I discussed one instance earlier with reference to war. The third instance differed because the situation involved Ruth in face-to-face assertion. We had been discussing the garden. She praised her husband as

a wonderful gardener. We never bought a thing in the vegetable line when we came here. Onions and potatoes and everything he grew. (You've got some pretty nice flowers out there.) Yes, well, we're redoing out there because we've been flooded because of next door...(w)e've been under water every time it rains...(w)e've had water right up to the door here.

Ruth pointed to the top of the back steps, and indicated that the water had risen to her knees. She then related some dealings with local bureaucracy, and how she flouted the conventions to correct any misconceptions they might have about her. She was still annoyed, as her comments indicated.

The stupid man from the council – I hope he sees this – he said, "Your trees have got roots." I said, "Well, you're the second person that's told me, and I'm amazed. I didn't know trees had roots. The blockage is not here. It's over the road." So Sunday morning they were out there...unblocking it. He came back on Tuesday, and said to me, "You threw a bag of frozen corn in the creek, and it went in, and blocked the top of the..." I said, "I've never wasted a scrap of food in my life and I'm not going to start now." And he said, "We won't charge you this time but we will next." And I said, "Have a go." The cheek of him. (Goodness gracious me!) I just said to him, "Did you find your way in to my doorstep?" He said, "Yes." "Well," I said, "find it out. You just find your way out. Because," I said, "I pay your wages." So I got a bit aggressive when I got a bit older, Penny.

In this account, Ruth defended her husband, and presented him as a hero, a hard worker and a good provider despite his injuries. By referring to the hard work involved in growing produce, and her husband's success, at the beginning of the story, Ruth set the scene. She indicated the family's values, and the effort expended to feed them well. This provided the background to understanding why she was so indignant at the council officer's accusations.

She hesitantly presented herself as a renegade, conflicting with her gendered expectations and embedded habitus. While she gained social and cultural capital for her resourcefulness in her earlier stories, in the third story, fearful of loss, she apologised for her behaviour. Saying, "I got a bit aggressive when I got a bit older," Ruth acknowledged that her defiance contravened her embedded understanding of social behaviour. Contravening mores was not desirable, but was more desirable than allowing anyone to suggest she was a bad citizen, particularly given the values she reiterated at the beginning. In speaking up for herself, Ruth



vetoed suggestions that she would behave contrary to the way she was raised, and had practiced throughout her life. Her behaviour could also provide a model for other, less assertive people, demonstrating how assertiveness could be effective when falsely accused.

In recounting their own stories, participants often enabled their audiences to recognise themselves, strengthened connections through engagement, and knowledge. These practices developed and deepened collective and individual bonds. After sharing stories, my own sense of belonging, was enhanced. While positive disclosure could enable connections, increase social and cultural capital, and enhance belonging, negative disclosures could result in the opposite. Risks included being judged negatively, rejection, reduction in cultural capital, hurt to others, business failure and/or reduced belonging.

When the negative disclosures were received positively, or listeners recognised personal connections, those involved usually gained a sense of connecting more deeply with individuals and the community. Some participants revealed themselves as agents as they related their experiences of contravening social mores. Their narratives revealed personal courage in contravening mores, sometimes supported by kin or professionals, out of concern for their well-being. Non-disclosure was a protective act, particularly when people could not predict reactions, nor count on understanding. Just as positive disclosures could enable continued belonging, so could non-disclosure, providing nobody discovered and/or disclosed one's personal 'skeletons'.

## **Conclusion**

Participant practices revealed that belonging could be enhanced by experiences in common, shared temporally or not, and geographically or otherwise. Shared values, like hard work, pioneering, and survival, derived from experience, education and religious engagement deepened bonds, further enhancing belonging. Participants also expanded belonging through relating narratives about family heroes and renegades. Claiming positive associations occurred early in people's relationships, while revealing negative or hidden stories cemented relationships. Belonging was increasingly revealed as layered, ancestrally, geographically and culturally. In the next chapter, as I examine participants' discussions about, and responses to, location/place, I discuss how links to place extended beyond the local, with belonging further enabled through physical and relational kin connections.

## Chapter Seven

### Places and spaces

*Then I thought, "This is where I live. This is where I want to be, where I will bring (my children) up". So it felt like home. Joan B*

#### Introduction

Where we belong seems to be as important as to whom we belong. Whether our kin and the locations we 'belong' to are near or far, grouped or scattered, place features in belonging. As I noted in Chapter Two, scholars understand place in a variety of ways, physical and metaphysical, emotional and spiritual. In this chapter, I discuss how the participants constructed meaningful places, through practice, narrative, inscription and re/creation. I also discuss how their responses to place differed, according to their experiences, and the importance they attributed to past and present place. I consider how the attitudes of 'born and bred' residents and incomers can differ, and examine how individual responses can impact on belonging. This speaks partly of elective belonging (Savage et al. 2005), but is enriched by other factors, which I include in discussion. Negative experiences and negative emotions about places and/or people could lead to feelings of isolation or a sense of not belonging. I discuss some negative aspects in this chapter, and others in Chapter Eleven.

Cohen (1982) asserted that belonging entailed more than being born in a place. It required inheriting or acquiring the culture, traditions and values of a place, performing valued skills and understanding "its idioms and idiosyncrasies" (ibid:21). Kohn (2002) argued that constructing belonging in a place (and community) was active, performative and embodied. It was influenced by factors such as kin connections, longevity of residence, friendships, community commitment, employment and daily routines. She and Cohen both researched relationships to place in geographically-contained communities where incomers deferred to locals. Savage et al. (2005) conducted extensive research in one British city, and contended that there, at least, incomers did "not defer to locals as being those with any kind of moral claim on place...their way of framing the distinction between locals and incomers was highly congenial to incomers" with local culture being viewed as 'narrow' (ibid:37).

#### Place and space

Belonging can be revealed through engagement with and connections to people, places, and cultural knowledge (Cohen 1982). Following Ingold (2000), Kohn (2002) and Tuan (1974), I argue that belonging also develops through and is revealed by activities in, and engagement with, place. Savage et al. (2005) elaborated an "idea of 'elective belonging', which articulated senses of spatial attachment, social position, and forms of connectivity to other places. They argued that 'elective' belonging depended on "people's relational sense of place, their ability to relate to their area of residence against other possible areas...so that the meaning of place is...judged in terms of its relational meanings" (ibid:29). They argued that, for four sites in Manchester, England, distinguishing "between locals and incomers (was) only one...way of organizing (people)" (ibid:31).

While I explored how participants claimed spaces and created places for themselves in the context of 'the world around here' (Geertz 1973), I also investigated how the participants conceived of their worlds, where they were, and what they included. Although it might seem obvious, physical presence was a defining factor, while tangible personal experience of places was important.

## Past and present place

Early migrant settlers were often deeply attached to their lands of origins, as noted in the introduction. Many referred to the British Isles or Europe as 'home' but, by the time of this research, most Pākehā described Aotearoa New Zealand as 'home'. Some immigrants felt isolated by birth and culture, with the occasional participant referring to England or Scotland as home. This occurred mostly when they were born in the British Isles. Some recorded active decisions to belong, like Ailsa's mother, and June, described in the previous chapter.

When living relatives regarded 'home' as being elsewhere, belonging could diminish or erode. Two participants raised in Aotearoa New Zealand, Whanganui-born Joan B and English-born Joan G, recalled feelings of isolation and/or alienation. In a land where most people 'seem the same', with similar cultural and ancestral origins, these recollections were unexpected. The participants described their sense of not belonging as rousing feelings of impermanency, despair and/or loneliness. Joan G continued to 'feel' English after living over 75 years in Aotearoa New Zealand, maybe because she and her husband were only children, with none of their own. They had

no-one in New Zealand at all. (Do you still have people in England?)

Yes, I still have cousins I stay in touch with in England. A friend came and stayed with me a few years ago. I played with her as a small child.

We hit it off just like that.

She placed the forefinger and third finger of her right hand close together. "Her mum and my mum were friends all their lives. We'd had the same upbringing, I suppose. We thought more the same than people here. We know each other very well." She added,

Of course, neither of us are New Zealanders. I was born in England, and Alec in Scotland. We've both lived here all our lives. Both of us grew up in isolated places so 'home' was always talked of as 'home',<sup>104</sup> and Mum and Dad would always talk of 'aar Betty', 'aar Tom', 'aar Bill'.<sup>105</sup> I was quite little and would ask where they were if they were 'our Betty' or 'Tom' or 'Bill'. So we were brought up a bit alienated. Mum and Dad had English friends. When new people arrived, my mother would always ask, "Are they colonials?" (What did she mean?) Haven't you heard that term? (No.) She meant, "Were they born in New Zealand?" We used to get it a lot when we were children because there was lots of immigration then. Our parents (and their friends) used to compare notes and ask each other if they had heard from 'home'. They would go on the bus, mostly the women, and exchange notes.

These reflections indicated that kin had a major role in enabling or disabling one's sense of belonging. A childhood where meaningful adults regarded a distant land as 'home' impacted strongly on Joan G. She seemed to have absorbed and understood the 'fabric' of her English culture more strongly than the culture of the colony. This, being born in England, her mother's life-long friendship, and community habits - exchanging notes on the bus, speaking 'Yorkshire dialect', - enabled Joan to connect emotionally and culturally with her mother's friend's daughter. Despite extensive community involvement in Wanganui,<sup>106</sup> Joan G continued to feel slightly alienated, never quite sure where she belonged. She said, "I don't really know where I belong. Oh, I know that I really do, because I have spent my life here."

She retained links to 'home' through letters to and from, and visits from cousins and friends, 'connecting' to English-based kin more strongly than to most

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<sup>104</sup> Yorkshire, England.

<sup>105</sup> aar – our (The New Geordie Dictionary 1998).

<sup>106</sup> Joan belonged to four community organisations, was president of one, and had been a committee member for several.

other Aotearoa New Zealand residents. Her most constant emotional attachments appeared to be to kin, suggesting that, for incomers, kin remained important in belonging. This was similar to Māori who identify with others through tribal affiliation. Joan G's comment about the friend who visited and with whom she "hit it off just like that" supported Ingold's assertion that "(c)ommon involvement in fields of nurture, rather than any principle of shared descent, creates likeness" (2000:148). Joan and her friend probably experienced similar nurture, due to their parents originating in the same area and culture. Although Joan was raised at a geographical distance, her parents and many of the people around them shared common cultural backgrounds, and the migrant experience. Even so, Joan emphasized the importance to her of kin connections, suggesting that, in practice, there may be truth in the adage, "blood is thicker than water". Again, it is probably not a biology which creates the bonds, but the shared history and cultural mores that kin have in common. In this way, perhaps, nurture enabled and thickened Joan's bonds and her sense of belonging to her English kin and friends.

Joan B recalled her sense of isolation and a later positive decision to belong. For her grandparents England was 'home'.

(a)nd even when the big ships that came in and used to anchor on the other side of the bar, they were 'home' boats...so 'home' was really over there<sup>107</sup>...(t)his feeling of isolation I had at least up to...I think, I had it seriously in my early twenties, so seriously that I felt very, very isolated. I didn't know where to go. I didn't know how I belonged. I suffered this very bad feeling of isolation for about ten years – virtually until I had my children. Then I thought, ***"This is where I live. This is where I want to be, where I will bring them up. So it felt like home."*** (My emphasis).

Joan B turned an emotional corner when her children were born. Her decision, that "this is where I live. This is where I want to be, where I will bring them up", was active, emphasising Nussbaum's contention that "(e)motions direct us to an important component of our well-being and register the way things are with that important component" (2001:135). She described this as a form of "value-acknowledging" which can provide, "in combination with...situational perceptions and beliefs", the "motivations to act" (ibid). Perhaps because "love prompts desires to protect" (ibid), Joan was able to choose to belong. Emotional agency enabled her to place herself decisively in 'the world around here' (Geertz 1996) and "(s)o it felt like home". Joan emphasised that her choice made Whanganui 'her' place. She elected to belong (Savage et al. 2005), and, by raising her children and creating a home, she made a commitment and links to the community. Simultaneously, she made the community home for her children, and enabled their belonging. Other women recalled similar decisions, again active choices, made before, or during the trip to Aotearoa New Zealand.

In contrast, Ailsa had a strongly integrated sense of belonging to Scotland and Aotearoa New Zealand. Discourse and family behaviour enabled her belonging through creation of threads to and from the past to present. Although her parents regarded Scotland as 'home', in a similar way to Joan B's grandparents, Ailsa was much more settled. Like Joan, she knew the wharf, the boats and their movements, intimately. "Our bedroom was glass the full width of the house...we were in bunks, and we always had a competition looking out at the sea, right down to Kapiti Island...we could see the coastal ships coming."

Her narrative suggested that where concepts of 'home' were firmly interwoven into concepts of 'being here', what I describe as 'dual' belonging could develop. This seemed different to that often described by transnational migrants (Baldassar 1997; Jansen 1990; Meyerhoff 1980). The difference between 'dual belonging' and the yearning described by transnational migrants was that 'dual'

<sup>107</sup> England.



belonging lacked heartache, instead implying ease in, and attachment to, two cultures and two locations. This might have reflected cultural and/or environmental similarities, and/or acceptance of the new. Unlike transnational migrants, people with dual belonging did not appear to actively yearn for wherever they were not. Dual belonging had similarities to elective belonging (Savage et al. 2005) because belonging was “not to a fixed community, with the implication of closed boundaries, but (was) more fluid” (ibid:29). It was also unlike elective belonging to a degree, because, while Ailsa’s biography explained her residential location, it also indicated embedded belonging to two different cultures and distant geographical locations.

She made frequent references to Scotland as ‘home’, commenting that she was strongly influenced “by my parents and my brother-in-law.”<sup>108</sup> She also noted, “I’m Kiwi born and bred”. Her sense of being Scots was developed in her childhood, through the presence of material objects, strong parental accents, and language. She noted, “We always had a jammy pie when we came home from school...that used to be blackcurrant jam straight onto bread. You never had bread, butter, and jam.” Her feelings for Scotland had increased during “four visits home”, and were maintained in ongoing actions. These included language, material objects treasured and displayed, and attendance at cultural events. One afternoon when I visited Ailsa, she showed me a newspaper article. It featured a young woman who had won an award for writing about her family’s treasures (Lawrence 2004:8).

I thought, “That’s me,” when I saw her displaying the family treasures – Delft – from Holland. I have in my mother’s Scottish chest so many treasures from Scotland, that I thought, “That’s it, belonging – to the Scottish.” I’m the first generation Scots, and I’ve got all my mother’s treasures. I’ve got a little brass jelly pan Gran used to make a wee<sup>109</sup> boiling of jam, and Robbie Burns’<sup>110</sup> book with a Scottish cover. I’m a member of the Robbie Burns’ Club. (She emphasised the ‘r’, rolling it with a Scots burr). We meet every two months on Sunday afternoon. We have dancing, and someone plays the bagpipes and, maybe, (gives) a précis of a Scottish book. I think I’ve been home to Scotland four times, and I worked over there, so I have a sense of belonging to Scotland. Māori people and Island people have a sense of their taonga.<sup>111</sup> For the rest-home on Sunday I was on call. I said to the girl, “I’ll take my cell-phone and I’m going to the Robbie Burns’ Club”. She asked me what (that) was. I said, “You go to your marae.”<sup>112</sup> I’m going to mine.” Why do I have a sense of belonging? It’s our heritage. I suppose its things too.

Her comments indicated a relational understanding of Māori concepts, developed through engagement with Māori, and an ability to compare them through emotions experienced through attending the Robbie Burns’ Club. For Māori, the marae provides ‘a place to stand’. It is their tūrangawaewae.<sup>113</sup> For Ailsa, the Robbie Burns’ Club provided a similar, inclusive, supporting structure, with direct, embodied and performative involvement through dancing, listening to Scots music, reading Scots writing and poetry, and eating Scots food like shortbread<sup>114</sup> and haggis.<sup>115</sup>

<sup>108</sup> From Scotland.

<sup>109</sup> Little, small – a Scots term, frequently used in Aotearoa New Zealand speech, especially among people of Scots descent.

<sup>110</sup> Scotland’s national bard (Robert Burns Country n.d.).

<sup>111</sup> Property, valuables (Reed & Brougham 1978:229), treasured or precious possessions of sentimental but not necessarily of high economic value (Gilbert 2005: personal communication).

<sup>112</sup> Māori enclosed ground used as meeting place (Reed & Brougham: 197).

<sup>113</sup> Tūranga -‘foundation’, the ground; ((Reed & Brougham 1978:240); waewae –feet (ibid:243); hence tūrangawaewae, a place to stand, meaning specifically, a place where one has an inherited and undeniable right to be.

<sup>114</sup> A crisp, sweet, buttery biscuit.

<sup>115</sup> A savoury pudding made using offal.



Ailsa then handed me several small objects, which were on the table when I arrived (Fig. 29).



**Fig 29: Ornamental crosses and trinket box.**

“The crosses are from the Iona community. It’s similar to Quaker Acres.<sup>116</sup> It’s on an island off the coast where people go with the Church of Scotland for retreats.” She picked up the china box, saying, “I wanted to show you this because my mother looked very similar to the Queen Mother. She was married the same year. It was bought in Scotland. In her and mum’s wedding photos they have the same headgear.” Her action in producing the material objects, regular attendance at the Robbie Burns Club, use of Scots idiom, and her narrative, demonstrated the depth of her knowledge of her parental heritage. Combined with her pride in family achievements, these processes revealed her belonging. It was engendered through common and shared histories, combined with knowledge and practice of cultural codes from two different lands.

Ailsa also revealed belonging through strong connections to, and knowledge about, places in both countries, as I discuss next.

When I went ‘home’ a few weeks ago to Scotland, I visited the school again that (my mother) taught at. There’re photos in the Kirkintilloch Library, and we’re going send more photos ‘home’ that we’ve got in her cabin trunk of early 1900s. I had been ‘home’ in 1969 when I went to the World Congress of Nurses...(t)hat visit affected me more because I met a lovely lady called Tilly (who) told me all about my mother and father getting engaged.

Ailsa’s emotional attachment to Scotland was emphasised through references to ‘home’. It had been heightened by learning more in a particular Scots location about her parents’ meeting. As Pamela did in England, Ailsa was able to visit and ‘feel’ locations where her parents and grandparents had lived and worked. Meeting Tilly and hearing family stories in the location where they occurred assisted

<sup>116</sup> A Quaker residential community in Whanganui.

in 'enlivening' place (Casey 1996) for Ailsa in a way that was different to learning about them at a distance. She did not disregard Aotearoa New Zealand as 'home', but indicated that, even when one was born in a 'place', one could have strong emotional ties to other 'places'. This was enabled partially through faster, cheaper international travel, and the proliferation of electronic media. Ailsa's comments and activities highlighted the creation of extended trails (Ingold 2000), deepened through intergenerational transmission of knowledge, her continued engagement in particular cultural practices, and travel between familiar places.

Metaphorically, when belonging flourishes, the rhizome flourishes. By extending her belonging across the world, Ailsa elongated the rhizomatic tendrils above the earth, possibly thinning her belonging within one environment as it deepened in the other. More likely, by tending belonging through practical engagement, she nurtured it, so that it continued, growing thicker and more profound in both. The interplay of developing knowledge enabled her belonging in both locations, a little like fertilizing the rhizome. Just as increased nourishment of plants can improve their quality, causing them to flourish so engaging strongly in two cultures in two locations, enhanced Ailsa's belonging, not to one place, but to both. The knowledge she gained about family in Scotland enabled her to better understand her 'place' in the world, particularly in Aotearoa New Zealand. The Scots knowledge embedded in childhood, and which she continued to engage in, enabled her belonging to, and in, Scotland. This could be likened to rhizomatic growth where nourishment sometimes changes or enhances growth patterns, increases vigour, and alters or enriches leaf and flower colour.

Ailsa also belonged steadfastly to Whanganui. In conversations she referred to and discussed her public and private associations. She gained her public knowledge through ongoing, embodied, visible community commitments. Other participants revealed similar practices, recognising, describing and naming places, and connecting them to people and events. Their descriptions of their practices and emotions of attachment highlighted Ingold's (2000) sense of ebb and flow, 'growing' and 'being grown as one lives in the world'.

While reviewing researcher-generated photographs, some of which I discuss below, Ailsa revealed an intimate knowledge of local places, embedded since birth through active environmental engagement, extended and deepened through kin, employment and community involvement. As an elected council representative, Ailsa was instrumental in the redevelopment of the suburb where she grew up. She recalled a happy childhood with intense, repetitive movement through the local area, and her adult involvement in its upgrade. I discuss her responses next.



**Fig 30: The North Mole from Castlecliff Beach.**

We were brought up on here...Dad was the harbour master. So this was our playground. Ailsa ran her finger over the image (Fig 30). Mm. The coastline has changed...we used to play cricket on the front berm.<sup>117</sup> And use two rubbish tins as the wickets...all the neighbourhood kids would come...(e)very weekend Mum used to cart us down to the beach and we'd go through the marram<sup>118</sup> grass, and we'd pick up little black seeds, and put them in a match box...(t)he Red Cross made iodine out of (them) during the war. If you got a whole matchbox full, well, you can imagine those little seeds like that. (Ailsa used her fingers to show how tiny they were.) It took us yonks<sup>119</sup> to get a matchbox. But I suppose we were out in the fresh air...

<sup>117</sup> Grassy area in the front of a property.

<sup>118</sup> *Ammophila arenaria* (Schallenberg 2001).

<sup>119</sup> A long time.



She knew about the sticky river silt (Fig 31).



**Fig 31: Whanganui River and city from the Durie Hill Tower**

Oh, that's wonderful. That's the river after a flood. You can tell (from) the silt. That's why the little dredger was built. To keep the Port o' Castlecliff open...Dad designed it in 1949...(i)t lasted forty years and it was only built to last twenty years...(i)t had the very best of engines...(a)nd that's what kept the port open...(t)hat is papa rock making that silt...it's a very pure silt.

She knew what buildings had been used for.



**Fig 32: Whanganui River and the Tasman Sea, from the Durie Hill Tower.**

And this, (Ailsa ran her finger over the image (Fig 32) pointing to the grey-roofed cluster of buildings, lower right), is Duncan Polio Hospital, which is now a rest-home...I was charge nurse of children's ward. I used to bring the children up, and then they used to come to me to have their orthopaedic surgery, then they'd come back to Duncan Hospital.<sup>120</sup>

She recalled why certain actions were taken, including the capping of the Durie Hill Memorial Tower, the barred metal cover, known affectionately as 'the crayfish pot'.

There were two nurses, they both committed suicide from there...(a)nd of course, the airport (top left)...made by wheelbarrow and spade. (I didn't know that.) Oh, yes, during the depression (with) all the people out of work. That's how we got an airport. We wouldn't've had an airport otherwise...(a)nd that was – it's always been known. But one of the good things about this airport is that it's been made on sand, and therefore it's rarely closed. The only time it's closed is if there's a crosswind. (So, is it – that's what prevents it, sand?) Well, yes. The water goes through it very quickly. It's like a sieve. (Mm. I thought it had to do with the clouds and the way the winds blew them away.) (Ailsa laughed.) Oh, no. No, you never ever hear of that being closed because of flooding.

She knew where people lived and even how they spent their days, through her work as a health administrator and caregiver (Fig 33).

<sup>120</sup> The buildings were removed in 2003. The land became a residential subdivision.





**Fig 33: Whanganui River and city, looking north-west.**

We had a lady we look after, just behind there (pointing to the brown roof). That's McNamara's (pointing the green roof, foreground left). There's another house there...she's got a million dollar view right out...she's watched the Waimarie (on the river, lower left)<sup>121</sup> all the time, from the very beginning and the big crane coming.

Ailsa was a mine of information which she shared willingly. I experienced no sense of exclusion. Rather, I felt included because she explained so much in detail. By discussing the airport, and sharing her knowledge, Ailsa included me. She extended my belonging because, as an incomer, I lacked information. Her knowledge was gained through longevity of residence, and demonstrated deep belonging, similar to that experienced by other Whanganui-born and raised participants. It was like the belonging attributed to 'born and breds' (Cohen 1982; Kohn 2002; Strathern 1982). Incomers frequently described the knowledge 'born and breds' revealed as disconcerting, because it underscored their 'outsiderness'.

By deliberately seeking information, and by asking questions, incomers can gain information, and become possessors of knowledge, as I did while talking with Ailsa. Revealing one's lack of knowledge, as in 'I didn't know that', required trust because not 'knowing', when others 'know', can heighten the feeling of 'outsiderness' and leave individuals feeling insecure. The willingness to share information with incomers indicated acceptance and signalled ascription of belonging. It was, perhaps, another way of creating trails, of regeneration and progeneration (Ingold 2000). In sharing her memories of the landscape and events, Ailsa created new trails taking me into the past. When I view or visit the airport, the runway will no longer be a blank asphalted space. It will be peopled with shadowy figures, wielding shovels and trundling wheelbarrows. In this way, memory has made place, rather than place making memory. It implied that belonging was also made through sharing memories and transmitting information, as well as engaging directly with the environment. Lye, in her study of the Batek, argued that "trails are

<sup>121</sup> "PS Waimarie worked the Whanganui River for 50 years until she sank at her berth in Wanganui in 1952...The Whanganui Riverboat Restoration and Navigation Trust Inc (restored her) and re-registered her as No.1 in 2000" (Robbins 1999-2004).

routes to remembrance just as they are routes to knowledge" (1997:149, as cited in Ingold 2000:148). Just as the Batek used the trails to recall their old people, so photographs provided another means of creating trails. Ailsa responded by recalling her own memories, and making a trail into the past for me. This regenerated the past for her and generated it for me, deepening my belonging through the transmission of knowledge.

English-born Ruth J provided a different perspective on heritage, indicating differences which can occur when one is raised in a long-settled land with evidence of the past all around.

When you're brought up in history, it is just part of you. You're steeped in it. You feel as if you're part of it. That's a special feeling. And if you grow up casually learning about Druids and Vikings,<sup>122</sup> you see the things you're a part of, and you belong. It's all to do with that and the feeling that you really belong there. I know how Māori people feel. If you're part of it, you're almost jealous of it, and protective. It belongs to you and not to other people. When I lived in Cornwall,<sup>123</sup> for the first seven years or so of my married life, and I was only young, nineteen, people called me a foreigner. I did not belong. It's really interesting, that jealousy feeling. They wouldn't teach me how to cook Cornish food. I needed to know how to make it for my husband. But they wouldn't teach me. I had to wait for my sister-in-law to come from the Midlands.<sup>124</sup> She'd moved out some years before. I had to wait for her to come and teach me before I learned to cook Cornish food. I know if Māori people feel they are part of the bush - we called it forest in England - I know how they feel. ***It's as if all the molecules in your body are part of it and they all are connected.*** It upsets me immensely (when people say you can't belong) because that's in your own belonging. You can't change that. (My emphasis)

Ruth described attachments which occurred when people lived in particular locations for centuries (Cohen 1982; Kohn 2002; Strathern 1982). Her remarks also included a sense of the spiritual, an aspect I discuss later. She described how intensely embedded belonging could feel. It paralleled the belonging asserted by indigenous groups internationally, particularly those disenfranchised following occupation or colonization. Her reference to knowing how 'Māori people feel' suggests an embedded and experienced understanding of what it means to 'belong through birth'. She expressed her sense of it "as if all the molecules in your body are part of it and they are all connected". This is reminiscent of Cohen's (1982) concept of belonging involving being part of the 'complicated fabric' of community, and Read's sense of 'deep belonging' (2000). Ruth's comments incorporated embodiment and emotion; a holistic and direct connection to the world in all its aspects, imaginary (Stefano 2002), symbolic and material (Morley 2001), physical, metaphysical and spiritual (Read 2000). Her passion enabled an understanding of why Pākehā people might now feel the right to claim belonging to Aotearoa New Zealand in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Her reference to 'that jealousy feeling' highlighted the depth of emotion others have evinced in relation to occupation, activism or changes in their visual environments. I discuss this in the next section.

### Past similarities – environment

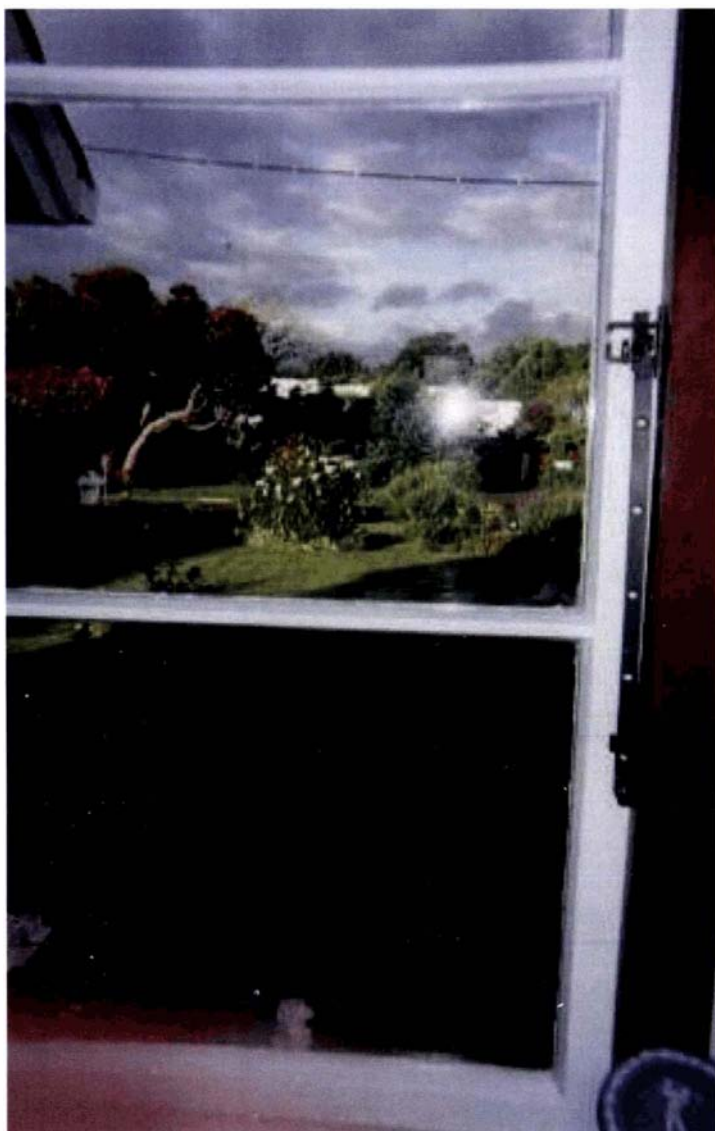
As Ruth described above, most participants responded actively to their physical environments. Environmental similarities, changes to past places, and/or destruction also affected belonging. Some participants connected to the past by

<sup>122</sup> Druids, Celtic priests; Celts, people who dominated much of western and central Europe in the 1st millennium BC; Vikings, Nordic people who invaded much of Western Europe (<http://www.Angelfire>).

<sup>123</sup> English county (<http://www.cornwall-calling.co.uk/>).

<sup>124</sup> A group of mid-English counties (<http://www.picturesofengland.com/mapofengland/regions.html>).

recognising similarities in present places and/or actively increasing similarities between past and current geographical and domestic environments, through inscription.<sup>125</sup> Ruth J and June each recognised and recorded aspects of their childhood environment in their photographic inventories, Ruth with a view from her front window (Fig 34).



© Ruth Jane

**Fig 34: View through glass.**

That...was just taken from the front room through the window. I like to look out and see the garden and the street. (I thought the clouds were lovely too.) I love the clouds. It was the clouds that attracted me and to look out of the window and see the clouds, and the street, of course...(t)hey (the clouds) remind me of Kent,<sup>126</sup> too. We had them (and) because of the hills and so on...(l)iving here I see Kent. The skies are like Kent because we were near the sea (on the Downs). Driving towards Marton<sup>127</sup> is like on the Downs. It feels like I belong here.

Viewing a Weald of Kent website (Travel Publishing Ltd 2002), I was struck by the familiarity of land and sky-scape in on-line photographs.

<sup>125</sup> Cf. Leonard (1997) for a discussion of re/visioning landscape to replicate 'home'.

<sup>126</sup> English county (<http://www.Picturesofengland> 2001 – 2005).

<sup>127</sup> Small town near Wanganui.



Experiencing what Barthes described as ‘punctum’ (Barthes 1981:27), I felt a ‘sting’ of recognition, “that accident which pricks me, but also...is poignant to me” (ibid). I recognised why Ruth ‘felt belonging’. Indirectly, I experienced what she had seen and felt. It could only occur because I was familiar with the Marton landscape through travel within it, and with Whanganui skies. Changing weather patterns seemed to have increased the frequency of some cloud formations so they seemed more like Northland skies than when I arrived thirty years ago. Or perhaps they have become familiar with time. A plum tree in bloom had a similar impact on June (Fig 35).



