

STORIES ALL OVER THE SCHOOL: PRIMARY SCHOOLS,
PĀKEHĀ TEACHERS, AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF
‘CULTURE’

BY

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A thesis submitted to the Victoria University of Wellington in partial
fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Te Herenga Waka — Victoria University of Wellington (2023)

Abstract

In recent years there has been a push in New Zealand education for the ‘inclusion’ of Māori (the Indigenous people of New Zealand) culture into the national curriculum in service of improving the educational outcomes of Māori learners. What remains underexplored is the present culture within schools in which Māori culture is to be ‘included’. This study looks at the construction of culture in two mainstream Primary Schools.

This critical ethnographic study was conducted over the course of a school term in two-year 5/6 classes, one in a majority Pākehā school and the other in a majority Māori and Pacific school. I explored the institutional and interpersonal mechanisms that ideas about culture were produced and reproduced through in everyday activities. Settler Colonial Studies, Critical Race Theory, and Critical Whiteness Studies for the theoretical basis for this research. Additionally, I developed a distinctive framework for understanding the findings called the Black and Indigenous Perspectives on Whiteness (BIPOW).

Storytelling is a central feature of this thesis. I explore how the stories we tell are powerful transmitters of the understandings we carry about ourselves, each other, institutions, and the nation. I follow in the tradition of Critical Race theorists who use storytelling, narrative and counternarrative, and allegory as a means to decentre Whiteness. I leverage storytelling to illustrate the ways schools and classrooms disseminate ideas about culture and race.

I conclude that schools pass on ideas about culture through educational policy, practices, and the hidden curriculum. Whiteness is often tacitly transmitted within schools and classrooms, even in cases where the expressed intention is to be welcoming of and inclusive of diversity. The Pākehā teachers who took part in this research had a limited understanding of culture when it came to themselves but were able to identify aspects of culture in Māori and Pacific ‘Others.’

I suggest that if schools in New Zealand want to improve the quality of education for Māori

and Pacific students, and indeed all students, they must unsettle taken-for-granted notions of cultural dominance rooted in White supremacy. Inclusion of other worldviews into an existing system is not enough, the perspectives of Indigenous, Black and other racialized groups must be centred if we are to dismantle the edifice of White colonial education.

Acknowledgments

Please excuse the brevity of these acknowledgments. I only have 100,000 words to work with here and this is the thesis that just wouldn't quit. Know that I have a poem in my heart for each of you, but that poem will have to stay in my heart for the time being.

Jennifer, I could not have done this without you, my love. Thank you for your dedication and encouragement during this process. What a journey this has been and I'm glad that I have been on it with you.

Amelia, yes, I *am* finally done! Turns out it takes a long time to write a PhD. Thank you for always helping me remember why I was doing this, for keeping it real, keeping me on my toes, and keeping me laughing. I am so proud of the person you are. I hope one day you read this thesis and are proud of the work you and your brother inspired me to do.

Adley, thank you for giving me up Saturday mornings and occasional weeknights to let me work on this project. Your big heart and insistence on justice were a huge inspiration to me. I have learned a lot about how to be brave from you.

I would like to thank Mary and Kate for putting up with me in your classrooms for a term. It was lovely to get to know you both, even if only for a short time. Your openness and honesty were critical to the success of this research. I literally couldn't have done this without you. My sincerest gratitude.

Thank you as well to the students in Mary's and Kate's classes. You were my teachers when it came to understanding culture in schools (and the best places to order pizza).

Joanna and Cherie, you are the best supervisors I could have asked for. It is such an honour and privilege to work with you both. Thank you for your unwavering support throughout this process and willingness to let me do me, even if you didn't always understand it at first. Your guidance has been invaluable, but it is your belief in me and my scholarship that I will always treasure.

Liana and Hine, your support and understanding have meant the world to me. You were always there for me through thick and thin. I know that you always had my back, and there are no words to express how grateful I am for that. We will always be team taniwha!

Victoria University, thank you for funding my first three years of study with the Doctoral Scholarship.

To all the people I have met at Victoria, from lectures to fellow PhD students, thanks for the support and conversations along the way.

Mom and Dad, I did it! This is for you.



Contents

Abstract.....	ii
Acknowledgments.....	iv
Glossary ¹	viii
Preamble	10
Introduction.....	5
Positioning Myself to the Research.....	5
Introduction to the Study	7
Before We Get Into It: Framing the Thesis	8
Some Notes on Terminology	9
Outline of Thesis	11
Chapter One: Theoretical Frameworks	14
Studying Whiteness	14
The Theoretical Trifecta: Critical Race Theory, Critical Whiteness Studies, and Settler Colonial Studies.....	14
Critical Race Theory	15
Critical Whiteness Studies.....	16
Settler Colonial Studies.....	18
Adding My Own Lens	21
Black and Indigenous Perspectives of Whiteness	23
Black Scholars on Whiteness	23
Indigenous Scholars on Whiteness	31
Conclusion	43
Chapter Two: Methods	44
A Tale of Two Schools- Pīwakawaka and Tuī Primary Schools.....	45
Tuī Primary	45
Pīwakawaka Primary.....	46
Different Schools, Different Stories.....	47
Ethnography.....	49
Culture	51
Meeting Kate	54
Meeting Mary.....	55
Teacher Interviews.....	56
Getting Student and Parent Consents	57
Participant Observation	58
Data Analysis	60

Unapologetic Storytelling.....	62
Chapter Three:.....	65
They Are Still There-A Counterstory	65
Chapter Four: Policy Analysis	77
Historical context	78
Development of Ka Hikitia.....	80
Overview of Ka Hikitia.....	80
BIPOW and Ka Hikitia.....	81
Whiteness as Possession/Property	81
Colonial Mythmaking/Fantasy of Whiteness.....	85
The Racial Contract/The Settler Contract.....	87
Conclusion	90
Chapter Five: Tuī Vignettes.....	92
Painting Stories	92
Teaching Culture	95
Funny Money	100
Only Joking.....	108
Chapter Six: Pīwakawaka Vignettes	110
Stories All Over the School.....	110
If You Want to Learn About Culture, You’ve Come to The Right Place	113
If You Are Not Talking, Then You Are Not Learning	118
We Have All The People On Our Shoulders	122
Cotton Eye-Joe.....	123
Chapter Seven: Practices.....	127
Use Of the Colour White	127
Murals	129
Cultural Events.....	132
Cultural Day.....	132
Cultural Groups.....	134
Kapa Haka.....	137
Conclusion	140
Chapter Eight: The Hidden Curriculum.....	142
Window Books.....	143
Just Because Poem	145
Identity Chart.....	148
Coloniality Lives in the Details.....	154
Reproduction of Power Relations in the Classroom.....	156

Conclusion	163
Chapter Nine: The Mary Interviews	165
First Interview	165
The Second Interview.....	169
Chapter Ten: The Kate Interviews	172
The First Interview.....	172
The Second Interview.....	180
Chapter Eleven: Pākehā Teachers' Understandings of Culture	186
White Identities of Settlers in New Zealand.....	186
Pākehā Teachers.....	189
Schools Socialization of Teachers.....	192
Cultural Confusion	194
Definitions of Culture.....	194
Seeing Their Own Culture.....	197
The Role of Culture in Their Lives	199
Cultural Clarity.....	201
Reflections on Pākehā Identity.....	204
Culture as a Proxy for Race.....	211
Chapter Twelve: Conclusion.....	215
Stories of Hope.....	217
Something That Feels More Like Freedom.....	220
For the Commonwealth.....	221
The Power of Forgiveness	226
References.....	229

Table of Figures

Figure 1: Intersection of theoretical frameworks.....	17
Figure 2: Settler/Indigenous power relations triangle.....	22
Figure 3: Black and Indigenous Perspectives of Whiteness framework.....	25
Figure 4: Aspects of White Possession.....	36
Figure 5: Common colonial myths	41
Figure 6: Monetary value of behaviours in Money Game.....	106
Figure 7: Kate's writing on the whiteboard.....	122

Glossary¹

Word/phrase	English Definition
Aroha	love, empathy, compassion
Hāngi	earth oven - earth oven to cook food with steam and heat from heated stones.
Hapū	kinship group, clan, tribe, subtribe - section of a large kinship group and the primary political unit in traditional Māori society.
Hauora	be fit, well, healthy, vigorous, in good spirits.
Ie toga	fine Samoan mats ²
Iwi	extended kinship group, tribe, nation, people, nationality, race - often refers to a large group of people descended from a common ancestor and associated with a distinct territory.
Kahui Ako	communities of learning
Kaiako	teacher, instructor
Kaitiaiki	Guardian
Kapa haka	concert party, haka group, Māori cultural group, Māori performing group
Karakia	incantation, ritual chant, chant, intoned incantation, charm, spell - a set form of words to state or make effective a ritual activity.
Karanga	formal call, ceremonial call, welcome call, call - a ceremonial call of welcome to visitors onto a marae, or equivalent venue, at the start of a pōwhiri.
Kia kaha	stay strong
Kia ora	hello! cheers! good luck! best wishes!
Koru	spiral motif (in <i>kōwhaiwhai</i> patterns and carving).
Kotahitanga	unity, togetherness, solidarity, collective action.
Maihi	carved bargeboards
Mana	prestige, authority, control, power, influence, status, spiritual power, charisma - mana is a supernatural force in a person, place or object
Manaakitanga	hospitality, kindness, generosity, support - the process of showing respect, generosity and care for others
Marae	courtyard - the open area in front of the wharenui, where formal greetings and discussions take place.
Māreikura	nobly born female
Pākehā	New Zealander of European descent
Pātē	slit drum
Pepeha	to say, exclaim, be the subject of a saying
Piupiu	Māori flax skirts
Poutama	stepped pattern of tukutuku panels and woven mats - symbolising genealogies and also the various levels of learning and intellectual achievement.
Pōwhiri	invitation, rituals of encounter, welcome ceremony on a marae, welcome

¹ All definitions from Te Aka Māori <https://maoridictionary.co.nz/> unless otherwise noted

² From the English Samoan Dictionary <https://glosbe.com/en/sm>

Pukana	to stare wildly, dilate the eyes - done by both genders when performing haka and waiata to emphasise particular words and to add excitement to the performance
Rangatahi	younger generation, youth.
Rōpū	group, party of people, company, gang, association, entourage, committee, organisation, category.
Tamariki	children - normally used only in the plural.
Tangata whenua	local people, hosts, indigenous people - people born of the whenua, i.e. of the placenta and of the land where the people's ancestors have lived and where their placenta are buried.
Taniwha	water spirit, monster, dangerous water creature, powerful creature, chief, powerful leader, something or someone awesome -
Taonga	treasure, anything prized - applied to anything considered to be of value including socially or culturally valuable objects, resources, phenomena, ideas and techniques.
Te ao Maori	The Māori world
Te reo Maori	The Māori language
Tekoteko	carved figure on the gable of a meeting house, figurehead
Tikanga	correct procedure, custom, habit, lore, method, manner, rule, way, code, meaning, plan, practice, convention, protocol - the customary system of values and practices that have developed over time and are deeply embedded in the social context
Tipuna	ancestor, grandparent, grandfather, grandmother - singular form of tīpuna and the eastern dialect variation of tupuna.
Tokere	Slit drum
Tu meke	colloquial phrase meaning 'too much' and is used to express excitement or being shaken up. An expression of gratitude or appreciation. ³
Ua Faafetai	thank you ⁴
Wāhine	Woman
Waka	canoe, vehicle, conveyance, spirit medium, medium
Whakapapa	genealogy, genealogical table, lineage, descent - reciting whakapapa was, and is, an important skill and reflected the importance of genealogies in Māori society in terms of leadership, land and fishing rights, kinship and status.
Whānau	extended family, family group, a familiar term of address to a number of people - the primary economic unit of traditional Māori society.
Whānau ora	family health
Whānaungatanga	relationship, kinship, sense of family connection - a relationship through shared experiences and working together which provides people with a sense of belonging.
Whenua	Land

³ From <https://www.visitzealandia.com/Events/ArtMID/2271/ArticleID/129/Storytime-at-ZEALANDIA-Tu-MekeT%C5%AB%C4%AB#:~:text=Tu%20meke%20is%20a%20New,excitement%20or%20being%20shaken%20Up>

⁴ From the English Samoan Dictionary <https://glosbe.com/en/sm>

Preamble

It was a few days into the last term of the school year when my daughter came home with some news. “Mama, they are making us colonisers at school.”

We were eating dinner and I nearly spat out my potatoes. “They’re making you do *what*?” I asked.

“Be colonisers. Mama they are making us pretend to be on the Endeavour with Captain Cook. I’m the astronomer.”

“Oh,” I said, trying to buy myself time to both contain my rage and my food. “Who are the other people on the boat?”

“One person is Captain Cook, and another person is a servant”. “A servant or a slave?”

“I don’t know, but the person in the book is Black,” she replied. *Of course, he is*, I thought. One of the few times my daughter will see Black people in a book, and he is there as a ‘servant’.

“How do you know so much about Captain Cook?”

“We’re reading a book about him. We each get to act out a part and write journal entries from their perspective.” She gave me the name of the book. Whatever time I had to myself after she went to sleep would be spent looking up this book.

“What does the book say about Māori?” I asked.

“Well, nothing so far. We’re still in the beginning.” I already knew what it would say about Māori. It was a book about Captain Cook after all. Māori would play the foil, the savage to Cook’s civil.

“How do you feel acting it out?” I asked.

“Kind of bad. I know how bad colonisation is.” Yes, she really said that. We talked about these issues not just as a matter of education, but of survival.

I told her that it was not her fault. After all, it was what her teacher had asked her to do. I let her know that she had my permission not to participate if she didn’t want to. I understood her hesitancy. It’s a big deal for a child to stand up to their teacher, to tell them something they should already know. That night I emailed her teacher and set up a meeting.

When I checked out the book from the library, I found it was everything I had expected: whitewashed, inaccurate, paternalistic, and downright disrespectful to Māori and the other

Indigenous people.

A few days later, as I waited outside before I met with the teacher, I noticed a group of Pākehā parents clumped together, waiting for school to be let out. I knew them of course; our children went to school together. They were the kind of parents who wanted their children to learn how to speak te reo Māori, who supported the kapa haka performances and even dug the pit for the school hāngi. I overheard them talking about the Captain Cook lessons.

“I’m just happy they are teaching some history,” one of them said.

Some history? More like *your* history. It was a version of history that supported their worldview, a settler mythology that had been legitimated in its telling and retelling over time. They were happy to align themselves with convenient aspects of Māori culture, but not when it came to challenging White supremacist notions of history.

When I told them I was going to speak with the teacher about the Captain Cook lessons, one of them said, “Oh good, tell me how it goes.” We both knew I would not.

When it was time for our meeting, most of the students had left, save a few stragglers looking about for a friend or misplaced item. My daughter’s teacher, Vivian (not her real name), is in her early 50’s, an immigrant from England, who has been at the school for some time. She was almost an institution herself. She had the respect of the group of Pākehā parents; whenever I mentioned which class my daughter was in, inevitably one of them would say “My child had her and she’s great!” Vivian prided herself on being ‘bicultural’; she was learning to speak te reo Māori and used some basic Māori commands in class.

I walked into the classroom and although it was the end of the school day, noticed that it was very neat and tidy. The chairs were all up on the desks, books and pencils had been stashed away. The days of the week, months, and basic numbers were all displayed in Māori. I took down a chair to sit on and approached her desk.

“So, my daughter tells me you are learning a lot about Captain Cook these days. And you are doing some role playing? Tell me more about that.”

“I have a book that I’m using about Captain Cook.” She walked over to pick it up from the shelf at the bottom of the whiteboard. By the time she was back, I had pulled my copy out of my backpack, post-it notes sticking out from it.

“Yes, I’ve read it,” I said.

“Well, we’re reading the book and the students are building sets and acting it out. Sometimes they write journals from the perspective of one of the characters in the book. Students get to choose who they want to be except for the more popular characters like Captain Cook, his cook, and the astronomer. The students have to all take turns being them.

” It’s starting to make more sense to me now. At the end of the previous year, parents had been informed that the school would be moving toward play-based learning; I was sure this lesson was a product of that. I knew that Vivian loved teaching drama, so it seemed that her take on play-based learning would include some acting. On the surface, it all seemed so reasonable, fun even. Students had choices, were active, built sets, and they had to read and engage with the material. The journals they wrote took the perspective of one of the characters. These were all pedagogically sound strategies, strategies that any teacher education program would be happy to espouse. And yet, what were these strategies teaching? A whitewashed, colonial, sanitised version of history. In short, it was a settler mythology highlighting a man whom many Indigenous people all over the world revile. Wasn’t using sound teaching practices to teach racism and white supremacy just another form of violence?