© June Sheppard

**Fig 35: A neighbour's plum tree.**

Since I've been here, in this house, I have...more thoughts of my grandmother's home in England. I hear the wind in the plum tree, and it's the same rustling noise. I hear the birds, and it's the same birds. There's something about Wanganui that really is closer to what I knew as a child than all the time in Hamilton. I never had those feelings in Hamilton. But since I've been here...in a way it's almost as though I've come home. It's a strange feeling. Wanganui itself is an old town, a historical old town, and it's got a dark past as well, and, you see, many places in England had a very dark past. Wars and all sorts of things, terrible things, happened in England, in Britain...(i)n a sense, there's the same sort of history here. But, as I said, the nature side of it – so many things here – appeal to me.

The environmental aspects Ruth and June described resonated with Poulet's argument that, “(i)f familiar places are sometimes able to leave us, they are also able to come back to our notice, and...retake their original place...one can see that places behave exactly like past moments, like memories. ***They go away, they return***” (Poulet 1983:163, translated by and cited in (Buijs 1993:3, my emphasis).

Margaret McC described how environmental aspects like “(l)iving on a hill in sight of water (with) so many beautiful days” enabled her to adjust, ‘relatively quickly’, to life in an unfamiliar, densely populated city. These and other participant comments also affirmed the importance of the sensescape in memory and

belonging (Feld and Basso 1996). While many of us privilege the visual, as did Ruth and Margaret McC, others like June, above, and Roselene, below, recalled the past through non-visual senses. June recalled sounds and smells, while Roselene's memories of South Africa were triggered by sounds and heat.<sup>128</sup>

I don't remember a lot in South Africa...just little incidents...a little bit about visiting relatives, and an auntie who had a beach cottage...and some friends that had a lovely big ostrich farm...I have some memories of home, like, not being in South Africa, but listening to music...and things like, funnily enough, chooks cackling in summertime...(i)t must be imprinted in my mind.

As Ruth J asserted, "Being born in a place *strengthens* your sense of belonging. **You can feel it. You can smell it. You can touch it, even though you are not there.**" (My emphasis)

While these participants were aware of environmental factors which recalled memory, and sometimes created ease, other participants adopted an active approach to environmental reconstruction, recreating aspects of their childhood homes in current dwelling spaces. In Joan B's garden (Fig 36), water tumbled over the water wheel and birds chirped and fluttered through mature trees.



**Fig 36: The entrance to Joan's property.**

Joan recalled "the beautiful, beautiful section we had. It was...incredible...with ponds and beautiful stonework and plenty of room and a pony, all living in the garden...(i)t seems as though I've tried to recreate that as well, Penny, here, in my shift." She added,

my father always wanted to be near his brothers. He was one of six boys and four girls, and got on extremely well with his parents. We shifted to Springvale, and here I've been ever since. (So you shifted here?) Yes...I live on the same section. I built a house around the old

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<sup>128</sup> Feld (1996) discusses the importance of sounds in constructing landscapes, their contribution to the sensescape, and the landscape's consequent embodiment.



house and then pulled the old house down.

Joan, Ruth J, and June enjoyed the similarities of environment, suggesting that finding or recreating similarities, enhanced belonging 'around here'. Conversely, Pamela described how removing aspects of a familiar landscape could diminish, even violate, belonging, particularly when 'destruction' was deliberate.

Say, thinking about becoming part of the visual and emotional environment, I lost my sense of belonging to Auckland. I was looking around last time we were up there and it has changed so much I couldn't go back to live there. It's not the city I grew up in. Auckland, when I was growing up, was still a lovely place for children. It was safe...(w)e could all go off in a group and play in Cornwall Park<sup>129</sup> all day, and nobody worried about us...You wouldn't do it that now. That man who chopped down the tree on One Tree

Hill chopped out part of my belonging.<sup>130</sup> He does not seem to realize that it was part of other people's association with a place...(t)hat pine tree was part of the skyline. It was the thing you saw as soon as you hit Auckland. As soon as you saw that you were home. The skyline is not the same at all. That hurt!

Karen: Somebody's planted another tree.<sup>131</sup>

Penny: Will that make a difference?

Pamela: It will probably feel better once the tree grows up. Your sense of belonging to a place is tied up with familiarity and memories and who is there.

Later I sent her a card (Fig 37).

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<sup>129</sup> A long-established city park.

<sup>130</sup> After chainsaw attacks in 1994 and 1999, the pine tree was declared unstable and eventually removed (<http://www.aucklandcity.govt.nz>). Sir John Logan Campbell, who is buried on the summit, gave the name One Tree Hill to Maungakiekie. He was inspired by (a native tree), the sacred Totara (*Podocarpus Totara*) (Trees for Survival Trust 2005), he saw on his first visit here in 1840. Te Totara i Ahua was cut down as part of the colonisation of Auckland during the 1850s and 60s. Campbell attempted to replace the Totara...a single...(p)ine survived. The tree was damaged after successive attacks by Māori protestors, and...eventually felled for safety reasons in 2001" (<http://www.aucklandcity.govt.nz>).

<sup>131</sup> Consent was granted in 2002 to plant a grove of nine trees, all natives (<http://www.aucklandcity.govt.nz>).



From an original painting by David Stone Dip L.P.

**Fig 37: One Tree Hill, New Zealand.**

Her emailed response summarized her emotions. She wrote,  
 Mum and I love your card. It's perfect! One Tree Hill as we remember it.  
 It brings back so many memories. We played all around that hill,  
 complicated all day hide and seek games, slid down the hill on pieces of  
 cardboard. Went off in the morning and didn't come home until tea time.  
 No one worried in those days about youngsters spending all day off by  
 themselves. Those were great summer holidays. Thanks.

Pamela's narrative demonstrated how, 'place' embedded visually and emotionally, through repeated interaction, particularly direct engagement. Her expression of 'hurt' indicated emotional connections to a place she frequented during childhood. One Tree Hill and its surroundings were so deeply embedded, they formed part of her belonging. Her active engagement was recalled in the all-day games and remembering "(t)hat pine tree (being) part of the skyline." In Casey's terms, place had become "more an *event* than a *thing*" (1996:26). It had taken 'on qualities of its own' (ibid). Place retained its 'hold' on her, gathered her in, and held out its ability to draw her back (ibid:24-25). Through television broadcasts, and later, with direct re-engagement, place released its memories and then, "through the activity of remembering, memories (were) forged" (Ingold 2000:148) As others had done, and continued to do, Pamela generated and regenerated her own trails within that landscape (ibid).

The protestor's actions and media coverage assisted in regenerating those trails. This led to her generating trails into the past for her daughters, similar to the way Ailsa had done for me. Both narratives also transmitted knowledge about cultural values, difference and change. Ailsa's indicated respect for hard, physical labour. Pamela highlighted emotional attachment to a past environment, and the value of understanding different perspectives. In both situations, technology provided the 'route to remembrance (and) knowledge' (ibid).

Other Aotearoa New Zealanders responded as Pamela's did, revealing that personal experiences of 'place' could be intertwined through "the shared experience

of inhabiting particular places and following particular paths in an environment” (ibid). Via the media, many Aotearoa New Zealanders responded emotionally, even though they did not gather ‘together’ physically. Their reactions united them, engendering a feeling of belonging together. Their responses and the resultant collective unity confirmed Pohl’s assertion that “(c)o-presence is not really necessary to establish that feeling of togetherness” (2001:1).

Without denying the validity of the protestor’s action, Pamela’s comments underlined intercultural tensions, an increase in indigenous assertiveness, and a challenge to Pākehā dominance. In arguing that the protestor demonstrated disregard for “part of other people’s association with a place,” she also drew attention to the danger of assuming that belonging was exclusive. The protestor’s belonging was generated through ancestry and experiences. His actions demonstrated a disapprobation of colonial occupation and its impact. As a Māori, he symbolized the colonized group, unlike Pamela, who could be viewed as symbolic of the colonizers. The protestor’s actions suggested that his belonging had been assaulted by colonization, the ‘destruction’ of a ‘sacred’ Totara, and its replacement with exotic trees. The polarized attitudes of Pākehā and Māori revealed here also underline how different perspectives can locate a person as hero or renegade, as discussed in Chapter Five. Those opposed to and hurt by the tree’s destruction perceived the activist as a renegade. Those who supported his actions, as a way of highlighting their frustrations, probably regarded him as a hero.<sup>132</sup>

Although none of the participants suggested that belonging only was about “being born in a place” (Cohen 1982), Pamela’s comments revealed how practical, repetitive experiences in the environment of one’s birthplace enhanced belonging. Other participants revealed a range of emotions about birthplace, many indicating that birth increased belonging. Often, others felt so attached to a place that they regarded it as ‘theirs’, and, like Pamela, were shocked to learn that others felt equally possessive.

### **'Around here'**

As discussed above, the participants revealed attachment to locations where they had dwelled, studied, been employed, or visited frequently. They also revealed direct links to the ‘local’, past and present. These were conveyed via personal photographic inventories, images of place displayed in their homes, and/or through the detailed information they provided during interviews. Two groups of participants voluntarily provided exceptionally ‘thick’ detail (Geertz 1973) about early childhood places. They were those born in, and still, or again, living in Whanganui; and those who had immigrated to Aotearoa New Zealand as adults. Most Aotearoa New Zealand-born, non Whanganui-born participants named fewer places in former locations, although their memories of those places were deeply embedded, as general comments indicated. Below, I discuss the responses and their content, and how the place references differed.

Participants born and raised in Whanganui seemed to refer to fewer places nationally, perhaps because they or their ancestors were relatively immobile. Unlike non-immigrant incomer participants, Whanganui-born participants’ narratives contained minute locational details, often including house numbers, street, property and business names. The details were similar to those provided by English-born participants. Their local knowledge often overrode the knowledge derived from maps (Casey 1996). Some statements were uttered with an assumption that I would know the places named, while others indicated their awareness of my later arrival, by providing additional detail. Ailsa’s description of her early life highlights the thickness of belonging.

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<sup>132</sup> Sluka (2004) discussed a similar anomaly in respect of terrorists, arguing that personal political stance often determined whether a person was regarded as a freedom fighter or terrorist.



I was born here in **Wanganui** in **Cairnbrae Maternity Home** which is **now a backpackers' on Somme Pde...** it was during the war. Dad was away at the navy for part of my life...I was born in the October, and baptised at **St Paul's Church** on Christmas Day...And my life was brought up on **the wharf of Castlecliff**, and also on **the Castlecliff Beach**, because every day we went to the beach. We lived in **a Harbour Board house, 3 Ashton Terrace**. (My emphasis)

Debbie's and Margaret McC's accounts mentioned included naming schools they and their siblings attended, and their own early employment locations, often described in relation to other landmarks. Debbie recalled being employed "(i)n **the coffee shop opposite the Grand...** (Then) I worked at **a petrol station, St Johns Motors**, pumping gas" (my emphasis). Diane, who grew familiar with Whanganui before the family relocated, recorded meaningful buildings and sites in her photographic inventory.

When incomers could describe places and people in the terms used by longer-term residents, they signaled their own access to community lore and embedding knowledge. This indicated their movement along the continuum of belonging (Kohn 2002). The signals could be subtle as my actions during the discussion with Debbie revealed. As she described various locations, I signaled my knowledge with an 'Mm'. Similar affirmations could occur visually, as happened when I shared a photograph with Diane. We were discussing iconic Whanganui public places and spaces, when I showed her a photograph of a local beach. She interrupted me and led me downstairs to show me a painting (Fig 38).



© Painting Lynette Vallely

**Fig 38: Mowhanau Beach, Kai Iwi.**

We compared the photograph and the painting. The views were from almost identical vantage points about the same time. This heightened my sense of belonging to Whanganui, and increased our mutual bonds. The existence of the images, and Diane sharing hers with me, revealed a shared attachment to the same

location, even though we had made separate, unconnected visits. This was perhaps unsurprising given the importance of the 'beach' in the Aotearoa New Zealand psyche (Carlin and Jones 1999).

English-born participants' narratives were similarly littered with references to specific places, while their homes also contained images of past locations. Kathy remembered,

I was born in *Lancashire* in *a place called Chorley*...but my mother lived in the next town, which is *a place called Horridge*...(m)y parents were bakers and confectioners and *we had a shop in Horridge. Sutton's Bakery, it was called*. We had the bakery *at the end of a long street, Dickenson Street it was called*, and it was very much *like Coronation Street*. *And we knew everybody in the street*. (My emphasis)

She named five specific locations: the county she was born and grew up in; the town she was born in; the adjacent town where her parents lived; the family-owned bakery; and its street locations, reflecting Ailsa's detailed description of birth, christening and dwelling places. Narratives also included recollections and descriptions of buildings, and detailed description of landscape, activity and events. Kathy's description added another important factor in understanding belonging. Her comment that "we knew everybody in the street" signaled that 'knowing' people was important in belonging to place, because then one was firmly embedded in the fabric of community (Cohen 1982). It also confirmed that one way people "make sense of their landscape, and develop connections to *place*" (Basso 1996:54)<sup>133</sup> was through their relationships to people. This confirmed Basso's assertion that "(p)lace-based thoughts commonly lead to thoughts of other things...whole networks of associations..."(ibid:55), also borne out by Pamela's reflections about One Tree Hill.

As I noted earlier, people who lived in a place often knew it intimately. They could provide relevant and recognisable references for their listeners. When Ailsa referred to "Cairnbrae Maternity Home which is now a backpackers' on Somme Pde", and Debbie to "a coffee shop opposite the Grand" each assumed that I would be aware of the general location of the streets and/or buildings, because I dwelled and was interviewing them in the same city. Kathy also provided sufficiently detailed indicators which could have enabled me to find particular locations should I visit her childhood environment.

There are many possible reasons why some participants provided minute details in particular locations. For international immigrant participants, memories of childhood place might have been stronger, deeper or more significant because they had left those deeply meaningful locations in teenage or adulthood. . Perhaps 'thick' detail was important because easy or affordable access was unavailable. Those who departed from their birth lands as young children had engaged in place for a shorter period. Roselene's few South African memories and the more detailed Whanganui childhood memories exhibited this contrast. Amongst long-term Whanganui participants, particularly 'born and breds', place was layered with ancestral and personal experiences. This was combined with longevity of residence and environmental familiarity which enabled them to recall and remark upon changes. Participants born elsewhere in Aotearoa New Zealand were often connected to more places than 'born and breds, reflecting ancestral, parental or personal mobility. They had strong memories of past locations but their comments were more general. Perhaps if participants had been narrating their lives in past locations, or to an interviewer who was familiar with them, they might have provided more specific detail.

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<sup>133</sup> A neglected area of study (Basso 1996:54).



## Inscription and action

Other practices related to belonging in place included environmental inscription, public and private, different to the excision and inscription I described in Chapter Six. Objects incorporated into private and public environments revealed local, national and international connections, and included natural and constructed items. I discuss next how several participants practiced inscription as they made belonging, and then discuss the use of generic icons in the practice of belonging. Inscription occurred both publicly, as in city parks and gardens, and privately, as in domestic yards and houses.

Like interior inscription, garden inscription revealed past and present connections. Some designs and plantings reflected garden fashions, but also indicated participant interaction with the physical environment. Several participants embraced it, gathering natural objects during excursions to beaches, rivers, lakes and mountains. They incorporated these found items, like driftwood, shells, and rocks, into their gardens, and retained or planted iconic native trees and shrubs, such as ferns, flaxes and the *tī* or cabbage-tree<sup>134</sup> (Leach 1984).



© June Sheppard

**Fig 39: Pumice and stones edge June's garden.**

June gathered pumice<sup>135</sup> and stones from local beaches and used them to edge a garden in her rear yard (Fig 39). The pumice from a volcanic area, north of Whanganui had been washed down the river to the coast. Inscribing her personal space with these objects showed June's engagement in the local landscape. It provided her with a daily reminder of the area she dwelled in, and reinforced her awareness of living in Aotearoa New Zealand. By bringing the local, natural environment into private space, she actively created direct connections to place. The material items recalled a visit to the shore, and reminded her daily of her extended surroundings.

<sup>134</sup> *Ti-kouka* (Reed & Brougham 1978); *Cordyline australis* (Trees for Survival Trust n.d).

<sup>135</sup> A light, frothy volcanic rock which floats (Auckland College of Education 2004).

Participants also incorporated gifts and purchased material objects like statues, fountains, urns and planters in their gardens, as in Margaret Mary's photograph below (Fig 40). The statue and the lilies were gifts from family members. They reminded Margaret Mary that people loved her, and that she had relationships which existed beyond her dwelling space.



© Margaret Watt

**Fig 40: Garden border with statue and Christmas lilies.**

Material objects, weeded borders, and changing seasonal plantings signalled physical labour, creativity, practicality, and personal agency. Connections to others were reflected in material objects and/or plants. Their presence also signalled changes in garden fashions, increased leisure spending, and the greater availability of constructed objects for sale. In 1950s Aotearoa New Zealand many families grew vegetables and flowers, the former regarded as a feminine task, the latter a male task. Fewer people grew their own vegetables today although gardening was a major Aotearoa New Zealand leisure pursuit (Leach 1984). Orchards and vegetable gardens were no longer domestic essentials since fruit and vegetables can be purchased in supermarkets all year.

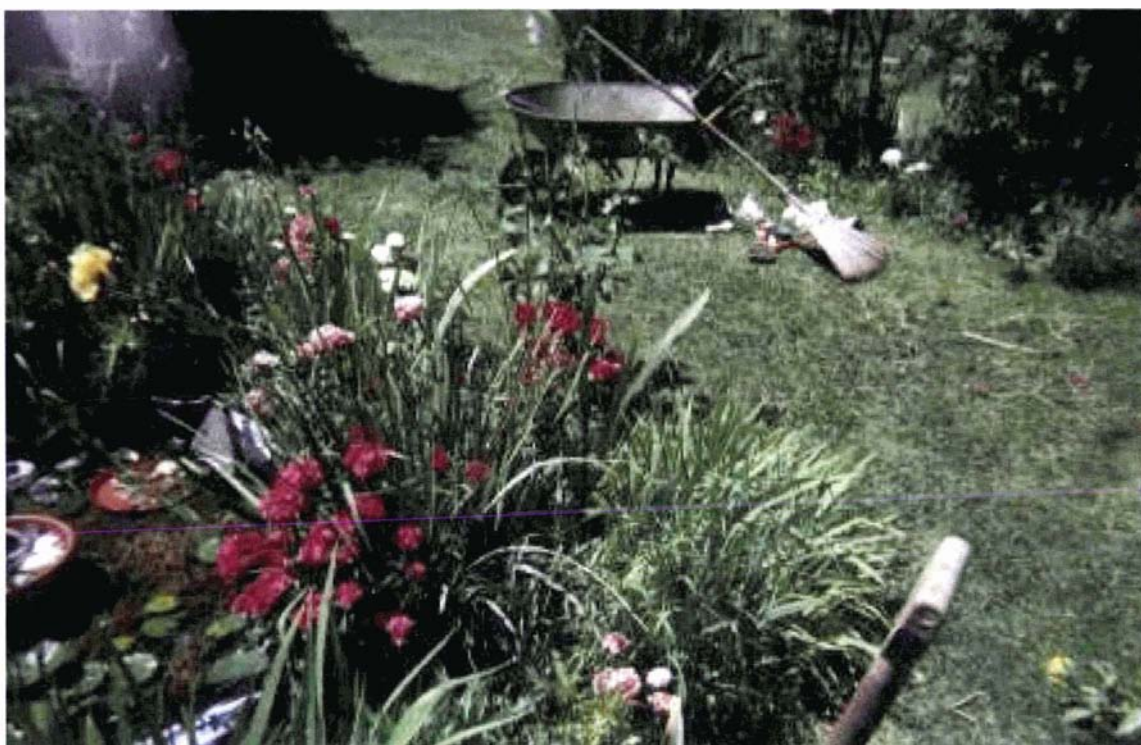
Another important aspect of creating and embedding belonging was by planning the garden and engaging in and/or paying for the yard work, particularly garden maintenance. By growing shrubs, flowers, fruit, vegetables and culinary herbs participants - some with memories of economic hardship, and others interested in organic gardening - gained a sense of pride and accomplishment. They created trails through their yards by engaging in active physical labour, gathering food and/or flowers for family sustenance and enjoyment, and showing and sharing the results. Having a 'good' garden was a way of gaining cultural capital, as in 'everyone knows you always have a good garden'. Sharing provender and walking through the space with friends enhanced connections through shared pleasure, and exchange or gifts of plants and objects.

Many participants photographed their yards, emphasising flowering garden beds. Margaret Mary made the garden hers in a way that the house could not be, since she lived with extended family. She organised or intensively tended three or four spaces in the yard: flower gardens visible from her seat in the family room, and



beyond the dining room and the herb and vegetable gardens. She and her daughter tended the front flower beds but Margaret took responsibility to find a person to assist with weeding. “You need a woman. Lynne<sup>136</sup> and I agreed that men are fine for taking a chain saw and restoring order. But you need a **woman** to weed, someone who recognises plants” (my emphasis). In wanting a woman to maintain her gardens, Margaret manifested embedded habitus, gendered but probably derived from previous unsatisfactory experiences. By hiring an outsider, she p/reserved space for herself and retained control over what happened within it. As the employer, she could direct operations, whereas if she asked her daughter, son-in-law, the nanny, or the children to help, it ceased to be space she controlled.

Ruth J’s photographs emphasised the physical labour involved in gardening, revealing it as an active process in a way that other images did not. She included photographs of garden produce, footwear for working in, and tools ready to use (Fig 41).



© Ruth Jane

**Fig 41: Wheelbarrow and garden tools.**

She explained,

They were just – that was taken because I wanted to show that it isn’t just the finished garden...that I love, it’s the working in the garden as well. I like to see the finished garden, but...when I’ve finished doing something, I don’t see it the way other people see it...I see it for the fact that it looks tidy, and that’d be another job to do...I like to be there but unlike many people – my friends say, “Oh, that looks lovely down there by the fishpond. We’d love to have one of those to sit by.” But to me you can’t sit by it and keep it the way it is. (Mm). It has to be worked on...I enjoy that aspect...too. But then, I love to see the plants and things growing...so I didn’t want you to see the garden without the tools.

She included a photograph of flower beds, not because they looked ‘pretty’ but because they recalled an event. She recalled, “It was to remind me that Jenny<sup>137</sup>

<sup>136</sup> A pseudonym.

<sup>137</sup> A pseudonym.

had danced, that was somewhere to dance and she had danced all through the flowers.”

Within their domestic spaces participants practiced belonging through action. By inscribing their gardens, and recalling events which had occurred within these spaces, they created ownership. They had claimed ownership, and, subsequently, belonging, through active engagement. They engaged with the soil, what grew above and within it, rather than only with the surface, weaving the land ‘like a tapestry’ from their lives (Ingold 2000:150). They revealed the land “not so much a stage...or a surface...as *history congealed*” (ibid). Participant practices suggested that “just as kinship is geography, so the lives of persons and the histories of their relationships can be traced in the textures of the land” (ibid). Their photographs demonstrated practice; the material items left their own marks. And, as Ruth indicated with the photograph which recalled her friend dancing between the borders, “place, in the end, is where human events take place.” (Read 2000:23).

Other photographs and comments related to public environmental inscription, sometimes, at the invitation of the local authority seeking to emphasise the city’s heritage, sometimes instigated by participants. Beyond graveyard inscriptions, one needed certain skills, connections, cultural capital, residential longevity, and occasionally serendipity, to be able to engage in public inscription. Joan B, Ruth G, and Ailsa had sufficient status, derived from birth, kin connections, residence, age, skills, and commitment, to do so. Joan’s and Ruth’s inventories revealed relationships to place through public inscription.

Ruth included two photographs, one of her standing in the town square (Fig 42).



© Ruth Gedye

**Fig 42: Ruth G in the town square.**

She was looking at the Gedye Family plaque. The story she told reiterated the importance of names and extended my understanding of belonging as she described connections to the past, and events in the present.

They had a Gedye family reunion...it's just gone a hundred years since the older generation first came to Wanganui...we thought in memory of that...we'd put a plaque...(t)here's such a lot of Gedye's and they're all related. If they've got the name Gedye, they are in the family. (So they're well-connected and established in this area?) Yes they are. Funnily enough, we had a call from Australia three weeks ago, looking for a Gedye. It was a Friday night and there was a wedding on the Saturday morning. And she was coming over from Australia for the wedding and couldn't come and wanted to ring the people so she rang me...it's amazing what happens, the connections.

Another (Fig 43) highlighted her community activities and added community belonging to the layers described above.





© Ruth Gedye

**Fig 43: Ruth G creating a palm print for a public sculpture.**

This is when they had that multicultural peace for all cultures. And this guy had made a monument out of concrete and he wanted people's hands to put in it...I said to my daughter..."I think I'll go in and do that"...I went along, and had to press my hand down on this piece of clay...when the whole thing's finished it's going up in front of the library. It will have my name and Westmere/Castlecliff CWI.<sup>138</sup> (Why did you choose to put that?) Well, I think it's because I'm a member of the CWI, and I think they do so much good in the country that is never ever recorded or spoken about and they raise so much money for other organisations. My group that I belong to, we're only 12 members, and I think we've only got two under 60. The rest are from 60 to 90...(s)o this is connected with volunteer work, pressing, you know, making the hands...I thought, "Well, I'll just put the old ladies on the map if I can."

By making her print available for inclusion in a public monument, Ruth actively affirmed her belonging. Her narrative incorporated current family relationships, community involvement and national organisational networks. By making her print available for public display, she demonstrated deep belonging, reiterated by her willingness to record her presence visually in a public place. Her actions signalled belonging at many levels, ancestral and current, private and public. The effort involved in gathering hundreds of prints, coordinating contributors, and then erecting the sculpture, highlighted the collective nature of community. The contributors deepened their belonging through inscription of a publicly sanctioned and displayed permanent object. This highlighted another facet of belonging which some participants signalled as important.

<sup>138</sup> Country Women's Institute – an organisation designed to help women take an active part in community life (New Zealand Federation of Women's Institutes Inc Undated).

In a similar way, reflecting different skills, Joan signalled her belonging (Fig. 44).



© Joan Bullock Morrell

**Fig 44: Joan B, statue, and children, at Virginia Lake.**

Four groups of school children spent an afternoon listening to Joan retelling the story of Tainui,<sup>139</sup> beside Joan's sculpture (centre). This combination revealed Joan's sculptural skills, acquired indigenous knowledge, and her community commitment. In revealing cross-cultural transmission of knowledge via the sculpture of an indigenous mythical figure, the image emphasised the complexity of belonging as multi-stranded and multi-faceted. Viewing Joan and the children with the statue revealed a publicly accessible nodal point where age met youth, skill met inexperience, and mythical indigenous past met Whanganui present. This event provided a gentle introduction to indigenous culture, a more distant past than the post-settlement events being protested at the Auckland reserve which Pamela described. Given the Māori preference for conducting their own research, which I referred to in Chapter Three, Pākehā telling Māori legends in public could be contentious. Joan's practices, described and discussed below, revealed a willingness on the part of some Pākehā to engage with Māori and the impact of colonization. Doing so deepened belonging to the Aotearoa New Zealand whole.

When I showed her a photograph of Moutoa Gardens/Pakaitore (Fig 45),<sup>140</sup> Joan revealed an awareness of cross-cultural tensions, recognition of the need to reduce them, and an understanding of her own and other people's perspectives.

<sup>139</sup> Myth suggests the Māori maiden, Tainui, cried so much over a lost love that her tears formed the adjacent Virginia Lake.

<sup>140</sup> An inner city park, Moutoa Gardens, known by some Whanganui River Māori as Pakaitore, became a site of Māori resistance in 1995 (Robinson 1995).





© Cherry Novis

**Fig 45: Moutoa Gardens/Pakaitore.**

Joan remembered,

That's a good, old familiar place...They had fish in the ponds. (They had a pond before the statue was there?)That's right. That was always there. And there was a statue, one of those cast lead ones. A very, very traditional statue, with lions spouting a bit of water and what not...(which) I always loved. It gradually disappeared...and left this strange upright and the pond around it. The upright just had a trickle of water. That's all that remained of the sculpture, for years...I used to look at it, and think, "Fancy that, that's all that's left of it"...then there was a photograph in the paper, someone complaining...one of the reporters said, "Surely someone can do better than this"...I went to bed that night. I always have a pad and pencil by my bed. And I woke up in the middle of the night and I had this incredible picture in my mind, so clear. All I had to do was do it...I rang up the Lions...I went ahead eventually and did it...left the pipe...the pipe fed the umbrella that the children were under...(t)he Lions helped me with it, the material and heavy lifting. And that's where it all came from. I had woken up with this clear, clear picture and I had not even turned the light on. I had written across the page from corner to corner all scrawly and scribbly and I would not have thought another thing about it, except that I saw the paper with the writing on, and I realized that was a true insight, that was, to do it. So it was really just some children under the umbrella in this very domestic scene, so I used my three children (a clock chimed softly)... as models, and my own cat and dog...the umbrella, of course, was the protector, the parent or protective thing, or the law or the courts, because it was called 'Protection in Adversity'. And what I was trying to say was that the courts are a protective institution, not necessarily a punishing

one...(t)hat is how I had found the courts...protective<sup>141</sup>...I was trying to get that message across instead of this interminable punishing.

Unlike many women in gendered Aotearoa New Zealand society, Joan, as a sculptor with local ancestry, had the skills, social and cultural capital, and personal connections to inscribe public places, through invitation and at her own suggestion. Using her children and family animals as models, she inscribed her own and the family's belonging more deeply by making it public.

The statue and other Pākehā monuments, some damaged or removed during the 1995 occupation, were embedded in public and personal memory through photographs, experience, and action. The statue's destruction and Joan's memories recalled the polarization of emotions nationally during the occupation. The destruction was rendered more poignant for Pākehā because statues commemorating Māori were not damaged. Many Pākehā regarded the damaged statues as their 'taonga', and were incensed, not only because they were destroyed, but because they were targeted. Some Māori regarded them as a symbol of colonial oppression, and were incensed by their presence. Just as Sokefeld warned against using concepts out of context for comparative purposes, it is also dangerous to assume that objects will have the same meanings for all those who view them. In the context of One Tree Hill and Moutoa Gardens/ Pakaitore, the differing responses highlighted different attitudes towards colonization and the varied readings different groups made of the same objects. Pākehā and Māori perspectives were encapsulated in their own "particular cultural circumstances" (Sokefeld 2001).

Their presence impacted on participant belonging, reminding them of an 'idyllic' past. Their destruction impacted emotionally in the present. The combination of actions, ancestral and recent, Māori and Pākehā created trails into the past, and generated new trails in the present. They revealed how different cultures laid different trails because of context and positionality. This leads them to respond to their environments and events differently from each other. The commotion surrounding occupation and/or destruction, led to possibly altered understandings, enabling progeneration of the future (Ingold 2000).

## Icons

While the statues described above were not generically iconic, they could become iconic in time. Several participants visited and recorded a variety of generic and specific iconic sites in their photographic inventories. Iconic objects included small natural items like pumice, driftwood, shells, native flora and fauna, and some introduced animals like the sheep. Sites were like those in most countries, where citizens frequently gather, and/or tourists visit. They included natural features like mountains, and beaches, compelling views and secluded sites, constructed items and large natural material objects. The images precipitated several understandings. Some extended the research location and visibly extended 'the world around here' (Geertz 1996), highlighting the ongoing mobility of Aotearoa New Zealanders. All reiterated the importance of the landscape and natural environment in Aotearoa New Zealand belonging.

English-born Kathy indicated her recognition and appreciation of Aotearoa New Zealand icons by photographing the cabbage tree and native ferns in her yard, and contrasting them with exotic flowers - giant amaryllis and sprays of pink orchids (Fig 46).

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<sup>141</sup> Built on a rise, the courthouse is the only building in the block, except for public toilets. The park appears as if it is the courthouse grounds.



© Kathy Olsen

**Fig 46: Kathy's version of summer and Christmas.**

"I really thought that was a lovely shot with the water. I just love that picture. It's got all these elements. The colour is like a rainbow...and it's got the cabbage tree and the punga in it too." When experiences were positive, as was Kathy's pleasure in summer and her garden, participants affirmed locations enthusiastically and in detail.



Iconic places sometimes provoked intensely personal memories, as could other, ordinary and not-so ordinary, buildings.<sup>142</sup> Yvonne visited and was photographed at a site she used to enjoy visiting in Wellington (Fig 47).



© Yvonne O'Connor

**Fig 47: Yvonne and Zoe on Mt Victoria in Wellington.**

This is me in Wellington with Zoe...I was on my way to Marlborough. And, because we had Zoe, we needed to go somewhere with a bit of green grass where she could go to the toilet. And the reason we went up to Mt Victoria...is that when I lived there it was a favourite place. So, because we had a camera, and ...we had Zoe we went up the hill. (Why was that a favourite place in Wellington?) It just – it was just somewhere I used to go with a man in my life and, just also, when I got a vehicle, I just used to go up there and sit up there, because you could see that wonderful view, and it was really clear.

By returning to place, Yvonne reaffirmed past belonging as Diane did by revisiting and photographing meaningful buildings and sites, including schools, houses, places of employment and public buildings. Other participant images embodied national concepts about belonging, most likely 'collectively orchestrated' (Sontag) and embedded through engagement, discourse and public communications. Māori affirm belonging by returning to ancestral places. Known as *ahi kā*,<sup>143</sup> it entails emplacement and maintenance of relationships with one's home place.<sup>144</sup> Yvonne's returning to a favourite place was not truly *ahi ka*. It was simply a favourite place, of which she had fond memories, but lacked the extensive connections of temporal ancestral ties to place. *Ahi kā* is more complex than simply returning, but other participants indicated engagement in a similar practice. When I return to my family land in Northland, spend time with family, renewing contacts and

<sup>142</sup> Diane's photographs were of buildings and outdoor locations with personal meaning. Each was a mnemonic for personal relationships.

<sup>143</sup> 'Ahi kā' - the burning of fires, a symbol of the maintenance of land-title by using the land in a particular way. W/h/anganui historian Kahukura Taiaroa described *ahi kā* as 'keeping the land warm' by the presence of self, kin or ancestors.

<sup>144</sup> Cf. Tomlins-Jahnke (1996) for a discussion about Māori women educators who engage in this practice.

walk the boundaries, I am regenerating place, restoking my internal fires, and warming the existing connections.

Other photographs revealed acceptance of national icons. They included constructed icons such as the national museum, Te Papa<sup>145</sup>, particular natural objects, specific sites and generic locations.



© Jill Kirk

**Fig 48: Mt Ngaruahoe from a bus window.**

Jill's photograph of Mt Ngaruahoe taken through the bus window (Fig 48) was an example of a specific iconic location. A keen gardener, Jill attended a national flower show in a metropolitan centre. She travelled with a group and predicted, correctly, that this might be her last major out-of-town trip. Taking the photograph through the window with the reflections, while the bus was moving, indicated that Jill treasured the mountain and what it represented. "I couldn't resist it," she said. The mountain was one of three in the Tongariro National Park, a World Heritage Site (Department of Conservation n.d.). The image contains many features incorporated into the Aotearoa New Zealand imaginary – the great outdoors, wilderness, snowy mountains. Although the photograph revealed Jill's sense of belonging to this landscape, the reflections are a reminder of Jill's other connections. These included the bounded nature of the journey, her containment within the vehicle, the travelling companions who share her interest, and live in the same city.

<sup>145</sup> Te Papa Tongarewa, the Museum of New Zealand ([www.govt.nz](http://www.govt.nz) 2005).

Ruth's photographs taken during a trip to the East Coast were generic (Fig 49), and reflected an aspect of life, the beach, which Aotearoa New Zealanders conceive of as a birthright (Carlin and Jones 1999:11). Her narrative included descriptions of being honoured by action and accorded status due to age. Like Joan B, Ruth extended the boundaries of belonging, culturally as well as geographically, since her narrative refers to Māori friends and practices.



© Ruth Gedye

**Fig 49: An East Coast Beach.**

The photograph recorded an ideal of Aotearoa New Zealand life, depicting summer, blue skies, and the sea, in a secluded settlement, a place to 'get away from it all', relax, and enjoy a way of life reminiscent of an idyllic past.

It's lovely over there. When I go over...a Māori friend (makes sure) the whole of Tokomaru Bay knows that the eldest lady he knows will be in the district. "And you've got to show her respect," he says. "She's white." (Now, how do they do that, Ruth?) Last time we arrived there I went across the road to go to Russell's place<sup>146</sup>, and I was just standing watching. About two cars a day might go through. But you do still look, just to go across...I was taken by the arm by a young Māori gentleman who walked me across the road. He said, "I'll be here when you come back." And he was...I think that's wonderful...(i)t's an amazing area. Nobody locks doors or windows or anything. One would not take from the other...(i)t's very fascinating, very, very fascinating, very interesting. It's the peace and tranquillity of that place. It's a long way away...the beds are made when we arrive, black satin sheets and pillow cases. So beautiful. "How do I deserve that?" I asked. "Because I was the oldest lady in Tokomaru Bay," they told me. The sheets were a bit slidey, but I got used to that.

Ruth's narrative highlighted ascription of status, due to age, not always acknowledged in public discourse where there is a sense that, not only is age not respected, but disregarded and/or disdained. There was also a subtle warning

<sup>146</sup> As in other situations, I have removed the friends' names for privacy. Aotearoa New Zealand is a small place so the friends may be identified by people on the East Coast.



conveyed by Ruth's friend to those within the community. It highlighted fears that because she was white she might be treated rudely, given the tensions I have referred to which have occurred between Māori and Pākehā. She was Pākehā, old and valued by her friends. Therefore, she deserved the respect of others a well. Her narrative emphasised how people could be drawn into a community, nurtured through their relationships, connections established and belonging not only encouraged but actively facilitated. Ruth's narrative implied ascribed belonging, born of respect for age, and gained through personal relationships and on-site interaction. She also negated the attitudes some Pakeha have about Maori by asserted, "(i)t's an amazing area. Nobody locks doors or windows or anything. One would not take from the other." Such an understanding could arise only through personal experience, clearly described in Ruth's narrative.

## Conclusion

This chapter explored women's practices of belonging in and to place/s. Meaningful 'place' existed in many locations, including birth place, areas of ancestral and personal residence, and travel locations. This could be described as a form of extended geographical belonging, linked to kin and experience. The participants engaged with places from a range of positions and in diverse ways.

Their practices included private and public inscription, recalling ancestral, personal and environmental connections; historical and cultural knowledge; embodiment, emplacement and active environmental engagement; recognition of similarities to other places; recreation of past places; and response to environmental changes. Belonging was progressive, and varied according to time, effort, connections and visibility. Their belonging incorporated local, national and international connections, some direct, others imaginary. Some revealed what could be described as dual belonging, a sense of being at ease, or at home, in two cultures in different lands.

Comparing Whanganui-born participants, incomers and their responses to the environment and indigenous engagement revealed that there were many layers and many paths to belonging. Participants with ancestral or kin, through birth or marriage, had the strongest initial connections, indicating that birth assisted in belonging. Unlike Savage et al.'s (2005) Manchester study, which suggested that 'locals' did not retain "moral possession over place" (Savage et al. 2005:30), Whanganui 'born and bred's', still seemed to have a strong hold. This did not appear deliberate, but indicated where Whanganui was in terms of practices of belonging.

Many of the participants' practices aligned with Tuan's assertion that people were oriented to the places where they spent the most time, and that even strange places become familiar as we spend more time in them (1977:199). Even so, being familiar with, being born in, or electing to belong was not always sufficient to establish belonging. Temporal longevity assisted in developing attachments, increased one's knowledge and usually deepened belonging. Having ancestral connections and lengthy residence usually enhanced cultural and social capital, enabling some participants to take opportunities to inscribe the public landscape. (In addition, education and experience in and about place, through action and engagement extended and deepened belonging.)

Through environmental and cultural engagement, participants revealed 'home' as a physical, social and emotional space, a site of resistance and personal agency, and "an important locale within which (to) negotiate their daily lives" (Giddens 1984, as cited in Munro and Madigan 1999:107). This was evident in participant responses to what they perceived as assaults upon their belonging. Through their responses to, and descriptions of indigenous occupations, and/or environmental alteration, participants revealed "social and political processes of place making...(where) embodied practices...shape(d) identities and enable(d) resistances" (Gupta and Ferguson 1997:6). They were forced to confront the impact

of colonization as a result of these indigenous actions. They also revealed how indigenous people were engaging in place and enabling their own resistances. This combination indicated an altering political habitus in Aotearoa New Zealand.

As Pakeha people live longer in this land, and develop an understanding of, or engage with, Maori practices, they appeared to be establishing a deeper level of belonging. Their practices in place linked them inextricably to the environment through their knowledge of other cultures and an awareness of, and continuation of the practices which their ancestors had engaged in, including pride in physical labour, achievement and creativity.

I continue this discussion in the next chapter, but focus instead on how connections to people in a place can deepen belonging while the reactions of 'born and breds' can enhance or reduce it.



## Chapter Eight

### Community Engagement

*It's nice to meet people on your home social level, because you do relate differently...it's about giving of ourselves, and accepting and receiving what other people are like and what they've got to offer. Roselene*

#### Introduction

While familiarity with place enables belonging, and birth can enhance it, interpersonal relationships are vital in belonging. In Whanganui, the attitudes, concerns and actions of longer-term residents could impact on participant belonging, positively and negatively. In the previous chapter, I discussed how long-term residents and incomers engaged with the environment to create a layer of belonging. In this chapter, I describe and discuss how several incomers actively engaged in Whanganui life, and formed 'new kinds of solidarities' (Savage et al. 2005:53). I also review what factors could unsettle or impede belonging.

#### Progressions

The younger a participant was when they arrived in Whanganui, the more readily their belonging progressed, even when they had no control over the move. They were instantly introduced to particular communities through school attendance. Their subsequent engagement with the environment enabled them to make rapid associations with people and place.

Some youthful incomers recalled experiencing homesickness, resentment, anger and/or resignation about moving. Roselene, whose parents moved for political reasons and to be closer to kin, appeared to have accepted the move, perhaps because she was young, not quite six years old. Diane was eleven years old when her father relocated for business opportunities. "(We) came from Wellington. I lived in the middle of the city. I left all my friends behind. I think I cried every night for the first month I was here." After that she made friends, and settled down. Pamela's father relocated on promotion. Aged fifteen, Pamela took longer to settle. She related the changes she experienced, and the emotional reactions she experienced as a result of relocation. Her narrative also demonstrated how individuals can first feel alienated; and then, slowly, develop belonging, moving along a continuum as they become more familiar with people and environment (Kohn 2002).

When I arrived in Wanganui in the middle of my fifth form year...I had to go...to a co-ed school.<sup>147</sup> I was terrified at first because I had had nothing to do with boys...**(i)t was also a totally different environment.** I mean, I had to bike past sheep to get to school.<sup>148</sup> **I wondered what on earth I'd struck.** I also came across a far more sophisticated group of kids. They were having parties. They were actually drinking alcohol...their parents were providing. It absolutely horrified me...**(m)y fifth form year was pretty quiet.** Then I joined up with - I was a Girl Guide before I came down...**Mum got me into Rangers again.**<sup>149</sup> **I met up with a group of kids who weren't actually drinking...that made me a bit more comfortable. It took me a long time to make friends because...the kids in Wanganui had all got their friends. They had their own little clique, and it took a long time to sort of feel comfortable...I made the odd friend, but not really any...very close friends, not a group of friends. It wasn't until the following year**

<sup>147</sup> Pamela had attended a prestigious state girls' school.

<sup>148</sup> She was accustomed to using public transport.

<sup>149</sup> Guides New Zealand, a member of the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (Guides New Zealand 2000).

**when I joined the library staff at High School that I actually made a group of real friends**, a mixed group that actually hung out together and did all sorts of things together. (My emphasis)

Adults might anticipate that, at the age of fifteen, making friends would be straightforward. Pamela highlighted the strangeness of being a newcomer. She described a rural environment that contrasted with the city and rode a bicycle instead of on the bus. While this provided new freedoms, because she did not know people, she could not take advantage of having her own transport. The difficulties she experienced in breaking into social circles were also remarked on by adult incomers.

Joan G illuminated why this might be. She reflected, "If people have been together a long, long time they all seem to be in comfortable connections with each other. They think you are a bit odd." Other incomers also expressed frustration at what they perceived as the entrenched attitudes of those they regarded as locals. There was a perception that Wanganui 'locals' retained "moral possession over place" (Savage et al. 2005: 30). Joan G elaborated,

**The friends I've made, the close friends here ...they're not Wanganui people.** I can remember quite a few years ago meeting a lady and we used to chat occasionally and she came from the South Island too. And she said, a lady said to her one day, "How are you getting on here?" And she said, "Oh, a bit like this, you know, oh, all right." And this lady said, "I'll tell you something. **You'll make friends, and they'll be good friends. But they won't be Wanganui people.**" (Why is that, Joan, because that's been my experience pretty much, as well?) I don't know what it is. You only go so far. They won't look at you. They get terribly interested in their feet. They won't look at a stranger very often...(d)on't get me wrong. I met some very nice people here... (It's) just that - and other people have said this too - you can have them to your home numerous times, but you don't get invited back. (And you feel, well...?) What is it about me? They don't like me...(y)ou've got to draw people in...(w)e were always taught, not taught...(m)y parents did it. **And they were complete strangers in the country.** (But they showed you how, didn't they?) They must've...because I do tend to draw people in. (My emphasis)

Joan recalled her own experiences, and noted discussions with other incomers about Wanganui 'born and bred's'. She argued that people who left home, and returned, changed in the process, becoming more welcoming to outsiders than those who had always stayed home. She highlighted a different habitus, constructed through contact with other people and other places. Recalling her parents' practice of drawing people in, she indicated that she too had learned about how to include others through observing parental practice. Her narrative revealed that belonging could be processual, because she was "not taught. My parents **did** it" (my emphasis). They 'showed' her how. This emphasised how conduct could be transmitted intergenerationally through example. She also ensured that I understood her comments were reflective, not boastful. I expand on aspects of not belonging in Chapter Eleven. Below I discuss other factors which enhanced or enabled belonging.

## Generation

When Pamela described relocating in Whanganui, she also described the practices young incomers could involve themselves in to develop relationships. With parental support, she drew on past activities, Guides. Her own enthusiasm led to her involvement in a new activity, the library. Both measures introduced her to other people and enabled her to develop relationships within different groups. In time, she established her own links, and developed community knowledge and a history. She could claim belonging through education, environmental engagement and knowledge, employment, marrying in, bearing and raising children, and visible community involvement. These factors extended her relationships, enabled a more thorough understanding of Whanganui, provided intimate environmental knowledge, and introduced her to a range of residents. Knowledge of cultural codes most likely assisted. Even so, she ventured, "(Whanganui) didn't really feel like home until I had my children." Like others, her children provided the catalyst for choosing actively to belong.

Savage et al. emphasized the role mothering can play in enabling women to 'attach' to a community. They asserted that "mothering...demands the performance of appropriate activities on the behalf of children...(it) is...a key device inviting women" to settle. They argued that this "reinforce(d) the process of elective belonging itself with its disdain for locals and transients. Incoming mothers...talk(ed) about their children as a resource in narrating their belonging to their place of residence" (2005:57). They argued that respondents described "how having children enabled (them) to feel as if (they) belong(ed) to a community" (ibid). The networks were transient and frequently dissolved when the children moved on (ibid:59-60). By inserting themselves into a nodal point, like school or church, the Whanganui women similarly extended their contacts, and established other paths to belonging. Their actions reflected Berne's (1964) concept of finding social groups which accept us. None of the Whanganui participants 'disdained' the locals or transients, even though several found it difficult to 'break in' to existing groups.

June's experience of relocating to Whanganui in her seventies was very positive. This partly highlighted the value of agency when making life-altering decisions. Several factors promoted her belonging. Firstly, she had prior knowledge of Whanganui, gained through marrying in – "my husband lived here as a boy". Secondly, she visited the area with her husband after World War II and had kept a photographic record of their visit. Thirdly, she renewed contact with his childhood friends. Fourthly she had immediate kin living in the city. She remarked,

Belonging - I have had that feeling ever since I've come here. ***I've made friends. People wanted to be friends. We fitted in. I have family here.***

My son has moved here. He's living at Castlecliff. My other son in Tauranga and his wife have a land agent looking. They could end up living here too. (My emphasis)

Other women found similar factors enhanced their belonging, especially in 'making friends'. June's positive attitude was probably an intangible but additionally helpful factor in '(p)eople want(ing) to be friends'. She, Joan H and Margaret Mary also highlighted the value of neighbourliness, friendship, group membership, and community involvement as factors which enabled them to feel more settled. Joan H and Ruth G added home ownership into the equation.

Since Joan H arrived in Whanganui over 40 years ago, the family had developed relationships, bonds and history through visible commitment and continued involvement. Her narrative incorporated similar actions to Pamela's. As an adult, she had relocated frequently but had an extensive range of connections available through her husband and her children. She described the decision to move from the South Island as positive, because their extended family lived in the North Island. This paralleled the behaviour of young Aotearoa New Zealand-born travelers, who return 'home' to be nearer to kin and friends (Lidgard 1997).

Joan recalled,

Well the main thing was...all our parents...and all our families were in the North Island. So we really felt quite isolated down there...(w)e were pleased to get back to the North Island because it was so much easier to get to our friends and our relations in Hawke's Bay. (That still feels like home?) It must be the familiarity, probably...I've got friends there that I visit, and after I've been there a while, I go and see the...hills from my other sister's. It's the small town, I think...there's only the one long main street, but it's surprising, you know. I can walk up the main street and not see a soul I know, now. And yet, I still like going there...(o)nce we'd settled down and Colin had got his new job...we felt as though we had come home...we really feel as if we'll never leave here...(y)ou know, when we shifted, we'd had ten houses in our first ten years of married life.

Joan and her family also engaged in community activities. This was an important move in developing belonging. Church groups, sporting activities, and organisations linked to the children's education were included.

Since I was married...yes, every time we moved that was one of the things we did. Go to church, to try and meet people. ***It's surprising how hard it is when you shift to another place. You have to work twice as hard to get to know people...You're not accepted straight away.*** (My emphasis)

After her husband changed employers,

We never looked back. That's when we felt as though we'd come home, because we bought our own home...we were two doors from the Bennetts and the Gray's were over the back. So we were sort of one big happy family, and we just felt as though we'd come home, just by doing that. Mind you, it took the children a while to settle down. But I'd say they were happy in Wanganui.

Joan H described joining other groups when her daughters were older, extending her community links, and expanding family belonging.

***I went to Scottish Country dancing...My two girls went too...We had that in common. I started golf...(t)he children were still at school then...(n)ow I work in the op shop once a month...it's a real rag shop. And (we) do meals-on-wheels once a month. Or, if we're called, we do extra, because they are short at the moment, and I'm treasurer for the Women's Fellowship...that involves two meetings...I'm in a house group. It's sort of a Bible Study House Group...Colin and I do the readings at church three times a month...and I garden and (play) bowls. I try to walk but I haven't got time.*** (My emphasis)

Joan's narrative reflected Pamela's and June's. All engaged directly in a range of community activities, some of necessity, like school for Pamela; others for pleasure, like golf for Joan; and to assist the community, like delivering meals-on-wheels.

While children could be a resource in "narrating belonging to (a mother's) place of residence" (ibid:57), relocating with older children did not seem to provide the same openings, as Margaret Mary found. She recalled neighbours as crucial initial contacts. She described the impact of political encouragement,<sup>150</sup> and social acceptance for women working, as factors which had diminished neighbourliness. For her, belonging was

gradual...(w)hen we first came to Wanganui there were only a

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<sup>150</sup> In February 2005, the Prime Minister, Helen Clark, announced a programme to encourage women with children to work (Taylor 2005).

few...ladies we saw on a regular basis, our neighbours. But **one of them came along one day and said, "Would you like to come and have a cup of tea with us next week?"** I said, "Oh, that would be nice. I've gotten my mother with me." "That's all right," she said. "Bring her." We had our neighbours from across the roads, and both sides. **It was lovely. That's sort of how we got to know them...(i)n Auckland, I got to know my neighbours because my children went to school...that's how you get to know people, when your children are (primary) school age. You help with galas and things...(b)ut (neighbours) don't seem to visit...I find...well, fairly recently, I think it's because such a lot of people go to work.** For instance, **I can walk down Bullock Drive in the daytime, and I don't see a soul...**I think they're all working, though there must be some elderly people. I know there's an elderly gentleman down there. I stopped and talked to him one day...(b)ut you do have to make an effort to talk...to them. They're friendly enough...(w)e don't have such a connected community. (What do you do that makes you still feel a part of the place?) I suppose it's just, well, because I know people now, and I know where my friends are. I don't feel isolated or anything. (My emphasis)

Her reflections reiterated Savage et al.'s (2005) argument that mothering impacts on belonging, but perhaps only with children of a certain age. They also noted that the mothering networks were transient, and often dissolved beyond primary school level.

Margaret Mary highlighted how social change could reduce community contact, and how isolation was reduced when one maintained ongoing relationships with kin and friends. In Chapter Eleven, I discuss how Margaret Mary sensed her belonging altering due to ill-health. Her later comments about it being difficult to meet local residents showed how social change could impact negatively on older residents. Accustomed to performing belonging in particular ways, when changes occurred older people were forced to find new ways to belong. Margaret Mary and her age cohorts solved the problem by continuing to meet socially, formally and informally, and through involvement in community activities.

While Margaret Mary indicated a reduction in neighbourhood interaction, Joan B revealed a possible adaptation. Her inventory included several photographs of neighbours sharing a festive meal (Fig 50). They included members of Whanganui's multi-cultural community. The gathering indicated that neighbourly sharing might have evolved to accommodate women working and parenting by scheduling the gathering for the evening rather than during the day.





© Joan Bullock Morrell

**Fig 50: Sharing a pre-Christmas meal.**

Doing so enabled them to celebrate the festive season together before family demands took over. The evidence did not preclude the possibility that similar gatherings may have occurred in earlier eras, but indicated that neighbourly engagement continued. It also proved the continued existence of small, interactive, neighbourhood collectives.

Changes in employment practices with more householders, particularly women, engaging in paid employment, appeared to have a flow-on effect, as discussed above. Margaret Mary mourned the reduction in community cohesion, partly because of the feelings of isolation it engendered. Her comments suggested she no longer relied on neighbours for social contact, or support. She emphasized the benefits for older people in joining or maintaining links with established groups. Doing so maintained belonging, and reduced personal isolation. Margaret Mary's sense of belonging was also strongly linked to kin. She felt linked to the community through the family, saying, "With the grandchildren it's nice because, well, you're living with them, and you live their lives in lots of ways, through them."

The strength of these bonds was evident in her photographic inventory. Images included her granddaughter's birthday 'with the children' at home; the decorated Christmas tree, her grandson's cardboard box models, and the family 'bottoms up' in the swimming pool (Fig 51).



© Margaret Watt

**Fig. 51: Installing a backyard swimming pool.**

Installing the swimming pool involved family members, young and old, and some neighbours, but only children. “They put water into it and smoothed it out. They looked so funny, all bottoms up. I think even the little girls from next door were there,” Margaret Mary said. Her comment revealed a rather wry Aotearoa New Zealand sense of humour. The photograph demonstrated family involvement in constructing an item for collective enjoyment. Their mutual engagement in physical labour enhanced their bonds through joint environmental inscription, and shared achievement in completing the task. Ongoing interactions, arising from sharing the pool with family, friends and neighbours, were likely to further expand belonging.

Participants disclosed other factors which assisted in progressing their belonging. In June’s narrative, the direct, practical intervention of a formal contact, her real estate agent, opened unexpected doors. Other incomers have noted how similar interventions enabled them to develop belonging more rapidly. June recalled,

I went along to League of Mothers...I thought...“through them, I’ll make contacts and friends.” ***But my land agent...this was in February, said, “Do you play bridge?” I said, “No, but I like cards”...(s)he said, “Well, there’s a Bridge Club just round the corner. They’ve got learners’ lessons coming up in May”...in May she rang me again. I thought she went the extra mile...I went along. I learned to play Bridge...I’ve made a lot of friends through Bridge...*** I play privately once a week in a group...I still feel Hamilton’s my home...but now that I’ve come to Wanganui, because I’ve known about it for so long, and heard about it... (My emphasis)

As an older incomer, June’s narrative highlighted the importance of continuing engagement in familiar activities. The insider’s efforts in assisting June to engage more deeply in the community was an important and valuable factor in deepening June’s Whanganui belonging.

June’s practices contained elements of elective belonging but her belonging was also ascribed and/or accepted. This has been researched in other contexts (Mars 1999). Whanganui participants also indicated that incomers sometimes had to

make a conscious effort to accept belonging when it was ascribed, or offered. Ruth J and I were discussing the CoF one day when I said, "I think it almost doesn't matter what you do, if you don't have that sense inside yourself of being accepted by the people here." Ruth agreed.

That's right...and ***it has to be you that works at it to do it. Nobody can do it for you.*** Coming into the group, I felt like an outsider for quite (a while), even when they...asked me if I'd like to run as president. ***I thought well, that's funny really...because I don't belong to this group properly yet. (So what changed it?) I think it was me making...the decision that I did belong to the group.*** (My emphasis)

For Ruth, acknowledging and accepting belonging followed ascription. Like others before her, Ruth then decided she did belong. This does not seem to be like elective belonging. Although Ruth chose to relocate to Whanganui, belonging did not really occur until she felt herself accepted, and included, by longer-term residents. She then accepted belonging, rather than choosing, earlier, to belong.

Being invited by 'locals' to engage in community activities enhanced June's and Ruth J's belonging. Both invitations occurred in what were relatively public arenas. Another practice which enhanced incomer belonging was being invited into residents' homes. This was indicated in personal inventories, which included photographs of people working, volunteering, eating, playing or praying together. Several included celebrations like Christmas, children's and adults' birthday parties, regular family gatherings, and community activities. Domestic celebrations, such as these, generally require invitations, and pre-planning. Participants regarded entertaining, or being entertained, in private homes as a valuable way of getting to know others better. When long-time residents, incomers or not, went beyond what was perceived as the accepted habitus, and actively included other incomers in invitations, incomer belonging was enhanced. Most participants emphasised the importance of accepting such invitations. Roselene reiterated the value of making such invitations.

It's only by inviting people into your home that you really get to know them, only by being in your house in your own environment. Perhaps you let your guard down...I think it's nice to meet people on your home social level, because you do relate differently. By getting to know people, and getting that sense of belonging, you can follow up on things. I think it's all about giving of ourselves, and accepting and receiving what other people are like, and what they've got to offer.

When Margaret Mary celebrated her 80th birthday at home, she included CoF members as guests. By doing so, she stepped outside usual Friends' practice. Several participants commented favourably. They had rarely been invited to other members' homes. When they had invited people to their own homes, they had felt hurt when no return invitation eventuated. They attributed this absence to resident shyness, and/or to their having so many existing contacts that they had neither need nor time for more.

Being invited into a person's home – their personal, private space – signaled a willingness to reduce personal boundaries, to engage more deeply, and to reveal more than was visible through casual public contacts. It also signified caring and concern for others, an embedded aspect of social habitus. The lack of a return invitation suggested a lack of caring, just as not accepting an invitation indicated a reluctance to engage further, or develop a relationship. Ruth G confirmed that being invited to special occasions enhanced belonging. Of an invitation to a friend's wedding, she said, "It makes you feel as if you are belonging." Kathy remembered, "I started working so I met heaps of people and was invited out and invited them back home. (So that's something that's important too, inviting people back?) Yes."

June indicated the value of being invited to join others in external activities because it enabled belonging to continue through maintenance of existing



relationships. It could also boost self-esteem. She had expected to have a quiet 2004 winter.

Because I've had no car, I made no arrangements to play Bridge this winter. But people have asked me to sub, and I've played about eight times. We're in the paper." She showed me the news clipping. "I've played with different people. (Perhaps we recognise belonging when the local newspaper prints our names as successful). "I hadn't thought of that. I thought I'd show it to the family so they know I'm not on the shelf.

She chuckled, adding that several invitations were from men. Such invitations enhanced belonging because

(b)elonging is a feeling that you are still worthwhile. It gives you a boost (when people seek you out). You don't get depressed. You don't feel, "Oh, nobody loves me." You feel included. I imagine that if you were on the outer it would be a horrible feeling. I often wonder why I have been accepted because I don't always feel worthwhile. One half of me is shy. On the other, I'll do things, and put myself forward.

## Exclusion

As June indicated above, not belonging was undesirable, and could cause unhappiness. Being excluded indicated a lack of acceptance, and diminished belonging. Participants identified several practices as exclusionary. Some were specific, others were generic. Actions which disabled belonging included not being welcomed, or being actively and directly excluded, as in "We're having a party. But you're not invited." One of the reasons that this sort of statement hurt so much was that those uttering it had stepped outside the accepted habitus. Usually, a lack of invitation was not expressed directly, but committed through omission (Visweswaran 1994). People usually learned of their exclusion after, rather than before, the event. It was still hurtful, and could lead to extreme reactions.

Amanda commented, "You know you belong when you get included. If friends leave you out, and don't invite you to things, you don't belong." When I asked Amanda how not belonging could make people feel, she responded, "Suicidal." Her mother, sister and I stared at her, shocked, because speaking lightly about suicide is not appropriate. Returning our startled gaze, she emphasized, "I'm joking," and then described emotions similar to those June had mentioned.

"(Not belonging makes you feel) unhappy, lonely, miserable. You think, "What the hell did I do wrong?" You feel confused, because you don't know what you did, that they're not letting you in. You wonder why they behave like that, when you thought you did belong."

Although other participants described episodes, or moments, of feeling unwanted or unneeded, these were usually short-lived. When they persisted, participants described feeling alienated. One explained,

I am probably not your best subject. I have never felt I belonged here in Wanganui, never ever. People said, "It's a very friendly place etc. They are, up to a point. I think it's a two-way thing. We probably got off on the wrong foot...(b)ut maybe this isn't for recording.

I turned off the camera and listened to her story of deliberate exclusion. The insensitivity of the people involved astounded me. I asked,

(When you say 'Wanganui people' what do you mean?) "The 'born and breds' here. I have been here a long time. But in all that time, only one Wanganui person has ever said, "Come with me. We're going to do so and so. Would you like to come?" I have some good friends but Wanganui people say, the following day, "I went out with my mates". But they never ask you. I have got good friends but they are not Wanganui 'born and breds'. Wanganui people cannot branch out. In the street, they don't look at you. They cannot deal with outsiders. If something did

not go into the computer, (she tapped her head), when they were young, they cannot deal with outsiders. I think I make them feel uncomfortable.

Another participant described her experience of rejection, equally hurtful. The episode had emphasised the impermanence of community involvement and employment, and roused a feeling of insecurity.

Being part of the community and working as I do...even that doesn't feel one hundred per cent safe. I've just had an experience where I was rejected, so I am never completely confident that I will be kept on. I have experience and expertise but someone might come along with more enthusiasm, so they're (the jobs) are not permanent.

These comments indicated that belonging could be fluid, and could be impacted upon negatively by direct and indirect actions, collective and individual. Belonging ebbed and flowed not only according to personal, visible, demonstrated commitment to the collective, but according to the commitment the collective was prepared to make to individuals. The participant experiences highlighted how acceptance or rejection, friendliness and standoffishness, could facilitate or disable belonging. They suggested certain practices enabled, and others precluded, belonging. I continue this discussion in Chapter Eleven, combined with participant reflections about belonging.

## **Conclusion**

Participant practices discussed in this chapter reflected Aotearoa New Zealand habitus, a desire to belong, and the concept that people 'ought' to belong. I have described practices which participants paid heed to, or engaged in, and which they revealed as enhancing and/or enabling, or reducing and/or disabling belonging. Factors which assisted belonging, and often caused participants to make decisions about where they would dwell, related to geographical proximity of kin; marrying in, usually leading to increased connections through spousal relationships; relocating with spouse or parents, and developing a history through education, or longevity of residence, combined with active engagement in community activities; and/or having children.

Credence was given to engagement in activities which enabled the growth of interpersonal connections. These included paid employment, recreational, leisure and community-oriented activities, with the associated development of personal communities of interest. Such involvement enabled the creation, extension, and/or maintenance of contacts. In time, it led to the establishment of personal networks. As Savage et al. (2005) asserted, children often provided the incentive for younger women to 'put down roots'. Some participants included property ownership as an important aspect of belonging. Others reiterated the importance of finding amenable collectives, and the importance of visiting several groups to find what best suited oneself.