“Do you have concerns about it?” she asked me in a sincere tone.

“Yes, I do. After reading the book, I’m concerned that it’s told from a very Eurocentric point of view. Indigenous people, including Māori, are not depicted very well. It doesn’t mention at all the 13 Māori that Cook and his crew killed upon first encounter, though it does a very good job at highlighting some stereotypical versions of Māori. Not to mention that the one representation of a Black person is that of a servant.”

“You know, the author of the book is also Māori.” The fact that she brought this up was not unexpected.

“I do,” I said with a nod.

“You know, this is a bicultural nation. So, I am trying to teach students about all sides of history,” she replied.

“What are you using to teach the Māori version of their encounters with Cook? Are you giving equal time to that?”

“Listen, I’m White. As hard as I try, I won’t ever have the same lens as you.” I was surprised she had made such an acknowledgement.

She asked me what I thought she should do. She wanted me to give her a checklist of ‘how

to not be racist'. For something as multifaceted and pernicious as racism in schools, there are no easy answers. I handed her some articles I had printed off about the problematic nature of teaching through re-enactments and suggested that she could read the articles for a start. We parted on good terms, with her thanking me and insisting that I come back and talk if I had any other concerns. I said I would.

Two weeks or so after our meeting, I asked my daughter how the lessons about Captain Cook were going.

"We stopped," she said. "The teacher said we had too much other stuff to do." I wasn't sure what to make of this, but I certainly didn't take it as a win.

I share this story to illustrate a fundamental problem that faces education in New Zealand today. Just as in my story, the majority of teachers in New Zealand are White (Education Counts, 2022). As Vivian indicated, these teachers come from a particular set of racial and cultural perspectives.

However, there is more than one 'society' in NZ and tribal worlds, Pākehā are not the dominant group. The reality is that White teachers are charged with teaching students from a variety of backgrounds and cultures. How can they do this effectively if they don't understand the racialised connotations of New Zealand society?

For racialised students, being taught about themselves through the lens of White supremacy is a form of violence (Fanon, 1963) which perpetuates the aims of settler colonialism and racism. Whether or not this violence is intentional is irrelevant; the outcomes remain the same. Charles Blow, an African American journalist says, "One doesn't have to operate with great malice to do great harm. The absence of empathy and understanding are sufficient." (2012, n.p.). In order to educate Māori, Pacific, Black and other racialised students without doing them harm, teachers and institutions in New Zealand require empathy, understanding and skill as well as be willing to tolerate racial discomfort.

Introduction

I share the previous story to illustrate a fundamental problem that faces education in New Zealand today. Just like in my story, most of the teachers in New Zealand are White (Education Counts, 2022). As Vivian brought up, these teachers come from a particular racial and cultural perspective, one that will be supported by dominant society. These White teachers are charged with teaching students from a variety of backgrounds and cultures, but how can they do this effectively if they don't understand culture and its racialised connotations?

For racialised students, being taught about themselves through the lens of White supremacy is a form of violence (Fanon, 1963), and perpetuates the aims of settler colonialism and racism. Whether or not this violence is intentional is irrelevant, as the outcomes are the same. Charles Blow, an African American journalist says, "One doesn't have to operate with great malice to do great harm. The absence of empathy and understanding are sufficient." (2012, n.p.). I wonder if schools as institutions and the Pākehā teachers that inhabit them possess sufficient empathy, understanding, and I would add the ability to tolerate racial discomfort to educate Māori, Pacific, Black, and other racialised students, without harm. It was my attempt to better understand this complex issue that is the origin of this research.

Positioning Myself to the Research

The paradigm from which I have decided to conduct and write up the research, namely Critical Race Theory, demands that I state plainly my positionality to my research. It makes sense that you know who I am and why I am doing this research from the outset. I make no claims of being objective, detached researcher. No one ever has been. I am not here to argue this point, it has been done before and by those with far more knowledge in it than me (see Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Dillard, 2000; Lather, 2006; Denzin & Giardina, 2009). Instead, I need you to understand from the start where I come from and some of the experiences that have shaped my perspective.

I came to New Zealand from the United States just over four years ago begin work on my PhD. The path that brought me here, in retrospect seems a direct one, but was full of unpredictable twists and turns as I lived it.

Let me start by saying that race has shaped my life before I was even born. My ancestors were stolen from their homeland to serve as slaves in the United States of America. They

were chained, sold, beaten, raped, overworked, underfed, denied an education, denied basic humanity. It happened hundreds of years ago, but their pain as well as their pride is still with me now.

My mother was White (born in Germany) and my father was Black and that was a very big deal in the United States when they were together. Anti-miscegenation laws meant to keep Blacks and Whites from marrying had existed far before either of them was born. Three years after anti-miscegenation laws were repealed in all states through the ruling in *Loving v. Virginia*, my parents were married. But the ruling repealed the laws, not people's attitudes and my parents had a hard time finding a church that would marry them. Eventually they found a Mormon minister that agreed to marry them. It didn't matter that neither of them was Mormon, they were just happy to get married. The Army stationed my father and mother overseas in Germany for several years, where I was born. When I was two, the military decided to bring my father back to the US, which sounds easier than it was. Since my father was in an interracial relationship, they couldn't just station him anywhere. The threat of violence was still very real for interracial couples in the US. There was one base where the military sent most of its interracial couples because the surrounding community was more accepting, Fort Ord in California. That's how I came to be raised on the beautiful central coast of California.

Let me continue by saying that race has shaped my life from the very moment I was born. My mom named me Amber, after the jewel, because she said it reminded her of the colour of my skin. I was named after the colour of my skin. Every time somebody called me by that name, it served as a reminder of my race, my difference, my place in the world.

My teachers growing up were mostly nice White ladies. A pre-schooler could count the number of teachers of colour I had in my K-12 education: only two. I was a good student, hard worker, and for the most part my teachers liked me. Once when I was very young, I told my teacher that I was White, because my mom was. I had yet to learn that Whiteness was property that was fiercely guarded even (and especially) by these nice White ladies. I received my first lesson that day. "No, you are not White!" It was the sternest response the young me had experienced and it taught me that Whiteness was not mine to claim.

I was a good student, but I was lacking in education, or more accurately lacking in being taught about Black people. We rarely read any books with people who looked like me on the cover, and when we did it was during Black History month. Those books taught me history full of holes, that being Black was struggle and strife, that being Black is about difference. I

learned I was different, and not in a good way. I learned I was not as good as, not as smart as, not as worthy as my White classmates.

Yes, I learned more about Black history when I went to college and I was grateful for it. The fervour with which I drank in Black history made me realise that I was thirsty for stories of my peoples hope, strength, and resistance my whole life. I was particularly interested in the stories of Black queer women like me. These stories filled me up and began to do the work of healing me from decades of White supremacy I had ingested through education.

After finishing university, I worked in non-profits and the business world. These professions weren't for me and I knew it. I kept hearing a calling inside which I ignored. Deep down I knew I wanted to be a teacher, but I just couldn't see myself as one. I realise now that this is because no one ever told me I could be one, and I didn't see myself represented in the teachers I had. After years of denying what I wanted, I finally decided to become a teacher. I wanted to be a teacher for kids like me, to be a role model and protector. And that's what I did. For eight years I taught and fought for our most vulnerable students as a special needs teacher. What troubled me was the pattern I saw emerging in my schools, most of the special needs students were students of colour. It became apparent to me through the years that racism was baked into the schools themselves. I went on to become an assistant principal in an effort to try to make schools more equitable places. Throughout my years as a teacher and assistant principal it was my mission to try to make things better for and protect students of colour as much as possible.

I came to New Zealand to broaden my perspective of what was happening in education. Indeed, why did ac 'achievement gaps' or 'opportunity gaps' exists? Why were they a world-wide, racialised phenomenon? What role did race and culture play in educational here? I wanted to use my position as a cultural outsider in New Zealand to lend some clarity to understanding these questions.

Introduction to the Study

Considering the significant influence Pākehā teachers may have upon the schooling experience as they make up the majority of teachers in New Zealand (Education Counts, 2022), there is a need to better understand the ways they conceptualise and express culture. Further, the dynamics of school themselves may affect the teachers' subjective conceptions of culture. Therefore, it is equally important to explore schools as sites of socialisation and how they might further shape Pākehā teachers' understanding of culture. Currently there is a

dearth of research in these areas and this study intends to initiate this important scholarly discussion.

This study intends to examine how the social environment of the school may shape Pākehā teachers' conceptualisations of culture. Also of interest is how teachers' understandings of culture are enacted within their role as teacher. The explicit and tacit processes of schools will be explored to better understand how they contribute to Pākehā teachers' understandings. One of the objectives of this study is to illuminate how schools may serve to both produce and reproduce conceptions of culture. An essential piece of understanding how schools and classrooms function today is to understand where they came from. The historical context for education in New Zealand is the foundation from which the current system is built and teachers work within.

The aims of this research are to: 1) to investigate how schools construct culture 2) describe how Pākehā teachers understand culture, both for themselves and others. Whilst these aims have been written in distinct parts, it is acknowledged that each of these aspects interact with and inform each other.

With these questions to guide this inquiry, I turn next to discussing to the broader conceptual ideas that inform this thesis.

Before We Get Into It: Framing the Thesis

To successfully navigate this research you need to get comfortable with stories. Naepi argues that all research is a form of storytelling (Royal Society NZ, 2021). Mine however will not attempt to camouflage the stories it tells, rather it will showcase them. As much as possible I wish to convey my research as story. I know that this is not your ordinary thesis, and I don't want it to be. The things that I have to say and the stories I have to tell deserve much more than ordinary. 'Ordinary' is just another way of saying what is expected, what is normalised, what is considered 'right', or to put it bluntly, what is White. The coloniality and racism of the ordinary must be examined. What is 'ordinary' but coloniality in action, producing assimilated responses, acceptable to the White supremacist settler state? I am reminded of the words of Audre Lorde (2003):

Those of us who have been forged in the crucibles of difference -- those of us who are poor, who are lesbians, who are Black, who are older -- know that survival is not an academic skill. It is learning how to take our differences and make them strengths. For the

master's tools will never dismantle the master's house. They may allow us temporarily to beat him at his own game, but they will never enable us to bring about genuine change. (p. 2)

This is true in any colonial project, but especially so when it comes to studying Whiteness. We need tools that have been forged in the fire, the tools of Black and Indigenous peoples, the tools that have been passed down through the generations that have helped us survive. Storytelling is my tool of choice to dismantle the masters' house.

My way of writing this scholarship is not traditional, and that is exactly the point. I am assuming that you, as the reader of this work, are able to hear these stories with ears that are capable of hearing what it is I have to say (Dixon & Rousseau Anderson, 2016a). In relating 'Classical' music to Black spirituals, Bell (1995) has this to say:

at some point, White scholars must have heard the Spirituals. It is easy to imagine their reaction. Even the most hostile would have had to admit that the sometimes joyous and often plaintive melodies had a surface attraction. The scholars would have concluded, though, that the basically primitive song-chants were not capable of complex development and were certainly too simplistic to convey sophisticated musical ideas. The music, moreover, was not in classical form, likely deemed a fatal defect.... Whatever they were, the critics would conclude, these songs were not art. (as cited in Dixon, 2016 p. 909)

Furthering Bell's point here, Dixon & Rousseau Anderson (2016a) argue that it takes a different set of ears to hear and appreciate spirituals than it does Classical music. To truly listen to the spiritual asks the listener to abandon what they know about what classical music and work to hear the complexity and nuance of the spiritual as its own valid art form that has grown out of the Black American experience. Failure to understand does not mean the music is not complex, but that the listener may be lacking in knowledge necessary to comprehend such complexity.

Some Notes on Terminology

I want to note from the start some of the choices I have made in the terminology in this thesis. I have decided to use the term New Zealand as opposed to Aotearoa (the Māori word for this land) in this work as it better reflects the settler-colonial reality of this nation. I join with

Asafo and Tuiburelevu (2021) in doing this as a critique to the settler dominant structures of this nation that continue to illegitimately claim ownership and sovereignty over land which Māori never ceded.

Since the beginning of this study I have learned more about the Pacific peoples who make New Zealand their home. When I first began this research, much of the literature I read used the term Pasifika as way to identify groups of people who come from the nations surrounding New Zealand. As I listened to perspectives of Pacific peoples I learned that this is a contested term, and is not preferable as it collapses the identities of people from distinct nations and culture into one term, leading to homogenisation (Chu-Fuluifaga & Ikiua-Pasi, 2021). I have therefore used Pacific peoples in this thesis as it is a term that recognises the heterogeneity of people who "trace descent to and/or are citizens of any of the territories commonly understood to be part of the Pacific (i.e., Melanesia, Micronesia, Polynesia)" (Davidson-Toumu'a, Teaiwa, Asmar, & Fairbairn-Dunlop in Chu-Fuluifaga & Ikiua-Pasi, 2021 p.16). The New Zealand census collects census data for seventeen different Pacific groups: Cook Islands Māori, Fijian, Hawaiian, i-Kiribati, Indigenous Australian, Kiribati, Nauruan, Niuean, Ni Vanuatu, Papua New Guinean, Pitcairn Islander, Rotuman, Samoan, Solomon Islander, Tahitian, Tokelauan, Tongan, and Tuvaluan. (Ministry for Pacific Peoples, 2020). There will however be sometimes that I use Pasifika in this thesis, specifically in the interviews I conducted with teachers, as that was reflective of my understanding at the time.

There will be certain times when, in relation to a point I am making, I mention Māori and Pacific peoples together. This is not because I see them as the same group, but because of how they have been positioned 'Other' in relation to Whiteness. I want to make clear from the beginning that I see and value the distinctiveness of Māori and Pacific peoples and am not lumping them together without care and thought.

A large part of this thesis is about unpacking Whiteness and it will be helpful for me to explain some terminology from the outset. When I speak about Whiteness, I am not talking about skin colour, although White is a socially constructed racial identity just as any other race is. I am speaking about a set of power relations based in White Supremacy which orders society in such a way as to confer superior status and advantages to those who are deemed White (Leonardo, 2009; Mills, 1997). Whiteness can be viewed as a site structural advantage, a worldview through which the world is understood, and a tangible set of cultural practices that are normalized (Frankenberg, 1993).

When I discuss White supremacy, I don't mean extremist groups such as neo-Nazis or

White nationalists, I am talking about how “the interests of White-identified people are given precedence over the interests of other groups through political, social, economic and cultural structures and practices that have evolved over centuries and are maintained and continually recreated by these structures and through individual actors and actions (conscious and unconscious).” (Walton, 2020 p.80). White supremacy then is not only evidenced in extreme acts of violence and hate but also in the mundane, everyday actions that uphold racial stratification. In settler colonial countries White supremacy is not the exception but the rule.

Lastly, the use of the concept White hegemony in this thesis is drawn from Gramsci’s theorization of hegemony as the acceptance of values and norms necessary for upholding an inherently unjust system (Stoddart, 2007). In this theorization people are not forced to comply but do so willingly because these unexamined frames operate under the guise of ‘common sense’ and the taken for granted norm (Stoddart, 2007). Institutions, such as schools, are recognized as sites that produce and reproduce hegemonic power (Gramsci in Stoddart, 2007). In the case of White hegemony, people and institutions consent to and participate in the overarching system of Whiteness.

Outline of Thesis

Chapter One provides an exploration of the different theories that undergird this work.

Critical Race Theory, Settler Colonial Studies, and Critical Whiteness studies form the basis from which my analysis was generated. By understanding White supremacy as the foundation of racism and settler colonialism these theories provide a useful framework to examine what is happening in schools in settler colonies such as New Zealand. Drawing on these ideas, I build my own way of looking at Whiteness called Black and Indigenous Perspective of Whiteness (BIPOW), centering the theories of Black and Indigenous scholars. In recognizing that Whiteness impacts Black and Indigenous peoples differently, their perspectives remain distinct, although there is striking alignment in the ways our people understand Whiteness.

The methodological approach of this work is outlined in Chapter Two. The research was designed to compare and contrast two different schools to see if the school environment and

the way it is structured would have a bearing in the ways Pākehā teachers understood culture. Indeed, the schools I chose were very different: Tuī was a mostly Pākehā full primary school in a high socioeconomic area, and Pīwakawaka was small school primarily made-up Māori/Pacific students in a low socioeconomic area. I set out to look at the everyday ways notions of culture were embedded in the schools I studied, as well as how teacher enacted their understandings of culture within their classrooms. Additionally, I conducted interviews with teachers and students to gain a fuller picture of the ways they thought about culture. Throughout this chapter the two schools are introduced, and the settings contextualised.