Changes in social practices altered the timing of but not necessarily the practices which enabled belonging. With more women engaging in paid employment, the level and timing of neighbourhood contacts had altered, often reducing, or moving gatherings from day-time to evening. In the suburbs, earlier habits of joining neighbours casually for morning or afternoon tea appeared to have diminished. It was replaced by pre-arranged gatherings of friends. Earlier customs of attending formal church, recreational or leisure meetings continued. Women in paid employment, particularly those with children living at home, had less leisure time. Their social exchanges more likely occurred at work, during office hours, and staff morning and afternoon breaks. These participants often maintained contact with former colleagues and friends through email, telephone conversations, occasional evening 'catch-ups', or through pre-arranged visits. Paid employment extended participant belonging into a more public arena but appeared to have resulted in reduced belonging to the residential neighbourhood. For most participants, their



personal space, and the privacy of home and yard remained important.

Not belonging was a negative experience for several participants. Some noted that when personal attempts to engage within groups were rejected or stymied before they began, belonging became elusive, or difficult to establish. I discuss this aspect in more detail Chapter Eleven. In the next chapter, I discuss codes of conduct and the ways in which knowledge of these can facilitate belonging, focusing on a particular code of hospitality, that of 'taking tea'.

## Chapter Nine

### Codes of hospitality

*Good news, let's have a cup of tea. Bad news, let's have a cup of tea.  
Waiting for news, let's have a cup of tea. Kathy*

#### Introduction

Knowledge of cultural codes is an important factor in enabling belonging. Hospitality is a concept contained in most cultures and discussed in different contexts. Offering and accepting hospitality demands certain cultural knowledge, including how to behave, dress, converse, and recognise the cultural signals. It often involves providing and accepting food, drink, comfort and company. One also needs to understand what is being offered beyond food and drink, and to understand the requirements and responses which may vary according to context. This chapter focuses on everyday codes of hospitality in Aotearoa New Zealand culture focusing on a specific code, 'taking tea'.<sup>151</sup> Firstly, I discuss what hospitality means in general; secondly, I provide a brief history about 'taking tea' and its rise in popularity; and, thirdly, I outline the codes and practices around 'taking tea' in Aotearoa New Zealand culture.

#### Hospitality

Hospitality is offered in most, if not all, cultures and discussed in a variety of contexts (Park 1991; Shostak 1990; Threadgold 2000). It is practiced and experienced at many levels, in private and public, in pairs, groups and collectives. The food and drink offered might differ, but generally codes of hospitality act like 'guiding walls' (Serpentina 2004). They serve functions similar to those of origin narratives, which I discussed in Chapter Five. 'Hospitality' may be defined simply as "the friendly and generous reception and entertainment of guests or strangers" (D. Thompson 1995:656). Although one might be supplying the same sorts of items as one provides to those in need, 'need' implies "stand(ing) in want of, requir(ing), e.g. a new coat, a glass of water" (ibid:911). Providing what a person needs as opposed to providing hospitality requires engagement on a different level. Filling a need can imply providing the basics without developing a relationship. Providing, and responding to, hospitality usually demands meaningful engagement, even if an ongoing relationship is not pursued.

Sometimes, codes of hospitality appear as if they are traditions. They are linked to the past through history, practice, use of material objects, and custom. Codes of hospitality incorporate routines, may occur at specific times in particular spaces and places, and before, during, and after ritual events. They can seem a little like ritual, if one follows Gluckman's (1962) argument that ritual was a way of managing social relations. In industrial society, ritual was less concerned with the sacred than in pre-industrial subsistence societies. Incorporated in a range of social relationships, ritual could be viewed on a continuum, with religious acts at one extreme and social etiquette at the other. (Gluckman 1962). Hospitality provides a way of managing social relationships. It also offers emotional and physical nourishment, and a means for engaging with others. Behaviour is often proscribed and involves performativity, enactment and embodiment of cultural practices.

Knowledgeable engagement in cultural codes provides another path to belonging, another twist in the rhizomatic fibre. Hesitant interaction is welcomed, because it demonstrates a desire to be more intensely involved. This signals a desire to belong. Refusal to engage implies unwillingness to extend a relationship

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<sup>151</sup> Although I refer to 'taking tea', similar processes are involved and emotions aroused when people share other forms of hospitality, drinks and food.

and may be read as rejection. I next provide brief historical information about 'taking tea' and its development as a British tradition, after which I discuss 'tea taking' and its implications in belonging.

## Tea history

Finding historical information about 'taking tea' was straightforward with extensive material available from national tea boards, museums and libraries.<sup>152</sup> In the ethnographic context, less direct material seemed directly available although many ethnographers referred to codes of hospitality (Lavie 1990; Panourgia 1995; Peters 1990). Peters described the importance that Bedouin attributed to 'eating together'. They regarded it as a way of developing strong, ongoing bonds, and providing fellowship and protection (ibid:190). Lavie detailed Mzeina hospitality protocols, including exchanging 'hugs and kisses-in-the-air greetings', provision of food, timely silences and conversation (1990:172-173). Kato explored the 'well-researched' Japanese tea ceremony as it pertained to women's empowerment in modern Japan (2004:preface). In the Aotearoa New Zealand context, women's stories were the most likely to contain images and references to 'taking tea' and providing food (Barker 2000; Herda 1990; Reid 1999). This probably highlighted the gendering of food preparation in the domestic context. It seemed to reinforce Daley's contention that women and men focus on different aspects of the same events and report events differently (1998). Although I focus on 'tea taking', hospitality included providing a wide range of food and drinks, and associated comfort. Drinks could be hot, cold, alcoholic or soft. Food included snacks, light meals and lavish dinners. Extending and accepting an invitation was an indication of willingness to become involved. Refusal to offer or accept an invitation could be read as a rejection from either party. Sometimes, not offering hospitality, or declining it when offered, was regarded as transgressing cultural mores (McNeish 1994:personal communication).

Although India claimed to be the largest producer of tea internationally, tea cultivation and drinking was regarded as originating in China over 4500 years ago. Drinking tea became popular at every social level from the Chinese court to commoners. Eventually, tea drinking became popular elsewhere in Asia and Europe (Pettigrew 2001). In Britain, where most research participants had connections, "Anna, 7th Duchess of Bedford, is reputed to have originated the idea of afternoon tea in the early 1800s...to ward off the hunger pangs between lunch and dinner" (British Tea Council 2004). It was even the subject of a children's nursery rhyme (Mother Goose n.d.). In Hong Kong where a museum is devoted to tea history, it was recorded that "(a)rdent tea enthusiasts often have their own special teapots, which (they take to)...their tea drinking sessions" (Marimari.com 1999-2002). Tea drinking accessories are marketed internationally. They include items for storing, infusing, serving and drinking tea, and a range of novelty items (Downeast Balsam Fir Company 2004). In Aotearoa New Zealand during the middle decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, afternoon tea became "an area of public life where some women can excel" (Park 1991:11).

This brief synopsis indicated that 'taking tea' has become increasingly widespread since its introduction over four thousand years ago. It can involve using an extensive variety of objects, sources and products. 'Taking tea' is integrated into social activities, and absorbed into everyday life. With tea drinking incorporated into their ancestor's social lives, Aotearoa New Zealand settlers were, like their compatriot migrants to other Commonwealth countries, positioned to transport and continue the custom. It was such a familiar daily occurrence that few people stopped to think about it, although most participated in it regularly.

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<sup>152</sup> These included the British Tea Council 2004; Chiew n.d.; Courtauld & Hunt 1991; Teaboard India 2004; TeaConcepts Staff with help from Julia from Russia 1999-2004.

'Taking tea' has evolved with its own language. Early rural pioneers 'boiled the billy'<sup>153</sup> over an open fire or took a corked bottle of cold milkless tea to work; their urban counterparts 'put the kettle on' over a wood, coal or gas range. People now use electricity to 'boil the jug'.

'Tea taking' occurred in everyday life in private and public. Many households began the day with a pot, cup or mug of hot tea, served with or without milk, and/or sugar. Although some people preferred drinks like coffee and chocolate, the processes, practices and codes were similar. People accepted offers of tea (rather than coffee) as a comfort, to celebrate, or to fill time. As Kathy and several other participants noted, making tea was a frequent practice: "Good news, let's have a cup of tea. Bad news, let's have a cup of tea. Waiting for news, let's have a cup of tea."

In social situations, observation indicated that most people treated tea in a more utilitarian manner than coffee, hot chocolate or alcohol. They inhaled the aromas of the latter, and savoured hot chocolate, or alcohol on the tongue, sometimes emitting sighs of delight, or rolling their eyes to signal enjoyment. Many cafés featured specialty coffees, a change which occurred during the 1990s. A range of coffees and serving styles were available. Some office workers made forays from their workplace to their favourite cafés where they bought what they regarded as 'the best coffee in town'. They could be seen returning to their offices carrying disposable mugs of hot, fresh coffee.

## Occurrence

I uncovered 'tea taking' processes and practices, which reflected the immigrant British and European background of Pākehā women, and evidence of intergenerational transmission of the associated codes. The nature of hospitality is such that is always provided to, or for, others. Offering hospitality was always active, and occurred between or among people. It was offered where relationships existed, or when people wanted to develop, encourage, expand or maintain them. Occasions could be formal or informal, public or private, business or personal, tenuous or long-term. Because hospitality required interaction it could not be provided by oneself to oneself. One could treat oneself in a similar way, setting up a situation so that one could feel pampered.

I enjoyed hospitality and engaged in 'tea taking' frequently. As I noted earlier, this research involved participant-observation and interviewing people in public, semi-public and private domestic environments. Visits generally included an offer of hospitality. Mostly, we drank 'tea' together, and nibbled on savory and/or sweet food. 'Taking tea' occurred when I visited people individually, in small groups, at business meetings, when mourning, after funerals, and during birthday celebrations. June's comment about Mahjong Club meetings indicated that this form of hospitality was standard. "We pay fifty cents to the club. They've got to pay for the rent etc, and we have a cup of tea and biscuits."

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<sup>153</sup> Billy' - Australian term for a "tin or enamel cooking pot with a lid and wire handle for use outdoors" (D.Thompson 1995:126).

This was reiterated on occasions like rest-home games afternoons (Fig 52).



**Fig 52: Rest-home residents 'taking tea'.**

Rest-home residents enjoyed conversation over 'tea' and store-bought biscuits during an afternoon spent playing board and card games. Purchased, instead of home-baked, biscuits probably signalled an increase in their commercial availability, cost effectiveness, and time constraints on kitchen staff. Serving them on a plate, rather than from a packet, indicated the continuation of past custom. This showed that staff were aware of the rules of conduct surrounding the serving of 'tea'.

Knowing the rules enabled people to engage in cultural codes and assisted belonging. In what follows, I discuss three 'tea taking' occasions in detail, drawing parallels, and describing differences from other occurrences. The first involves a formal invitation, extended to me as an acquaintance. It arose from my request to interview a participant. Most interviews conducted in private homes involved similar actions and routines. Similar processes took place between friends and relatives, although the formality was probably reduced. The second discussion reflects on 'taking tea' in a semi-public arena, while the third details the practices and processes surrounding 'tea taking' during periods of mourning. This included domestic and public spaces.

I also discuss what 'taking tea' signifies and achieves in regard to belonging. The events were recorded from an outsider's perspective, but drawn from my research experience. The absence of photographs during mourning periods emphasized the frequent silencing of grief amongst Pākehā.<sup>154</sup>

Each event provided insights into practices of hospitality, and revealed the incorporation of past practices and some changes.

<sup>154</sup> Videos of funerals were being made more frequently. When a family requested it, a funeral director might arrange for the funeral service to be filmed. Sometimes a family friend would do so. In a funeral I videoed I did not film grief directly. I concentrated on the ritual and only filmed individuals who were directly involved in the service.



## Hospitality at home

The occupant of the house is expecting a visitor. She is not entirely sure what form the visit will take but, as the Host,<sup>155</sup> she wants to be prepared. The action occurs 'backstage' in the kitchen, and 'front stage', in the adjacent dining room and lounge. Before the visitor arrived she ensures the house is clean and tidy. She might vacuum or sweep the floor, dust the shelves, plump up the cushions and place fresh flowers in a vase. Depending on the season, these might be a tiny posy of winter flowers, or a larger vase of more prolific summer flowers.

Next she prepares a tray, probably removing it from a shelf or the cupboard where it is stored. She might choose a pretty tray cloth from the fragranced drawer in the dresser where she keeps special items. She will have ironed the cloths before putting them away, but checks to ensure sure they are flat and smooth. If not she will re-iron one, smoothing it with the heat. Placing the cloth on the tray, Host selects two cups, two saucers and two side plates from an adjacent cupboard.



**Fig 53: Tray prepared for morning 'tea' with a visitor.**

Setting the tray (Fig 53) with this cluster of material items denotes the special nature of the occasion, and possibly a little nervousness on the host's part. The setting indicates that she knows the rules of hospitality, and how to honour her guests. Doing so probably enables the continuation of the host's self-esteem, and ensures that guest does not judge her as lacking in cultural knowledge, and therefore attributes her with less cultural capital. The ironed lace tray-cloth, the matching fine quality tea-set, with its stylish cups, saucers, side plates, and teaspoons, the folded paper serviettes, milk jug and sugar bowl are accessories to the practice. The plate of home-baked cakes denotes further effort, particularly because store-bought items are frequently served in similar situations. The absence of a plate beneath the left-hand cup signals that Host does not intend eating, further emphasising the effort being made to provide hospitality. If she were alone, Host

<sup>155</sup> I refer to the 'occupant of the house', Host, and Guest to define the participants' roles.

might only have a cup of hot liquid but, because she has invited a guest, she provides a snack. On her own, she would probably use a utilitarian cup or a mug. For a guest, she chooses to use good cups. They will not be the most utilitarian. They might be the best. They are more likely to be in-between. For a birthday party she might use the finest china she has, a risky practice because fine china is delicate. Decorated porcelain cups with floral sprays and a fine gold rim would be usual among older women; particularly those over seventy.



**Fig 54: Home baked goods, clockwise from front left, sultana biscuits, fruit cake, Māori kisses,<sup>156</sup> and Russian slice.<sup>157</sup>**

The plate, (Fig 54, front left) is an example of this style of china. Younger women might combine the traditional or old-style china with something more modern but of equal quality. The other two plates also typified the china many women used for formal, private, 'tea'. Except for the stainless steel dish (front right), the plates are probably between fifty and seventy years old. Each item was sliced into single servings. They were not fragile, hot or likely to crumble, and could be eaten without using cutlery.

After placing the items neatly on the tray, with the plates beneath their matching cups and saucers, cups upright ready for filling, Host returns to the cupboard for a matching milk jug and sugar bowl. She does not know whether Guest will take sugar or milk so fills both. She places a teaspoon on each saucer, and another beside the sugar bowl. This indicates that the spoon has not been used before. It signals that Host is a person who cares for her home and her reputation. A sugar-encrusted spoon in the sugar bowl would indicate carelessness or lack of attention to detail. It could also suggest lack of household hygiene.

Next she takes down her 'good' teapot. Normally, she would drop a teabag into a mug or cup, use her usual china or metal teapot. Today she chooses a

<sup>156</sup> I felt awkward when I learned what these biscuits were called, although no-one else indicated discomfort. It suggested a lack of cultural awareness of indigene in this section of Pākehā society.

<sup>157</sup> I was not discomforted by the name, Russian slice, as it seemed to indicate the origin of the cake.

porcelain pot. Once, it would probably have been British-made. Now it might be designed in one country and manufactured in another, possibly South-East Asia. For a birthday party, or a large gathering, Host might use a silver tea service, complete with hot-water pot. For only two people that would be 'over the top' – extreme. Host takes pleasure in the fine china, sunlight glinting on the golden knob of the lid. She rinses away barely noticeable specks of dust, and inspects the spout for stains. None are visible, so she dries the pot with a soft cloth or tea-towel. She places it gently on the bench,<sup>158</sup> beside the electric jug.

Returning to the cupboard, Host chooses a plate for the food she will serve. She selects a small plate, since this is morning 'tea'. Her guest is likely to have eaten breakfast recently and will not want much to eat. It would be impolite to provide nothing, but could cause her guest embarrassment if she provided too much choice. She treads a fine line between generosity and overprovision. If it were afternoon 'tea', she might choose to serve more items. Afternoon 'tea' is usually served several hours after lunch, and several hours before the evening meal, so people are likely to be hungrier. From a cupboard she removes two plastic sealed boxes and a lidded tin, the former usual in 20<sup>th</sup> century New Zealand, the latter a relic of her past. Possessing and using this indicates that she is not young; while the former indicates the era the action occurs in.

Removing the lids, Host lifts a packet of savory biscuits from one, home-baked, sweet biscuits from another, and a store-bought cake from the third. From the refrigerator she takes butter or margarine, a savory spread, relish or pickle, and a small packet of mild cheese. From an adjacent drawer she removes a small stainless steel bread-and-butter knife. She smoothes butter and savory spread on four crackers, slices and places cheese on four others, and arranges them all on the plate. This is enough. Should Guest want only savory items there will be enough to offer savory items twice. Deciding that the plate is too small to accommodate sweet items as well, Host lifts a matching plate from the cupboard. She positions four biscuits on one side, and small slices of cake on the other. In an informal situation, or where the guests are close kin or friends, savoury and sweet items might be served on the same plate, or even from the tin or box. The tray is large enough to contain both plates and the other china.

Host covers the prepared tray with a fine mesh lace-edged cloth, also stored in the dining room dresser. It might be hand-painted, possibly a family heirloom, inherited from a mother, grandmother, auntie, or other female relative. It is likely to be cream or white, and will protect the food from insects. If the items being served were creamy or likely to stain the food cover, Host might use a store-bought stiffened cover, high enough to clear the items and wide enough to cover a large plate. If she were taking 'a plate' to a meeting, she might cover the food with plastic wrap, a paper napkin or a clean tea towel. Next she fills the electric jug with water from the kitchen tap. Glancing at the clock on the electric stove, she notes that Guest is due any minute. She returns the jug to the bench and presses the small knob at the back to turn it on and heat the water. She leans against the bench, gazing out of the window into the sunshine sparkling on the plants. Noises emanate from the jug as the element in its base begins to heat the water.

Host steps into the lounge to see whether her visitor has arrived. She looks discreetly through the window to the street. Her visitor has just parked her car in the concrete driveway. Host returns to the kitchen for a last look at the tray, and pours hot water into the teapot. This warms it up, so that when the tea and hot water are added, the tea will stay hot for longer. Host knows that if she does not do so, the teapot will absorb some of the heat and the tea will be less flavoursome.

The visitor knocks on the front door and waits for Host to open it. She does

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<sup>158</sup> Bench surfaces include formica, stainless steel, slate, wood, or laminate. Some homes heat water electrically, others prefer gas.



not know her well, and this is her first visit. It would be inappropriate, or even rude, to open the door herself, or approach by way of the back door. If Host was a close friend, she might knock and enter, or walk around to the back door. Again she should knock, but could open it, put her head inside and call out a greeting to let Host know she had arrived. Host might then hurry to the door, calling her to 'come in.' Since these two are recently acquainted, Host opens the front door. "Good morning," she greets her guest. "Good morning," Guest responds. "Come on in," Host invites Guest. "Let me take your coat." Guest hands Host her coat. "I'll hang it in the bedroom. Don't forget it, will you?" she cautions. She leads Guest into the lounge and directs her to a seat. They chat briefly, probably about the weather or Host's garden.

"Would you like a cup of tea, or coffee?" Host asks. "I'd like tea," Guest responds. If Host offered only one item, Guest could politely suggest an alternative, perhaps hot water, to provide Host with an option, and avoid embarrassment. Other guests might ask for coffee. In that case, Host might use instant coffee. On special occasions, or during the evening, she might prepare filtered or percolated coffee. In this situation, she might not want to take the time required. She neither knows Guest well enough to leave her sitting on her own, nor to invite her backstage to the kitchen. Host returns to the kitchen, and switches the jug on. She carries the prepared tray into the lounge and places it on a low table. Perching on the edge of a chair, she chats with Guest while the jug boils.

In a few minutes she returns to the kitchen where she empties the hot water from the teapot. She takes the tea-caddy, tin or packet from the bench, and spoons three teaspoonfuls of tea into the pot. She has been taught to use one spoonful for each person 'taking tea' and add one 'for the pot'. Some people would find this too strong, and would reduce the number of spoonfuls. Host pours the freshly boiled water over the tea leaves. She could use teabags, but prefers the flavour of leaf tea. Measuring the tea involves effort, but when providing hospitality one understands that making an effort is part of the process. Host places the lid on the teapot and slides a tea-cosy<sup>159</sup> over it, leaving the spout and handle protruding.

Host carries the pot carefully into the lounge. She places it on the tray. "I'll let it draw for a moment," she says. "Do you take milk?" she asks Guest who nods in assent. "Yes, thank you," she replies. Host pours a small quantity, perhaps two teaspoonfuls, of milk into one cup. She replaces the jug and puts a hand on the teapot handle. She might turn it three times, gently 'to mix the leaves and water' together. She lifts the pot and pours a small quantity into Guest's cup. Others would add the milk last depending on what they had been taught, or their taste preference.

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<sup>159</sup> Made of wool or woven fabric, sometimes padded, the cosy keeps the heat from escaping as rapidly.



**Fig 55: Ruth J pouring tea.**

"Is that strong enough?" Host asks. Guest nods. "Yes, thank you," she replies, remembering her good manners and using formal, courteous language and a moderate tone. Host completes pouring the tea, places the teapot on the tray and passes the filled cup, with saucer and plate beneath to Guest. "Use the table beside you," she suggests. She then offers Guest sugar. Guest declines and Host then pours her own tea, first placing a teaspoon in the cup. She does not add milk. "I prefer mine black," she says, breaking what could be an uncomfortable silence, since these women have spent little time together. Host does not add that she has learned that fine porcelain could break when filled directly with fresh hot tea. Nor does she disclose that she has placed the teaspoon in the cup to absorb the heat. The latter is a practice an older relative, most likely her mother or an aunt, will have taught her.

Guest waits for Host to pick up her cup before she picks up her own. Her mother taught her the protocol of waiting for the Host's signal before beginning. "If you were at the Palace, you'd wait for the Queen to pick up her spoon or fork before starting yourself," her mother might have cautioned to drive the point home. The comment was probably relayed by an older relative. It reflects the British connection



and indicates past and current habitus.

Host lifts up the sugar bowl and teaspoon, and places a spoonful of sugar in her cup. She replaces the spoon in the sugar bowl, and lifts the spoon from her saucer to stir the sugar into her tea. It would be inappropriate to stir the sugar into the tea with the spoon from the bowl. The sugar would dampen and stain when the used spoon was replaced. The pair sip their tea. Host offers Guest a biscuit. Guest, correctly, selects a savory one. When offered a second item, Guest selects a sweet one, complimenting Host on her home-baking. Host also selects first a savory item, then a sweet one. Guest declines a third item. They have been taught that it is appropriate to accept the offer of drink and food, taking first a savory, and then a sweet, item, and to decline any further offerings. It is part of the 'tea' ritual, and each understands the process.<sup>160</sup>

The visit might take an hour or more, depending on whether the visit is social or business-related (like interviewing). Guest indicates that she must go by saying so directly, or by standing and asking for her coat. Host fetches the garment, Guest thanks Host for her hospitality, and takes her coat. Host precedes guest to the door, opens it, and ushers her out. They thank one another, Host for the visit, Guest for the hospitality. Guest moves towards the car, smiling and chatting. Once Guest is seated in the vehicle, Host waves. Guest returns the wave, or toots the horn softly, perhaps twice, since, in Aotearoa New Zealand, it is supposed to be used only as a warning signal.

If Host does not escort Guest to the door, or hurries inside instead of waving until the vehicle departs, Guest may feel hurt. By standing and waving, Host signals that the visit was successful. It is a mark of courtesy, signals that Host valued the exchange, that the pair connected, and enjoyed their time. If Host did not escort Guest to the door, it could be perceived as rudeness. It might seem that she does not care enough for Guest to farewell her. It implies that Host has better things to do than 'waste' more time. It could leave Guest with a feeling of unfinished business, if she has to 'see herself out'. Even if the pair is well-known to one another, Host is likely to escort Guest to the door and wave 'goodbye'. She might stand inside the door if it is very cold, or raining. A considerate Guest would urge her not to 'stand out in the cold' but to 'go back inside.' Host can then choose what to do because she has permission to depart from the expected, although not always implemented, behaviour.

During the occasion, both have engaged in a 'game' (Berne 1964), and played it 'seriously' (Ortner 1996), using culture's 'guiding walls' (Serpentina 2004) to learn more about one another. They have enacted the practice Berne observed of filling "the major part of the more interesting hours of social intercourse" (1964: 171-172). It has its own rules and rhythms.

Just as the Geertzian cockfight (1973) has underlying meaning, so does 'taking tea'. It enables participants to gauge one another personally, socially and culturally. It enables them to display prior cultural knowledge and deepen their connections.

Taking 'tea' was embedded in Aotearoa New Zealand culture. It occurred, in private, as described above, and in public. Some arenas were blurred, neither completely private nor fully public. This indeterminacy often related to gatherings in private homes. Engagement required prior knowledge, sometimes an introduction from an existing member, and perhaps a specific invitation. Such events included social occasions like the Live Alones, birthday celebrations like Margaret Mary's 80<sup>th</sup> birthday, aspects of mourning, and small meetings of groups like the FOHCC. Within the public domain were local government meetings, and gatherings in publicly accessible locations, such as funerals, church services, after sport functions, and

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<sup>160</sup> I have observed situations where guests decline the first offer of hospitality, but who are startled when their hosts do not press them until they accept.

fund-raising events. In these arenas, certain protocols also applied. The processes which occurred in the domestic were magnified because the numbers were larger and/or the meetings followed formal processes. Structures were similar, as were the purposes and outcomes of 'taking tea'. The following material, drawn mostly from my experience of CoFs' meetings, provided insights into how larger social occasions were staged and managed.

### **Collective hospitality**

Three women enter the kitchen, a small room at the rear of the bowling club hall. When the meeting formalities end, they will serve hot drinks through the open servery. These will accompany the food members have contributed. After casual greetings including smiles and nods, the trio prepares the kitchen. They tackle a variety of tasks, assigned tacitly, because long experience and frequent involvement means each knows what to do. One checks the Zip, a wall-mounted water-heater to ensure it contains enough water. She turns it on. It will turn off automatically with a protracted, piercing whistle.

Her companions arrange cups and saucers on the servery bench. The servery separates the backstage/kitchen (Goffman 1959) from public areas. It often acts as a boundary between members and guests, or insiders and outsiders. Varying in date and style, from 1920s to 1980s, the crockery includes fine, bone china, afternoon teacups and saucers, and larger, cream-coloured breakfast cups, rimmed in gold or green. The women arrange the saucers in neat rows, two or three cups wide, and eight or ten cups long. They place the cups upright on matching saucers, and teaspoons inside another cup, handles protruding. Not everyone will want sugar; spoons slip and rattle and can be a nuisance. At a more formal gathering, a teaspoon might be placed on each saucer.



**Fig 56: Cups on a servery, ready for afternoon tea.**

Cups arranged in rows (Fig 56) are a familiar sight in many public locations where large numbers of people need to be served, or to serve themselves, quickly. The indistinct figure (right) demonstrates Aotearoa New Zealanders' diffidence about

public acknowledgement. This relates to assisting behind the scenes, and being photographed.

Preparation continues as one woman removes milk from the refrigerator, twists the blue plastic top from a white, soft plastic bottle, and pours whole<sup>161</sup> milk into a medium-sized jug. Another woman tips fat-reduced milk from a similar, yellow-capped bottle into a smaller jug. The third adds sugar to the sugar bowl, taking it from a glass jar with screw-top lid. This is a practical means of transporting sugar, and keeping it fresh. One woman removes the lids from battered old aluminium teapots, checks that they are clean, and drops a handful of teabags into one of them. The other teapot is for hold hot water. This will be used to dilute strong tea, or to add to instant coffee or chocolate powder. In other public situations, beverage flavourings might be placed in open containers, adjacent to the cups. People choose their own and add the hot water themselves.



**Fig 57: Final preparations.**

As members arrive, they place food on the table allocated (Fig 57). One woman carries side plates from the kitchen to the table where others arrange food. They ensure sweet and savoury items are well-spread. Like the domestic tray, the table is often draped with a white cloth or covered in paper.<sup>162</sup> Piles of paper table napkins often lie near the plates. A posy of flowers sometimes adds a welcoming touch. The food remains covered with plastic wrap, fabric cloth or in sealed

<sup>161</sup> Homogenized milk, containing cream.

<sup>162</sup> Often from the end of a roll of newsprint.



containers until tea-time, usually around 3 p.m. The covers are removed and some items sliced just before eating. Afternoon tea food usually includes items like those pictured. They range from savory items like asparagus rolls (centre – circular, white dish), and sandwiches (left rear), and sweet items like pikelets, brandy snaps and chocolate biscuits. The contributions reflect significant effort and expense. They provide nourishment and social sustenance. Their preparation often creates an opportunity for happy anticipation of the ensuing event. The public nature of the occasion is reflected in the use of disposable food containers and/or replaceable dishes. People then need not worry about having to find their dish, wash it and carry it home.

After the formal business and the speaker's presentation are over, members are invited to take 'tea'. The kitchen volunteers leave the meeting room a few minutes beforehand, usually when the president indicates verbally, or with a glance, that it is time to complete the preparations. The women fill the teapots with hot water, and put them on the bench near the teacups. They take their places behind the servery ready to pour the drinks. One places small portions of coffee powder into some cups. Another pours a little milk into others. Hot water is added to the coffee powder, and tea poured into the cups containing the milk. Members add their own sugar using the spoon in the sugar bowl. They stir it with a spoon taken from the pre-filled cup. Some put the used spoon on their saucer. Others place it on a saucer designated for the purpose.



**Fig 58: CoF members chat before enjoying afternoon tea.**

Members put their hot drinks on tables near their chairs (Fig 58), and make a separate trip to select their food. At CoF it was acceptable to select several items, savory and sweet, to 'save making a second trip'. Selecting several items at once was practical, because many members were older and frail. They often took a long time to walk to and from the food table. Their accepted practice ensured time to eat, drink and chat. They sat for safety, and because it was companionable.

Taking more than one item at a time would be frowned on in 'polite' company, or where designated people moved about offering food. 'Good' manners



then dictate taking and eating one item at a time, partly to ensure everyone has enough to eat. At CoF, members were aware of their group practice. "We bring three or four items on a plate, enough for ourselves and one other," Margaret Mary said, when I asked her what to bring. She added, "Most people usually provide more than that." Members paid a small fee, fifty cents or one dollar, for a take-home selection of left-over items. The money was banked for room rent and/or group trips.

Groups like the CoF provided informal and unofficial mechanisms for survival. Members remarked, "I'll eat plenty now and I won't need to eat tonight"; or "I won't need dinner tonight. I'll just have some soup, or maybe cheese and crackers". These comments enabled me, an outsider, to understand why they were contravening social mores. In some groups, like Live Alones, participants only took one item at a time. Usually, the host offered food to the guests. A survival tactic revealed during those gatherings included discussions about how to extend the budget. Again focused on food, they exchanged sources for obtaining, and/or recipes for making, tasty low-cost meals. The topic was approached indirectly, prefaced with remarks about recent discoveries, such as, "I found a lovely recipe for lasagna the other day. It made enough for two meals so I froze one"; or, "I found a good packet mix the other day. It could be enough for three meals." Then, in a slightly apologetic tone, "I only used it for two, it was so nice." The apologetic tone indicated diffidence about indicating greed, by eating more than was necessary, and extravagance by not making the food last longer. It suggested adherence to Protestant principles of hard work and well-honed coping skills. Although the discussions about food could be perceived as gendered, female, domestic discussions, their underlying purpose was to assist in survival. They were a subtle tactic, which indirectly acknowledged each other's needs (Scheper-Hughes 1992).

After eating, members place used cups and plates on the servery. One or two more able-bodied members assist by clearing the food table, and wiping away crumbs. The kitchen volunteers resume their duties, washing, drying and putting away the dishes. In a formal domestic situation, such as a monthly afternoon tea, or a birthday party, the host would circulate, removing used crockery to tea-wagon or kitchen. Some guests help by placing used items on the wagon or table. Close friends might be allowed backstage, (indicating greater belonging). More often the host will protest, decline offers of help, and clear the dishes herself.

My nephew showed a highly developed awareness of my family's social protocols during afternoon tea for a large group invited to my natal home. While carrying a plate of food from kitchen to serving table, I stumbled. Several items fell to the floor. My mother and brother rushed to my aid and offered to clean up. Accepting their offer, I continued on my way. Later, my nephew remarked that it was 'rather rude' of me not to clean up. "Most people," he said, "would say, 'Oh, no. I'll do it myself.' But you just kept going." His comments emphasised my family's cultural expectations were, that if you make a mess, even when it is a mistake, you clean it up; and that, while it was customary to offer help, it was less usual to accept the offer.

## **Routines**

The occasions described above were more formal than many, but as I noted earlier, the processes involved were similar. On informal occasions, food might not be served at all, or served accompanied by a paper serviette or towel rather than a plate. Neighbours or close friends might sit in the kitchen, or outdoors, in a warm sheltered place. Wherever and whenever the processes occurred they contained routine elements. I closely observed the preparation when visiting a participant at her home. I observed, "Roselene made tea in a pot. She poured milk and tea into cups and saucers at the bench. She asked if I took sugar, then placed our drinks on the table. From a cupboard, she removed a plate of fruit cake and offered me a slice". This was less formal than the situations described above. Another day I made

an unplanned call on Pamela. I had become a 'backdoor visitor'. This meant I was known well enough that I did not need an invitation to visit, nor ring the front door bell, and wait to be invited in. I could walk into the more private rear yard, knock on the door, open it, and enter. I noted, "When I arrived, John asked if I wanted a cup of tea. He was working at the informal dining table, installing a new motherboard and programmes on their son's computer. Pam 'put the jug on' and made and poured the tea. While we drank it, we chatted. In this informal situation no-one felt the need to apologize for the way for things were. This indicated acceptance and that I was trusted not to criticize the use of living space as a temporary construction space.

Discussing codes of hospitality later, participants concluded that they were usually more relaxed and less formal than thirty or forty years ago. The formality seemed to depend on participants' ages, the extent of the relationship with their guests, the formality or solemnity of the occasion, and the numbers being catered for. One woman remembered her grandmother's formal afternoon teas, saying,

When my grandmother served tea, it was always at 3.05 PM...(i)f we were going over for tea, it was often a scramble. We'd be hurrying to get there on time. My grandmother would serve it herself. She had a cloth on the table, and the teapot and cups set out in front of her. There was milk, cream and lemon. She poured the tea, and then asked if you wanted sugar. She added it, and passed you the cup and saucer, with the teaspoon on the side. If you were family, you had regular sugar.<sup>163</sup> Visitors were offered sugar lumps...served with tongs. You stirred the sugar in with the teaspoon. If you were family, and you arrived late, say at 3.20 PM, you might miss out on afternoon tea altogether.

Kathy reflected on the changes to a more casual mode, influenced partly by the production of tea bags instead of leaf tea. She used

teabags. Sometimes I make the tea direct into mugs, sometimes into a pot. It depends on who's coming, and what time of day. I like tea in the pot in the morning, and then, the rest of the day, if it's just me on my own, I just have a tea bag in a cup...if I've got invited visitors, I tend to make the tea in a pot, but friends who are popping in generally get a bag in the cup. Inviting people means I am more formal, because if I am making tea in the teapot, I would put it onto a tray, and make it in the teapot, and have nice cups. When the vicar came to see me – that was an invitation, so I made the tea in the teapot. I set up the tray before he arrived, and poured the tea in the lounge. I served food – savoury, you know, cream crackers with slices of tomato on them. I put the spoon in the sugar bowl and carried the tray in.

In the swing of things, and understanding what I was seeking, Kathy added, with a grin, "...and low fat milk in a jug." We talked about how Aotearoa New Zealanders did not usually offer visitors lemon.

If it was an American visitor, perhaps I'd have offered them lemon. If it was someone who just dropped in, they'd get an Arcoroc mug. I'd put the milk in and the sugar. I'd probably just yell out, did they want sugar...(m)y mum still has a beautiful silver service which she would set up for posh people. (What's a posh person?) "In Lancashire," Kathy thought for a while, "we had an aunty who was posh. She had a different accent and she lived in a semi-detached house. (Was she a sister-in-law?) Yes.

We reflected on the more formal treatment of this particular aunt, and concluded that it may also have had something to do with her not being blood kin. Yvonne's narrative combined aspects of the descriptions above but extended

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<sup>163</sup> Granulated.

concepts of hospitality into the public arena. The practices she revealed differed from those described earlier. They indicated changes which have arisen with the rise of café culture, even in the provinces.

In today's culture, (if you are at home) you ask people whether they want tea or coffee, and sugar. You put it in yourself...(i)f you don't know them well, you would invite them to a café. And now I have two protective big dogs at home, so people have to like dogs if they visit.

We concluded that with more cafés available, in working life people met in cafés more often than in their homes. It enabled meetings without making extra journeys, and without having to engage in domestic hospitality practices, including making one's homes welcoming. Similar practices occurred in the workplace, as another person noted.

When I'm out on a job and they offer me a hot drink, I always ask for coffee with milk and two sugars. That's because I like to put the milk in first, in tea. In businesses, they mostly use teabags straight into the mug, then put the milk in.

As with narrative, similar reticence was observable in codes of hospitality. In narrative, people first revealed information which they gauged might enhance their standing. Once trust and intimacy were established, some let their guard down and told the darker stories, those of the 'family linen cupboard' (Boenisch-Brednich 2002:76). With hospitality, the same continuum was apparent in terms of acquaintanceship, and growing friendship. In the same way as acquaintances usually only narrated the positive to begin with, so they constructed boundaries for 'taking tea'. The less people were acquainted, the more numerous the boundaries. These limited the private spaces guests could enter. Containment, like serving the 'tea' on a tray signaled other boundaries, as did taking the coat and returning it later. In later interviews I conducted, the tray was often dispensed with, the drinks prepared with both of us in the kitchen, and food not always offered. June noted a change in habits one day when she offered me a selection of store-bought sweet biscuits. She apologized for having no "home baking," adding, "I don't bake these days." Her apology probably related to her age since she had lived through an era where afternoon tea was "an area of public life where some women can excel" (Park 1991:11). June and I stood and drank our tea in her kitchen, indicating an increased level of ease.

## **Mourning**

In this section I continue with the discussion about 'taking tea', this time within the mourning process. I incorporate aspects of embodiment apparent in everyday practice, but which are heightened during periods of mourning. Within the hospitality ritual certain greetings occur, verbal, performative, and/or embodied. Verbal greetings, still heard occasionally, may involve a formal, "How do you do?" The expected response is "Very well, thank you. How do you do?" When people greet one now they usually say "How are you?" They expect no more than a cursory, "Fine, thanks" or "I'm well" rather than a litany of ailments. The handshake continues as a greeting, most often amongst men. Women might shake hands in formal or business situations. People who know one another well, or who haven't seen one another for some time, might kiss the cheek, or hug one another (Fig 59).





**Fig 59: Ruth G and a friend hug each other.**

The range of actions signified different depths of emotion, and levels of belonging. When Ruth G and a friend greeted one another, they embodied their affection by hugging one another. Female and male partners will often greet or farewell one another with a kiss and a light touch. After a longer separation, they will probably engage in a full body hug. At events such as funerals, physical embodiment of emotion and the physical expression of comfort was more noticeable than in everyday exchanges. These performative practices assisted in intensifying, or affirming bonds, just as 'taking tea' did. Both were significant components of the Aotearoa New Zealand mourning practice because they offered comfort. The processes involved in 'taking tea' provided displacement activity for upset people, and enabled them to move through the course of grieving by engaging in familiar practices. The hugs enabled them to offer the comfort of touch to the bereaved.

From the moment news of bereavement breaks until the post-funeral meal, people follow pre-experienced paths and codes. The bereaved family can expect a stream of visitors, particularly when the person who died was young or well-known. Friends and relatives call to offer comfort to the deceased's relatives. They might bring food, drink and flowers, operating on similar assumptions to the Greeks, who assume that the bereaved will be too distressed to care for themselves. Instead, others adopt a nurturing role (Panourgia 1995:116). In Aotearoa New Zealand, the provision of sustenance enabled the bereaved to focus on their grief, and make funeral arrangements without mundane distractions. Again, whether one walks in, or waits at the door, depends on the depth of relationships. Those who come and go are engaged in hospitality, according to several factors. These include the above-mentioned closeness, their commitments, the time of day, personal energy levels and emotions.

As noted, physical comfort was frequently extended. Whether people kissed, hugged, shook hands or patted shoulders and arms, depended several factors. They included one's relationship to the bereaved, age, gender, and upbringing. Young people appeared more willing to exchange hugs and show emotion than



many of their elders, particularly men. As noted earlier, Aotearoa New Zealanders were often reticent about revealing emotions, so these physical demonstrations were highly valued. They signaled the intensity of emotions evoked by death and dying. Their embodied responses indicated their awareness that, in death, "life had suddenly a large rip or tear in it, a gaping hole" (Nussbaum 2001:39).

Margaret McC recalled her pleasure at being greeted with hugs when attending a family funeral.

Someone in my former in-laws' family died. I came up to a funeral – I suppose that is another sense of belonging – because (my ex-in-laws) let me know. They said, "Will you be coming up to the funeral. I thought about it and said, "No." Then I said, "Yes." When I arrived, Euan's<sup>164</sup> sisters all gave me big hugs and my in-laws two. There were two ex-husbands there as well, and the nephew who was 12, he came racing across the driveway calling "Auntie Marg, Auntie Marg," and gave me a big hug...it was evident that I was still very much part of the family.

The evidence was apparent in the hugs and the shouted greeting. Physical touching was reserved for people of whom one was fond. Despite her divorce, her former in-laws remained fond, including her in their embrace, physically and emotionally.

During the mourning period, 'taking tea' occurred frequently, as those involved moved in and out of a variety of liminal spaces (Turner 1967). It appeared in the guise of hospitality but fulfilled other functions as well. It gave mourners something to do, by preparing, partaking, or tidying up afterwards. It could provide essential sustenance to long-distance travelers, and those emotionally, or physically, exhausted by funeral preparations, and the stream of visitors.

Late in the day, a soft or alcoholic drink might be offered instead of 'tea'. This was sometimes used for medicinal purposes, like treating shock when news of the death was received. Callers usually accepted this hospitality, recognizing it as part of the mourning process. Those who decline will usually discover at least a hot tea or coffee thrust into their hand, or placed beside them, with a question, "You don't take sugar, do you, just milk?" Recipients might ask for sugar, but rarely refuse the drink. They drink it, or dispose of it quietly, perhaps crossing boundaries and entering the kitchen to do so.

In grief, the kitchen often becomes a focal point, and even acquaintances may enter it. They might be perceived as performing a useful task, assisting in keeping the house clean and tidy. This was appreciated in the context of the increased activity that surrounds death and dying.

During the pre-funeral period, tea making and tea-taking, and tidying provided people with warming activities, and distractions which enable them to mark time, note its passage, fill hours usefully and support one another. Although making and pouring tea was often regarded as a feminine task, it appeared to become less gendered during bereavement. Divisions were still evident, but men and women could be seen working in the kitchen, sometimes singly, sometimes together. It remained rare to see young men in this space. They were more likely to be involved in more strenuous activities, or 'hanging around', talking among themselves.

The kitchen may take on aspects of a community or commercial kitchen. Quantities of water boil frequently. Mugs and cups are arrayed on the bench top, with tea towels beneath them to catch spills. Teabags are evident in an open container or box, with the sugar to one side. Teaspoons lie on the bench, or in their drawer. Milk is stored in the refrigerator. Every so often, someone voluntarily wanders around, collecting used cups and glasses, washing them by hand or stacking them in the dishwasher. This ensures enough clean crockery and a task for those who need time out in a quiet, functional space. Roles rotate as different

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<sup>164</sup> A pseudonym.

people take time out or are waited on, with others taking over.

The atmosphere alters when the funeral service is over, but another round of hospitality ensues. Unlike the 'teas' in the family home, the post-farewell food and drink could be commercially prepared, and the function hosted in a funeral parlour. Alternatively, it might be prepared by a fundraising church group, and served in the adjacent hall. While this can be costly, it reduces the physical and organizational burden on the bereaved. Preparations are similar, with seating, food and drink available.

'Tea' is offered as a way of thanking the mourners, and nourishing them before the return home. Māori and Pacific Islanders cultures offer similar hospitality. The atmosphere lightens as the mourners gather for this last 'meal'. Their conversations reveal that they are looking ahead. They chat about future events, sports matches, cultural outings, and/or catch up on family news, community gossip and people's plans. It is a chance to spend time with friends or infrequently seen relatives, as Margaret McC described earlier. This event, 'tea', provides a sense of closure to the day and signifies the end of the public mourning period.

## Conclusion

The processes described above are typical of public and private engagements, funeral teas and domestic birthday parties. At birthday parties the atmosphere was festive, with a birthday cake, cards and gifts presented to the celebrant, candles lit and 'Happy Birthday' sung. At a funeral, the atmosphere was solemn, sad or, if the person had been suffering, perhaps relieved. As I noted, people greeted one another more intimately than was usual, with hugs and kisses as well as handshakes. They expressed their joy or sorrow, and then turned to talk to others who were present. 'Taking tea' served similar functions despite its location, the numbers present, the occasion, and the relationships of participants. Knowing how to engage in cultural practices can affirm belonging. Through engagement, celebrants and mourners alike develop, thicken, deepen or lengthen the strands in their trails of belonging.

As I argued earlier, knowledge of and engagement in cultural codes like 'taking tea' enabled Aotearoa New Zealanders to incorporate aspects of their past into daily life, enjoy the present and look to their future. I discussed 'taking tea' in the private home, in semi-public spaces and as an aspect of the mourning process. 'Taking tea' was an everyday practice, incorporated into codes of hospitality. The consumption of food and drink was an essential aspect.

People engaged in a variety of locations, at different levels. Doing so was important and valued. It provided participants with ways of connecting, and reconnecting within private and public spaces. They maintained and extended belonging through shared experiences, physical and emotional, and by exchanging information.

Participant practices revealed that 'taking tea' was embedded in the Pākehā past, carried across the oceans by their British ancestors. Their use of historical material objects, like crockery and cutlery, provision of sustenance using ancient recipes, and engagement in visible cultural practices showed that 'taking tea' in Aotearoa New Zealand was an ongoing and embedded code of hospitality.

Participants discussed some of the changes which had occurred surrounding hospitality and 'taking tea' in Aotearoa New Zealand in the past fifty years. These included a reduction in formality, although most had retained knowledge of, and engaged in, more formal practices. Participants noted a rise in numbers of people 'taking tea' in cafés. This had reduced the number of 'in home' visits, although the latter were still valued. In both private and public spaces boundaries were apparent, delineating not just consumption but relational boundaries. Style of presentation depended on the relationship of participants. Some participants signaled that with the advent of television, internal domestic boundaries had altered. People often took

meals while watching television, rather than in a space designated for eating.

Regardless of location, occasion or numbers present, 'taking tea' provided opportunities to intensify interpersonal relationships, while observing cultural practices. Inclusions and exclusions could signal similarities and/or differences. The boundaries altered according to occasion and intimacy of relationships.

By taking 'tea', one made time and emotional space for oneself and others, providing support in grief, and celebrating success. The level of emotion engendered and experienced varied depending on the occasion, but sharing food and drink regularly enhanced relationships, engendered warmth, and provided a specified process and a contained time for doing so.

The invitation to 'take tea' offered more than sustenance. It provided relief from the daily grind (Cosman 1981), and offered 'recreation, reward, hope and order' through friendship shared. The invitation, and its acceptance, indicated a willingness to engage in a manner not extended to allcomers. The time spent 'taking tea' often enabled participants to return to the world 'restored' (Grainger 1974). At the same time, 'taking tea' enabled people to express and affirm boundaries symbolically. They often heightened their "awareness of and sensitivity to their community" (ibid:99).

While gaining cultural knowledge might seem straightforward to cultural insiders, it could seem difficult, even impossible, to understand for cultural outsiders. 'Taking tea' was rarely a purely pragmatic event, but as complex to outsiders as the Japanese tea ceremony. Children absorb cultural practices as if by osmosis, but adults have either to question or observe cultural insiders before they engage (Herda 1990). 'Taking tea' as revealed by the participants in the context of offering hospitality was no different. Knowledge was often gained by observation and involvement. In the next chapter, I discuss the transmission of knowledge, particularly in relation to 'taking tea'.

## Chapter Ten

### Intergenerational transmission

*I like teaching the younger ones what I know.* Ruth G

#### Introduction

Practices of belonging are transmitted through observation, engagement and narrative, among other things, as indicated in previous chapters. People learn by observation and engagement while children absorb cultural practices as if by osmosis, noted in the previous chapter. I recall my great-aunts involving me, as a ten-year-old child, in their preparations for 'taking tea'. In the same way as ancestral information was transmitted inter- and intra-generationally through sharing stories, so it was relayed in practice, another form of 'guiding walls' (Serpentina 2004). What I learned from my aunts was embedded, although malleable. I carry the knowledge with me into private and public, individual and group, and happy and sad occasions. The practices around 'taking tea' which I learned from my aunts, and as they were revealed by the participants, were very similar. This reflected our common pasts, and shared cultural experiences.

Inviting people to take 'tea', that is, to partake of hospitality, created temporal and spatial nodes, and paths towards belonging. Engaging in 'tea taking' practices could intensify relationships and belonging, to people, places and cultures. Understanding the associated processes and practices could enhance or enable belonging. The lack of knowledge, or the refusal to respond in culturally practiced ways, could diminish connections, and reduce or disable belonging.

People adopted different roles in different contexts depending on whether they were host or guest. They assumed different degrees of authority, and delineated boundaries through their actions (such as those noted in the previous chapter – taking the guest's coat, inviting her to sit, excluding her from the kitchen; accepting the invitation of a seat 'front stage', knocking before entering, using the front door). These processes enabled 'the construction of relationships' (Bell 1997:82) in a way that was understood culturally. They also provided a way of enabling development and balance in relationships.

I noted in the previous chapter that several factors were important. They included knowing how to behave, dress, converse, and recognise cultural signals. The requirements and responses differed according to cultural and social contexts. In this chapter I firstly discuss the importance of personal presentation in different social contexts. Secondly I discuss cultural codes of presentation contained within the practice of 'taking tea'. In association with this, I discuss the intergenerational transmission of knowledge. Transmitting and gaining knowledge is progressive, begun in childhood, and continued into old age. This enables an understanding of how novices gain 'the perceptual sensitivity' of the knowledgeable hand (Ingold 2000:147). Lastly, I show how this can be revealed, whether the surroundings are congenial or otherwise.

#### Personal presentation

Personal presentation was a valuable indicator of cultural insiderness and willingness to conform to the social habitus, particularly when appearing in public. Dressing suitably for particular occasions indicated embedded cultural knowledge. Personal attention to detail could indicate cultural capital and social status. Depending on the occasion, garments, hairstyle and accessories varied. What one wore depended on the time of day, and the occasion. It was further directed by one's relationship with the people being visited. Informal, impromptu or casual visits required less preparation than formal, pre-arranged visits. Visits to kin, close friends



and neighbours often fall into the former category, while pre-arranged celebrations, visits to acquaintances, business meetings and funerals required a different, more formal style of presentation.

When informally visiting neighbours or close friends during the day, weekday or weekend, it was acceptable to wear working clothes, even if one had been performing household chores or yard work. Casual exchanges in the area of one's residential dwelling might lead to an invitation to drop everything and 'take tea', or to 'come in' for a chat. One might wash one's hands, tidy one's hair, or remove one's work boots. Beyond this, neighbours expected little formality.

Boundaries were observed, with 'tea' often being taken outdoors (in fine weather), or in the kitchen – an acknowledgement of the casual nature of the invitation, the relationship, and the activities the participants had been engaged in. This was the reverse of the 'tea taking' described in the previous chapter, where guests remained 'front stage' in the public rooms. Neighbours often remained 'back stage', rarely crossing the boundaries between interior and exterior spaces. This signaled that boundaries could provide advantages (Barth 2000:27-30), by keeping others out and removing or reducing the need to present oneself and one's home in the best possible light. It also highlighted the ambiguity of relationships with neighbours (Perin 1988:26).

In contrast, the formal, or pre-arranged, visit required careful attention to personal presentation. As I indicated in the previous chapter, women paid careful attention to the presentation of their homes when 'taking tea'. They also paid careful attention to their personal appearance. If invited to another person's home, or when they were expecting visitors, they donned make-up, jewellery and smart, casual clothes. Social occasions like birthdays demanded festive, colourful clothing, signifying fun and laughter. Other events, such as business meetings, required women to wear tailored suits or dresses, rather than trousers, and floral, embroidered or plain, well-cut blouses in soft fabrics. Adding items of personal significance, such as gold or silver jewellery, pearls or precious stones, signaled the importance of an occasion and a desire to honour the person celebrating.

Dressing suitably increased one's cultural capital and status, further incorporating one into a group. More women wore trousers frequently than in the mid-late decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century but there were still occasions where women were expected to wear skirts. One example was when the British Queen expressed displeasure after the Aotearoa New Zealand Prime Minister arrived at a state dinner, spurning cultural mores by wearing trousers (Brown 2002). Funerals often demanded the wearing of black. This signified the darkness of loss and the depth of grief. To attend regular church services many women wore skirts rather than trousers, perhaps denoting respect for more traditional customs, or reflecting the relative formality and public nature of a church service.



**Fig 60: Chatting at an 80<sup>th</sup> birthday afternoon 'tea'.**

These women (Fig 60) and their hosts 'knew' the rules of Pākehā culture. Enjoying afternoon tea during Margaret Mary's 80<sup>th</sup> birthday, they made lively conversation. Fine china cups and saucers indicated the special nature of the festivities. Side tables enabled those attending to participate without awkwardly juggling cups and plates. The close proximity of the furniture suggested many people were present. Their attire reflected the celebratory nature of the occasion. The oldest woman present appeared to be wearing more casual clothing. This probably related to her age and comfort. The others wore 'good' clothing, probably not their 'best', i.e. not of the quality or value they might choose to wear to a wedding. This clothing might be described as 'second best'. It is good quality, the blouses tailored of fine cloth, and the other garments well-cut. They are made using less serviceable cloth than one would wear for physical labour like gardening or house-cleaning. All but one wore coloured garments. Three wore skirts, although women often wore trousers at home. Women in this age group (over sixty-five) frequently wore a dress, or skirt and blouse, with a tailored jacket in public. Some added jewellery in the form of necklaces, earrings, brooches and bracelets. The woman in red (second left) wore a fine gold chain.

This style of personal presentation was also apparent during a CoF meeting, when the members celebrated a 100<sup>th</sup> birthday. Living for 100 years was a great achievement since most people died a decade or two before reaching that age. Those attending made an effort to present themselves 'well'. They dressed in 'good' clothes, some going first to the hairdresser, and adding finishing touches of jewellery (earrings), and/or soft scarves. Within the hall, tables were joined together and covered with matching cloths. People could then sit and eat around a communal table, bonded through group membership, and their common purpose.

Coordinated china, rarer, more expensive and more elaborate food than usual, daintier, richer cakes, and the presence of a birthday cake indicated the effort people had made and emphasized the importance of the occasion.

### **'Dressing' food**

During the extended luncheon/afternoon tea meeting, other cultural practices became visible. While such celebrations required careful attention to dress, they also required careful attention to food and its presentation. One large cake, baked to share with many people, often featured at celebrations such as birthdays, weddings, christenings and Christmas. While many people made fruit cakes,<sup>165</sup> often following old, family recipes, younger people were tending to choose what were regarded as 'non-traditional' cakes, such as chocolate or vanilla. One member baked a Christmas cake (Fig 61) for the Circle, using her grandmother's recipe, most likely British in origin. The cake was decorated with blanched almonds, artificial holly, and plastic lettering bearing the words, Merry Christmas.



**Fig 61: A Christmas cake.**

<sup>165</sup> The celebration fruit cake was an Aotearoa New Zealand tradition, probably reflecting the past. Made using dried fruits, butter and eggs, it was a substantial cake, and kept well, potentially spreading out the duration of the occasion.





**Fig 62: Thelma's birthday cake.**

'Dressing' a cake was sometimes part of the pleasure of preparing for a celebration. The cakes (Figs 61, 62) indicated how carefully a cake might be decorated (dressed). The birthday cake recorded the celebrant's name, Thelma, and her achievement, reaching 100 years of age. In its 'party dress', the cake featured a combination of traditional and non-traditional decoration. The 'traditional' aspect was reflected in the piped letters, numbers and rosettes bordering the cake. Pink symbolized femininity in Aotearoa New Zealand culture, although some people resist wearing the colour because they fear it suggests passivity. Fresh borage flowers, daisies and pansies added a festive, non-traditional air. "I just collected the flowers from my garden," Ruth J said. Sometimes, birthday candles were placed on the cake, even when there were a large number. On this occasion, the candles were placed on a separate tray, reflecting a recent trend, regarded as more hygienic. Their exclusion from the cake enabled it to be decorated and cut more easily, before sharing with the group. Although the Christmas cake was less ornate, it was 'dressed' with equal care. The regular arrangements of almonds, placed on the batter before baking, indicate forethought.

Preparing a birthday cake, lighting its candles, singing 'Happy Birthday' to celebrants while they 'blow out' the candles, and then clapping their age were usual practices observed at birthday celebrations. Singing the birthday song, blowing out the candles, cutting the cake, and the celebrant making an unspoken wish, signaled the moment of transition from one year to the next.



Practice absorbed



**Fig 63: Joan G offering Thelma the first slice of cake.**

When the cake was cut, the first slice was offered to the celebrant, then to those present. It was later distributed to others who could not attend. Joan (Fig 63) continued the practice by offering it to Thelma first. Sharing the cake with many people, present and absent, engendered a feeling of ‘communitas’ (Turner 1982), binding the group together, and extending the circle. Distribution of the cake signaled that the party was nearly over, and people could soon leave.

The rest-home residents below (Fig 64) attended a dance performance before tea was served. A small girl offered food to elderly guests during a group afternoon tea. Although she held the plate with two hands to ensure she did not drop it or spill the biscuits, her manner was similar to that of the older woman above (Fig 63). Both were engaged in a similar practice, offering sustenance on one level, and much more on others – love, care, friendship, effort, time, courtesy and respect. Because there was always someone to direct and encourage them, children could engage in cultural practices with minimal anxiety. Older people sometimes praised their efforts, emphasizing the value of the task, and their role in it.



**Fig 64: Learning by doing – offering guests biscuits.**

By attending meetings with significant adults, young people absorbed cultural mores. While the child above was school-aged, younger children too learned from observation and involvement. Toddlers attending a meeting with their mothers observed cultural practice at morning 'tea', as they 'played' at the tea wagon (Fig 65).



**Fig 65: Toddlers absorb cultural practice.**

Noushin Hafiz (right) and Alex Anderson investigated the tea trolley, watched by Noushin's mother, Jahanara, during a Multicultural Women's Group meeting. The girls absorbed cultural practice by observation and serious 'play' (Ortner 1996), while Jahanara ensured their safety. They became familiar with concepts of sharing, mingling and conversing, with the material items used, and the need to wait to be served, or to serve oneself when with a group. They might also have become aware of the danger of hot items, given Jahanara's close watch as they 'played' below the tea-pots.

Cups were placed on both tiers of the trolley, and food on a separate table. The presence and contents of the three tea-pots revealed different personal and cultural preferences. Although shiny and new, the aluminium pot was typical of community group tea-pots. One pottery tea-pot was made locally and purchased with a gift of family money following the sudden death of the group's former coordinator. It embodied her memory. The group remembered her regularly, since the tea-pot was used at each meeting. The liquids served included Japanese green tea, English tea, and hot water for instant coffee. Providing different teas acknowledged the diverse cultural origins and preferences of members. Transporting milk and sugar from another site could be messy, and with minimal on-premise facilities, it was practical to serve milk from its store-bought container and sugar from a storage jar. This approach also signaled the impermanence of the meeting space, and the willingness of members to forego social conventions for ease. Members volunteered for the morning tea roster. They took it in turns to provide the food, serve drinks and wash dishes afterwards.

Morning tea provided members with a space within the meeting to socialize and expand their relationships. They practiced their English skills, learned more about one another, and exchanged information about cultural practices, including food. Children observed that food was offered from the plate rather than in the hand. They saw it being offered it to guests first. They observed that people selected only one item at a time, and ate it carefully, standing or sitting, perhaps using with a paper serviette to catch crumbs.

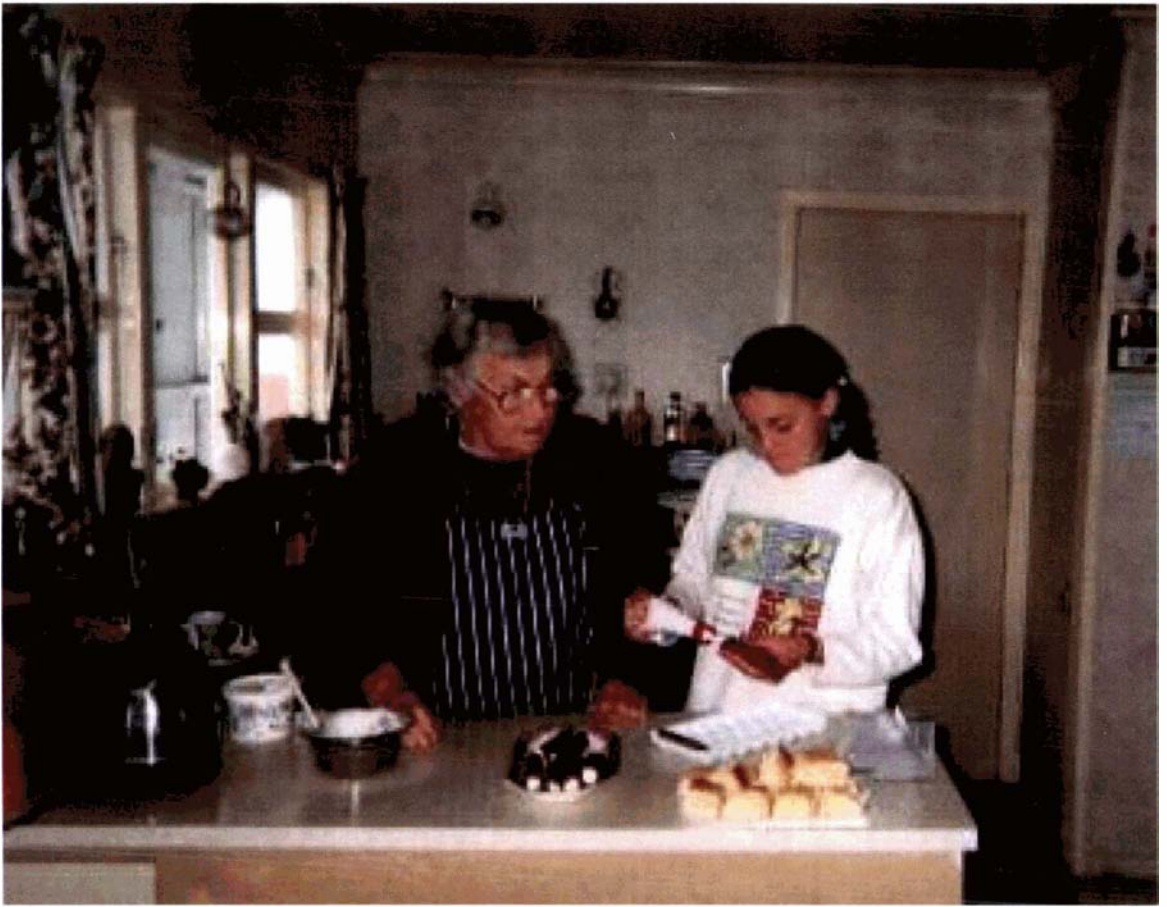




**Fig 66: Supper backstage for orchestra and crew.**

The image (Fig 66) of orchestra and crew taking supper backstage in the Royal Wanganui Opera House highlighted the embeddedness of aspects of ‘taking tea’. The bleak surroundings contrasted with the formality of the occasion, apparent in the formal garb of visiting orchestra members. Although the area was unfinished, uncarpeted and was being used for storage, clean, white cloths covered the supper tables. Food was served on plates, and chairs were available for seating. The juxtaposition of formal with informal, and the careful presentation of the food in the unfinished building highlighted how deeply embedded the code of hospitality was in Pākehā habitus. The contrasts emphasised the importance of engaging in existing cultural codes to maintain self-respect, and retain cultural capital. In this instance, the importance went beyond individual capital. It extended to the Opera House itself, and possibly reflected on the city as whole. Orchestra members came from out of town, and would probably report to other outsiders about the quality of their experience. It was therefore even more important to provide excellent hospitality, according to cultural standards, to maintain the facility’s reputation and encourage others to accept invitations to perform in the city.