From here I begin to get into the results of my research.

Chapter Three presents my analysis of the Ministry of Education's Māori Educational Strategy, *Ka Hikitia* (Ministry of Education, 2013). Presented as a fictionalized encounter with the Minister of Education, this chapter is how I interviewed the document. A good deal of what the Minister says in the story are direct quotes from *Ka Hikitia*, and from the Minister himself. Though ostensibly this is a document that is meant to deal with Māori, it teaches us a great deal about Whiteness. Whiteness permeates *Ka Hikitia* and reaffirms Pākehā identity and ways of being.

Next, in Chapter Four I further analyse *Ka Hikitia* using the main tenets of BIPOW.

The next set of chapters focus what I observed at the schools. Chapter Five presents a series of vignettes taken from Tuī School and Chapter Six vignettes from Pīwakawaka School. In Chapter Seven I analyse what we can learn about how schools construct culture through the practices that they undertake. I examine how the Hidden Curriculum, as enacted through teacher interactions and pedagogy, supports particular understandings of culture in classrooms in Chapter Eight.

The interviews that I conducted with the teachers (Mary and Kate) are presented in Chapters Nine and Ten. I then move on to analysing what the Pākehā teachers who took part in this study had to say about culture in Chapter Eleven. Seeing the culture of Māori and Pacific Others worked to obscure their own sense of cultural identity. It is this idea of identity that is crucial to this chapter as I look at the ways both Mary and Kate look to find their place and a sense of belonging in New Zealand.

I conclude with Chapter Twelve and give recommendations for schools and teachers who would like to implement pieces of this research. I call for a radical re-storying of our world, a

world we all have a place in, if we seek to achieve more equitable outcomes. The thesis ends with stories that are exemplars for how to do that.

Chapter One: Theoretical Frameworks

The purpose of this chapter is to outline the theories that undergird this research. Before taking on the theory it is necessary that I briefly review what the literature says on the topics I have chosen to engage with. I begin by looking at the White identities of settlers in New Zealand, Pākehā teachers, and schools socialisation of teachers. I then turn to theory as a way to help me identify, explore, and analyse my fieldwork. The theories that have them most utility for my research are Critical Race Theory, Critical Whiteness Studies, and Settler Colonial Studies. I end this chapter by contributing a theoretical framework I developed that centres Black American and Indigenous scholars conceptualisations of Whiteness.

Studying Whiteness

The task before me is a tricky one. On the one hand, this thesis is undeniably about Whiteness: how it manifests itself in education, how Pākehā teachers see themselves, how it is invisible to those who wield its privilege, how it both constructs and is constructed in settler colonial contexts. On the other hand, I do not want to centre Whiteness in this discussion (de Saxe, 2022; Leonardo, 2013; Matias & Boucher, 2021). Increasingly, Whiteness has taken prominence in discussions of race. Therein lies the problem, even when trying to deconstruct it, Whiteness has a way of taking up all the space.

To explore Whiteness then, I turn to the experts, those that have needed to understand Whiteness for their very survival, those who know more about Whiteness than Whites ever could, Black and Indigenous folks. To study Whiteness without centring Whiteness, I will focus on Whiteness through a Black and Indigenous lens, I will prioritise Black and Indigenous ways of knowing, with the backbone of this work being the power of storytelling. There are power in stories, more power than the academy has acknowledged. I intend to harness this power to outline the contours of Whiteness in education in New Zealand. Throughout the analysis I deal with the intersections of Whiteness and Pākehā identity.

The Theoretical Trifecta: Critical Race Theory, Critical Whiteness Studies, and Settler Colonial Studies

For the purposes of this thesis, three overarching and complimentary theoretical frameworks

will serve as the basis: Critical Race Theory (CRT), Critical Whiteness Studies (CWS), and Settler Colonial Studies (SCS). CRT provides a frame through which to analyse racism in education, whilst centring the experiences and knowledges of people of colour. CWS seeks to expose and challenge the normativity of Whiteness at the personal and institutional level. CWS combined with Settler Colonial SCS illuminates the ways Whiteness intersects with colonisation.

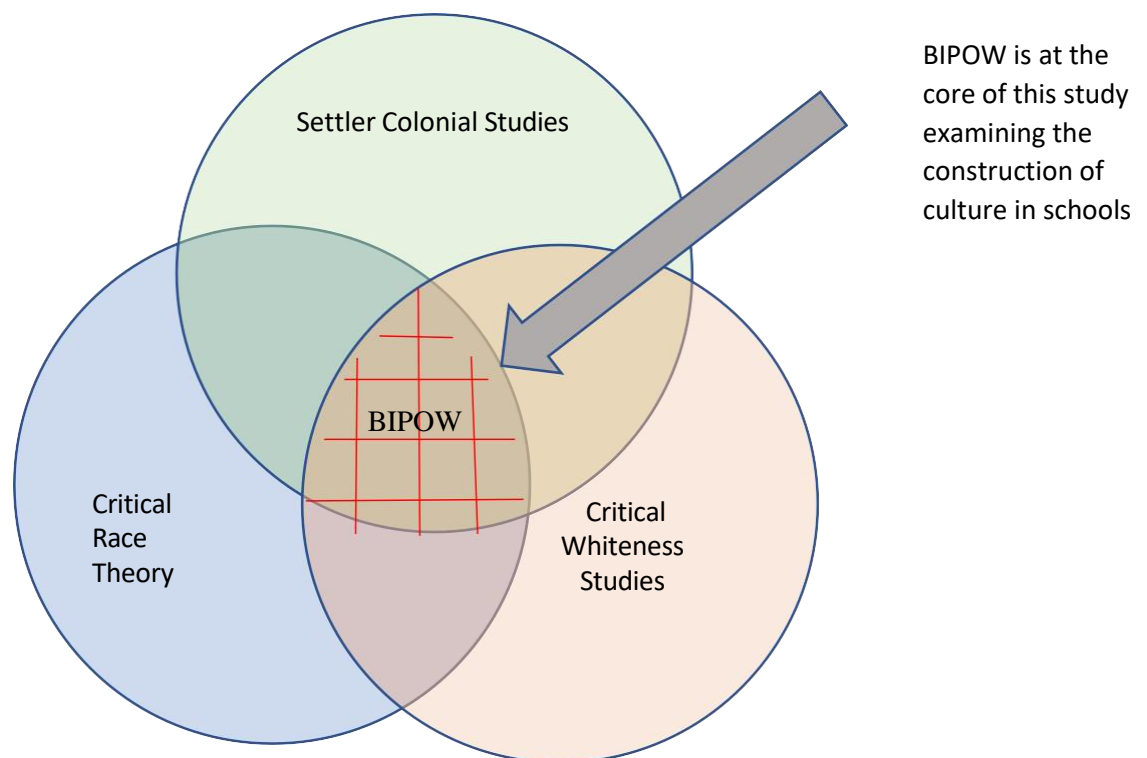


Figure 1: Intersection of theoretical frameworks

The next section is broken down into two parts. The first part covers of the key principles of Critical Race Theory, Critical Whiteness Studies, and Settler Colonial Studies. The next section is an overview of the perspective that make up the Black and Indigenous Perspectives of Whiteness framework.

Critical Race Theory

Critical Race Theory (CRT) is a framework that supports interrogation of racism in education. CRT in education grew out of legal scholarship of the 1970s and 1980s in the United States, when frustrated with slow progress of Civil Rights legislation, legal scholars began to look at the ways the legal system itself was contributing the oppression of Blacks. In

a similar fashion, CRT in education examines the ways systems, policies, and practices in education work uphold White hegemony and contribute to disparate outcomes between White students and students of colour (Taylor, 1998; Taylor, 2016; Solórzano, 1998). CRT endeavours to challenge the common assumption of Whiteness as normative and uses storytelling as a means of centring the knowledge and experiences of people of colour.

Ladson-Billings (2016) emphasises the potential for change through CRT:

It is because of the meaning and value imputed to Whiteness that CRT becomes an important intellectual and social tool for deconstruction, reconstruction and construction: deconstruction of oppressive structures and discourses, reconstruction of human agency and construction of equitable and socially just relations of power (p. 17).

The strength of CRT lies in its ability to peel back the many layers of White supremacy, scrutinize it, disassemble it, and recreate structures in more equitable ways. The capability of CRT to make systems of power visible is what makes it a crucial instrument for examining privilege in the education system.

CRT remains a dynamic and evolving framework to examine the obstacles faced by people of colour in education. Some unifying features of CRT scholarship are seeking a foundational understanding of the White supremacy and the ways it is upheld in institutions, to decouple White racial power from institutions (i.e., law, education) (Crenshaw, 1995), a belief in anti-subordination (Calmore, 1992), and resistance to institutionalized racism (Bell, 1995).

Although devised in a U.S. context, CRT has the ability to add several crucial aspects to this study. Whilst the term race is not used frequently in New Zealand, certain cultural groups, such as Māori and Pacific, are racialised. CRT will serve to expose White supremacy as an enduring, permanent structure in the New Zealand context. Recently, Asafo & Tuiburelevu (2021) have made a case for developing a uniquely New Zealand branch of CRT that deals explicitly with settler-colonialism.

Critical Whiteness Studies

Owing an intellectual debt to Black scholars who have long been critically examining Whiteness, most notably W.E.B. DuBois (Twine & Gallagher, 2009). CWS is an area of

scholarship that has garnered attention in the last 30 years. It grew out of the work of scholars in CRT in the 1990's that began interrogating the insidious ways Whiteness was taken-for-granted but rarely named.

The normativity of Whiteness renders it nearly invisible to the uncritical, untrained eye. White people who profit from the function and maintenance of a White supremacist system the most, are the least likely to recognize it. What if we ask, as Nayak (2007) did, "...what would happen if we were to 'make strange' something so palpably familiar? What could transpire if we were to regard Whiteness less a matter of skin pigmentation and more as an organising principle in late modernity" (p. 738). CWS is an area of scholarship that endeavours to explore these questions.

At its base, CWS asserts that:

- Whiteness is a modern invention; it has changed over time and place.
- Whiteness is a social norm and has become chained to an index of unspoken privileges.
- The bonds of Whiteness can yet be broken/deconstructed for the betterment of humanity.

(Nayak, 2007 p. 738)

Using an interdisciplinary approach CWS interrogates "...Whiteness as an absent racial category and dominant social norm" (Rogers & Mosley, 2006 p. 466). CWS contends that the failure to recognize Whiteness functions to uphold the permanence of race and racism (Allan, 2001; Leonardo, 2009). Believing that racial categories, are 'normal' and 'natural' is believing in a system created based on racial hierarchy, namely White supremacy. CWS counters these beliefs by demonstrating how Whiteness as racial category has been produced and demarcated historically, through economic and legal means (Haney-Lopez, 2006; Massey & Denton, 1993; Roediger, 2005). The ultimate objective of CWS is to "reveal and denaturalize the socially constructed nature of race, White privilege, and racism in the social and cognitive architecture of our lives so it can be noticed, named, deconstructed, and reconstructed" (Rogers & Mosley, 2006 p. 467).

This study will add to the CWS scholarship by examining the ways Whiteness functions within the unique history, economics, and laws of New Zealand whilst also identifying areas of connection to the global system of White supremacy. As Twine and Gallagher (2009)

observe, “Whiteness as a form of privilege and power ‘travels’ from western countries to colonies throughout the world. As Whiteness travels the globe it reinvents itself locally upon arrival” (p. 10). This research will help document the ways that Whiteness manifests itself in New Zealand.

Settler Colonial Studies

CWS combines with Settler Colonial Studies (SCS) to illuminate the ways Whiteness intersects with settlerness. SCS is concerned with the critical examination of settler colonialism as a global and transnational phenomenon, while also maintaining a focus on unique ways which it manifests in local contexts such as New Zealand. Settler colonialism is the work Indigenous scholars have long been committed to (Rowe & Tuck, 2017). As an interdisciplinary genre of research SCS gathers its insights from a variety of disciplines including Indigenous studies, critical ethnic studies, feminist studies, queer theory, anthropology, critical geography, and Asian, Black, and Chicana/Xicana Studies (Rowe & Tuck, 2017)

SCS is a recent encapsulation of theory that deals explicitly with settler colonialism as a phenomenon distinct from colonialism. Colonialism seeks economic and military aims but the colonizers don’t seek to replace the Indigenous population, but in settler colonialism the settlers work to establish their permanence. To do so they must ‘eliminate’ and replace the Natives (Wolfe, 2006). In short, with settler colonialism, the colonizers come to stay (Tuck & Yang, 2012; Veracini, 2010, 2011; Wolfe, 1999, 2006).

The main purpose of SCS is to expose how settler colonialism is and has been constructed and how it continues to function to privilege settlers over Indigenous peoples (Veracini, 2010). Within settler colonial societies, settler identities are constructed as normative, while Indigenous populations are subject to the “construction of inferior otherness” (Veracini, 2010). The ability to include and exclude is held by settlers, who are thereby able to claim ownership of the land and begin formulate their own sense of belonging. (Veracini, 2011) These constructions form the basis for unequal power relations between settler and Indigenous populations.

Some of the main tenets of SCS are:

- Settler colonialism is a structure, not an event (Wolfe, 2006)

- Land, not labour, is of central importance to the settler state. This supports the genocide and dispossession of indigenous peoples (Wolfe, 2006; Glenn, 2015; Rowe and Tuck, 2017)
- Fundamentally unequal power relations are at the core of the Settler and Indigenous relationships (Veracini, 2011)
- Settler colonialism cannot be relegated to the past, it is an ongoing and contemporary process. (Veracini, 2015; Wolfe, 2006)
- “Settler colonialism obscures the conditions of its own production.” (Veracini, 2010 p. 14)

Veracini (2011) posits that there are three main elements that Whiteness in settler colonial contexts, or settlerness, relies on: a triangular relationship between settlers, Indigenous peoples, and exogenous others; settler disavowal of Indigenous presence before colonisation; and desire. I will briefly cover each of these conditions below.

The triangular relationship within settler colonial societies is formed of the settlers, the Indigenous population, and exogenous others (such as migrants). Initially, the European sovereign was important to this formulation as it mediated the relationships between the settlers and the Indigenous and exogenous others. This triangulation is conceptualised as one of disappearance of all but the settler. In time the settlers needed (or wanted) less and less from the metropole. It was intended that the Indigenous population would vanish through genocide, incarceration, containment (such as on reservations), and assimilation. The restriction and assimilation of exogenous others allowed settlers to control who may become part of the country, giving them the power to remake the country in their own image. In this triad settlers consolidate their control and assert themselves as sovereign, even in relation to the founding metropole.

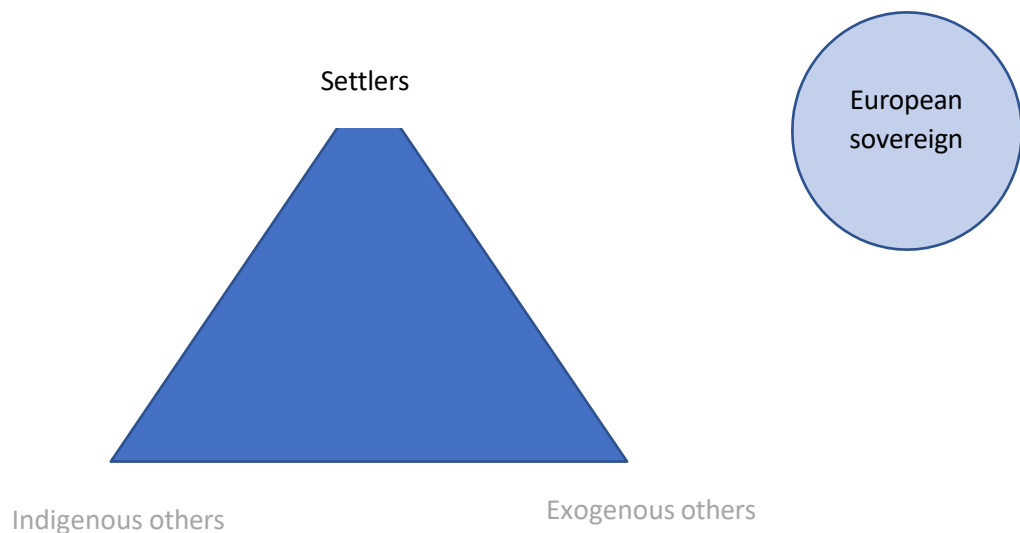


Figure 2: Settler/Indigenous power relations triangle

Disavowal is crucial to Whiteness in settler colonial contexts. Veracini (2011) locates the penchant for colonizers disavowal of Indigenous peoples in the founding epistemologies of the Western tradition. Plato thought of the relationship of body and soul as a kind of colonisation whereby the soul descends into the lifeless body and animates it. So too the settlers see themselves as bringing ‘consciousness’ to the blank slate of colonized lands. In settlers’ notions, the first encounter with Indigenous people is a ‘non-encounter’, with the settler looking right through their presence to an imagined future of the settler body-politic to come. Indigenous people who originally inhabited the land are through this mind trick transformed into intruders in settler space. Disavowal on the part of settlers establishes an unequal power dynamic from these very first ‘non-encounters’.