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**Fig 67: Transmitting knowledge.**

Ruth G highlighted how the process could be taken back a step, in this photograph from her personal inventory (Fig 67). She is teaching her great-granddaughter how to fill brandy snaps<sup>166</sup> with cream using an icing piping bag. As well transmitting practical skills, working with her granddaughter and making this photograph, created an opportunity to display Ruth's cultural capital.

I like teaching the younger ones what I know. Maybe it's not the right thing or the right way to do it, maybe that's not the right way to fill brandy snaps but it's better than using a teaspoon. If I teach her she can do much better.

Other young women gained similar cultural information through attending events with their elders. Karen had attended CoF meetings with her grandmother, Margaret Mary, and made and served tea to her mother's business guests. She had learned about the social and practical aspects of taking 'tea', which cups to choose, where they were kept, and how to handle them so that they did not break. Like Ruth's granddaughter, and the other small girls pictured (Figs 64, 65) she also learned by active engagement under adult supervision. She helped to prepare party food for her grandmother's birthday. She worked with Debbie who was a long-time family friend (Fig. 68).

<sup>166</sup> A rolled, sweet, cream-filled confection.



**Fig 68: Preparing chocolate éclairs.**

Debbie (rear) filled the chocolate éclairs with cream and passed them to Karen to arrange. By doing so, Karen learned about the behind-the-scenes aspects of hospitality. She developed skills in preparing and arranging party food, learned what sort of food was enjoyed, and that it was served on fine quality china. She and Debbie wore aprons to protect their 'good' clothes, worn in honour of the occasion. Working together often engendered a feeling of unity. It was also likely to increase Karen's confidence through practical social knowledge. She probably learned that much more was exchanged during the practice how to prepare food. Sharing activities like these provided spaces for exchange of intimacies which enabled people to 'get to know' each other better. Sharing the activity enabled them to develop a history through shared experience. Karen might also have learned that developing competence could incur praise thereby inducing emotions of pleasure and pride.

Although much of the food pictured in the photographs above was home-made, it does not convey a clear impression of a change in Aotearoa New Zealand women's behaviour in the past ten to fifteen years. With store-bought goods now commonplace, home baking is usually reserved for special occasions, as I noted with June's comment that she no longer 'baked'. That food continued to serve as a function of hospitality suggested that it might still be intimately bound to the adult female identity in Pākehā ideology (Banda & Herda 1988), but adapted to suit late



twentieth century expectations and time constraints.

In a departure from 'taking tea', but in the context of transmitting knowledge through practice, other skills were revealed in photographs. As noted earlier, Ruth G asserted it was important to teach skills to younger people. She taught her children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren to read and/or cook and/or sew. Her photographic inventory contained five images involving children in these activities, highlighting the importance the family attributed to these practices and emphasising them visually (Fig 69).



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**Fig 69: Ruth G and a great-granddaughter discussing quilting.**

Ruth reflected,

That's Tanita and I teach her sewing. I'm just doing a little patchwork, Amish patchwork, and we were looking at it. She said, "You haven't got the squares right, Nanna." And I didn't. So she's showing me where I have to put the squares to get them right...she loves embroidery, she loves knitting. These...children are very fortunate because their own grandmother is a great sewer, and sews, and crochets, and embroiders...she's taught that little eleven-year-old...how to use the sewing machine. She can do patchwork on the sewing machine as good as an adult. So when she comes here we talk about it – sewing, patchwork and cross-stitch. (What a wonderful gift?) Well, I think we're fortunate to have the children to do it with. (That's true too, a gift each way.) They love doing it. They go to school, this one's at intermediate, Tanita, she's a clever girl...they say to her, "Where do you get all your knowledge from?" "All our grandmothers", she says. They say, "Well, how many grandmothers have you got?" She says, "Well, I've got two grandmothers, and two great-grandmothers, and they all help us sew.

Margaret Mary recalled her own experience of gaining practical skills.

my grandparents...(t)hey're the ones that started me knitting, sewing, anything like that, using the crochet hook...(m)y grandmother was a

lace-maker...her daughters, my mother particularly, was very interested in dressmaking. She taught me...as well as my grandmother and my aunt. From them you learn, well, lots of things really. But you're using your hands. Pamela's the same. She sews. She's trying to teach Karen. (And I am teaching the girls) knitting. What does your father call them? Womanly pastimes.

While one might infer that Karen's father was being disrespectful by referring to domestic crafts as 'womanly pastimes', Margaret Mary and Karen appeared mildly amused. Her father's use of the term seemed to unite the women in the family. This suggested that engagement in shared practice created a gendered, skilled space of belonging which he could not enter. Their expressions suggested they enjoyed his recognition of their unity, and that he admired their skills and commitment. Margaret Mary's and Ruth G's comments demonstrated how skills/activities might be embodied and transferred inter-generationally. Some were integrated into, or reflected in 'taking tea'. Others practices were embodied and/or performed, and assisted in engendering belonging.

Although space constraints preclude my delving deeply into the ways in which younger women created spaces like those described above, personal experience and observation indicated some changes. Those who had the fewest leisure opportunities, due to other demands on their time, included younger women juggling families, households, paid employment and/or study. Personal experience revealed that working women had fewer time available to take time out with friends. As with the Mancunian women whose mothering activities engaged them in school communities (Savage et al 2005), the younger participants and other women engaged casually in a variety of spaces. These included the sidelines of their children's recreational spaces, such as the sports field, occasional weekend 'tea', or scheduling lunch or 'tea' during the day. Meeting younger participants in cafés was one way in which they overcame the dilemma of managing their time effectively within these constraints. Others maintained contact by electronic means including email and telephone. It is an area which would benefit from further study.

## **Conclusion**

In this chapter I have discussed the transmission of cultural practices, particularly those related to hospitality, using narratives and photographs to clarify actions and processes. I showed that cultural practices embed from an early age through observation, instruction and direct engagement. As girls grow, older women teach and demonstrate cultural practices, supporting younger women as they engage in the practices themselves. Transmission could be a subtle and not-so-subtle process. Sometimes instruction was direct as when young women were actively shown how to perform certain actions, including the preparation of food and drink. Other practices were more subtle, including the knowledge of which material items should be used on any particular occasion, what to wear and how to comport oneself. Some of the practices Pākehā women engaged in related to their British and European origins. These were apparent in their use of material objects, food served and personal presentation. Some of the practices were evolving, impacted partly by political changes, such as women engaging in paid employment, and partly by the location, Aotearoa New Zealand.



## Chapter Eleven

### Talking directly

*You have to connect in some way to have a sense of belonging.* Ruth G

#### Introduction

Anthropologists understand belonging in a variety of ways. They have asserted that it is fluid, multiple, mutable and layered. Previously, belonging, like identity, was perceived as bounded, but more recently, the boundaries have been described as fluid. Belonging involved physical and metaphysical ties, tangible objects and intangible emotions. It required connections between individuals and collectives. Researchers suggested it was derived from a variety of sources. These included kinship, inter-relationships, shared knowledge, language, religion and/or skills and cultural understanding. For some, it was positional. For others, it was subjective. Sometimes, it was both. Belonging has been variously described as personal, elective, ascribed, and/or accepted. Some scholars argued that belonging was deeply embedded and long-lasting, born of knowledge gained as if by osmosis. But, as Ruth G stated (above), all belonging involves connections - to people, places or spaces.

In the preceding chapters, I discussed various practices of belonging. I began from the perspective of ancestry and heritage, revealed and practiced through narratives. I continued by exploring the impact of common experiences and shared values. I then reflected on the relationships to place, past and present. This included inscription, emplacement and active engagement. I explored participant practices of cultural codes, focused on hospitality, and the intergenerational transmission of knowledge.

In this chapter, I discuss what belonging meant to the participants. They disclosed and reflected on their own practices. In structured conversations, they relayed their awareness of their practices, many of which had enabled them to engage in, connect to, and become intertwined within a variety of communities. Sometimes this was related to, and, at other times, was regardless of, birth or kinship. Cohen (1982) suggested that belonging was not just about birth. The participants suggested that birth could enhance belonging but that belonging could also be independent of birth. This underscored the concept of elective belonging (Savage et al. 2005). People who were not connected to a place through birth engaged in various practices, many described in previous chapters, to enable their belonging.

Some participants revealed what I termed 'dual' belonging. This indicated an accepted and comfortable belonging to two cultures in two different lands. It could also indicate belonging to one culture but different places in the same land. The participants revealed patterns of belonging, often reflecting movement along a continuum (Kohn 2002), as they engendered belonging through active practices. As the continuum lengthened, thickened, or deepened, their ties became web-like (Geertz 1973). Belonging was often fluid. Combining Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) conception of the life-world as a rhizome, with a range of levels and layers, vertical and horizontal, and Ingold's (2000) extension of the concept, with the suggestion that 'becoming' ebbed and flowed, incorporated the concepts of continuum and web.

## **'Home' and belonging**

When discussing belonging, I noted that it was important to consider the meaning of home. Belonging was often conflated with identity, and discussed in conjunction with discussions about home. Home could be one's physical dwelling place, one's natal home, and/or a "virtual or rhetorical space... an idea – or ... a fantasy – of that...place where...'everybody knows your name' " (Morley 2001:425). Some literature suggested that home was where people elected to belong (Savage et al. 2005). Others conceived of the site of belonging as one's childhood home, or natal land (Baldassar 1997; Battaglia 1986). Some participants concurred with this concept, but others disagreed.

I asked participants directly what 'home' meant to them, where it was, and whether it had to be the same as where they felt they 'belonged'. For those born and bred in Whanganui, home was Whanganui and where they belonged. For incomers, 'home' could be where they were born and raised, but belonging was different.

Joan H said, "Your belonging in the place *you weren't brought up in* is a *different* sort of belonging – it's an *independent* belonging, *away* from the family home. It's different. *You make it yourself*" (my emphasis). Joan B perceived belonging as changing "with maturity, I think. *We realize the world is our home*. It's very comfortable where we've made our homes and our gardens – *things we have invested ourselves in*" (my emphasis). Kathy had developed a sense of belonging to Wanganui and Aotearoa New Zealand, even though 'home' remained in

Manchester in Lancashire. (Why?) *Because that's where I was born*. (You have lived in New Zealand for thirty years. Is that also home?) No. *It's different because I wasn't brought up here* so my early childhood was in England. (What sort of feelings do you have when you think of England?) Warm fluffies." She laughed. "When I am in England I have warm fluffies for New Zealand. (Let's talk now about your sense of belonging.) *I have more of a sense of belonging here because I am part of the community and I have worked here, brought children up here and buried a child here*. (Does that, those things, do they tie you or just connect you?) *They connect me. I don't feel tied*. (My emphasis)

These comments showed that people could conceive of home, and belonging, as different, with one's natal home remaining 'home', and 'belonging' being enabled by other factors, some of which I explore below. Joan B described belonging as altering with maturity. This concurred with Joan H's suggestion that adult belonging differed from one's childhood concepts and feelings. Joan's reflections asserted the importance of time and collective involvement in an individual's movement along the continuum of belonging. Kathy confirmed the significance of their suggestions, indicating that age, experience, and relationships, were part of the process of engendering belonging. It was not only elective. It was constructed through contacts, commitments, engagement in community activities and events, and employment. It involved the development of personal history with people in places. Kathy's comments emphasised that life processes which occur in particular locations were enabling rather than binding.

Several participants indicated attachment to more than one location. This usually included one's childhood dwelling place. A few indicated a lack of attachment to childhood locations, perhaps arising from their attitude to life, their own and other people's personalities, their age, and/or childhood experience. Yvonne revealed no sense of belonging to her birthplace, perhaps because her aspirations differed from those of her age cohort, and her younger sister. "I got out of Masterton because all my friends were getting married. I didn't want to do that." Her mother's presence was the one factor which drew Yvonne back. She had earlier encouraged Yvonne to explore life further afield. "(We had) been told for our entire lives, "Don't do what I did. Go out and see the world...don't get married. Don't have

children young...(a)nd perhaps I was listening."

Other participants knew people who claimed belonging through birth. Such people regarded being born in a place as important in belonging. It was a factor which endowed, or through which they claimed, cultural capital. Several others indicated, as I discuss later, that some residents regarded ancestral settlement and birth as providing them with greater claims to belonging in particular locations than incomers.

### **What we belong to**

Because I had telephoned the participants to arrange the interviews and discussed the focus, all had reflected, before our meetings, on what belonging meant to them. Yvonne said she had "given it a lot of thought in the past twenty-four hours" while Joan mused, "It's surprising how you take things for granted until you have to describe it." Several remarked that their comments were 'their take' on belonging. Yvonne emphasised that her comments reflected 'my belonging'. Ruth J said, "This may not be right, but this is how I feel."

The participants generally described themselves as belonging to kin, friends, a city, its institutions, and particular places within and beyond the city. Some revealed belonging to other lands, but remained connected to Aotearoa New Zealand. Others indicated belonging to the world in general, and/or incorporated a sense of the metaphysical, as Ruth J described in Chapter Seven. Several described belonging in the context of personal ownership, as well as through group affiliation. None referred directly to national belonging or to a common language as a link in the current era. There are several possibilities for these lacuna: firstly, participants were members of the predominant culture, spoke the most often used, English language, and therefore assumed a national unity; secondly, the environment was so familiar no-one thought to raise the concepts; thirdly, participants might have focused on 'the world around here' (Geertz 1996); and, fourthly, global communications can create extended communities, external to national physical boundaries. Perhaps the emphasis on national belonging had become less dominant in political, and subsequently, in individual, ideology. But participants were aware, as I discuss later, of difficulties experienced when ancestor migrants lacked a common language. Of belonging they said,

Margaret Mary: ***"You belong to a family – to the community – to individual friends and groups."***

Ruth G: ***"I belong to a family...If you have a house you belong to a house and the house belongs to you."***

Margaret McC: ***"There's belonging to something, or something belonging to me. So belonging can be both..."*** (When I bought my new house), it was quite nice having my own things around me, and remembering what I had."

Roselene: "Hmm. Belonging. ***In its broadest sense, it's a feeling of pride, of belonging to a city, a community, an institution, a family and has a sense of security.*** There's always the ***fellowship*** that comes with belonging. You've got to join institutions, clubs etc. ***You've got to get out into the community to get that sense of belonging, to feel part of it.*** (My emphasis)

These descriptions of where and what we belong to are akin to Cohen's (1982) argument, that belonging included a sense of being incorporated into the community's social fabric through a variety of means, including genealogy, kinship, social, environmental and cultural knowledge, and language i.e. family, institutions, community and ownership. Margaret McC's pleasure in "having my own things around me", is a noted transnational settlement practice (Thomas 1997), a way of constructing home away from home. It seems to enable belonging, as one re/creates a sense of one's former self in place. This may deepen one's sense of



security, which Roselene argued was an aspect of belonging. By incorporating aspects of past selves in new locations, people enabled their engagement, perhaps because there was a familiar space to return to. Margaret indicated that material objects within her home linked her to her past, and enabled her to entwine it with her evolving self in a new location.

Roselene and Joan's comments about fellowship and friendship hinted at the existence of "nebulous threads...the subterranean level of meaning...not readily accessible to the cultural outsider" (Cohen 1982:21). Joining 'institutions, clubs etc', the production of 'fellowship', the membership of 'a city, a community, an institution' suggested spaces of connection. Pamela's younger daughter, Amanda extended the concept when she argued that belonging meant

**(b)eing part of something**, a family, an organisation, friends, anything. It's like the human triangle." She left the room to look up her 'religious education' notes. After confirming her thoughts, she said, "To be fully human, you have to be loved by someone and **to be able to communicate** with other people, your parents, friends, even the cat. (My emphasis)

Amanda's argument, drawn from her church school education, that belonging meant "being part of something...to be loved, and to be able to communicate with other people" was echoed by other participants. It suggested that belonging was active. One did not simply 'belong' by being born within a family. Rather, the habitus of Pākehā women at least, dictated that agents were responsible for developing their own belonging by connecting and communicating. Shared language was one way of doing so. Although, as I noted above, none referred to language as an aspect of current belonging, several highlighted its importance in the past. They recalled how language could be inclusive or exclusionary. Ruth G remembered,

Mum used to say, "When you came straight from Denmark and can't speak a word of English, you felt as though you (were) in a big pit." There was no way out, until she went to Palmerston North and the Danish Church (where they spoke Danish), and could help her with English. So, with the friendship, the longing and the loneliness went, to a certain extent.

These comments indicated that it was not just sharing a language, Danish, that enabled Ruth's mother to develop belonging. It was gaining fluency in the language spoken in the land she had emigrated to, English, while being supported by others who spoke her first language, which made the difference. Ailsa and Joan G highlighted two other aspects of language. I have not seen either raised in the context of immigrants of British origin in Aotearoa New Zealand. Migrants of non-British origin have indicated difficulties in being understood. Ailsa recalled, "My mother and my father were so broad that we used to interpret for our Māori friends." On the West Coast where "there was lots of immigration", Joan G recalled,

Some of them had awful dialects. They didn't realize they were so broad. But people also didn't realize how they changed. There was one lady who was a Geordie.<sup>167</sup> She chewed and coughed and spat out her words. She went for a trip to England. She returned soon after. "They taark aaful," she said, "Aar Garge or aar William". And she had the broadest dialect we ever heard.<sup>168</sup>

Shared culture and language were not essential to belonging, as Kathy indicated.

I've lived in other places where I have been part of the community. In Germany, I felt really at home there even though we were part of the

<sup>167</sup> Geordie n. & adj. Brit. colloq. n. 1 a native of Tyneside. 2 the dialect spoken on Tyneside. adj. of or relating to Tyneside, its people, or its dialect (D. Thompson 1995:567)

<sup>168</sup> 'taark aaful' – talk awful (D. Thompson 1995:567).



occupying military force. And I had a lovely time in Kings Cross.<sup>169</sup> I lived in a flat opposite the wayside chapel. It was a lovely place. The people were really friendly. There was a little deli<sup>170</sup> next door. I used to have chats with them and people who knew me, and I could walk around and feel very safe.

Cultural differences could impact on one's sense of belonging, while extreme cultural unfamiliarity could engender a sense of not belonging, as Kathy also noted.

I've felt that (sense of not belonging) in countries that I have traveled through which have been culturally different...I knew I did not belong in Madras. It was stinking hot, people everywhere you looked, and bodies in the street. I thought, "Oh, get me out of here."

Kathy's wanting to 'get out' was a personal reaction to place and situation. People and places differ, and what for one person feels unfamiliar, arousing a desire to flee, feels familiar or comfortable to others. This suggested belonging was different for different people, and was probably linked to personal experience, upbringing and/or their age and stage in life.

### A 'feeling'

Understanding and being able to speak a common language was an important factor in belonging because it assisted immigrants in developing the necessary connections and feelings of safety, as what was strange became familiar (Tuan 1977). Partly, belonging was a feeling of comfort, safety and security, sometimes including a sense of permanency and/or connection with the spiritual as well as the physical world.

Pam: "Belonging is where you **feel comfortable, at home.**"

Debbie: "**It feels good. It makes me feel good.**"

Ailsa: "**Belonging – is comfort.**"

Joan B: "Comfortable, well rounded, well balanced - a person who's not in conflict. So **belonging is really a feeling, something I have within me. You take yourself to wherever you go...** Belonging means we feel safe, and secure wherever we are. We're part of humanity. Our words, actions and thoughts are important no matter how trivial they feel to us.

Joan: "(Belonging) **gives a feeling of stability, and satisfaction, as a housewife, and once again, of friendship.**"

Roselene: "Hmmm. Belonging – in its broadest sense, **it's a feeling of pride...and has a sense of security.** There's always the fellowship that comes with belonging."

Kathy: "**It's a feeling of being in a place where everybody knows your name,** you know." She laughed. (How has that happened for you?) It's because living and working here I've met so many people that I know a lot of people. And I have friendships and relationships with all of these people." (My emphasis)

These comments reflect Morley's conception of home as a 'space of belonging', and Stefano's argument that "**Being at home may have more to do with how people get along with each other...so that feeling included and accounted for becomes a means of defining a sense of belonging**" (2002:38, my emphasis).

Participants described belonging in terms of safety, security, comfort, being comfortable, an internal sense, being connected, engendering fellowship, pride and positive feelings. Many of these words describe emotions, which assert the reality of Nussbaum's contention that "emotions shape the landscape of our mental and

<sup>169</sup> In Sydney, Australia, known...as the drugs and red lights capital (Sydney.au.com).

<sup>170</sup> Delicatessen.

social lives" (2001:1). While several participants used the word, comfortable, implying "free from discomfort, at ease" (D. Thompson 1995:264), Ailsa used the word, comfort. This implied not only "a state of physical well-being" or "things that make life easy and pleasant" but also of "consolation; relief in affliction" (ibid). I am not suggesting that Ailsa needed to be or feel 'consoled' but that her use of the term suggested people experienced 'relief' in belonging, and in recognising it.

## Acceptance

Integral to belonging was a sense of being accepted, of accepting others, yourself, and your lot, and being known and trusted. Being accepted implied tolerance, trust and inclusion. Belonging could also imply frustration, anguish, and the loss of personal space and spontaneity. The corollary was not belonging. This was accompanied by a lack of acceptance, and a sense of being excluded or rejected. People who felt excluded described feeling unworthy, undervalued and not needed. Their responses highlighted the claim that one good reason for belonging to groups was self-esteem (Carnes 1995, as cited in Bradford et al. 2004:323), a factor which diminished or disappeared when people felt they did not belong.

Karen described belonging as "**(b)eing accepted**. It is definitely where you feel accepted" (my emphasis). Ruth G asserted, "**You've got to accept people for what they are and usually you find they accept you back**" (my emphasis). Ruth J enlarged on this, when she recalled her first contact in Wanganui, during a visit.

Kylie<sup>171</sup> **welcomed me, valued me, and accepted me**, as if I had come into her shop not as a visitor or a tourist...(she) was happy to see me as a person...that will stick with me forever. Acceptance is a most important thing...**(b)elonging is about accepting yourself and who and what you are, and about knowing yourself, and the good and bad things about yourself. It is accepting that that's okay.** (My emphasis)

Ruth G argued,

You have got to accept what comes your way. **I think your life is planned. You have a destiny. If you want to make it so that you belong to your community you can do it. But, if you have an attitude that you don't want to belong, then it's very poor.** (My emphasis)

This suggested that concepts about belonging were embedded in Pākehā women's habitus. The comments indicated the need for, and expectations of active engagement. Belonging required effort, and choosing not to belong was seen as anti-social. This was reflected in other attitudes about acceptable behaviour. One version related to respect and disrespect for property. Roselene recalled a boy seen breaking windows near her church. She said,

**It is important to have that sense of belonging otherwise people just feel isolated.** It's those young vandals who feel isolated...(t)hey want to be accepted. When they behave as they do, people don't accept them...(s)ometimes it's (vandalism) a group thing, and bravado. (My emphasis)

Reflecting further, she agreed that although some behaviour isolated people from the mainstream, behaviour was sometimes designed to gain entry into a desired group. This cohered with Berne's argument that " 'everybody who is anybody' in a given social circle...behaves in the same way, which may seem quite foreign to members of a different social circle" (1964:172). Those who change the game or the way they play will be outlawed in one group, but will be welcomed in another social group (ibid). In the situation Roselene described, other factors were probably involved, but space precludes further discussion.

Ruth G's and Roselene's comments introduced the notion that belonging could

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<sup>171</sup> A pseudonym.

be accepted, refused, or rejected in the context of one group, yet not others. Pam reflected,

We can accept belonging. ***We can also reject belonging.*** It's possible to make a positive decision about it, that you are going to have your home here. It is possible, especially for people who come from another place, or they can decide they won't belong...***We can choose to belong or not.*** (My emphasis)

Margaret McC highlighted another aspect to how belonging could feel. ***"Mixed...It depends on what's happening at the time.*** If things are going well you feel good, and ***if things are not going well you feel (might feel bad or)...frustrated about belonging"*** (my emphasis).

A woman whose friends acknowledged she rarely became angry, Margaret described problems after she relocated to another city.

I nearly chucked in Guides a year ago. I got frustrated...I felt I wasn't being valued. I went to a meeting and...went home feeling angry...I was going to chuck taking the unit. I had a quiet chat to a senior colleague. I told her that I knew they mightn't value my skills and not be asking me to do things because they didn't know my capabilities.

She added,

I have found it interesting moving to Wellington. ***People had always said... it was hard to break into groups in Wanganui. Going to Wellington, I have found the same thing.*** You might belong to Guides, but it very hard to break in. I think that's what happened in the district. I sat quietly, when I began attending a new Guide group. I wanted to see how it functioned before I said anything.

She elaborated, explaining that her 20-plus year involvement in guiding meant she understood the guiding movement nationally, and wore the uniform which signified belonging. Even so, strangers did not recognise her competence or knowledge, because they had no prior personal connections. This suggested that belonging and its companion, acceptance, meant insiders needed to learn about incomers before accepting or including them willingly in group activities. It also suggested that acceptance involved trust, and that, until one was trusted, one was less able to develop or deepen belonging. Margaret's comments suggested another useful practice, the value of observing and developing understanding before speaking or acting.

Ruth J also remarked on the usefulness of such behaviour. She indicated that people could absorb the culture and mores of their communities and cultures by quietly watching. This could enable an understanding of the people, places and cultures. It was a subtle way of gaining knowledge but required time. She said,

As I have lived here,<sup>172</sup> ***I have gradually learned that you have to be quietly living in a place without putting yourself outwards...(y)ou absorb people, and you learn who they are...(t)hey have to start accepting you, and when people start getting to know you they can like you, and learn that there are aspects of you they don't like. But that doesn't matter (to me) because I like myself.*** (My emphasis)

Ruth G indicated that there was another aspect to enhancing belonging, and other reasons for standing back and letting things be, particularly when relationships changed. Sometimes, instead of emphasising connections, those with long-term, well-developed bonds needed to stand back. This could enable incomers to develop belonging within the collective.

When my son moved out and got married after 45 years of living with me – they decided to marry, and it was quite right - my daughter-in-law said to me, you have no idea how it feels (now) because I belong to you.

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<sup>172</sup> Aotearoa New Zealand.

She has three adult children. One has leukemia. I know about her family and she feels she belongs (to our family). (What have you done to make her feel she belongs?) ***We live our own lives. I don't interfere.*** Lindsay and I have been partners in business. His wife accepted me as her mother-in-law, and another grandma to her children. (My emphasis)

Ruth indicated a willingness to detach while being supportive, saying, "We live our own lives. I don't interfere." Not interfering provided spaces which enabled the families to make contact when they chose, rather than being pressured to do so. These practices indicated respect from, and for, those involved. They were able to draw closer because there was no pressure upon them.

## **Experiencing ancestral origins**

Participants agreed that shared culture enabled people to gain a sense of belonging more quickly. This seemed reasonable given that sharing culture usually means sharing language and understanding cultural codes. This usually indicated that negotiating the environment was relatively straightforward, even when it was geographically unfamiliar. Participants and acquaintances recalled visits to ancestral homelands. For some, it felt 'like home'. Pamela sensed that in York where she entered streets where her grandfather had walked and worked. This suggested that belonging could arise from a combination of collective instruction and embodiment.

Another traveler to England recalled, "(t)he people seemed so familiar I felt I was looking at neighbours and acquaintances." This suggested recognition of the physical characteristics of shared ancestral gene pools.<sup>173</sup> I recalled being in southern Scotland and experiencing a strange sensation of homecoming, of familiarity of people, sky, land and seascape. It implied embodiment of memory of physical places and people. One might argue that we absorb visual memories from material objects within our family homes, and that related family narratives provided a sense of connection to such places. The sensations seemed more deeply embedded than such an argument rendered possible. It was more like a 'heartfelt ease', which contrasted with my experience in London. I knew my great-aunts had played around Westminster Abbey, and could envisage them there, but did not have the same sensations.

Perhaps my ancestors settled in a place geographically similar to Scotland, and the landscape seemed 'like home', with wide open spaces, fresh air, and fewer people than further south, perhaps not. I suggest my experience resonated with Ingold's argument, that "remembering...belongs...in the active and creative involvement of real people in a real world" (2000:205). People who traveled to places of ancestral origin recognised that there they can claim their past, through narrative and presence. At most, they may connect with kin, alive or dead. At least, they probably sense more strongly who they are, and 'speak' and show, through visiting ancestral locations, their past connections to 'local' residents.

## **Recognising belonging**

Participants also discussed ways of recognising belonging, in themselves and others. I have already discussed the importance of receiving and accepting invitations to events, and into homes, as an indicator of deeper inclusion, and the corollary, active or silent refusal of inclusion, as a disabling factor. Another way of recognising belonging involved being able to laugh at yourself, with others, and accept humorous, well-intended personal comments. Pamela said, "It's being yourself, and nobody minds. It's not a problem if you put your foot in it. (Family or friends) might laugh at you but it becomes a joke, or else they just forget it." Amanda argued, "They mightn't let you forget it." "That's right," agreed Pamela. "But it becomes a joke." Teasing me one day about being forgetful, she shook her head,

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<sup>173</sup> Note Belich's argument that over half the population may be of English, Scottish and Irish descent (2001: 217).



patted my shoulder, and laughed, "Oh, Wilma. You're just hopeless, must be losing your marbles." I grinned and agreed, not minding particularly that she had used my first given name. Although I am not particularly fond of it, I accepted her using it in the context described above.

This showed how acceptance, often involving long-term connections, allowed people to make mistakes, have them accepted or joked about, and be forgiven or forgotten. Amanda's assertion that "(t)hey mightn't let you forget it", and Pamela reiterating that 'it becomes a joke', suggested that a younger person might react more strongly to being joked with or about. An older person might be more relaxed, laugh at themselves, recognize the laughter as kindly, and see it as allowing for their own and other people's idiosyncrasies, and/or errors. Pamela also reminded her daughter that it was possible to accept laughter at oneself when it was meant kindly i.e. the laughter was 'with' you. Her interaction with me showed how our connection had deepened. Time, shared activities and revealing our 'linen cupboard' stories to one another had reduced the boundaries between us and cemented our friendship. We were relaxed enough to engage in and enjoy a joking relationship, which also demonstrated awareness of the other's emotions, and a gently expressed concern. Her pat to the shoulder signified caring, and removed any sting. It indicated a close relationship since touching others physically was an infrequent aspect of Pākehā habitus, as noted in Chapter Nine.

As I have just described, increasing connections often enabled the reduction of particular barriers and behavioural boundaries. Ruth J emphasised that the barriers were often contained within.

We need to do it (the belonging and connecting with others) through understanding, because we can put walls between ourselves and people we are among. We don't have to accept that wall. ***We don't have to feel rejected and misunderstood, or as if we don't belong, because we do belong in the world. We can do it ourselves.*** (My emphasis)

She highlighted the ability to resist exclusion, firstly by recognising when people tried to do so, and secondly, by taking action to be re-included. Belonging was individual and communal because it was also about

accepting yourself and who and what you are, and about knowing yourself, and the good and bad things about yourself. It is accepting that that's okay...***You have to grow up enough to disclose 'the dirt' on yourself. We all have our secrets.*** (But belonging?) ***I think my feeling of belonging here has really been through acceptance.*** (My emphasis)

Roselene and June affirmed this argument independently, adding that a feeling of being needed, wanted and sought after, regardless of age, was important. Roselene asserted,

No matter what your age is, you want to feel accepted, and needed and useful. That's part of belonging...(o)ld people shouldn't be put down. We all have value and can contribute something. When older people are feeling they have to be involved, they also have to make an effort as well as be accepted. ***We have to break down barriers in ourselves.*** (My emphasis)

Ruth J indicated that while being excluded could be resolved, resolution and re-integration required positive action. She discussed this in relation to the veneration of

people...thought to be, somehow, perhaps of better financial standing and educational standing" and rejection of "...people (thought) to be of a much lower standing (or having) some kind of mental disorder. They're put down, and degraded, and avoided, and talked about.