Desire also plays a key role in Whiteness in settler colonial contexts, Veracini (2011) contends. Gendered and sexualized tropes are often present in the mythmaking about colonisation. The myth of the sexually available Indigenous woman often translate into beliefs about Indigenous societies welcoming colonisation speaks to the settlers’ carnal desires. For Veracini “different forms of domination produce the possibilities and limits for specific forms of libidinal expression.” (p. 7-8). Put simply, colonizers wish to ‘*stand on top of*’ Indigenous people, where settler colonizers wish to ‘*stand in for*’ Indigenous people. Elimination and replacement are the main goal of settler colonial desires. As part of wanting to take the place of Indigenous peoples, settlers also limit Indigenous people’s use of the land.

Whiteness should not however be equated with settlerness. Settlerness is distinct in that it is produced in the triangular relationship to Indigenous and exogenous others. Settler colonial settings are therefore what produce both Whiteness and settlerness. The use of settlerness as a conceptual tool therefore may better represent power dynamics in settler colonial societies.

This research will use the lens of SCS in conjunction with CRT, and CWS to analyse the data and make sense of what was observed in schools and classrooms. The current study will add better understanding the ways Whiteness and settlerness interact to produce what was observed during the duration of this research.

Adding My Own Lens

Even in critical Whiteness research, it is the perspectives of Whites who are lauded and predominantly used for justification. This is problematic because as critical scholarship on Whiteness points out, Whites partake in a denial of reality, a ‘consensual hallucination’ (Mills, 1997) which impacts their interpretations of themselves and the world. They cannot, because of their positioning and how they have been taught to see, see matters of race clearly. What then is the logic of relying so heavily on the theories that Whites develop about themselves if they are not necessarily the best judges of what Whiteness is? Who knows Whites better than those who have been constructed outside of Whiteness? For Indigenous and Black people it has been a necessity to learn about Whiteness: what it is, how it’s made, and crucially -how to survive it. The fact that BIPOC scholarship has been overlooked is problematic especially in the field of CWS, where once again White perspectives achieve dominance, reconstructing the very issue we are trying to deconstruct. For my part, I seek to rectify this wrong by centering the conceptions of Black and Indigenous people (mostly Māori) in this project. In order to build this framework, I read the works of many Black American and Indigenous theorists. As I read, I kept track of the themes that were prominent in their work and went about categorizing them. In the end I came up with many themes for both the Black American and Indigenous theorists, which I thinned out into overarching themes. What I was left with is a surprising alignment between Black American and Indigenous thinkers around their conceptions of Whiteness. Although there is similarity in themes, the particular ways that Black and Indigenous scholars understood Whiteness was particular to their relation to it. What that means is that Black scholars drew their understanding of Whiteness from slavery and the oppressive racism they encountered after the end of formal slavery. Indigenous scholars based their analyses of Whiteness on the

invention of colonialism and the violence and dispossession that followed. Whilst there are areas of difference between Black and Indigenous theories, the overall unifying factor is the scourge of White supremacy and what it has wrought on this world. Indeed, many of the Black theorists cited Indigenous scholars, and many Indigenous theorists cited Black scholars. I suppose then that it shouldn't be surprising that our formulations of Whiteness have certain commonalities since Black and Indigenous people have been constructed outside of Whiteness and have looked to each other for knowledge.

From the nexus of CRT, CWS, and SCS I turned to Black and Indigenous thinkers to further explicate Whiteness. I have chosen to include both Black and Indigenous perspectives in this framework because it both connects me to this research and adds valuable perspective. I understand that Whiteness works in different ways depending on one's positioning to it. How Whiteness works in relation to Māori is different to how it will work in relation to me as a Black American. Both are important and help to dissect the ways in which Whiteness operates in relation to different racialised positions. This framework is not meant to be used as a binary, with analysis for Black folks fitting one side and Indigenous folks on the other. To do so would erase the people who inhabit both Black and Indigenous identities and further colonial constructions of race. These perspectives are meant to speak to each other in relationship in order inform a critical analysis of Whiteness.

What follows is a brief overview of the perspectives of Black and Indigenous scholars pertaining to Whiteness which I will use to analyse my findings.

Black and Indigenous Perspectives of Whiteness

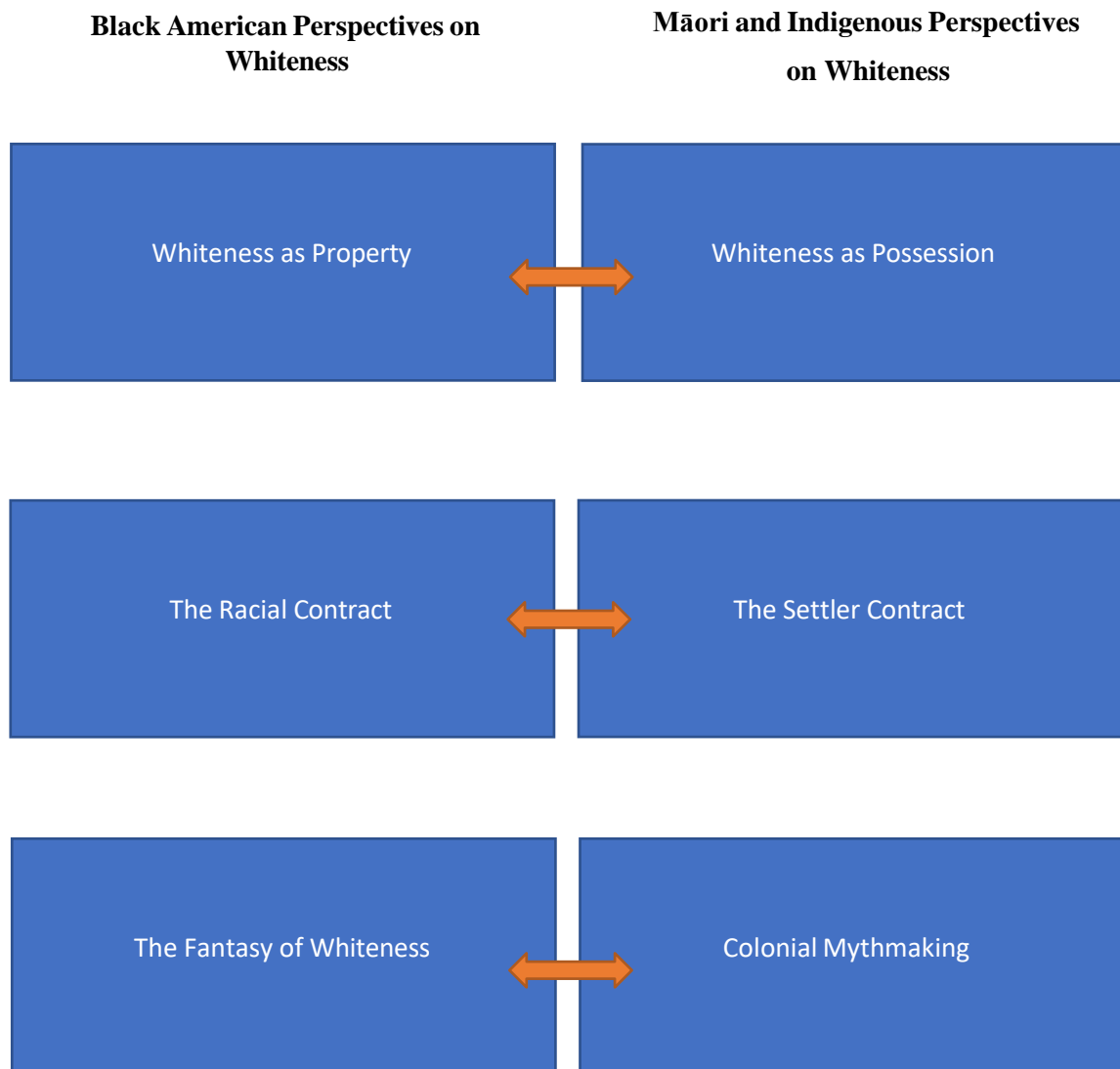


Figure 3: Black and Indigenous Perspectives of Whiteness framework

Black Scholars on Whiteness

Whiteness as Property

Cheryl Harris, a Black legal scholar from the United States, is widely credited with developing the theory of Whiteness being a form of property. The crux of theory of Whiteness as property is that being White comes with privileges and benefits through which Whiteness accrues its value. These benefits have become the expectation of Whites, and thus a form of property. Property in the legal sense is not only a tangible ‘thing’, but also relates to an intangible set of rights and expectations. In an attempt to protect the valuable property of Whiteness, Whites have used the law to legally codify Whiteness, therefore reifying Whiteness as a racial category. The adoption of the colonizers set of White supremacist

values undergird the legal system and obscures what is a social construct for being inevitable and natural.

Harris (1993) argues that Whiteness as property cannot be discussed without also discussing the distinct but parallel systems of racial oppression of Native American and Blacks, for it was through such racial domination that Whiteness as property came into existence. When the British colonizers came to North America, they set about to claim land that in fact already had inhabitants. The way they went about this was through use of the concept of 'possession' (Harris, 1993). Since possession was defined using the colonizers conceptualizations and practices, Native Americans were not seen as legally inhabiting the land they had lived on for generations, thus justifying conquest and colonisation by the British. Whilst Native Americans were denied their right to possess and live on the land, enslaved Africans themselves became property. Because race was used as the only legitimate basis for enslaving a people, Whiteness took on the additional value of being 'free', or not being able to be made into property by being taken as a slave. Harris (1993) asserts that "Whiteness was the characteristic, the attribute, the property of free human beings. (p. 1721). It was through these racialised systems of property, giving Whites the right to possess land, to own enslaved Africans and not being property themselves that race and property became merged.

Whiteness and property share certain functional aspects, namely the rights of disposition, right to use and enjoyment, reputation and status property, and the absolute right to exclude. Whilst Harris contends that Whiteness shares all the aforementioned aspects with property, she highlights the importance of the right to exclude as a central organising principle, a "conceptual nucleus" (p. 1714) through which both Whiteness and property coalesce.

Harris argues that Whiteness has been greatly defined, not so much by what it is, but what it is not. Since Whiteness had acquired such value, it was a resource that needed to be protected from outsiders. Whiteness as property thus was essential to the creation of hierarchical power relations. Courts were crucial in defending Whiteness from intruders by creating legally quantifiable definitions of Whiteness. These definitions worked differently for Blacks and Native Americans highlighting each groups distinct relation to Whiteness. Blackness was seen as contaminant that would devalue Whiteness, therefore came laws such as the 'one drop rule'. White blood in Native Americans made them less Native. Too much White blood and one would no longer be considered 'Native enough' and the land could be confiscated.

Conceptualizing Whiteness as property helps us understand the real, material value of Whiteness as well as the legally and socially constructed ways in which Whiteness accrued its value.

In their germinal article on CRT in education, Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) take Harris's (1993) concept of Whiteness as Property and apply it to education in the United States. They look at schools through the main tenets of Whiteness as Property: (1) rights of disposition; (2) rights to use and enjoyment; (3) reputation and status property; and (4) the absolute right to exclude (p. 59), arguing that these rights are also maintained through education. Educational scholars have since utilised Whiteness as Property as a tool for analysing the educational inequality in the United States and Canada. Some of the issues that were examined included policy and law (Aggarwall, 2016; Buras, 2011; Snyder, 2020), funding (Alemán, 2009), curriculum (Orozco, 2011; Peters, 2015) African Americans access to education (Donner, 2013), educational opportunity (Salisbury, 2021), valedictorianship (Donnor, 2021), and Métis teachers experiences of racism (Gillies, 2021).

To my knowledge, Whiteness as Property has yet to be used to examine education in a New Zealand context. As I set out on my fieldwork, I was curious to see if tenets of Whiteness as Property held true in the schools where I was observing, or if there were additional or appropriate way of theorising the ways Whiteness showed up in education here, especially in respect to particular settler/Indigenous power relations in New Zealand. Therefore, I use the lens of Whiteness as Property to explore how culture is constructed in schools.

The Fantasy of Whiteness

hooks, Baldwin, Dubois, Mills, and Morrison shared the idea that Whiteness is not immutable fact, but a social construction. It is a story that Whites tell themselves to justify continued privilege whilst standing on the backs of others. It is an identity that has been made up in order to further White supremacy. It is what they have placed their belief in so they may understand their world. In short, Whiteness is a fantasy.

As hooks (1992) asserts, "Ideologically, the rhetoric of White supremacy supplies a fantasy of Whiteness" (p. 42). It gives White people the idea that they are somehow superior to all others and their displacement and continued subjugation of Blacks and Native Americans is justified, if not required. Afterall, if Whites believe themselves to be superior to others, is it not the 'White man's burden' to look after and overtake, by force if necessary, all others.

This way of thinking provides Whites with ideological armour to believe their privilege is right, just, and natural. It is this ‘fantasy of Whiteness’ that these theorists took on.

Whiteness, as it functions in the world today, is a recent occurrence (Du Bois, 1999). Previous to colonizing America, the various ethnicities of Europe were recognised as distinct and unique entities. It was only in encountering the others, Blacks, that those who considered as and considered themselves to be White sought the refuge of an amalgamated White identity (Baldwin 2011; Harris, 1993). Previous to these encounters, Europeans would not have considered themselves to be White. Baldwin (2011) notes that

It bears terrifying witness to what happened to everyone who got here and paid the price of the ticket. The price was to become ‘White’. No one was White before he/she came to America. It took generations, and a vast amount of coercion, before this becomes are White country. (Baldwin, 2011 p. 178).

In this statement Baldwin recognizes that there was a price to pay and a process through which various European identities came to be known as White. Thus, Whiteness was built not born. Baldwin (2011) goes on to say that he sees Whiteness as a “totally false identity” (p. 179). He calls it false because Whiteness is not founded in culture or ethnicity, but because it was constructed for the sole purpose of domination. This construction of Whiteness takes on legal form. Mills (1997) asserts that, “Whiteness is invented, and one becomes White by law” (p.64). Harris’s (1993) Whiteness as property theory supports the idea of law playing an integral role in the invention of Whiteness.

Whites often live in a fantasy world of their own making. They tell stories that both denigrate the other while uplifting themselves. The stories of Blacks and Native Americans that are told, and retold, and become part of narrative fabric of the country are mere figments of Whites imaginations. Mills (1997) puts it like this:

There will be White mythologies, invented Orients, invented Africas, invented Americas, with a correspondingly fabricated population, countries that never were, inhabited by people who never were Calibans and Tontos, Man Fridays and Sambos—but who attain a virtual reality through their existence in traveller’s tales, folk myth, popular and highbrow fiction, colonial reports, scholarly theory, Hollywood cinema, living in the White

imagination and determinedly imposed on their alarmed real-life counterparts. (pp. 18-19)

Whites invent these stories about other races and then they go about believing in the stories that they tell. So it is that White mythology informs Whites' self-belief, but also how they believe others to be. These beliefs impact their thoughts, actions, and behaviour.

The fantasy of Whiteness has supplied Whites with stories about the other, which are in fact a mirror of themselves. I quote Morrison at length here because of masterful way she is able to illustrate this dynamic.

White people believed that whatever the manners, under every dark skin was a jungle.

Swift, unnavigable waters, swinging screaming baboons, sleeping snakes, red gums ready for their sweet White blood. In a way, he thought, they were right. The more colored people spent their strength trying to convince them how gentle they were, how clever and loving, how human ... the deeper and more tangled the jungle grew inside. But it wasn't the jungle blacks brought with them to this place from the other (liveable) place. It was the jungle Whitefolks planted in them. And it grew. It spread. In, through and after life, it spread, until it invaded the Whites who had made it. Touched them every one. Changed and altered them. Made them bloody, silly, worse than ever-they wanted to be, so scared were they of the jungle they had made. The screaming baboon lived under their own White skin. (Morrison, 1988 p. 317)

The 'screaming baboon' that White people so fear is in fact themselves and it entirely of their own making. So it is that Whiteness is scared of its own reflection.

In connection with Morrison, Baldwin (2011) brings up an important paradox inherent in the construction of Whiteness through oppositional definitions, that "those who believed that they could control and define Black people divested themselves of the power to control and define themselves. (p. 180)". When the essence of Whiteness is the negative of something else, of not being Black, what kind of identity are Whites left with? Toni Morrison asks this same question and then goes to ask Whites to contemplate "What are you without racism? Are you any good? Are you still strong? Still smart? Do you still like yourself?... If you can only be tall because someone is on their knees then you have a very serious problem. My

feeling is that White people have a very, very serious problem and they should start thinking about what *they* can do about it.” (Rose, 1993 39:57). Baldwin (2013) lamented the great price Whites themselves had paid in order to live in this fantasy. As he observes, “White people in this country will have quite enough to do in learning how to accept and love themselves and each other, and when they have achieved this which will not be tomorrow and may very well be never-the Negro problem will no longer exist, for it will no longer be needed.” (Baldwin, 2013 p. 33). Understanding that that racism is not in fact a problem of Black people, but of White people is something that Morrison and Baldwin shared. They leave solving the racism and White supremacy in the lap of White people, the creators of and progeny of this fantasy.

As I was going be interviewing and observing Pākehā teachers, I was curious if within the construction of their racial identities they shared a similar fantasy. Would their identities hold up on their own merits or under closer examination would they prove to be just as fragile and dependent on others for their sense of identity? Were the mechanisms through which they build their understandings of themselves and others distinct or similar to the ways Black American scholars saw the formation of Whiteness? Was there some way that Pākehā were able to disentangle themselves from notions of White supremacy and domination? Did fantasies of Whiteness play into how they understood their own culture and that of their students?

Whiteness as Racial Contract

“When White people say “Justice” they mean “Just us”. (Mills, beginning inscription of *The Racial Contract*).

Caribbean philosopher Charles Mills contributes to the analysis of Whiteness from Black perspectives in his work *The Racial Contract*. *The Racial Contract* contends that White supremacy is as political system that has shaped the modern world, though it is invisible, taken for granted, and what appears to be natural. The Racial Contract is defined as a set of contacts between Whites that designate Whites as ‘full persons’ and non-Whites as subpersons so that non-Whites are given subordinate status in White or White ruled polities. The rules that Whites follow when dealing with other Whites do not apply when Whites are dealing with nonWhites. The purpose of the Racial Contract is to “privilege Whites as a group and to exploit the bodies, land, resources of nonWhites and deny them equitable socioeconomic opportunities.” (p 11). Because this is a contract between Whites, Mills suggests that nonWhites are the object not the subject of this agreement and Whites, by accepting the terms are the signatories. The Racial Contract is used to both draw conclusions

about social justice and injustice in society but also to as a means to describe and explain the inception and current functioning of the contract in society and people's moral psychology.

In this theory the purpose of the state is to maintain the Racial Contract, securing privileges for Whites and subjugating nonWhites. Whites consent to this contract, either explicitly or tacitly, and agree to uphold the racial order- to uphold Whiteness. Failure to maintain their civic or political agreements and Whites are seen as abandoning their fellow White citizens. An 'epistemology of ignorance' is prescribed to Whites which creates a pattern of localized and global cognitive dysfunctions that does not allow Whites, in general, to understand the world that they themselves have created. To be White (or more accurately, constructed as White) requires cognition that does not allow for self-transparency and understanding of social realities. Borrowing from William Gibson, Mills calls this a "consensual hallucination" (in Mills 1997 p. 18). Mills (1997) goes on to say that "*White misunderstanding, misrepresentation, evasion, and self-deception on matters related to race* are among the most pervasive mental phenomena of the past few hundred years, a cognitive and moral economy psychically required for conquest, colonization, and enslavement." (emphasis in original p. 19).

The Racial Contract has materialized through history and is traceable in the creation of the modern world. Indeed, the past five hundred years have been shaped by European domination and the consolidation of White supremacy worldwide. The basic assumption on which Europeans legal claims rest is "the rightness and necessity of subjugating and assimilating other peoples to [the European] worldview." (Williams in Mills, 1997 p. 21). There have been various iterations of the binary encoded in the Racial Contract: European vs non-European (geography), civilized vs. savage (culture), and Christian vs. heathen (religion), which consolidated over time into the current White vs nonWhite conception. There became two distinct moral codes for Whites, one in dealing with Whites and one in dealing with non-Whites.

Moral and legal doctrines enshrined the categorization of non-Whites as different class of being, not afforded the same rights and opportunities of as Whites. The Racial Contract, then, creates a "transnational White polity" (p. 29) which was established in demarcate Whites from Indigenous peoples, the superior from the inferior. Thus, the modern world was created precisely to be racial hierarchy, with Whites holding the seat of power.

Another important contribution to understanding Whiteness is the economic nature of the Racial Contract. Mills argues, citing Locke and Hobbes, that the Western conception of

society was brought about in order to protect private property. Europe, through invasion, exploitation and extraction cut off avenues for growth in other cultural centres in Africa and Asia. Europeans were not culturally or morally superior to any other nation, rather their advancement is due to their exploitation of the rest of the world. Using Eric Williams thesis, Mills contends that the profits Europeans accrued from the African slave trade is what made the Industrial Revolution possible. Additionally, the exploitation of Native peoples and the extraction of resources in Europe's colonies was essential to establishing and consolidating Europe's economic power. Using the Racial Contract as a lens gives insight into the construction of Whiteness as a social identity whilst simultaneously concretizing the terms through which Whiteness functions.

The Racial Contract is a useful means of interrogating schooling as it lays bare the unspoken assumptions in education- there is one standard of schooling for Whites and a different, subpar system for nonWhite students. It both helps us understand and explain the disparate outcomes for Whites and nonWhites as a function of "safeguard[ing] the polity as a white or white-dominated" (Mills, 1997 p.82). Leonardo (2013) posits that just as the word 'human' works as the signifier of the possession of Whiteness in the Racial Contract, so too does the word 'student' in education. White children are taken to be 'students' whilst students of colour are given a 'sub-student or non-student' designation.

Further, the way the Racial Contract works for teachers is that allows them to 'feel good' about superficial efforts to address racial concerns. Schools and teachers get lauded for activities such as multicultural assemblies and potlucks, or acknowledging a language on a particular Language Week, but these acts are largely performative and have no meaningful impact on the structures within the school operate. This operates to help Whites feel as if they are 'good people' and not racist whilst simultaneously being complicit and benefiting from a system that privileges them and hinders others (Applebaum, 2022; DiAngelo, 2018; Yancy, 2015)

The Racial Contract highlights the structural aspects of White supremacy that are inherent to education and maintain inequitable outcomes regardless of the intentions of anyone who works within the system (Leonardo, 2013). The educational Racial Contract, though not a literal contract, functions as if Whites are signatories because it produces predictable outcomes from which all Whites benefit.

Additionally, the epistemological concerns of the Racial Contract are central to schooling,

whereby Whites are valorised as the knowers, and nonwhites are maligned as the inferior ‘subknowers’ (Leonardo, 2013). This plays out in schools through conceptions of what constitutes knowledge and is expressed in both the stated and hidden curricula.

Indigenous Scholars on Whiteness

Whiteness as Possession

In her book *The White Possessive* (2015) Aileen Moreton -Robinson sets out to conceptualise Whiteness from her position as an Aboriginal woman (Goenpul) in Australia. The central claim of the book is that Australia and other settler colonies are constructed as White

Possessions. Maintaining these nation states as White possessions is not a natural process, but instead is cultivated through ideological, discursive, and material means. The concept of ‘possessive logics’ address “a mode of rationalization, rather than a set of positions that produce a more or less inevitable answer, that is underpinned by an excessive desire to invest in reproducing and reaffirming the nation-state’s ownership, control, and domination.” (p. xii). These logics underpin a nations discourse of ‘ownership’ and work to normalise colonial notions of knowledge, decision making, and social conventions. White possession requires that the ontology, epistemology, beliefs, practices, and values of White nation states remain centred. White sovereignty can be known as “the possession of land which was acquired through illegal means and materializes through a nation’s government and laws.” (p. 138)

Race is central to the functioning of White possession. Race works to privilege Whites and oppress Indigenous people in settler colonial societies. Racism is linked to the dehumanizing, possessive, violent impulses of colonisation. Indeed, settler colonial nation-states such as United States, Canada, Australia, Hawai’i and New Zealand would not have been possible without operationalizing such racism. Simon (2015) contends that “We must acknowledge that New Zealand was built on racism and white privilege, like other English settler colonies.” (p. 104). Whiteness functions to assert itself as superior through possession of the nation state. For Indigenous people White possession is palpable, it surrounds them in their daily lives, in everyday encounters. White possessive logics, race, and the founding of nation states work in tandem to discursively and materially negate Indigenous sovereignties and cement White possession. In this way White possession and Indigenous sovereignty are linked through the material and discursive ways Whiteness seeks to maintain its self-given superior status.

Western culture has created three types of humans based on race and gender: those who can

own property, those that can become propertyless, and those who are property. White men, who are the pinnacle of Western racial and gender hierarchy are the people who can own property and are thus constructed as most human of all people. As its basis patriarchal Whiteness seeks its expansion through the possession of land. Through initially contracting with, then forcibly and or violently dispossessing Indigenous people from their land, White possession is asserted. “Whiteness is the invisible marker of who can hold possession” (Harris in Moreton-Robinson, 2015 p. 6).

Beyond the literal acts of taking possession of the land, White possession works to self-legitimate colonizer conquest through ideological, discursive, and legal means. Through this, settlers begin to manufacture their sense of belonging to a country which they colonized. Patriarchal Whiteness has gained social and material value and as such functions as a form of property (see Harris, 1993) which must be protected. The law has been used as a tool to delineate the bounds of Whiteness through upholding Western epistemological conceptions. The property of patriarchal Whiteness is not only the possession of land, but of society, culture, and government. Whiteness is unmarked and unnamed and only examined through its socially and materially constructed through its inverse, Indigeneity. But there is no possession without dispossession, which brings the status of Indigenous people to the fore.

Terra nullius was used as justification for those who could own property and those who could become propertyless. According to this concept, land that was deemed ‘belonging to no one’ could be claimed by Europeans. Moreton-Robinson (2015) argues that “For centuries, the logics of possession have treated the Earth and its Indigenous peoples that is always predisposed to being possessed and exploited.” (p. 192). Though regarded the precept for international law from the 17th century, *Terra nullius* was never envisioned as a law pertaining to all people, just other Europeans. So rather than being a neutral, common-sense approach, *Terra nullius* was in fact a contract among White people that furthered their own worldview. “Only White possession and occupation was validated and therefore privileged as the basis for property rights.” (Harris in Moreton-Robinson p. 33).

Race is of central importance to the settler project as it tethers White possessive logics to the disavowal of Indigenous sovereignty. White possession is predicated on the erasure of Indigenous claims to land which have been legally codified. *Terra nullius*, as legal fiction, formed the foundation for the violence and dispossession of colonisation. White sovereignty has therefore been assumed though Indigenous lands that were never ceded. Indigenous people are placed in the position of being homeless and ‘trespassers’ on their own land. It is

Indigenous people's relationship to the land that solidify Indigenous identity and culture, and unsettle settlers claims to it. This puts Indigenous people in limbo, being belonging nowhere unless they are able to prove their identity to the satisfaction of White colonial standards.

This is done at the same time as the government wanting to appear fair and virtuous. Viewing White possession through a New Zealand lens, Simon (2016) argues that discursively framing the government as virtuous not only gives the Crown the appearance of occupying the higher moral ground but also works to avoid the violent history of colonisation. Far from a recent occurrence this use of virtuousness as strategy began with the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi (Simon, 2016).

Lastly, those who constructed as property have their identity defined by the terms that White possessiveness outlines. Indigenous sovereignty is denied because identity is not based on Indigenous claims but is regulated, measured and validated through patriarchal White possessive logics. From tribal enrolment, to blood quantum, to skin colour, White possession seeks to quantify Indignity as a known object, something different from itself. "As things that are possessed, Indigenous people must be emptied of our ways of being in order to come into existence as the homogeneous Indigenous subject created through racial rights discourse... (pp. 191-192)" Once marked as Indigenous, the logics of patriarchal White possession determines the rights and treatment held through authority and law. These practices work to uphold patriarchal White possession through continued exclusion and the maintenance of subjugation. As Moreton-Robinson (2015) argues, "At an ontological and epistemological level, the Crown and subsequent governments have treated us as their property" (p. 94).

The following chart is meant to highlight the different avenues through which White possession manifests. I have included social aspects of White Possession to the categories Moreton-Robinson (2015) has identified:

Aspects of White Possession

Category	Examples
Ideological	White supremacy, Settler Contract
Social	European standards, settler normalization, holidays, media, acceptance of racism and colonialism, White hegemony
Discursive	Colonial mythmaking: (NZ is not racist, colonisation was beneficial etc...) colour blindness, deficit narratives, Māori privilege.
Material	Indigenous dispossession from the land, settler possession of land, rights, laws, policies, property, economics, school curriculum, school funding, school resources. The language of colonizers used to replace (dispossess) Indigenous languages

Figure 4: Aspects of White Possession

I propose that White possession in education, like White possession in larger society, is cultivated through ideological, social, discursive and material means. This ultimately works to reassert settler dominance and control of the education system. White possession reaffirms and reproduces settler ontology, epistemology, beliefs, practices, and values within schools. Whites are able to assert their sovereignty in education through control of the physical space of the school, resources, and the stated and Hidden Curricula, whilst paying only superficial attention to the sovereignty of the Indigenous people whose land the school is on. Schools serve an important purpose in the on-going colonisation of Indigenous peoples through the ways in which they manufacture heroic origin stories for settlers that legitimate White superiority and conquest. Finally, education constructs Indigenous students as property through both setting them apart as different and able to be known by the institution, in the ways Whiteness choose to define them. Once marked as Indigenous, students' rights are outlined relation to educational system or settler government rather than to the sovereign Indigenous nation(s) of which they are a part. Ultimately, White possessions sets up Indigenous students to be 'trespassers' in the classrooms that were built on their ancestral land. This research will examine the ways schools construct culture through the lens of White possession.

The Myths of Colonialism

Colonization is often full of breathtaking exercises in illogic and legal gymnastics ... discourses that seek to construct new realities out of the facts of oppression and to legitimate the illegitimacy of colonial takeover. (Jackson in Mikaere, 2013 p. 11)

Colonial mythmaking was a common theme in Māori scholars interpretations of colonisation. I use the term myth here not to describe gods and heroes, but as stories that are designed to help people make meaning from their world. Myths are often attributed to the Non-western world belief systems, which fits in with the White supremacist belief that the stories Whites tell are ‘truth’ from which they accrue value. Obeyesekere (1997) contends that though mythmaking is often attributed to non-Whites, Whites tell just as many myths, the difference being White myths are cloaked and taken as fact, as history. The importance of myth models is twofold, to serve as a template for the construction of future myths at the same time they reference a set of latent ideas which then go on to be reproduced in various narrative forms, including art, history, biography and fiction (Obeyesekere, 1997). It is not so much the underlying ideas but how profusely they are reproduced in different narrative contexts that give these stories their mythic power. In this way these colonial myth models gain traction and are invisibly produced, reproduced, and readily accepted. Western culture sees itself a bastion of reason and logic, but as Obeyesekere (1997) points out “mythos still reigns there under the banner of logos.” (p. 11). Indeed, Western education is a key mechanism for reproducing the colonial logic of Western knowledge being held as ‘truth’ whilst other knowledges are either omitted or underestimated (Naepi, & Leenen-Young, 2021).

European mythmaking about the ‘Other’ was a mobilizing force behind colonisation of the “Age of Discovery” from the fifteenth to the eighteenth centuries. The Doctrine of Discovery is a set of Papal bulls that gave European nations the right to conquer, colonize, and kill non-Christians (Miller & Ruru, 2008; Ngata, 2019). The ensuing centuries brought about unprecedented brutality, violence, kidnapping, and dispossession of Indigenous peoples at the hands of Europeans. Jackson observes that the “Age of Discovery” would more aptly be called the “Age of Genocide” (in Ngata, 2019 p. 21). The Doctrine of Discovery can be seen as the founding myth of colonisation, enshrining White supremacy and operationalizing its principles. In creating two categories of people Christian/Non-Christian, or European/Non-

European, or White/non-White the foundation was laid for the dehumanization of the ‘other’ (Mills, 1997) necessary to carry out the violence required of colonisation. As Jackson (2018) so aptly points out, “everything has a whakapapa” (p. 1) and racism and colonialism are no different. The colonial myths that are present in New Zealand trace back to the founding myths of the Doctrine of Discovery.