Being seen associating led to Ruth being

ostracized. People shouted at me. Stepping outside (of the accepted social and cultural mores) led to my being rejected. It was very hurtful. I resolved it by ringing people and asking what I had done to upset them...how could I put it right...I...disclosed that I was aware of gossip. **So *belonging (to one group), and rejecting others, can mean a fear of difference.*** Gossip doesn't have to be dangerous. Part of our belonging is to be able to sort out the problems. (My emphasis)

This involved taking action towards re-inclusion, after acceptance changed to rejection. This arose because Ruth practiced a different approach from the collective towards people with a disability. Ironically, her acceptance of one group led to her rejection by another. This suggested that the collective feared contamination, and/or loss of social and cultural capital in the same way as when people hesitated to disclose their 'linen cupboard' stories (Boenisch-Brednich 2002:76), again for fear of negative judgments, rejection or contamination. Margaret McC's account of her reception, discussed in Chapter Nine, provided insights into how acceptance, inclusion and withdrawal could be enacted. Her account incorporated embodiment and emplacement. I discuss other aspects of her account here, since they indicated that not belonging could also be embodied. Margaret had described being hugged by several former in-laws, being greeted exuberantly by a 12-year-old nephew. Her former husband

Euan...gave me a hug, nothing sexual, just a comforting hug...I felt sorry for (his) new wife. There might have been big hugs (for her) earlier in the week, I don't know...(s)he stood behind (her husband) or cuddled their baby, or sat with her mother, as if she didn't belong.

Margaret observed the processes which demonstrated her own belonging, performed and embodied in the hugs, the nephew's shouted welcome and his rush to greet her. The new wife's resistance to Margaret's belonging was expressed in her hanging back in a group where people knew each other well, and acknowledged one another fondly, verbally and physically. Her actions embodied her sense of insecurity, and her relatively short-term involvement with the family. Standing behind her husband, cuddling their new baby, and sitting with her mother indicated that she felt she belonged only with blood kin and her husband. Her youth, the baby's recent birth and the relatively short time she had known her husband's family, might have impacted on her ability to mingle. These factors indicated why her ties to consanguineal kin appeared stronger than to affinal kin. The events indicated that when an incomer assumes a significant position in a family, even with a child to cement the relationship, belonging i.e. connections, shared history and acceptance, still needed time to develop.

Margaret's observations were similar to those which Kohn (2002) made with regard to the performativity and embodiment of belonging, detailed in Chapter Two. Mostly, "(t)hey are also very quietly and subtly enacted and embodied by people in the everyday...invisible to the very people that they define" (ibid:145). Margaret's observations indicated that people do become aware - perhaps after absences - of their place in the collective. They also indicated that belonging, developed and deepened through shared experience, historical knowledge and frequent engagement, as Margaret's was during twenty years of marriage, could be embedded deeply, and that it was not lost. It was revived and maintained through contact during this deeply emotional event. Attending the funeral enabled mourners to recognise their mutual attachment to the deceased. They reaffirmed their connections to one another by grieving together, recalling their past history, and later eating, drinking and talking together.

Margaret's experience, the actions observed and performed, and the connections regenerated, recalled Fontaine's assertion that "(t)he image of shared blood or common physical substance are only two among many ways of representing relatedness" (2002:5307-5311). The family behaviour suggested that,

despite the major disjunction of separation and divorce, the connections formed were so strong that the bonds remained.

Belonging was enacted less frequently but remained deeply embedded. Margaret's ex-husband's family continued to regard their relationships with Margaret and other former in-laws – the two ex-husbands present at the funeral – as like those which were “internal to a family (and the) emotional bonds, permanent ties that reflect ideals of sharing and altruism” (ibid). Embracing their former in-laws emotionally and physically highlighted Kellerhals' assertion that, with the rise in divorce rates, and increasing recomposition of families, “the kinship tie looks increasingly like a network” with weak bonds and no important focal point, rather than “like a group concentrically focused on forebears and endowed with a strong collective consciousness” (2002:5343-5347).<sup>174</sup>

## Naming

People also recognised that they belonged, or that others belonged by being named. Debbie, Kathy and Amanda described one aspect of their belonging as being known, usually by name. Kathy described it as “a feeling of being in a place where everybody knows your name. You know...(So a sense of belonging boils down to being known, and knowing people, feeling safe and secure?) Yes, but it's really about making connections,” unknowingly reiterating Morley's assertion that “home...is an idea...of that ultimately *heimlich* place where...‘everybody knows your name’ ”(2001:425). Debbie argued that developing belonging was an active and publicly visible practice. Like Margaret's experience at the funeral, belonging was performed and embodied in everyday actions.

***I think you make your own belonging whether you are from out of town, or not.*** Wanganui's my home and I love it. It's not too big. People accept me. (How do you know you are accepted?) People smile. They wave. They say 'hey'. They acknowledge you. My kids say, “You know just about everybody in Wanganui.” I say I do too. They (my kids) can't walk down the street with me and not have somebody say hello to me. It's come about through (my connections to) theatre, my family, through the kids. ***If you want to belong you make the most of it by joining clubs and meeting people and not being afraid to say hello to somebody you don't know.*** (My emphasis)

During our conversation at a street-side café, I observed several affirmations. At least two people greeted Debbie, confirming her observations. Greetings included a nod, and a smile, or a wave. They were quick and silent, acknowledging her and that she was busy. If she had been on her own, they might have verbalized their greeting, or stopped to chat.

I observed similar daily affirmations for others. Often, the affirmation occurred in what seems to be a Pacific form - a glance, a tilt of the chin, a nod which is not quite a nod, eyes looking upwards slightly and eyebrows raised a little. The movements took a moment. Nothing was spoken but people were acknowledgement. Another non-interrupting gesture of acknowledgement involved a subtle wave. The elbow was usually at waist level, hand extended near the hip or just below the shoulder, and fingers raised with minimal motion of the wrist. Eyebrows might also be raised.

## Creating and maintaining belonging

In this section, I discuss the participants' perspectives on creating, maintaining, and diminishing belonging. These included private and public behaviour, and involved giving and/or receiving, participating and/or withdrawing. Individual practices incorporated shared conversations, telephoning one another,

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<sup>174</sup> Cf. Stacey 1990 for further discussion.

giving gifts, sharing time, caring for one another, and inviting relatives and friends to celebrate family occasions. Events beyond one's control, like death, relocation or ill-health impacted on belonging, often negatively, sometimes positively.

Margaret McC described above how she was physically and verbally included in a family funeral by 'ex-in-laws'. The experience affirmed her place in the hearts and history of her former in-laws. She also described how remaining in touch with former friends was important. She maintained belonging through frequent reconnection.

We stay in touch, and we stay with each other. If I am coming back to Wanganui, I try to see some of them. When I brought Mum up when Ron was in hospital, I called Jeannie and asked if she had time for a fifteen-minute cup of tea...I shot round there...and we caught up. And I was saying I was looking for a bed when I was here in November. My girlfriend offered me a bed. When I was leaving that time, she invited me up for tonight (for a ten-year old's birthday party)...so Jeannie and Awhina I stay in touch with, and Susie, and my ex-in-laws, and a very few others...if I had not caught up (for a while) I try to touch base. There are emails but Susie's not very good at that, so we get on the phone...Awhina is at work, so I catch up with her there. So I suppose communication is a way to stay in touch with friends...(w)ith groups, it is by participating, because if you don't participate you don't feel as much part of it, so you don't feel you belong as much.<sup>175</sup>

June described the strangeness of recognising her connection to younger generations of family through use of a relational term, 'auntie'. She said this impacted strongly for several reasons.

When you have grown up as I have with my family dying at an early age – my parents – I never really belonged to anybody. But I feel by corresponding with my sisters in England, and their children, and another one there with a new baby...I'm a great-great-aunt...I have married and with a family, I developed a sense of belonging...my nephew in Hamilton calls me Auntie June. It is an unusual feeling because it (reminds me) of a new generation (and that I have family and I belong).

Events such as death connected participants to places, collectives and communities. Margaret McC's gravestone photographs indicated this, as did Kathy's comment that, "I have more of a sense of belonging here because I have...buried a child here." While deaths of kin connected them more deeply to Whanganui, they did not perceive these as tying them to the location forever.

## Gifts and thanks

Offering and/or providing practical help and material gifts was another way of deepening belonging as did sharing positive and negative events, writing letters, making telephone calls, and, with the increase in technology, emailing people. June gifted plants and food, as a thank you for transport to meetings. Ruth baked love into biscuits she sent to family. "Every now and then I do a whole lot of baking, pile it up and send it down. They are always delighted," she said. Her daughter-in-law telephoned her thanks. The thanks enhanced their relationship because the daughter-in-law acknowledged Ruth's efforts and love. During the call, they exchanged information about family activities. This increased their knowledge and maintained their relationship. Their practices conformed to social habitus and the expectation that thanks will be extended. This is viewed as an active courtesy

While some participants described belonging as a commitment, Ruth G described it as a practice, a sharing of emotions, positive and negative, actions that

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<sup>175</sup> The names are pseudonyms.



indicated caring. Of her own family and friends, she said, "I think it's because we share each other's joys and problems so it makes a tighter belonging. I think you have to work together to have that feeling of belonging and security." Her use of the word, tighter, suggested degrees of belonging with closeness enhanced through time, level and frequency of effort and contacts, and how and when caring was expressed.

Friends, caregivers and neighbours who acted similarly extended people's connections, integrating them more extensively into community life. It also made people feel valued and noticed. Practices of 'love and caring' included providing services, making meals, spending time and/or talking together, inviting people to attend family celebrations, or being available regardless of situation or time.

June reflected that when she was ill "people had telephoned, delivered meals and visited to see how I was. That made me feel I truly belonged." I felt similarly when Roselene remembered, after three years, that I preferred my tea with milk. Rudge (2005: personal communication) recalled a friend "who, when newly married and wishing to impress, kept a list on the back of a kitchen cupboard with info about how her friends had their coffee. Thinking she had remembered certainly impressed me!" In these situations, 'remembering' made the friends feel valued, reinforced their bonds, boosted their self-esteem and, in doing so, enhanced their belonging. Ruth described these tangible and intangible expressions of loving and caring as more valuable

than money could ever buy...I don't think you can ever be lonely if you have that feeling of belonging with family and friends...(i)f you didn't belong you would get grumpy and locked up in yourself. You'd think everybody was against you and that nobody cared.

### **Diminished belonging**

Knowing that others cared about you was a factor in augmenting belonging and reducing isolation. Such knowledge could also reverse, for a short time at least, a sense of diminishing belonging aroused through relocation. As I described in Chapter Eight, some participants recalled difficulties in developing belonging in certain locations and/or situations. Negative reactions from insiders could leave them feeling excluded and therefore, rejected. This resulted in feeling devalued, and, possibly, worthless. This could result in turn, to feelings of isolation or alienation. Fuhrmann argued that "(e)steem...is related to the sense of belonging, and not to race or ethnicity per se" (1990:340, as cited in Bradford et al. 2004:315). As people aged, or their personal circumstances changed, belonging could diminish. I noted above that expressions of love and care assisted in belonging. Similar practices could result in reducing or decreasing the loss of belonging, especially when people experienced isolation and reduced belonging, due to changes in their circumstances. Margaret Mary's photographic inventory provided insights into the overlapping nature of intercity networks. She revealed actions which showed how caring for others could assist in reducing isolation in the short-term. She attended a Christmas gathering in 'sort-of relative's house. It was also the former home of one of her friends. She took several photographs of the renovations.



© Margaret Watt

**Fig 70: House interior, Christmas Day, 2000.**

The new purchasers had made several modifications (Fig 70). Margaret Mary said, “I took these photos to show Jill. It was at (her former) house...(s)he heard it was changed and told me to take a good look. So I took these photos.” By taking and sharing the photographs, Margaret Mary temporarily reduced Jill’s sense of isolation, the rhizomatic thinning which had occurred through a lifestyle change. It provided a visual path for Jill into this former node of her life. By providing a way for Jill to ‘visit’ her former home, through the photographs, Margaret Mary enhanced their friendship. She tended to Jill’s emotional comfort, and might have momentarily reduced her sense of isolation. Alternatively, viewing the photographs might have emphasised Jill’s loss. The photographs and comments revealed how networks developed and grew. They also indicated how connections could be sustained through nurturing practices, which many Pākehā women regarded as important.

Pamela acknowledged that participants who had negative experiences in Whanganui were not alone. As discussed earlier, she found making friends difficult when she arrived aged fifteen. She elaborated on possible reasons for exclusionary behaviour after I had told her about an acquaintance. The acquaintance had tried to recall the name of a person who had died recently. She said: “If you were Wanganui, you’d know the name”. Pam winced because the statement implied that I hadn’t been in Whanganui for long enough (thirty years) to know, let alone, recall the name. Age was the acquaintance’s excuse. Pam reflected,

There is a circle, who think they are Wanganui. They have an over-inflated opinion of themselves for varying reasons. Usually, their family has been here for a long time. They think they are ‘It’. Other people mightn’t be ‘It’ because they didn’t go to school here, or have money, or live in the wrong area, or have moved here. The definition of ‘It’ can vary depending on a range of things, usually social-economic.

This reflected Bourdieu’s concept of cultural capital, in this instance, claimed by some Wanganui residents through birth, residence, education and/or income. Incomers’ experiences suggested that, while such claims might not be peculiar to

Whanganui, apparent insiders claimed a superior belonging through birth and ongoing residence. Margaret McC described them as 'sort of toffee-nosed'. Some people disdained the attitude, while others actively avoided being associated with it.

Margaret McC's family lived on St John's Hill. She recalled, "For some...St John's Hill was known as Snob's Rock...(p)eople'd say, "Are you on Snob's Rock?" "Nah, nah."<sup>176</sup> (Laughs) "Don't live in the town boundary."<sup>177</sup> She highlighted the boundaries people drew for themselves, to avoid inclusion in behaviours they perceived as undesirable. She aligned herself with people who were not 'snobs'.

Belonging could also diminish through relocation and subsequent reduced contact, as Margaret McC described after moving from Whanganui. Margaret Mary and other older participants indicated that ill-health and the disabilities of ageing impacted on their ability to maintain the processes important in belonging, with frailty leading to diminished belonging through disengagement.

(To maintain belonging) you should attend (groups) but I'm dropping my groups because I can't get there easily enough and I don't like asking other people to take my walker...(Why don't you like asking them to take the walker?) "It takes up too much space in the car and with the church ladies, Myra usually takes me and a couple of others and I couldn't ask them to share the car with a walker. (How does that make you feel?) It's disappointing but I can't help it. I could keep attending the meetings if I didn't have to rely on others, and if I could walk better...I tend to get backache sitting in ordinary chairs for too long...two hours or more...when people can't attend meetings they slip back...(b)ut you don't want to hear my troubles. (Yes, I do, because it helps me to understand how belonging can decrease). The Age Concern Lady wanted me to go to their meetings. I couldn't do that because I have to have the toilet handy. I'm always dashing in and out. I can't see properly either. (So it's about personal dignity too?) Yes. (And making changes to something different can be awkward too?) Yes. I feel my lack of eyesight is very frustrating because I can't read for very long and do things I usually do. It's just one other problem...I'm starting to feel I don't belong in the same way because I can't get out to things. So I'm feeling a bit isolated. When you can't do things others are doing, it gets tiresome. (What can people do to help you feel more connected?) Talking about things is a great help. If Pamela and John and the kids talk to me about things it makes you feel that you're still part of the world.

Decreasing mobility, reliance on others, reticence about inconveniencing others, physical problems like back-ache, and a desire to retain her personal dignity, reduced Margaret Mary's ability to attend meetings regularly. This impinged on her sense of belonging because, without regular contact, exchange of information, shared meals and activities, she felt isolated. Her comments emphasised the opposite of Ruth G's comments about degrees of belonging. Ruth referred to 'tight' belonging. Margaret Mary's referred to it 'slipping away', indicating a reduction. This suggested that maintaining belonging required ongoing active engagement. Remaining aware of, and being involved in, family activities enabled her to continue feeling connected to the world of family and beyond, and to maintain status and belonging.

Physical disabilities, failing eyesight and hearing particularly, and her awareness that there were many others like her, dictated that a rest-home would not offer the same inclusive feeling as living in the family home did. It was not only that "(t)hey don't know your family and you don't know theirs", which the people in the

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<sup>176</sup> No. No.

<sup>177</sup> Although the property was accessed by driving through the suburb of St John's Hill, it was located in the adjacent county.

regular community circles of contact do. It was also that, without being able to hear or see well, the effort involved in understanding others with disabilities seemed overwhelming. Margaret Mary was aware that making new contacts would be exhausting, and probably superficial. If people were not able to engage in regular activities, such as attending meetings, church or visiting friends, their belonging diminished. Margaret Mary's increasing frailty, and her fear of burdening the family, reduced her sense of personal security and comfort, and heightened her sense of isolation, despite having lived in the community for over thirty years.<sup>178</sup>

## Commitment

Participants argued that belonging was a commitment, interactive and ongoing. They knew from experience and discourse that incomers wanted to develop belonging. Roselene recalled

talking to a lady at the Citizen's Advice Bureau. She said they had lots of inquiries from immigrants who wanted to find out where they could go to do things and feel part of the community. They were seeking to get a sense of belonging.

She and others recalled making efforts as incomers to engage in community activities by talking to their neighbours, joining church and/or sports or other interest groups, becoming involved in work-place activities, and socializing with colleagues after hours. It worked for them, and they encouraged the practice in others. Joan remembered,

It didn't take us long to settle down. But you have to try twice as hard as other people you come in contact with. They don't seem to make you welcome....I often wonder if I've been or seemed like that to new people. ... (i)f I see a new person at church I go up and speak to them because I know what it's like to be lonely. Our own experience has helped us to recognise that feeling in others.

Kathy described the processes and practices involved in belonging. Her comments highlighted the effort required, the slow osmosis through time, and

the sense of belonging developing. It's almost like a penny drops. That's something that clicks into place and you belong to it... (i)t's not something you're really aware of, but you realize you know people you see in the street. They know you. They know you're going to have a baby. You get to know other people, other mums, and before you know it, you're part of the community.

Kathy's comments resonated with those of Manchester residents whose children provided the connections for 'elective' belonging (Savage et al. 2005). "This process generates detached social networks, rather than close social ties with neighbours (ibid:54). Elective belonging might not indicate such deep involvement as Kathy experienced. She had married in, lived in a suburb noted for its 'community ambience', and recognised her belonging as "like a penny drops...something that clicks into place". This was perhaps a feeling akin to 'punctum' (Barthes 1981:27).

Roselene also emphasised that welcoming people, being friendly, and accepting them as they were, was vital, particularly when incomers appeared different. It was not always easy to continue doing so, and sometimes, people's best intentions did not accord with their practice. Ruth G and Roselene argued that being non-judgmental was important.

(We can include others) by extending the hand of friendship and accepting people (incomers) as they are, if we're not judgmental at all. If it is difficult to extend the hand of friendship to some people, that's the judgment in ourselves. We have to accept people as they are, and not

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<sup>178</sup> Soon after this interview, Margaret Mary's health deteriorated. She settled into a rest-home she found congenial.



try to change them. If we can't accept them because, as you said, we can't like everybody, we probably let them slide, but perhaps we shouldn't. Belonging is also a commitment and probably a lot of us don't give that commitment. But there's also self-acceptance and you have to know who you are.

Ruth G argued that non-judgment and acceptance applied cross-culturally. You've got to accept people for what they are and usually you find they accept you back. I am not racist, because I was brought up to believe that people were people, and you belong to each other, whether you know it or not. We have two Zimbabwean that come to our church. They're as black as the Ace of Spades.<sup>179</sup> One of the women said she felt great (coming to our church). She told me, "I didn't know how I would be accepted because of my colour." I said, "You belong to us." She said, "That's important." So to help people towards that belonging we have to show them consideration, and accept their culture, because if you have a culture, like Māori culture, you'll never get away from it. It's born and bred into you.

Although participants argued that shared ethnicity was not important for developing belonging, they indicated directly and indirectly that understanding different cultures could be valuable. This enabled all those involved to develop personally, and to understand themselves and others. Joan B commented,

I think it helps to know and understand the other guy because, it seems to me, even in a racial aspect, to know of another language or culture only increases understanding. That's how I've found it. By our own efforts we can assist others to develop a sense of belonging, by our own examples, perhaps more than efforts. (Can you give me an example to clarify what you mean?) She thought for a moment. "I went out to a course once. I thought I would learn Māori as a language. I thought, fancy living in New Zealand all this time...we used words as kids but didn't realize they were Māori. Part of it<sup>180</sup> was to go to the Kai Iwi<sup>181</sup> marae. It was my first official cultural visit. We had Māori kids as friends, and we stayed at their homes. At the marae, one of the chants we had to learn was about the moon. I practiced as I drove out. It was quite a big thing to get a babysitter, and leave my children. I hadn't been away from them for ages. I wasn't used to sleeping with others. I didn't even have a bed partner. And here we were sleeping in this great hall – I forget its name – with all these other people on mattresses, warts and all, and as I settled down in my place at the top end – under a window – the VIPs and old ladies were at the other end near the entrance. And the windows were just little windows...the moon shone through one of these little slit windows. I wondered how the moon could find that window and shine through that little slit onto me. It reiterated the chant. It seemed to say, "You're in the right place and you're okay"...I felt the most wonderful sense of security. Instead of struggling on my own at home, I had this wonderful, wonderful sense with all these people – I had a sense of all these people, and we were one big family. I thought, "This is what Māori get from this, and that was a big step in me understanding that culture, or some of their culture. You might say that it's belonging to the nth degree, you know."

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<sup>179</sup> A term used infrequently to describe people whose skin colour is very dark, somewhat disconcerting in the current social climate. Ruth used it to describe more clearly why acceptance was so valued by the incomers.

<sup>180</sup> A Māori language course.

<sup>181</sup> A rural settlement near Wanganui.

I remember talking to Henry Bennett<sup>182</sup> about it and my feelings and Henry saying, "Well, that would be your marae, Joan.

Other participants also included a spiritual aspect in their belonging. This connected to them to the world in general, the natural world, and an intangible, invisible realm. Ruth J (above) referred to this when she discussed the protests by Māori and others, like the Cornish, and their refusal to disclose information. "They are trying to say that you don't belong here, and don't try to take anything from us, (especially) what's spiritual. They are saying, 'We feel insecure. We're afraid of being robbed (of things which we value)'. She argued that people knew when they belonged to the world in general.

We can tell when people accept us, and also when we accept ourselves. That's an ongoing thing. It brings up the question of God and who God is. To me God isn't a person. This can be said at different levels. God is everywhere, and around us, in the sun, moon, sky, clouds and so on. It seems while we are here, we belong. I know I belong here. If the army came and said you don't belong...if they said nothing belongs to you, I wouldn't agree...everything does belong to us while we are here. It's that sense that integrates us into the world. It is almost infinite, the completeness of you and the universe. We are integrated. If I wasn't here, the world wouldn't be whole, and so that's where acceptance comes in. You can't belong, if you do not accept that every person is important in the universe, and that each one is as important as you are. That's a recent discovery of mine.

### **Belonging is...**

There are subtle differences in participants' concepts of belonging. Blended, they provide a sense of what belonging feels like. In this chapter, I discussed the participants' perceptions of and their concepts about, belonging. They included practices like sharing of time, labour, meals and food, joys and sorrows, and gift giving. Participants described what they belonged to, including family, friends, organisations, and the collective community. They conveyed the emotions involved in belonging and not belonging, and described how they and others developed, maintained and enhanced belonging. They described how belonging contracted through relocation, ageing, ill health and/or disabilities. They argued that not belonging could arise through active, personal and collective practices, producing negative emotions such as feelings of exclusion, isolation, loneliness and alienation.

Belonging incorporated similarity and difference, positionality and subjectivity. Using these mechanisms, participants indicated that there were degrees of belonging. They argued that belonging incorporated individual needs for commitment to people, places and spaces, and that, with maturity, belonging could change. Older participants indicated their belonging to the world in general, as well as to particular places, spaces and people. They incorporated the metaphysical, spiritual and imaginary into their belonging, and perceived, viewed and described belonging as a practice.

While cultural commonality often enabled belonging to develop more quickly, those who were different also developed belonging, particularly when they made an effort to be included in community activities, and events. Participants understood and described belonging as an emotional engagement to people, place, space and the world. They understood belonging as a practice, embodied through personal emplacement and as something which could be engaged in, accepted, rejected, deepened, or which receded. It could change as life progressed, and/or location altered. They were not necessarily aware of their practices as related to belonging. They shared a sense of what belonging meant, how it was enacted, how it could be

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<sup>182</sup> A kaumatua, wise adviser, now deceased.

extended or reduced, and how it made them and/or others feel.

The participants' actions, practices and reflections suggested they sensed belonging as multiple, layered and fibrous; intersectional, relational and positional; variable according to circumstance, geographical location and time. Perhaps most importantly, the participants conveyed a sense that belonging was not ultimately personal, as Read (2000) argued, but collective and embedded, part of Pākehā women's habitus. Belonging entailed responsibility, personal and collective, and could be frustrating when involvement in family or community affairs was not progressing as participants perceived it should.

Participants' assertions and practices highlighted Bourdieu's concept of habitus, with their actions creating them as active agents, capable of making their own belonging, but with cultural structures influencing them. Belonging was a commitment people were expected to make. Not making an effort to belong contravened social mores with those who avoided or rejected belonging being regarded as neglectful, lazy, or anti-social.

The participants highlighted that belonging ebbed and flowed according to time, effort, commitment, location and health. Because of this, Ingold's concept of the rhizome provided a metaphor for understanding belonging. It was entwined in the world, with no apparent beginning or end. It thickened and thinned, ebbed and flowed, expanded and narrowed, for each individual. In this way, belonging could be regarded as personal. But because belonging required engagement and connections, and could not exist without the collective, or the environment, it was communal.

When participants actively reflected on belonging, they reviewed their practices, and recognised how they belonged. Doing so might have strengthened their sense of belonging to Aotearoa New Zealand as descendants of migrant settlers, or as settlers themselves. They recognised connections to place as well as people. In most instances, their social contacts enabled belonging more strongly than attachment to places, or particular physical or geographical environments.

Most participants regarded themselves as belonging to Aotearoa New Zealand as a whole rather than just to Whanganui, even those who regarded Whanganui as 'home'. Participants also practiced belonging to Whanganui. Home was sometimes their birthplace, but their belonging became where they dwelled, and invested time and energy, and developed connections. This suggested that for some belonging was elective, for others it was dual, and for some, it related to birth. Their constructions of, and engagement with, belonging, were influenced by personal and ancestral mobility, and the Aotearoa New Zealand imaginary. In the final chapter, I suggest how the concepts the participants and I explored together might be melded to form a theory of belonging.

## Chapter Twelve

### Conclusion

*Rapua te huarahi whanui hei ara whakapiri,  
I ngā iwi e rua i runga i te whakaro kotahi.*

*Seek the broad highway that will unite  
the two people towards a common goal.*

(Rangipo Metekingi 1962, recalled by his son, Manu Metekingi 2004)

### Introduction

Motivated by a personal interest in the way Pākehā women constructed belonging in post-colonial Aotearoa New Zealand, and recognition that other settler migrants in post-colonial nations were discussing their belonging, my primary research goal was discover how women regarded belonging. The research was conducted against the background of a colonial society in change. The indigenous minority was voicing its belonging, and its concerns about the impact of colonization. The catalyst was my own sense of dislocation despite long-term residence in Whanganui. I wanted also to understand why, after over 160 years of white migrant settlement in Aotearoa New Zealand, Pākehā migrants were arguing about, and claiming, belonging. I wondered whether Pākehā women's experiences and responses replicated those in other lands. Over an extended period, I investigated intensively how some Pākehā women constructed belonging in a small provincial city. I used a range of methods to explore their practices as I engaged actively with them.

### Towards belonging

The Whanganui research participants indicated that their attachments to Aotearoa New Zealand derived from personal, familial and ancestral mobility, an understanding of their migrant heritage, and of what it meant to be descended from mostly British settlers. They revealed belonging through: active practices in everyday life; shared and common experiences; place attachment through inscription; environmental engagement and emotion; and belonging to communities, collectives and individuals through embodiment, performativity and narrative; knowledge of and engagement in, cultural codes of conduct; and the intergenerational transmission of knowledge. Their practices often revealed juxtapositions of their British/European heritage with Aotearoa New Zealand experiences. They revealed how their belonging was generated in the South Pacific land settled first by Māori, and later, by Pākehā.

Many described themselves as 'Kiwi', or 'Aotearoa New Zealanders' rather than claiming local or regional identity. Some continued to regard themselves as English, and perceived England as home. Despite this, they described themselves as belonging to Aotearoa New Zealand. Some argued that childhood and adult belonging were different, the latter created by oneself, the former experienced through childhood familial connections.

The participants seemed to be beginning to experience belonging as Cohen described it. They seemed to be becoming "an integral piece of the marvelously complicated fabric which constitutes the community" (1982:21). Individually and collectively, they claimed belonging to a range of geographical locations, icons, practices, and kin. This suggested tendrils or layers of belonging impacted by those factors I referred to above, such as heritage, ancestral settlement, and personal mobility; and, additionally, cultural codes, national political practices and global communications. Participants might not yet be recipients of a "proudly distinctive and consciously preserved culture" (ibid). They had transported aspects of their



ancestral culture, and transmitted, intra-generationally and inter-generationally, some of the 'traditions and values' drawn from their pasts. They were not always aware of being 'performer(s) of...hallowed skills' (ibid) but they were 'expert(s) in its idioms and idiosyncrasies' (ibid) as indicated through their practices of and knowledge of cultural codes, highlighted in practices of hospitality. Their "*depth of...belonging* (was) revealed in the forms of social organization and association in the community" (ibid), although not always through "a particular kinship group or neighbourhood" (ibid). Kinship was perceived as important, and connections within the community were regarded as vital to belonging.

Unlike Cohen's participants who appeared to dwell geographically near one another, the Whanganui participants' kin were scattered the length and breadth of Aotearoa New Zealand. Their neighbourhoods were less like the communities of Cohen's island research, and more like those described in Savage et al.'s (2005) Mancunian research. While the Whanganui participants exhibited a degree of elective belonging to their dwelling places, they also claimed belonging to kin and places nationally and internationally. They seemed to construct their belonging relationally, and positionally. They saw themselves as being connected to Aotearoa New Zealand as a whole. Participants regarded themselves as "recognisable member(s) of the community (of Aotearoa New Zealand) as a whole and of its cultural panoply" (Cohen 1985:21).

Some were attached to particular places through memory, residential longevity, inscription and/or engagement within the landscape, private and public. They located their origins within and beyond Aotearoa New Zealand's shores. Through this, I began to understand that they were not indigenous in the way that Māori Aotearoa New Zealanders were. This did not preclude their sense of belonging to Aotearoa New Zealand. This study showed some Pākehā women had begun to develop a deeper belonging to Aotearoa New Zealand. In most instances, it did not parallel that recorded in their ancestral communities nor of the Māori.

The research demonstrated that, for these Pākehā women, belonging had developed to the point where they practiced and claimed belonging, not only because "we have nowhere to go and do not wish to go" (Read 2000:2), but because this was where they felt they belonged and where they wanted to stay. It had become 'home' in most respects - environmentally, culturally, personally collectively, emotionally, spiritually and/or metaphysically. Participants claimed belonging to multiple locations, through ancestral and personal connections, but experienced personal place attachment to fewer locations.

Like Bell (2004), I agree that only by exploring their own origins can Pākehā gain a greater understanding of what it means to belong in the world, in Aotearoa New Zealand, and to 'the world around here'. By doing so, they might recognise and/or broaden their knowledge of Māori concepts of belonging, and the differences between their own, and Māori, concepts. Heightened understanding might lead to their recognising the contributions of Māori to Aotearoa New Zealand life, and a subsequent reduction in the denial of the validity of Māori claims. Bell argued that it might be better for Pākehā to accept "that alienation/estrangement defines precisely who they are. (This) would mean acknowledging estrangement from their European 'origins' and acceptance of the losses that entails. This process of geographical and cultural estrangement might offer a point of departure for reconstructing the Pākehā relationship to place in New Zealand (sic)" (ibid:235).

The Pākehā participants in the Whanganui context were moving along a continuum of experience. In this respect, they were beginning the journey towards the 'broad highway' Rangipo Metekingi referred to in the whakatauki noted at the beginning of this chapter, a process which might ultimately assist in reconstructing Pākehā relationships within the land. The change was reflected in their heightened knowledge of their own origins, and their willingness to claim them publicly. Moving from the assimilationist attitudes of the 1950s could herald a rise in the awareness

of the role of colonization in Aotearoa New Zealand, its effect on Māori, and its growing impact on Pākehā, as Māori highlight its import for themselves. As in other cultures, Pākehā women in Whanganui developed and maintained belonging through intergenerational transmission of knowledge about their origins, culture and places through narrative, personal experience, embodiment and action. The process had become more public in the past three decades, as Pākehā began to comprehend the value of embracing their origins, and of recognizing how they arrived in this place at this time.