Several Māori scholars have highlighted the colonial myths that circulate through different narrative contexts in New Zealand. Ritchie, Skerrett & Rau (2014) used letters sent into New Zealand newspapers to highlight colonial myths and their workings. The first myth they pointed out was that “we are all (happy) New Zealanders” (p. 20). They trace the ways colonial fictions work to construct Māori as inferior and separate from the true New Zealanders, White New Zealanders. The discourse around ‘we are all one New Zealand’ works to make Māori invisible and cements Whites claims to the country. The second Myth she identified was “colonisation is benevolent; therefore Māori ungrateful” (p. 24). British invasion of New Zealand is cast as beneficial for Māori since the British saw themselves as superior. The British were seen as bringing advancement to the primitive Māori. The basic sentiment is that “Māori are practically Stone Age people and ought to be grateful for colonisation which brought them out of the Stone Age and, if ungrateful, we can put them straight back there.” (p. 24-25). This discourse bluntly asserts the ideology White supremacy and reinforces the idea of the Whites being the creators of knowledge. The last myth that Skerrett discusses is “What? racism in New Zealand, never!” (p.27). In this colonial myth New Zealand is constructed as a country where no prejudice exists and Māori and Pākehā enjoy harmonious relations. The history of the country is represented in such a way that it appears the nation was founded through ‘benevolent colonisation’, as if there is such a thing. This myth benefits Pākehā New Zealanders sense of being a good kind of White person and keeps them safe from confronting the difficult realities of racism and settler colonialism of the past and present.

As a Māori legal scholar Ani Mikaere (2013) insight is most useful. She deals at length with the irreconcilable differences between The Treaty of Waitangi and Te Tiriti o Waitangi. She contends that mythmaking has been indispensable to the colonial project as a means of “justifying unjustifiable behaviour.” (p. 6) The mythmaking began as soon as Europeans set foot on New Zealand soil, when James Cook claimed that he ‘discovered’ this country though Māori had been here for centuries and has continued since then. She traces the role that fiction played in the discourse around Māori and British interaction pre-Treaty, the

fabrications that came after the signing, all the way to the ruling of Prendergast CJ that pronounced the Treaty “a simple nullity” (in Mikaere, p. 7). These colonial myths were founded on the premise of Britain’s right to colonize New Zealand and that Māori should be grateful that Britain extended enough goodwill to allow them to even sign a treaty. Mikaere (2013) argues that once it was clear that Māori resistance would not allow the Crown to ignore The Treaty any longer, a more sophisticated mythmaking strategy became necessary.

The most recent versions the colonial myth seeks to soothe Māori discontent whilst retaining power, this is the strategy of ‘doublethink’. One of the ways this doublethink is deployed is in the false equivalency between The Treaty of Waitangi and Te Tiriti o Waitangi. Mikaere (2013) asserts that The Treaty of Waitangi and Te Tiriti o Waitangi are two separate documents, with Te Tiriti as the only legally acceptable one. The development of Treaty ‘principles’ have been used to further this false equivalency by attempting to embody the ‘spirit’ of both documents. This ends up obfuscating the very important differences between the documents and asks people to accept The Treaty as legitimate. Te Tiriti and He Whakaputanga are therefore pushed aside as a historical footnote whilst people and institutions focus on the Treaty as the founding document. Mikaere (2013) suggests that Māori who believe in the legitimacy of the colonial myth of The Treaty of Waitangi are ceding sovereignty that their ancestors never did, denying their validity of their nations, and ultimately denying their own truth. Māori acceptance of The Treaty confers legitimacy to the Crown.

Moana Jackson is another Māori legal scholar and activist who worked hard to further the rights of Māori in New Zealand. Jackson recognizes the power that storytelling has to justify colonisation and that “the colonisers have told stories that redefine its causes and costs.” (2020, p. 134). Part of this redefinition was a rebranding of the colonisation of New Zealand as somehow better than in other localities and the Crown more honourable because of their attempt at treaty-making. Just as colonisation seeks to control the land and Indigenous peoples, colonising stories attempt to control the dominant narrative. The intentional ‘misremembering’ of history compliments the Crowns acts of violence and dispossession by creating stories to explain and exult their actions. If colonisation is addressed, it is framed as an event of the past, not an ongoing reality. There is a crucial lack of acknowledgement of the essential role racism plays in colonisation. As Jackson (2020) states so clearly, “racism as an ideology and practice was invented and refined in colonisation.” (p. 134). Jackson sees hope

and the possibility for restoration (his take on decolonisation) through the 'un-telling' of colonisations past and present lies" (2020 p. 154).

Tina Ngata is scholar, writer, and activist for Māori rights in New Zealand. In her book, *Kia Mau – Resisting Colonial Fictions* (2019), as the name suggest, she deals with the fictions that underly common assumptions in New Zealand. Many of the essays are critical of the colonial establishment and deal with her research on the Doctrine of Discovery, uncovering the violence and White supremacist intentions of James Cook, and resisting TUIA 250 (a re-enactment of Cook's voyage around New Zealand). She argues that colonial fictions are purposeful and necessary to uphold White supremacy. The unifying factor behind racism and colonialism is the White supremacist intentions made real in the Doctrine of Discovery, which is still operating today. In order to maintain power, and for people to accept their role in the process, colonialism designs myths. These fictions work to assuage resistance to colonial systems designed to dominate and control Indigenous people's lands and bodies. The messages contained in these fictions also convey tacitly and explicitly the centre and place value on settler's perspectives.

For Ngata (2019) the path forward is through telling the difficult truth of colonisation. The privileging of colonial conceptions in the 'two truths' model that operates in New Zealand cannot bring about reconciliation because it fails to recognize the injustice and harm done to Indigenous people. At the same time, it continues to weave colonial fictions over Māori perspectives. These myths work to maintain Pākehā power and privilege, avoid critical discussions about the legitimacy of the settlers claim to New Zealand, protect Pākehā racial comfort, and keeps Pākehā concerns centred.

Below is a synthesis of the colonial myths that Māori scholars have identified and how they work to maintain settler dominance.

Myth	How Settler Dominance is Maintained
We are all one New Zealand/ No racism in New Zealand (Ritchie et al., 2013)	Promotes colour-blindness, erases racism, furthers ideas of meritocracy, racial comfort for Pākehā, skirts difficulty history, allows colonial myths to stay intact, we are a better colonizer
Colonisation is benevolent; therefore Māori ungrateful/better colonizers (Ngata, 2019; Ritchie et al., 2013)	Justifies colonisation, makes colonisation seem beneficial, racial comfort for Pākehā, denigrates Māori
Doublethink, biculturalism, legal pluralism (Jackson, 1995; Mikaere, 2013)	Continues to centre Pākehā notions while giving shallow consideration to Māori concerns, Pākehā power is never questioned, Pākehā get to feel good for including Māori, status quo maintained
Colonisation is historical (Ngata, 2019)	Pākehā racial comfort maintained, continues ideology of meritocracy, places fault of inequities on Māori, erases the ways colonisation is an on-going 'structure' (Wolfe, 2006)
Opposition to colonisation is dangerous and divisive (Ngata, 2019)	Continues to normalise Pākehā institutions, casts Māori rule as dangerous, we are all one people discourse that continues to centre Pākehā concerns
Colonisation is inevitable and unavoidable (Ngata, 2019)	Belief in White supremacy is upheld and continues unquestioned
Colonisation is localised (Ngata, 2019)	Fails to acknowledge the larger system of global White domination that led to mass colonisation and death and dispossession of Indigenous peoples
The coloniser is central to our identity (Ngata, 2019)	Centres and normalises Pākehā, as if there were nothing or no one here before their arrival.

Figure 5: Common colonial myths

Schools are crucial to the colonial mythmaking process. It is through schools that colonial myths are legitimated and passed on to the next generation. Education in New Zealand works to privilege Western knowledges systems. As Smith (2021) says, "... Western culture constantly reaffirms the West's view of itself as the centre of legitimate knowledge, the arbiter of what counts as knowledge and the source of 'civilized' knowledge." (p. 125). Through enforcing Western epistemology in schools, Whites are constructed as the agents and creators of knowledge. White learn that their conceptions are superior and those who have been minoritised learn to accept white hegemony. White supremacy therefore becomes enshrined and operationalised through the educational system.

Just as in larger society, colonial myths work to construct the 'Other' in schools. Whiteness acts as the taken for granted standard in education and any other perspective gets labelled. For example, 'Māori education' and 'Pacific education' gets marked as different from the norm. By marking their difference, the groundwork is laid for disparate treatment. The kinds of knowledge these groups bring are either left out or devalued as localised 'cultural knowledge' (Cooper, 2012). Pākehā concerns remain central to education and the underperformance of Māori and Pacific students in this system becomes naturalised as another marker of difference. This process of othering in education functions to assert Pākehā dominance and acclimate us to the lower achievement of Māori and Pacific learners. I agree with Ngata's (2019) assertion that these myths work to reduce the resistance of Indigenous peoples to the status quo whilst maintaining settler dominance of society.

I used the idea of colonial mythmaking to help me understand how schools represent notions of culture. What stories were told about culture, and more importantly, how did these stories function? I also wanted to know if these colonial myths were present in the ways that the Pākehā teachers who participated in this research made sense of culture.

Whiteness as Settler Contract

Indigenous scholars have used the framework provided by Mills (1997) and have further theorized about the existence of a Settler Contract. In short, the Settler Contract is an agreement that justifies and maintains colonial power over Indigenous peoples (Kidman et al., 2018). Just as in the Racial Contract, in the Settler Contract there exists two different classifications of people, White and non-White. Because White people think of themselves as superior to all others, they feel it is their duty to 'civilise' the rest of the world and where applicable, bring them out of a state of nature (Mills, 1997; Pateman, 2016; Moreton-Robinson, 2015, Pateman, 2016). Owing to the perception that Indigenous people are sub-

human, and not part of any kind of society that Whites could decipher (or cared to), the land that Indigenous peoples inhabited was declared *terra nullius* (or land belonging to no one). *Terra nullius* as international doctrine was a contract amongst Europeans outlining how they would divide up the rest of the world, non-Whites were not included in the making of this contract (Mills, 1997, Pateman; Moreton-Robinson, 2015) At the core of the Settler Contract is Whites' refusal to recognize the existence of societies prior to European invasion, to do so would nullify their claim to the stolen territory. White nation states could not allow competing sovereignty from within and thus forcibly subsumed Indigenous nations (Pateman, 2016).

The Settler Contract did not conclude with the arrival of Europeans on Indigenous lands, it persists to this day. Wolfe (2006) speaks to the ongoing nature of settler colonialism when he observes that settler colonialism is a structure, not an event. Given the institutionalisation of settler colonialism, the Settler Contract manifests within many of the structures that make up settler-colonial societies. There are distinguishable and predictable ideological, discursive, and material patterns that uphold the primacy of Whiteness and the Settler Contract.

One such way is through a sub-contract of the Settler Contract known as an epistemology of ignorance. In speaking about this subject Mills (1997) expresses "...one has an agreement to *misinterpret* the world. One has to learn to see the world wrongly, but with the assurance that this set of mistaken perceptions will be validated by White epistemic authority." (emphasis in original, p. 18). To see the world wrongly and be supported in that perception by dominant society is the core of the epistemology of ignorance. What is remembered and what is forgotten is not without meaning but serves to support the Settler Contract. Battiste & Henderson refer to "cognitive imperialism" as the presentation of history in a way that erases the violence and brutality of colonialism in favour of a heroic and patriotic representation of settlers (In Kidman et al., 2018). In this way, settler notions of innocence and belonging are bolstered, and the Settler Contract is further supported.

The spatial sub-contract also undergirds the maintenance of the Settler contract. In the spatial sub-contract, the affective needs of settlers are centred which allows narrow inclusion of Indigenous interests (MacDonald, 2018). Said differently, settlers only include Indigenous matters in the amount and forms with which they are comfortable. In New Zealand this is evidenced in the ideology and resulting discourse of biculturalism. Current notions of biculturalism grew out of the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840 which has been

presented by dominant society as the beginning of the Māori and Pākehā partnership. In bicultural discourse Māori are presented as equal partners, with the same rights and responsibilities as Pākehā. This ‘imagined community’ (Apple, 2000) with Māori and Pākehā enjoying an equal partnership is often touted as the basis for biculturalism, but in reality, has never existed. Indeed, O’Sullivan (2007) argues that the limited inclusion of Māori actual place them as ‘junior partners’ in the Treaty. Kidman (2018b) notes that the discourse of biculturalism presents “...the origins of the nation as a negotiated and mutually agreed upon covenant between two peoples rather than as the result of the invasion and expropriation of Māori land and culture” (p. 104). In this way the ideology and discourse of biculturalism serve to obscure the difficult history of colonisation and shelter settlers from emotional discomfort. The limited inclusion of Māori interests in dominant discourse serves to keep the Settler Contract intact.

Another aspect of the spatial sub-contract is the idea that biculturalism should feel good. MacDonald (2018) argues that the biculturalism that teachers are asked to practice in New Zealand caters the affective needs of settlers to ‘feel good’ about their interactions with Māori students. Teachers perform ‘caring’ in ways that are superficial and leave the deep seeded coloniality of education untouched. Teacher may ‘feel good’ about pronouncing Māori students names correctly or asking about their day but ignore the structural barriers their students must navigate. Pedagogy and curriculum also play an integral part in the way the educational system centres the feelings of settlers. Culturally responsive pedagogy is often touted as the way to ‘reach’ racialised students. But this way of teaching acts a kind of ‘lovely knowledge’ which portrays settlers as benevolent and Indigenous peoples as the victim, thus reinforcing the status quo and leaving institutional racism unscathed. MacDonald maintains that the limited ways Māori culture is included in schools serves to meet the affective needs of settlers by again allowing teachers to ‘feel good’ by teaching something related to Māori whilst not changing the system itself. This can also be seen in the ways teachers approach topics related to New Zealand’s colonial past. Silencing the harms of the past work to keep Pākehā in their racial comfort zone and perpetual a false narrative of harmonious biculturalism. In all of these instances teachers are able to feel good about themselves whilst the power relations that maintain racism in schools remain untouched.

The Settler Contract provides a useful lens through which to interrogate how schools structure settler/Indigenous power relations. The epistemology of ignorance, spatial, and

‘feel good’ subcontracts can add insight into the ways the teachers thought about and enacted notions of culture.

Conclusion

To conclude, in this chapter I have outlined various theoretical perspectives that have informed my analysis of this research. The foundation of my research sits in the intersection of CRT, SCS, and CWS. Each of these theories contributes to understanding the ways race, settler-colonialism and Whiteness function in a New Zealand context. Building on this foundation, BIPOW works to explicitly examine Whiteness from a Black American and Indigenous perspectives. Through the interplay of Whiteness as property/Whiteness as possession, Whiteness as Fantasy/Colonial Mythmaking, and the Racial and Settler Contracts, the contour of Whiteness and how it functions in society is further illuminated. In this thesis I apply the tenets of BIPOW to look at how the Ministry of Education and schools reflect ideas of culture, how the participating make sense of their own culture and the cultures of their students, and the way these understandings are enacted in the classroom.

Chapter Two: Methods

“Good luck finding schools to participate in your study.” I had just finished presenting my PhD proposal when a Pākehā man from the audience approached me. It was clear that he believed it foolhardy to undertake such research. My topic was too intimate, too controversial. What Pākehā teacher in their right mind would want to talk with me about culture and cultural identity? This wasn’t the first time I had encountered pushback to my research veiled as faux concern. The fact was that my research made some Pākehā uncomfortable was all too clear.

I met his eyes, smiled and thanked him. “I’m sure I will be fine”. Research in the area of race is not for the timid, and I had no intention of seeming demure. I had accepted that not every school or every teacher would want to participate in my study. I was looking for schools and teachers that were in a place where they were willing to critically reflect on and engage with culture, Pākehāness and how their actions support or disrupt the status quo. But how and where would I find such schools?

For the purposes of my study I was looking for two very different sites. Since I was interested in how schools constructed culture, I wanted sites that would contrast to explore this phenomena. To this end, I wanted to find schools with differing student demographics: one a school with a mostly Māori/Pacific student population, and the other a school a mostly Pākehā student population. Identifying the similarities and differences present at these sites would provide important insight into how schools contributed to the understandings of Pākehā teachers’ conceptualisations of culture. I wanted a snapshot of what these teachers were doing in their classrooms every day- I didn’t want to just see lesson explicitly about culture, I wanted to see what space culture inhabited in their normal, daily teaching.

Finding the schools that met my criteria was not so much difficult as it was time consuming. I was looking for Pākehā teachers that taught year 5/6 (ages 10-11). One would be from a primarily Māori/Pacific school, and the other a primarily Pākehā school. I undertook web-based search for schools using a website that listed all the schools in the Wellington region. Using this list, I went through the schools one by one and made note of schools in the Wellington region that fit my criteria. I began approaching schools in June 2019, just after I

received Ethics approval. I didn't want to send out a mass of emails and get back several responses from schools that were interested in participating in my projects, so I was slow and steady in my approach. I started off by emailing the principals of three schools. One got back to me and said that his school was interested in participating, but that he had no teachers that identified as Pākehā at the school. The two other schools responded that they were interested, and as 'luck' would have it, were the schools that agreed to participate in my study.

A Tale of Two Schools- Pīwakawaka and Tuī Primary Schools

Tuī Primary

A large school in the Wellington region, Tuī Primary has over 700 students on the role, from years 1-8, where most of the students (over 80%) were Pākehā. The neighbourhood surrounding the school has a grocery store, a library, a bookstore, coffee shops, cafe's, an upscale hairdresser, and a Pilates studio. There is a private school just across the street that began at the same time as Tuī Primary. Children in their prim and proper looking school uniforms forked off towards the private school, while the more casually dressed students walked into Tuī. The houses that I could see from the road were large with fences and well-manicured gardens; shrubs, grass, and thoughtfully placed flowers. Trees of different sizes ran along the main road. Tuī was located in an economically advantaged area where the median income was \$48,000 with nearly 40% of residents making over \$70,000 annually (Stats NZ, 2022b).

When I entered the school, I checked-in at reception, and the woman working behind the counter offered me a cup of tea. As an American in New Zealand, there is something utterly charming about the regularity at which people here offer me a cup of tea. I accepted and began following the receptionist down the hallway to the staff lounge where I ran into the principal. "Avery?" he says. I greeted him and explained that I am on the way to get some tea. He is a tall, slim Pākehā man with short grey hair and bright blue eyes. He joined the procession and the three of us walk down to the lounge together making small talk. The ever-changing weather in the region is a constant source of exasperation but gives ample fodder for filler conversation.

I began by telling him about myself, my background in education as both a teacher and assistant principal, my curiosity in the ways culture is approached within schools in New

Zealand. Then I started telling him about my project, how I want to look at how schools may shape the ways Pākehā teachers think about culture, and how I thought this school would be a great fit for my study. By now he was sitting back in his seat, tea in hand, and I could see him processing what I've just said. He sat forward, gave a lopsided grin and said that he would like the school to participate. Being more culturally responsive was something that they were working on as a school and that what I find could support this work. He said that several of the teachers has set goals for themselves about being more 'culturally responsive' and that in many ways this aligned with their work.

'Culturally responsive' is a term often used in education as a way to talk about teaching the 'Other'. I thought about how teaching has been 'culturally responsive' in favour of Pākehā for some time now. We were both talking about culture, but it held different meanings for us both. My focus was on Pākehā, his was not. This was a theme that came up again and again in my research, just what is meant when we talk about culture?

Per my ethics, I sent out an email to all the year 5/6 teachers at the school giving information about my project and, if they met the selection criteria, asking if they would like to participate. I had sent out the email a few days before the end of the term, a notoriously busy time for teachers, and then waited. I heard nothing from them the last week of the term or over the two-week holiday. I decided to send the teachers a quick follow-up email on the Sunday night before the end of the holiday so they would have my email at the top of their inbox when they opened up their email on Monday morning. Hopefully, feeling somewhat refreshed from the holiday, they would respond. And again I waited, wishing for one of the teachers to contact me. A day later, one of them did. Mary became one of the teachers that participated in my study.

Pīwakawaka Primary

Pīwakawaka Primary is a small school, serving about 150 students, most of whom (97%) are Māori or Pacific located in a suburb of Wellington. When I get off the highway and begin snaking my way through the roundabouts to my destination, I notice that there is much more room out here. Housing in the city is cramped- rows of townhouses, houses mere inches away from touching each other, houses on back lots- but here property sits on larger plots of land, houses have grassy front yards and driveways. There is a no-fuss aesthetic going on when it comes to the front yards- the grass is well kept, but there is not a lot of flash when it comes to

the gardening. No fancy flowers, but yards are maintained. The area is mostly residential but I do pass a small mall with a bakery, barber, discount store, a takeaway, and dairy.

Pīwakawaka is located in an economically depressed area, with a median income of \$24,000 with roughly 5% of people making over \$70,000 annually (Stats NZ, 2022b).

The damn GPS was acting up and had me turning around in circles as I tried to navigate my way to the school. Frustrated, I give up and decided to go by instinct. I pass by the school a few times before I see low to the ground the Pīwakawaka Primary sign and pull into the parking lot.

I got to the school office and checked- in. The principal's office was right next to reception, so she came out and greeted me almost immediately. She is wāhine Māori, with long brown hair, deep brown eyes and a warm and friendly demeanour. I took a seat at a round table she had in her office. I must have had a hint of consternation still left on me from my driving experience because the first thing she asked me was, "Did you find the place alright?". I let out a laugh and then recounted my driving adventure to her. "We should really get a bigger sign," she said, "people have a hard time finding us. Also, GPS often cuts out in this area so it makes it harder to find us." Feeling somehow vindicated about getting lost, I introduced myself to her. I told her about my experience in education and my interest in studying how schools in New Zealand discuss culture. Then I started telling her about my current project, studying how schools shape Pākehā teachers ideas about culture. I could see that I had piqued her interest- her eyes lit up and a small smile crept across her face. She said that she was very interested for her school to take part. She said they talked about culture a lot at this school and she would be happy to be a part of this research. Being such a small school, there was only one teacher that fit the criteria of my research and she believed that she would be keen to participate. "She is a second year teacher and she is fantastic." She gave me the teacher's email address and told me to reach out to her. And I did. I heard back from Kate in a few days saying that she is interested in meeting with me.

Different Schools, Different Stories

There were two very different, racialised stories being told about the neighbourhoods where I undertook my research and paying attention to those stories was important. When I hear White people talking about a neighbourhood being "bad", I know instantly that the majority of people who live in that area are people of colour (DiAngelo, 2018). I wasn't surprised

when I started paying attention to the general tenor of conversations about the neighbourhood Pīwakawaka Primary was located in. Crime. Poverty. A “bad” neighbourhood. I wonder if I’ve ever heard a neighbourhood comprised of mostly White people ever called a “bad” neighbourhood- I don’t think I have. “Working class” maybe, but not “bad”. This made me think about the Tuī Primary and not just the absence of negative judgements about it, but the positives about it. From what I had heard it was a ‘good neighbourhood’ (read: predominately White).

Because wealth is largely distributed along racial lines in New Zealand, the differing demographics of the schools would be reflected in the socioeconomic status of the schools. The net worth of Māori and Pacific populations is the lowest in the nation (Stats NZ Statistics, 2021). In 2021, the net worth of Europeans was \$ 138,000, Māori was \$ 29,000, and Pacific was \$15,000 (Stats NZ, 2022). That means on average there is a difference of \$109,000 between the net worth of Pākehā and Māori individuals, and a \$123,00 difference in the net worth of Pākehā and Pacific people. If projections hold true, these disparities in wealth will only continue to grow over the years.

But these statistics only tell part of the story. To only focus current wealth inequities is short-sighted and often plays into deficit discourses surrounding Māori and Pacific people. To truly understand the differences in outcomes between Māori and Pākehā, we need to look to the past to provide context for present day outcomes. As a settler colonial state, it is imperative that any analysis of wealth in New Zealand takes in the account the long, violent history of colonisation and resulting displacement of tangata whenua. For Pacific people these disparities are reflective of the ongoing racism they have experienced in New Zealand, being sought after as ‘cheap labour’ for the New Zealand economy yet denigrated as ‘criminals’ and ‘overstayers’ (Anae, 2020) who were unable to gain a foothold in the Pākehā dominated county.

Additionally, any analysis that looks at cultural disparities must also take into account the historical privilege that Pakeha in New Zealand are privy to. Borrell et al. (2018) argue that just as Māori have faced historical trauma due to colonisation, Pākehā have been the beneficiaries of historical privilege. The authors explain “The Pākehā settlers who acquired the land and material resources taken from Māori have reaped individual, collective and intergenerational rewards from that procurement.” (p. 26). Indeed, the historical privilege of Pākehā has left a

mark in different ways at both schools.

In introducing Pīwakawaka and Tuī Primary I would like to provide a way to compare and contrast student achievement levels, but what I have to show are how these schools performed on a now defunct measure based on the National Standards. Tuī Primary was ranked as a high achieving school, with most of its students meeting or exceeding National Standards. At Pīwakawaka Primary, students performed below or well below National Standards. The story that this measure reveals, once again sticks to the familiar, racialised storyline.

Another common measure at both schools is the ERO (Educational Review Office) school report. Every school in New Zealand participates in a review process with the ERO at intervals of three to four years, or as required in the school's previous review. The ERO reports focuses on school performance on a number of student outcomes and school progress indicators. Both Tuī and Pīwakawaka Primary have been through an ERO review in the last three to four years. At one school the report focuses on who the students are, at the other what they can be. One school was described as being highly effective, while the is on an improvement plan. One of the schools was described as having strong parental support, while the other tells parents how to support their children. Teachers at one school possessed a "strong work ethic", while teachers at the other were just starting to look at the effectiveness of their teaching. Which school is which? The stories are predictable and familiar for you to know. Through discursive means the ERO reports work to cement the categorizations of Tuī as a 'good' school and Pīwakawaka as a 'bad' school. These stories precede any of my work within the schools.

Ethnography

At its most basic, ethnography is writing about culture through analysing the lives of people: one person, a specific group of people, or people as part of a social institution. The ethnographer's role, as Zora Neale Hurston (1935) puts it, is to be "a detective of some kind" (p.60) with the goal of investigating how a particular culture works.

Ethnography is not about the sensational, but about the mundane- examining the everydayness of peoples' lives for clues about culture. The intention of ethnography is to make the familiar strange, to unravel the enmeshed pieces of people's lives to see how they work together to form the whole. The tools that ethnography uses to this end are varied, and

though widely recognised as a qualitative research method, it may also incorporate quantitative aspects (Katz, 2019). Walford (2009), after comparing several differing notions of ethnography finds that the long-term engagement with a research site, the utilisation of multiple research methods, and the production of rich data through theory-led and systematic means are at the core of ethnographic research. In sum, ethnography is “empirical scrutiny of social situations *in vivo*.” (Holstein & Gubrium, 2008 p. 373 emphasis in the original). Ethnography that takes place in schools should not differ from ethnographies that take place in other locations as all should rely on sound ethnographic principles (Ogbu, 1981).

Flexibility and the ability to keep one’s research holistic are key attributes for school ethnography (Ogbu, 1981). Whilst many studies may come under the banner of educational ethnography, significant variance between studies in this category exist. Considerations such as a researcher’s positionality to the culture of study, the discipline used to frame the study, theoretical orientation, purpose of study, funding sources, and the underlying epistemology and axiology of the researcher account for the array of differing perspectives in educational ethnography.

Especially useful to my research has been the use of a critical ethnographic approach. Critical ethnography is distinct from standard ethnography in that it directly attends to how power operates (Thomas, 2017; Fitzpatrick, 2017; Wilson & Yull, 2016; Carspecken, 1996) and in this problematizes the status quo (Madison, 2011; Thomas, 2011; Carspecken, 1996). Critical ethnography is “ethnography with a political purpose” (Thomas, 2011 p.4) that envisages research as contributing to social justice and egalitarian aims and calls on the researcher to reflexively explore their positionality within in the research (Tricoglus, 2001; Wilson & Yull 2016, Noblit, Flores, & Murillo, 2004; Madison, 2011). Ultimately, critical ethnography is conceived of as an emancipatory endeavour. Where standard ethnography describes what is, critical ethnography looks for what could be; where standard ethnography assumes the status quo, critical ethnography confronts it; where standard ethnography expects researchers to repress bias, critical ethnography celebrates the ability of researcher’s use of their positionality to bring about understanding and societal change. Where standard ethnography depicts a culture, critical ethnography seeks to change it (Thomas, 2011).

Critical ethnography adds the dimensions of, who benefits from what is going on here? Who is oppressed? What are the taken-for-granted assumptions here? Why is this going on at this particular time, in this particular place, in this socio-historical context? What are some other

ways this could be? How could this situation be made more equitable? How has my positionality as the researcher impacted this research?

Critical ethnography insists that, as the main research instrument, I don't leave myself out of the research process in the name of some manufactured sense of objectivity. It insists that I bring all parts of myself with me into this research and that these parts add layers that enrich the analysis. The aspects of myself that have been marginalised in society: Black, mixed race, queer/lesbian, non-binary, and fat must work in tandem with the knowledge I have acquired as a teacher, principal, and scholar to inform the meaning I'm making out of the material.

That who I am not only impacts my perceptions of what's going on, but also other people's perceptions of me, and therefore the kind of data I'm able to collect. Ethnography is embodied research. The question at the heart of this is not just how will I make sense out of the people in my study, but also how will they make sense of me? What parts of themselves will they allow to be seen? I have all of this in mind as I get ready to begin my fieldwork in the schools.

Culture

Another crucial part of this research is examining how Pākehā teachers enact culture within their classrooms. But what exactly is culture? And how would I identify it for my research? As I found out, defining culture is no easy task. It seems the harder one tries to pin a particular meaning to culture, the more slippery the concept becomes. In the attempt to define culture one runs the risk of reification, and turning culture into a 'thing' rather than recognizing the ever changing social processes that encompass culture. It is a risk that I must take as it is impossible to research something if you don't identify the parameters for what you are studying.

Across and even within academic disciplines, there is little agreement about the definition of culture (Faulkner et al. 2006). There are an abundance of definitions of culture but very little clarity. This conflict over the term culture begs the question of how useful a concept it actually is. Culture's ambiguity

suggests that the term is a sign, an empty vessel waiting for people—both academicians and everyday communicators—to fill it with meaning. But, as a sign in the traditional semiotic sense, the connection between the signifier (the word "culture") and the signified (what it represents) shifts, making culture a

moving target. (Baldwin, Faulkner, Hect 2006 p.4)

The idea of culture as a moving target is an apt metaphor for how both my participants and I have discussed culture throughout this research.

The New Zealand government, in relation to the collection of census data, treats culture as “a person's way of life, which may include music, literature, dance, sport, cuisine, style of clothing, values and beliefs, patterns of work, marriage customs, family life, religious ceremonies, celebration days/events which have particular cultural significance, e.g., Chinese New Year.” (Alan, 2001 p.5). Such a definition has utility for the government in considering how best to conceptualise culture for the purpose of measurement (e.g., the Census). However, this definition approaches culture in simplistic, unambiguous terms; useful for the census, but limited when it comes to explaining the way culture operates and is conceptualised in the daily, lived experiences of people.

The Ministry of Education commonly connected culture to the concepts of identity and language in *Ka Hikitia* (Ministry of Education, 2013) the Māori education strategy. There are also a few early childhood documents which give an explicit definition of culture as, “the understandings, patterns of behaviour, practices, and values shared by a group of people.” (MoE, 2013b). Although there is an attempt at outlining what culture is, the definition is broad to the point that it is hard to imagine in specific terms what culture is.

In order to gain further insight on the concept of culture, I turned to Anthropology and Sociology. A much cited take on culture is that of Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952). Through the analysis of various definitions of culture, they concluded that

Culture consists of patterns, explicit and implicit, of and for behavior acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievements of human groups, including their embodiments in artifacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional (i.e., historically derived and selected) ideas and especially their attached values; culture systems may, on the one hand, be considered as products of action, on the other as conditioning elements of further action. (as cited in Baldwin 2006 pp 8-9)

This understanding of culture is well represented within Anthropology. The focus of this conception is on the systemic and structural aspects of culture. (Baldwin, 2006).

Another highly regarded interpretation of culture is that of Clifford Geertz, a prominent sociologist. Geertz recognized culture as “an historically transmitted pattern of meaning

embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men [sic] communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life” (as cited in Faulkner, 2006 p. 35). For Geertz, culture concerned the not only material aspects but the meanings that people make that precede creation of the symbols. Culture, then, didn’t exist in physical realm of tools and artefacts, but in the mind. This way of thinking shifted the focus from the material elements to social and meaning making processes of culture (Faulkner, 2006).

Critical scholars have added the dimension of power to the understanding of culture. Viewed through a neo-Marxist lens, power relations are inherent to the production of culture (Baldwin, 2006). By analysing different aspects of culture (i.e pop culture, media, literature), those who operate from a critical perspective critique the status quo and investigate how these mediums produce and reproduce culture. We can see this reflected in Freire’s assertion that culture is “the representation of lived experiences, material artifacts, and practices forged within the unequal and dialectical relations that different groups establish in a given society at a particular historical point.” (in Giroux, 1998 p. 116). Freire argues that culture both acts upon and is acted upon within the system of overarching power relations. This understanding of culture is the one that most closely mirrors my own. Power is a crucial part of understanding how culture gets both understood and articulated.