Their sense of dislocation became evident as they discussed their heritage, puzzled over Māori concepts of belonging, and acknowledged their connections to Aotearoa New Zealand through people, heritage, material objects, iconic constructions, and places. I began this dissertation with a Māori proverb which argued that only by reviewing the past can we build the future, and followed with a quotation from Cohen (1985), arguing that belonging required more than being 'born in place'. The research suggested that some Pākehā have begun to review their past in an effort to find their place and their belonging. Through a range of practices, they were developing, and expressing deepening belonging. They were constructing their own 'folk' histories, discovering their frames of reference, and expressing their attachments through kin and time to place. This activity signaled deepening awareness among Pākehā of belonging, and recognition that it was not possible to belong without acknowledging Māori belonging. Their practices and their claims suggested concern about their 'place' in Aotearoa New Zealand, particularly since it had been challenged by Māori. Where that 'place' is, is becoming clearer, but how it will finally be resolved is not. Olliver-Richardson asserted that

(w)hile considering 'a sense of belonging' may not be suitable for all studies of ethnicity, it may be relevant in situations which are Pacific Island-based, or like Hawai'i, communities in which different ethnic groups co-exist while subscribing to an 'umbrella', pan-ethnic identity (2002: ).

Inclusion is likely to be as significant in Aotearoa New Zealand as for Hawaii. I concur with Olliver-Richardson's argument that "(a)s cultures, people and ethnicities become more fluid, the parameters and markers of 'belonging' and inclusion will be as significant as the borders of 'exclusion...'" (ibid). This is unlikely to occur until Pākehā have established and recognized their own practices of belonging. They were likely to need to acknowledge, as Bell suggested, that their 'alienation/estrangement' defined who they were. By recognizing their own practices, Pākehā could strengthen their belonging in Aotearoa New Zealand and within the world. Doing so could enable them to move forward. They would have less need to assert themselves by acknowledging the barriers constructed by their ancestors, and recognizing and accepting the need to heed the Māori voice, if those barriers were to diminish. In the Māori sense, "*Nga moe moe ā ki tua/Nga ara ki naiane/ Nga tupuwae ki mu*". Pakeha could also use "*The visions of yesterday (as) today's pathways (to create) tomorrow's stepping stone*" (Metekingi 1962, recalled by Metekingi 2004).

## Metaphors

Drawing on active research, I argued that belonging was a complex combination of individual and collective actions, practices, cultural codes and personal and collective philosophies. Belonging appeared to be multiple, mutable, fluid, and layered, personal and collective, positive and negative, embedded and elective, proscribed, ascribed accepted and/or rejected. It appeared to arise from, and occur as an expression of, habitus. It could be impacted on, and altered by personal agency, political processes, and global events. It was enhanced by knowledge of common experiences and shared practices, and altered with maturity.

Participant belonging combined a sense of 'belonging together' with

emotional attachment to people and places, past and present. This arose through engagement within cultures, places and people. Jackson (1995)'s description of being "at home in the world", suggested ease, but did not necessarily equate with or contain a sense of belonging. Brubaker and Cooper suggested incorporating the Weberian term, *Zusammengehörigkeitsgefühl*, into discussions about belonging. This notion described "a feeling of belonging together" but, it was argued, probably depended partly "on the degrees and forms of commonality and connectedness(and)...other factors, such as particular events, their encoding in compelling public narratives, prevailing discursive frames and so on" (2000:20). The term incorporated much of the participants' understanding of belonging.

Extending Bourdieu's (1982) concept of practice with Ingold's (2000) metaphor of the rhizome highlighted the importance of individual agency, and its interplay with the social habitus, as well as the environment. It made space for change. Overlaying Kohn's (2002) continuum with the concept of the web, enabled us to partly understand how rhizomatic tendrils can be thickened, suggests the stickiness of habitus, and through that, a way of explaining personal resistance to change. Applying Geertz's (1973) concepts of 'thick' and 'thin' to belonging, provided another way of understanding how a rhizome could develop thicker or thinner, longer or shorter, tenuous or deeply embedded strands. It also provided a way of indicating that while belonging was layered, horizontally and vertically, layers could vary in thickness, emphasising the participant descriptions about degrees of belonging. Doing so also provided a means of describing how belonging might shrivel without commitment, just as a rhizome, or parts of it, shriveled and died, without the right conditions for nurture.

Returning to Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) original discussion of the rhizome assisted in clarifying and extending the metaphor. They argued that "(a) rhizome as a subterranean stem is absolutely different from roots and radicles...(t)he rhizome itself assumes very diverse forms, from ramified surface extension in all directions to concretion into bulbs and tubers". It had "no beginning or end; it is always in the middle...coming and going rather than starting and finishing..." (ibid:6-7).

If one adopts the metaphor, and applied to it a degree of botanical accuracy, one discovers the ability for expansion. Playing seriously (Ortner 1996) with the rhizomatic concept enables one to extend the manifestations of belonging, and to argue that it exists above the surface as well as in the subterranean world. Just as a rhizome 'assumes very diverse forms' (Deleuze & Guattari 1987:6) so, it seems, does belonging, revealed through practice.

A rhizome is not static, and nor is belonging. Whether one envisages it as a "ramified surface extension...bulb or tuber" (ibid), a rhizome produces roots, leaves, flowers and seeds. It can be propagated by division or seed. It can be replanted in different soils and environments. In each situation a rhizome is likely to manifest itself slightly differently, depending on climate, soil, location and nurture. A rhizome tended by a gardener might flourish. Over-tended or neglected, it might wither and die. But, just as people who die leave traces of life in memory and material objects, so a rhizome leaves its own traces, continuing to flow into and add to the world as it decays.

There is no predicting how, or even whether, it will survive until the gardener learns what conditions it needs to flourish. It may flourish on an apparently dry hillside, in a swamp, or in well-tended ground, leafing, flowering and seeding in profusion. Each seed can produce a different form of the adult plant, throwing different colours, or smaller or larger varieties.

Rhizomes can be transported across the world, and planted in different lands, or contained in a pot, or plastic bag with sawdust, and frequently relocated. In the same way, belonging evolves according to location, environment, ancestry, and a host of other factors. Rhizomes might not grow exactly as they grew in their

originating land. They might produce smaller or larger leaves or different coloured flowers. They produce bulbs which can be removed, divided and replanted, generating their own collectives from individual plantings. The gaps left in the ancestral plots also fill with time. The uplifted rhizome, potted or replanted, and tended or neglected according to individual preference, continues its existence, or withers and dies. It is worth emphasising Deleuze and Guattari's assertion here, that the form of a rhizome varies "from ramified surface extension in all directions to concretion into bulbs and tubers". With "no beginning or end; it is always in the middle...coming and going rather than starting and finishing..." (1987:6-7).

This comprehensive understanding of the rhizome provides a metaphor for understanding that belonging can alter with environmental, relational and positional changes. It also enables us to comprehend how, in a changing world, with the rise in virtual communities, and personal wishes to offload material possessions, how individuals might create belonging to others in diverse locations. Such belonging bespeaks metaphysical and imaginary to a greater degree than physical belonging but is, in the becoming of those who engage in this way, equally valid.

Moving the metaphor in this direction suggests combining Ingold's (2000) relational concept with a genealogical concept, since rhizomes also reproduce through seed. I suggest that doing so does not weaken Ingold's concept, but enables a combination of perspectives. The combination enables an understanding that belonging requires nourishment in the same way as a rhizome. Just as a rhizome manifests itself in many forms, so belonging can appear in many forms and involve a range of practices. That a rhizome can manifest as subterranean stem, tuber or bulb, suggests that belonging can be similar. It can be contained or expansive, reveal itself in degrees, or holistically. It can occur at different levels, and be revealed as deeper or shallower, weaker or stronger, thicker or thinner, longer or shorter, depending on environment. A healthy belonging suggests healthy connections just as a flourishing rhizome, complete with leaves, and cyclical flower production suggests desirable growing conditions. A dying rhizome suggests the ebbing of life but not the cessation of being.

The ebbing of belonging suggests a reduction of connections and less ability maintain belonging. Like life, belonging can slip away. Like life, it can be regenerated, sometimes briefly, before a particular individual is engaged in a different form of regeneration. Similarly, belonging can be regenerated by attention and commitment. Just as Māori practice *ahi kā* to keep the home fires burning, so must Pākehā ensure commitment and continued practice to enable belonging. For, just as nourishing a rhizome encourages it to flourish, so engaging in the processes of belonging enables belonging to flourish. And if, as Ingold's terms, we 'grow' and 'are grown', we also 'grow' our own belonging by engaging in familiar practices and adapting to changes. We also 'grow' other people's belonging, and in return, they 'grow' ours. Like the successful gardener whose attention reaps benefits, by tending ourselves and others, we engage more strongly, and so encourage our own belonging. One could argue that some manifestations of belonging are more like rampant garden escapees i.e. where an occupying or colonizing group overruns the indigenous group. Then, it is not until the indigenous group regains its strength that alterations to incomer belonging can occur. Then, the interactions between the groups, and the understandings which can occur, enable altered perspectives of individual and collective 'place'. Again, in this situation, belonging can be seen to be facilitated by knowledge and experience, to 'grow' and 'be grown', but in a different manifestation.

Belonging, like identity, could be a useful cross-cultural concept, but only by recognising, as Sokefeld (2001) warned, that individuals, collectives, and cultures may sense and experience belonging differently, even though they construct it through similar practices. While belonging may contribute to identity, and has long been interwoven with concepts about identity, the Whanganui research suggested



that belonging was about more than knowing who you were. It was also about knowing where you were and had been, to whom and to what you belonged, and how you were connected socially, culturally, physically and spiritually. Pākehā habitus demanded engagement in the world.

## **Contributions**

By interweaving women's narratives with visual renditions of their lives, this dissertation makes an ethnographic contribution to studies of the construction of belonging, in a colonial, non-indigenous, settler context. It provides an analysis of active practices of belonging in Aotearoa New Zealand at the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It does so through researching, describing and discussing Pākehā women's articulations of their connections to the past, their sense of place and everyday cultural practices. It examines the reasons behind Pākehā claims for deepening belonging and investigates how this has occurred. It partly fills the lacuna Boesnich-Bode (2002) identified in her paper and thesis on migration of German people to Aotearoa New Zealand.

The research examined the practices of belonging among non-indigenous settlers. It can be included within a developing body of research on settler belonging, explored in Australia (Read 2000; Strang 1997) and Aotearoa New Zealand (Bell 2004; Boenisch-Brednich 2002; Dominy 2001). Internationally, it can be located within other research investigating belonging more directly than previously (Kohn 2002; Read 2000; Savage et al. 2005). It did so by directly investigating Pākehā women's constructions of belonging through action, daily life, observation, and narrative. While it provides directions towards understanding belonging, and a metaphor for doing so, I have identified lacuna within the research, but did not elaborate on them due to space and time constraints. I reiterate these next.

## **Directions**

This research was limited to Pākehā women's constructions of belonging within a provincial Aotearoa New Zealand centre. It focused on the practices, concepts, narratives, codes of conduct, and visual depictions, of a group of older women. Lacuna identified and described briefly in the thesis included the ways in which young people, female and male, practiced belonging; and how women who were engaged in paid employment while maintaining a household and family created spaces for themselves. These could form the foci of future research, as could other topics such as the impact of political actions and/or international events on belonging; issues of individual interpersonal relationships and resistance; the changing relationships of women and work; male, Māori and metropolitan constructions of belonging.

The research demonstrated an absence of Māori/Pākehā interrelationships at a personal and collective level within this small group, but an awareness of the dilemma of a nation, still impacted by colonization. Another possibility for future research could investigate how and where Māori and Pākehā connect, and the implications of this for furthering understanding, and the development of multiple belonging. It would also be interesting to explore constructions of dual belonging, and to learn where and how these occurred and were facilitated. One could explore the question of whether they disappear as ancestral settlement recedes temporally.

Other research could extend the gender, age, and ethnic foci to incorporate male, Māori, youth and different ethnic perspectives, within and beyond the shores of Aotearoa New Zealand. It could also explore whether practices of belonging differ, according to cultural constructs and expectations, by investigating and comparing strongly individualistic societies with strongly communal societies.

Perspectives and practices might be aligned more closely than might initially be anticipated, for, as Ruth G argued, “(i)f you want to make it so that you belong to your community you can do it. But, if you have an attitude that you don’t want to belong, then it’s very poor”, while Ruth J asserted, belonging is “as if all the molecules in your body are part of it, and they all are connected.”

## Appendix 1

(Information sheets and consent forms for research participants)

### **Creating the present using the past:**

#### **How do women in Wanganui use the past to create the present?**

**Researcher: Penny Robinson**  
**P O Box 84**  
**Wanganui**  
**Tel 06 3450845**  
**email: Robinson.Assoc@xtra.co.nz**

**Supervisor: Dr Keith Ridler**  
**SST7, Massey University,**  
**Palmerston North**  
**Tel 06 3569099**  
**email: k.ridler@massey.ac.nz**

I am a New Zealand born doctoral student attending Massey University at Palmerston North and studying Visual Anthropology. I have an interest in women, community and belonging, and associated with that, the idea of identity and home. My proposal aims to investigate how women in this regional New Zealand community use their past to create their present. I am contacting you to invite you to be involved in my study. The study will be carried out in accordance with the Ethics Code and Procedures of the New Zealand Association of Social Anthropologists.

My proposed research means looking at the way women, in particular, use and experience spaces, events and their lives and inscribe them with meaning. That means their meeting spaces, public spaces, gardens, buildings and interior decoration. It also means what aspects of their past they use today, things like wearing particular clothes, or cooking particular foods, or entertaining or gathering together in particular places or special ways. It can also mean ways they recall the past, and show that in their behaviour, their dress, their daily activities, and in public events. It can be as simple as realizing that one of the reasons you knit, sew or crochet is because your grandmother or great auntie taught you and you have found it a useful or pleasant skill to be involved in, or as complex as feeling an affinity for a place because the family has been there for decades, or even centuries. I would be glad if you would agree to be involved in my research.

You would be agreeing to me

- Attending some of your meetings as an observer
- Doing many of the things you do at those meetings i.e. stitching, washing dishes, listening
- Taking notes about those meetings and what people do
- With your agreement, photographing or videoing some of those meetings.
- Visiting you at home
- Photographing or videoing aspects of your home, garden, public and domestic spaces
- Attending some other activities you are involved in
- Talking with me about your life and recording a personal narrative
- Sharing aspects of your life with me, particularly your involvement in the community and within your families.
- Talking with me, sometimes one to one, sometimes in small groups
- Being photographed or video-taped at agreed moments.
- Depending on the topic we are discussing the time involved will be vary. It could be several hours over several months, or a few hours over a shorter time. Because I have not done research of this nature before I am not able to be precise.

When the research is completed it will be written up as a thesis.

- I will give you a copy of your personal narrative. You will be able to amend this.
- I will show you the photographs and video tapes I make involving you, and make those available for copying.
- I will show you all text quotes and especially photos and videos before publication.
- You may opt out of the research at any time, or specify text or images you do not want included in the thesis.

Thank you for your time and consideration

Yours sincerely,  
Penny Robinson



**Massey University, Palmerston North, Doctoral Research**

**Researcher: Penny Robinson**

**Research topic: How do women in Wanganui use the past to create the present?**

I have read the Information Sheet and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I agree to provide information to the researcher on the understanding that my name will not be used without my permission. (This information will be used only for this research and for publications arising from this research project).

I agree/do not agree to the interview(s) being audio taped.

I agree/do not agree to the interview(s) being video taped.

I agree/do not agree to activities being video taped.

I agree/do not agree to being photographed.

I also understand that I have the right to ask for the audio/video tape to be turned off at any time during the interview.

I understand that I have the right to veto the publication of any personally identifying material.

I understand that, while the research is confidential to the researcher, a doctoral thesis is a public document and will be available to others through the university library.

I understand that, because of the nature of this project, I may be identifiable in photographs or film. I understand that the researcher plans to use still photographs and video images in the final presentation. Any identifiable references must be agreed to by me before publication. I understand that I may opt out of the study at this stage.

I understand I have the right to decline to answer any particular questions.

I understand the researcher will show me all text quotes relating to me, and especially photos and videos before publication.

I understand I have the right to withdraw from the study at any time.

I understand that I may specify any text or images I do not want included in the thesis.

I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet.

Signed:

Participant:

Date:

Signed:

Researcher

Date:

## **Appendix 2**

(ASAANZ Code of Ethics)

(for original layout cf <http://asaanz.rsnz.org/codeofethics.html>)

### **Association of Social Anthropologists of Aotearoa New Zealand**

#### **Code of Ethics**

One of the four objectives of the Association is "to support the ethical conduct of social anthropology".

The Association of Social Anthropologists of Aotearoa/New Zealand adopted a code of ethics whose full title is "Principles of Professional Responsibility and Ethical Conduct ". This code was prepared by the Ethics Committee of the Association and is based, in a modified form, on the American Anthropological Association's "Principles of Professional Responsibility of" (1976). Another document of relevance to the activities of Anthropologists in New Zealand is the Maataatua Declaration.

"Principles of Professional Responsibility and Ethical Conduct"

Prepared by the Ethics Committee of the Association of Social Anthropologists of Aotearoa/New Zealand (formerly New Zealand Association of Social Anthropologists).

Adopted at the AGM of the Association, 28 August 1987

#### **Prologue**

The relationship between ethics, and research is one of the most important problems faced by anthropologists. The demand for accountability and ethical responsibility in research is valid and has become irresistible, as instances to the contrary have resulted in impaired research opportunities, infringement on the autonomy of peoples studied, and in some instances harm to research participants.

The following Principles of Professional Responsibility and Ethical Conduct set forth the major ethical issues confronting New Zealand anthropologists in their work. It should be borne in mind that the issue of professional ethics, and the principles that follow, have been the focus of considerable debate and disagreement. The ethical problems faced by anthropologists have changed over time and have become more difficult to resolve, and there is now, nor is there ever likely to be, any definitive agreement concerning either the nature of these problems or their solutions. With this in mind, this set of "Principles of Professional Responsibility" is intended to be a working document, amenable to revision after discussion at any AGM of the Association.

Ethical principles are vital for anthropologists because important ethical issues frequently arise in their work. This set of principles is intended to heighten awareness of the ethical issues that face anthropologists, and to offer them workable guidelines to help resolve these issues. It encourages anthropologists to educate themselves in this area, and to exercise their own good judgement. It is also intended to provide protection for anthropologists who come under pressure to act in ways contrary to their professional ethics.

It is recognized that ethical responsibilities sometimes conflict with one another, and the following principles are presented with full recognition of the social and cultural pluralism of

host societies and the consequent plurality of values, interests, and demands in those societies. Nonetheless, it is imperative that anthropologists be knowledgeable about ethical issues, be concerned about the welfare of research participants and about the future uses of the knowledge they acquire, and accept personal responsibility for their decisions and actions. Where these imperatives cannot be met, anthropologists would be well-advised not to pursue the particular work in question.

The following principles are deemed fundamental to the anthropologist's responsible, ethical pursuit of the profession.

## **1. Responsibility to Research Participants:**

In their work, anthropologists' paramount responsibility is to their research participants. When there is a conflict of interest, these individuals must come first. Anthropologists must do everything in their power to protect their physical, social, and psychological welfare and to honour their dignity and privacy.

- a. Where research involves the acquisition of material and information transferred on the assumption of trust between persons, it is axiomatic that the rights, interests, and sensitivities of those persons must be safeguarded.
- b. The aims of the investigation should be communicated as well as possible to research participants.
- c. If at all possible, the approval of the host population or group studied should be sought before any research is actually begun.
- d. Every effort should be exerted to cooperate with members of the host society in the planning and execution of research projects.
- e. While there is always an implied assumption of trust between researchers and research participants, every effort should be made to reach an explicit agreement to this effect.
- f. Research participants have a right to remain anonymous. This right should be respected both where it has been promised explicitly and where no clear understanding to the contrary has been reached. These strictures apply to the collection of data by means of cameras, tape recorders, and other data-gathering devices, as well as data collected in face-to-face interviews or in participant-observation. Research participants should understand the capacities of such devices; they should be free to reject them if they wish; and if they accept them, the results obtained should be consonant with their right to welfare, dignity, and privacy. Despite every effort being made to preserve anonymity it should be made clear to research participants that such anonymity may be compromised unintentionally.
- g. There is an obligation to reflect on the foreseeable repercussions of research and publication on the general population being studied.
- h. The anticipated consequences of research should be communicated as fully as possible to the individuals and groups likely to be affected.
- i. There should be no exploitation of research participants for personal gain. Fair return should be given them for all services.
- j. In accordance with the Association's general position on the clandestine and secret research, no reports should be provided to sponsors that are not also available to the general public and, where practicable, to the population studied.

## **2. Responsibility to the Wider Society:**

Anthropologists are also responsible to the public- all presumed consumers of their professional efforts. To them they owe a commitment to candour and to truth in the dissemination of their research results and in the statement of their opinions as a student of humanity.

- a. Anthropologists should not communicate their findings secretly to some and withhold them from others.
- b. Anthropologists should not knowingly falsify or colour their findings.
- c. In providing opinions, anthropologists are responsible not only for their content but also in explaining both these opinions and their bases.
- d. As people who devote their professional lives to understanding humanity, anthropologists bear a positive responsibility to speak out publicly, both individually and collectively, on what they know and what they believe as a result of their professional expertise gained in the study of human beings. That is, they bear a professional responsibility to contribute to an "adequate definition of reality" upon which public opinion and public policy may be based. However, anthropologists should not present themselves as spokespersons for people who have not given them their consent to act in such a capacity, and they should advocate the right of research participants to be heard directly in contexts where their lives may be affected.
- e. In public discourse, anthropologists should be honest about their qualifications and cognisant of the limitations of anthropological expertise.
- f. Anthropologists should be aware that, in requiring students to do field research purely as a training exercise, they may be making an unfair imposition on research participants. Unless there is some potential benefit for the research participants, and not just for the students involved, such exercises should be avoided.

## **3. Responsibility to the Discipline and Colleagues:**

Anthropologists bear responsibility for the good reputation of the discipline and its practitioners.

- a. Anthropologists should undertake no secret research or any research whose results cannot be freely derived and publicly reported.
- b. Anthropologists should avoid even the appearance of engaging in clandestine research, by fully and freely disclosing the aims and sponsorship of all research.
- c. Anthropologists should attempt to maintain such a level of integrity and rapport in the field, by their behaviour and example, they will not jeopardise future research there. The responsibility is not to analyse and report so as to offend no one, but to conduct research in a way consistent with a commitment to honesty, open inquiry, clear communication of sponsorship and research aims, and concern for the welfare and privacy of research participants.
- d. Anthropologists should not present as their own work, either in speaking or writing, materials directly taken from other sources.



e. When anthropologists participate in actions related to hiring, retention and advancement, they should ensure that no exclusionary practices be perpetuated against colleagues on the basis of sex, sexual preference, marital status, colour, social class, religion, ethnic background, national origin, or other non-academic attributes. (Exception is made for recognized programmes of affirmative action). They should, furthermore, refrain from transmitting and resist the use of information irrelevant to professional performance in such personnel actions.

f. Anthropologists bear a responsibility to their discipline, colleagues, students, and the public at large to work to maintain academic freedom and independence in their work (including both research and teaching).

#### **4. Responsibility to Students:**

In relation with students anthropologists should be candid, fair, nonexploitative, and committed to their welfare and academic progress. Honesty is the essential quality of a good teacher, neutrality is not. Beyond honest teaching, anthropologists as teachers have ethical responsibilities in selection, instruction in ethics, career counselling, academic supervision, evaluation, compensation, and placement.

a. Anthropologists should select students in such a way as to preclude discrimination on the basis of sex, ethnic group, social class, age, and other categories of people indistinguishable by their intellectual potential.

b. Anthropologists should alert students to the ethical problems of research and discourage them from participating in projects employing questionable ethical standards. This should include providing them with information and discussions to protect them from unethical pressures and enticements emanating from possible sponsors, as well as helping to find acceptable alternatives.

c. Anthropologists should conscientiously supervise, encourage, and support students in their anthropological and other academic endeavors.

d. Anthropologists should inform students of what is expected from them in their course of study; be fair in the evaluation of their performance; and communicate evaluations to the students concerned.

e. Anthropologists should realistically counsel students regarding career opportunities.

f. Anthropologists should acknowledge in print the student assistance used in their own publications; give appropriate credit (including coauthorship) when student research is used in publication; encourage and assist in publication of worthy student papers; and compensate students justly for the use of their time, energy, and intelligence in research and teaching.

g. Anthropologists should energetically assist students in securing legitimate research support and the necessary permission to pursue research.

h. Anthropologists should energetically assist students in securing professional employment upon completion of their studies.

## **5. Responsibility to Sponsors, Funding Agencies, and Employers:**

In their relations with sponsors, funding agencies, and employers, anthropologists should be honest about their qualifications, capabilities, and aims. They thus face the obligation, prior to entering any commitment for research, to reflect sincerely upon the purposes of their sponsors in terms of their past behaviour. Anthropologists should be especially careful not to promise or imply acceptance of conditions contrary to their professional ethics or competing commitments. This requires that they require of sponsors full disclosure of the sources of funds, personnel, aims of the institution and the research project, and disposition of research results. Anthropologists must retain the right to make all ethical decisions in their work. They should enter into no secret agreements with sponsors regarding research, results or reports.

## **6. Responsibilities to One's Own Governments:**

In relation with their own and host governments, research anthropologists should be honest and candid. They should demand assurance that they will not be required to compromise their professional responsibilities and ethics as a condition of their permission to pursue the research. Specifically, no secret research, secret reports, or secret debriefings of any kind should be agreed to or given. If these matters are clearly understood in advance, serious complications and misunderstandings can generally be avoided.

## **Epilogue**

A major theme underlying the Association's adoption of these principles is the idea that anthropologists who are knowledgeable about, concerned with, and sensitive to issues of ethics and responsibility are the best safeguard against abuse of our science. These principles emphasise both final decisions and the process by which they are made. Ethical decisions are made by people who are educated about ethical issues and principles, carefully consider alternatives, exercise judgement, and accept responsibility for their choices. These principles are dedicated to aiding anthropologists in making ethical decisions.

In the final analysis, anthropological research is a human undertaking, dependent upon choices for which the individual bears ethical as well as scientific responsibility. That responsibility is a human, not superhuman one. To err is human, to forgive humane. These principles of professional responsibility and ethical conduct provide guidelines which can minimise the occasions upon which there is a need to forgive. When anthropologists, by their actions, jeopardise research participants, professional colleagues, students or others, or if they otherwise betray their professional commitments, their colleagues may legitimately inquire into the propriety of those actions. The annual AGM of the Association provides the obvious forum for discussion of ethical issues. Finally, the Association of Social Anthropologists of Aotearoa/New Zealand also positively affirms our commitment to act vigorously in defense and support of anthropologists who come under pressure to act in ways that transgress these principles of professional responsibility and ethical conduct.

## Appendix 3

### NOHANZ Code of Conduct

(for original layout see <http://www.oralhistory.org.nz/Code.htm>)

## NOHANZ

National Oral History Association of New Zealand  
Te Kete Korero-a-Waha o Te Motu

## Code of Ethical and Technical Practice

*This Code exists to promote ethical, professional and technical standards in the collection, preservation and use of sound and video oral history material*

### **Archives, sponsors and organisers of oral history projects have the following responsibilities:**

- To inform interviewers and people interviewed of the importance of this Code for the successful creation and use of oral history material
- To select interviewers on the basis of professional competence and interviewing skill, endeavouring to assign appropriate interviewers to people interviewed
- To see that records of the creation and processing of each interview are kept
- To ensure that each interview is properly indexed and catalogued
- To ensure that preservation conditions for recordings and accompanying material are of the highest possible standard
- To ensure that placement of and access to recordings and accompanying material comply with a signed or recorded agreement with the person interviewed
- To ensure that people interviewed are informed of issues such as copyright, ownership, privacy legislation, and how the interview and accompanying material may be used
- To make the existence of available interviews known through public information channels
- To guard against possible social injury to, or exploitation of people interviewed

### **Interviewers have the following responsibilities:**

- To inform the person interviewed of the purposes and procedures of oral history in general and of the particular project in which they are involved
- To inform the person interviewed of issues such as copyright, ownership, privacy legislation, and how the material and accompanying material may be used
- To develop sufficient skills and knowledge in interviewing and equipment operation, e.g. through reading and training, to ensure a result of the highest possible standard
- To use equipment that will produce recordings of the highest possible standard
- To encourage informative dialogue based on thorough research
- To conduct interviews with integrity
- To conduct interviews with an awareness of cultural or individual sensibilities
- To treat every interview as a confidential conversation, the contents of which are available only as determined by written or recorded agreement with the person interviewed
- To place each recording and all accompanying material in an archive to be available for research, subject to any conditions placed on it by the person interviewed

- to inform the person interviewed of where the material will be held
- To respect all agreements made with the person interviewed

## **ORIGINS**

The National Oral History Association of New Zealand (NOHANZ) Te Kete Kōrero-a-Waha o e Motu was established as a result of the first national oral history seminar organised in April 1986.

## **OBJECTIVES**

- to promote the practice and methods of oral history
- to promote standards in oral history interviewing techniques, and in recording and preservation methods.
- to act as a resource of information and to advise on practical and technical problems involved in making oral history recordings.
- to act as a co-ordinator of oral history activities throughout New Zealand.
- to produce an annual oral history journal and regular newsletters
- to promote regular oral history meetings, talks, seminars, workshops and demonstrations.
- to encourage the establishment of NOHANZ branches throughout New Zealand.
- to improve access to oral history collections held in libraries, archives and museums.

National Oral History Association of New Zealand  
Te Kete Kōrero-a-Waha o Te Motu  
P.O. Box 3819  
WELLINGTON

2001



## Appendix 4

(Copy of letter seeking permission to archive  
videotaped oral histories, conversations and photographs.)

10 July 2003

P O Box 84  
Wanganui  
06 3450845  
06 3453371

Dear

Thank you for participating so fully, willingly and cheerfully in the research project I conducted with you in Wanganui during the year 2000. I am progressing with the writing up of the thesis and hope to use many of the photographs we took.

I am taking this opportunity to contact you to seek permission for two things.

- The first is to ask if you would be willing to allow the recorded material, photographs and our conversations to be placed in the Whanganui Regional Museum so that future generations can benefit from our mutual efforts. The museum has firm guidelines about access to the files, and honours and respects any wishes you might have about the way the material is used, and who may view it. They also consider a timeframe before it may be seen if people indicate a preference.
- The second is that I have photographs which include you, and in some instances, members of your extended community. I would like to use the images you made, and some that I took, in the thesis. The thesis will be read and considered by my supervisors, my examiners and, I hope, placed in the Massey University Library. There it would be available for use by other researchers for their own research. I will contact you to discuss your preferences and then, if you agree, use images that you indicate are appropriate, in the thesis.

This study had been long and slow, but throughout I have been uplifted by your input and support and am very grateful to you for your patience and efforts.

Best regards

Penny Robinson

## **Appendix Five**

(Guideline for information to be included in life history interviews)

Biographical details – self, kin etc  
Childhood and early memories  
Education – self, stages  
Employment  
Marriage or otherwise  
Politics possibly  
Religion  
Health  
Identity – perceptions  
This location – perceptions  
Being an incomer  
Being an insider

## Appendix Six

(Outline for investigating participants' concepts of belonging)

These questions assisted in developing an understanding of the participants' concepts about belonging, its emotional content, and how they practiced and sensed belonging in everyday life. (NB: These questions were a loose guideline. Some questions were asked only if the participants indicated that such items were incorporated in their belonging, i.e. feelings).

- What do you think belonging is?
- How does belonging feel?
- Where do you feel belonging?
- Where do you feel you belong?
- What helps you feel you belong?
- How do we know when we belong? in or to a place? Or to/with people?
- Is a sense of belonging important?
- How do we develop a sense of belonging? What happens?
  
- Have you ever felt that you did not belong – in a place/with or to people?
- How does not belonging make you feel?
- What affects your sense of belonging/positively/negatively?
  
- How can other people gain belonging?
- Can we help others/can others help us gain a sense of belonging?
- Can we accept/reject or deny others belonging?
  
- Does belonging change? If so, how?
- In terms of belonging, does it make a difference to share culture, say, or ethnicity, or language? Do you have to share a culture to have a feeling of belonging?
  
- Is being home the same as belonging?

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