However, when it came to getting a grasp on this slippery concept, I needed a working definition that provided more structure to my thinking. In this thesis I use a definition of culture from Hall, Battani, & Neitz (2003) as:

(1) ideas, knowledge (correct, wrong, or unverifiable belief), and recipes for doing things; (2) humanly fabricated tools (such as shovels, sewing machines, cameras, and computers); and (3) the products of social action that may be drawn upon in the further conduct of social life (a dish of curry, a television set, a photograph, or a high-speed train, for example). (p.7)

This definition is sufficiently specific to be able to know what parts of culture to look for whilst simultaneously remaining broad enough to encompass a culture’s worldview and epistemology. For the purposes of this research, I have broken down culture into two main parts: the symbolic (number one above) and the material (numbers two and three), with the understanding that power mediates the way culture is expressed and enacted. These

categories guide us to understand culture as something that is complex and reflected in what people create, do, say, and think as well as their relation to power.

Whilst it is valuable to have an understanding of the concept of culture, what I or other scholars think about culture is not the focus of this research. What I am interested in is exploring how schools construct culture and how Pākehā teachers understand and enact culture in their classrooms. It is the day-to-day, lived experience of the notion of culture that drives this research.

Meeting Kate

I headed out to Pīwakawaka Primary to meet with Kate (a pseudonym) to see if she would be interested in participating in my study. I walked into the school office where I let the receptionist know I had a meeting with Kate. The receptionist walked away and my eyes followed her down the hall. Kate was in a staff meeting in the school library with the principal and others. Kate followed the receptionist down the hall and I greeted her. After we shook hands and she led me outside so we could walk to her classroom. She had just returned from the between term break and was preparing for her students to return the following week.

In her classroom the chairs were up on the tables and a small stack of papers was scattered around where she was sitting. She took a stool off the table and invited me to sit down next to her. Our words echoed, with only two of us in this large space. Sitting at the adjoining corners of a long rectangular table, we began our conversation. I introduced myself, leading with my experience in education, making sure that she knew I taught and led in schools with cultural and economic diversity. I felt like this would put her at ease and grant me a sort of insider status, since I too know what it takes to be a teacher, albeit in a different country. I started to bridge the gap between my experience and research with 'I have always wondered how schools could better serve students of different cultures'. Then I start to talk about my present research of looking at the role of schools in shaping Pākehā teachers' view of culture and cultural identity.

Throughout my explanation she was nodding her head in agreement and smiling. I tell her what participating in this study would be like for her (me in her class 1 day a week for 10 weeks and two interviews). Kate let me know that the principal of the school had already let her know about the research, and after hearing it from me she was absolutely sure she wanted

to take part. School was starting the next week and she thought that beginning at the start of the term was a good idea. And with that, I was ready to start my fieldwork.

Meeting Mary

I met with Mary the second week of the term. She was the only year 5/6 teacher that had responded to my email. She was interested in meeting and learning more about my research and a date and time to meet was scheduled. I waited for her in the school office just after school got out. The office was busy: students gathered there to walk to a local after school program, parents asked the receptionists questions about this and that, teachers walked through purposefully-clearly on their way somewhere. I was the only one sitting, trying the best I could to keep out of the way. On the wall behind me were pictures of the staff. I craned my neck around to see if I could find a picture of Mary so I would recognise her when she came in the office. I turned around to a sea of Pākehā faces. There were a few brown people, and a few men but most of what I saw were Pākehā women. This is very much in line with what is known about the demographics of New Zealand's teaching force (Education Counts, 2022). As Tuī is a large school, there were many staff members to look through. How was this organised? By name or by year level taught? Ah, I see it's organised by year level. My eyes search for the year 5/6 teachers and then I see Mary. Happy with the picture of her I had in my head, I turned back around and continued waiting.

I heard Mary before I saw her. From around the corner, her voice carried down the corridor "Yeah, I'm waiting to meet with a PhD student from Vic". She walked into the office and sat down, finishing up her chat with the other teacher. I raised my eyes and smiled at her. Maybe she didn't see me, but at this point I was the only other person left in the office. She looked just like she did in the picture, though with slightly longer hair. She kept on talking to the other teacher. It made me wonder what she thought a PhD student looked like. *Apparently not like me.* Was it my age? My skin tone? My size? My gender? The other teacher went off and I stood up "Mary?" I asked "Hi, my name is Avery, nice to meet you" I said as I walked over to greet her.

After exchanging pleasantries, she walked me out of the office and over to her classroom. Because this school is in a rich neighbourhood, I was struck by how very ordinary the classroom looked. Desk and chairs neatly arranged and students' work covered the walls. There was a piano next to Mary's desk and she told me I could use the piano stool as she

walked around behind her kidney-shaped desk table. The springs in the stool had given up long before my arrival which gave the seat its convex shape. I brought the stool over and sat down across the table from her and began our conversation. I told her about my experience in education, and my interest in exploring how race and culture often impact outcomes in education. She went on to tell me about how she had spent time in London teaching at a “even lower than a decile one school” and how she had taught at a decile one school in Auckland. In the middle of our conversation another teacher came in to return to her some equipment they had borrowed, these little bee robots that can be used to teach kids coding. She wanted the school to purchase more of them, and how the six of them she was holding in her hand cost \$1,500. This led her to show me another gadget she had, a make it box where students could also learn to code and conduct electricity- no mention of the price of this one. The classroom itself may not look that much different than Pīwakawaka primary except for students access to resources.

We went on talking and she told me about how she has started looking at issues of bias in the class because the previous term, the students completed a project looking at gender bias and stereotypes. This term, she told me, she was going to do a project more generally about stereotypes. I went over the consent forms with her and explained what being part of my research would entail. Before we parted, she commented that it didn’t really seem like being part of my research would take much from her except the two interviews, which left me feeling confident that she would consider taking part in my study. I left her with the consent forms and awaited her decision. Two weeks later she agreed, and we negotiated a start date.

Teacher Interviews

As part of this research I undertook two semi-formal interviews for each teacher. I used an interview schedule, but I also allowed for follow up questions and organic conversation to develop. One of the interviews took place earlier on in the study and the other closer to the end. The interviews lasted about 45 minutes to an hour each and took place in the respective teachers’ classroom afterschool. The focus of the interviews were different: the first was for me to get to know the teacher better, and the second explored their identities more deeply. In my introduction in the interview schedule, teachers were given the option to not answer questions for any reason. Neither of the teachers refused to answer any the questions, even though some of the questions were quite personal, especially when it came to Pākehā identity.

Both teachers spoke easily, but I could tell at times they were being careful with what they said, like they didn't want to say the wrong thing. Sometimes this resulted in me asking the same questions in a different way, or just moving on. Building rapport with each of the teachers was important. I interviewed Mary the first week of the study and reflecting back I see this was a mistake. We had hardly gotten to know each other and I'm sure that it impacted what she felt comfortable saying to me. Her responses to the questions seemed a bit more stunted and I didn't know her well enough to know what to ask to further her responses. With Kate, from the moment I met her, she was like an open book and very willing to share her experiences with me.

There was one question in the second interview that was hard for me to ask the teachers. It had to do with if they felt their Pākehā identity influenced them as teachers. The answers to that question could have been very telling had I it, but I didn't. I changed the question at the last minute before the interview because I was concerned that the teacher would take it the wrong way. I changed the question to make it more palatable. Did they ever feel they were stereotyped as Pākehā teachers? Did they ever feel like they had to leave parts of themselves out of the classrooms? In hindsight I wish I would have asked the original question. As I reflect on why I did this, two issues connected with difficulties of doing ethnographic work come to mind. First, being a person of colour, I have been socialised to protect the emotions of White people- and not push on them in ways that may make them uncomfortable. It's self-preservation in a racist society to act this way, and it is part of my conditioning, so I don't blame myself for it, but I do acknowledge that this is part of what happened. As an ethnographer, I didn't want my participants to get offended and either end the interview or leave the study. I had just met them and was asking them some potentially sensitive questions.

Getting Student and Parent Consents

On my first day at both schools, the teachers introduced me during their morning meeting where role was taken, and the business of the day discussed. I introduced myself and told the students that I was going to be looking at how they learned about culture and cultural identity in their class and at this school. I told them that their teacher had agreed to be part of the study so I would be in their class, watching her for the next ten weeks. I explained that I was curious about what they thought about culture and cultural identity too, and that I invited them to take part in the study. I passed out consent forms and went over it with them. I asked

that if they were interested in participating in the study for them to please sign the form. I left the forms with the students in case they wanted to think it over and sign it later.

After I received the forms from the students, I gave the students a form to take home to their parent for their consent to be a part of my research. The parental consent informed parents about the research I would be undertaking in their classroom and what would be expected of their child if they decided to allow them to participate in my study. Rather than asking for active consent from parents, I used a passive consent strategy. Only if a parent did not want their child to participate in the study were they to return the paper to me.

In obtaining consent for the student focus groups I followed a similar method. Once students were randomly selected to be part of a focus group, I went over the consent form with the student and asked them to sign it, indicating their consent. I sent home a parent consent form home with students who had agreed to participate. This form utilised active consent, and students could only participate if parents returned the signature portion. Only one student's parent indicated that they did not wish for them to participate in the focus group portion of my study.

The two different consent forms gave children and their parents options as far as the child's level of participation. It was possible for a student to be part of the classroom portion of the study but choose not to be part of the focus group, or to be part of the focus group while not being part of the classroom study. I didn't end up using student focus group data due to space limitations of the thesis.

Participant Observation

Observation is an important tool in helping the researcher more fully examine the people, situation, or phenomena under study (Patton, 2002). Because I was interested in observing the 'everydayness' of how schools functioned to shape the ways a teacher may understand culture and cultural identity, there were no specific lessons I had to observe, no particular subjects to focus on, I just had to 'be' in the classroom. I was with the class all day from morning roll call to dismissal. I went to community centres, and field days, assemblies, kapa haka practice, and cultural groups. Whatever the class did in the span of the day, I did too. Wherever they went, so did I.

Participant observation requires experiencing, enquiring, and examining of a cultural context by the researcher in the course of fieldwork (Wolcott, 2008). I went to each school one day a week and spent the entire day with the class. Many of the teachers I encountered in the staff rooms seemed flabbergasted that I would be in the class all day – they expected me to focus on part of the curriculum or another. They were not used to the holistic take I was using. Of course this may be due to how schools in New Zealand are structured, this time is for reading, this time is for writing, and this time is for Maths- teachers are used to having subjects segmented. Particularly at Tuī primary culture, it seemed, was another subject to fit into their already packed lesson plans, something discrete and separate from what they were already doing, rather than something that was always already present in everything that they did. I was interested in how culture was taught both implicitly and explicitly- what was silenced and what was voiced in the course of a typical day.

I used my experience as a teacher in the United States in an attempt to build in-roads with staff at each school. I would talk about how similar and different education in New Zealand and the US was. I tried to convey how I understood the demands of their jobs, the paperwork, the lesson planning, the emotional investment they made in their students. I asked questions of them that only another teacher would, questions that would build teacher to teacher bonds. I suppose, the time I spent in these school solidified that, in many ways, I still see myself as a teacher.

In the classrooms, when the teachers were presenting a lesson or leading a discussion with the class I was off to the side, taking notes in my field notebook. However, when students were working on an assignment or otherwise engaged in an activity I would walk around the class and engage with different students. Most often I would ask them questions about what they were doing to see what meaning they were making out of the activity, but sometimes I helped as well- trying to help them figure out the location of a buddy class in the US or helping them fold their papers correctly for a Father's Day card making project.

Students would come over to where I was sitting and start talking to me about various things: their birthday, favourite foods, what it was like in America. Sometimes it was a way to get out of working and I helped them refocus on the work, but mostly it seemed out of genuine curiosity about me. One group of boys often asked me to stay in with them at lunch and play a game of Monopoly, where I lost every time. Once, a student was practising her violin,

teaching herself how to play one of the songs for her kapa haka group and stay, and I did. We talked about how she started playing the violin, how she had learned how to play so quickly, and that she was the most advanced player in the school. These delightful exchanges weren't only fun, they built rapport with the students so that they didn't just see me as a researcher from the university, but as a person who was interested in them and what they had to say.

Data Analysis

The field notes, interviews, and documents that I collected provided me a plethora of data to work through. The biggest challenge for me initially was just getting started. The amount of information I had accumulated was overwhelming. How or where do I start? I returned to my research questions to help ground my analysis. With that I was able to move from data overload to beginning my analysis.

Although my study examines culture, one of the major findings of my research is that culture in New Zealand is racialised, and function as a sorting mechanism for power and privilege. As such it was appropriate that I adopted a Critical Race Methodology for analysing these data. Critical Race methodology utilises the following principles:

- The interwovenness of race and racism with other forms of subordination- Focuses on the role race and racism have on the lives of marginalized peoples. CRT takes the position that racism is an endemic, permanent structure in society. Crucial to this examination is the way race interacts with other forms of subordination.
 - The challenge to dominant ideology- disputes the notions of colour-blindness, meritocracy, objectivity, race neutrality, and equal opportunity and seeks to expose the way these concepts mask White supremacy.
 - The commitment to social justice- CRT supports research that grapples with the eradication of racism, sexism, and poverty while giving power to marginalised groups
 - The centrality of experiential knowledge- centring on the lived experiences of marginalized people, CRT gives voice to stories, narratives, biographies, family histories etc... that have been delegitimised in dominant culture.
 - The transdisciplinary perspective- CRT insists that analysis of race and racism be contextualized within historical and present-day circumstances. By drawing from a variety of disciplines, CRT informs more holistic awareness of issues faced by marginalised peoples.
- (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002 pp 25-27)

I started with the teacher interviews which I transcribed and read through several times. Once I was confident I had grasped the narrative, I manually coded the interviews for themes following my first round of coding. I then hand coded transcripts again using looking for content that were consistent with a Critical Race Methodology (Saldaña, 2021). The themes that came from both of these rounds of coding were compared for similarities and merged where appropriate. I wrote the stories of the interviews in a way that was an accurate reflection of my experiences and gave information to contextualize their answers. What I presented in the discussion section is the compendium of my analysis of the teachers' responses.

I undertook a similar process for the field notes. I read through my notebooks and research reflections several times before I started coding to make sure the world of the schools and classrooms were close in mind. For each school I once again completed a round of Initial Coding and Content Coding (Saldaña, 2021). As I went through this process, I also selected incidents that highlighted one or several of the themes that came out of the analysis. These 'moments of encounter' "provide opportunities for scrutiny of their larger social implications." (Saldaña, 2018 p. 70). From there I wrote up the vignettes contextualising the events and highlighting the themes from the analysis. My role as researcher was to provide "written responsive resistance" (Saldaña, 2018 p. 70) to the silences and blind spots that I observed.

Another piece of data I looked at was *Ka Hikitia*, New Zealand's Māori education strategy. I analysed it by looking at how it constructed ideas about culture and through a CRT lens. The themes that emerged compared and merged where there was enough overlap to make it appropriate. As storytelling is an important aspect of my research, I pondered how I was going to make my findings of *Ka Hikitia* into a coherent narrative. After talking with my brilliant supervisor, I got the idea of creating a story where I 'interviewed' the document. The document is personified by the Minister of Education in a later chapter. The Minister is a composite character based in fact but a work of fiction. This counter storytelling is used to "render visible the structures, mechanisms, and ideologies in systems that maintain White domination and oppression." (Cook, 2021 p. 252). This method of counter storytelling is well established and has been used by various scholar of CRT (Cook, 2021). Although I personified the document and fictionalized the scenario, I pulled direct quotes from *Ka Hikitia* and the current Education Minister and used them in this chapter.

Unapologetic Storytelling

Stories are powerful things. Thomas King (2003) tells us, “The truth about stories is that is that’s all we are” (p. 2). We are made up of stories just like the universe is made up of stars. Constellations of stories help us to navigate our way in this world. They help us know who we are and understand our place in the world. The stories that we live by allow us to plot our course based on the discursive maps that others have left for us. Stories allow us to understand our past and envisage our future. Far from being neutral, stories teach us how to see the world in particular ways, leaving the stamp of the worldview they are told form in our minds. In the words of Delgado (1989), “stories structure reality.” (p 2415).

I follow in the tradition of those who have come before me noting that “Oppressed groups have known instinctively that stories are an essential tool to their own survival and liberation.” (Delgado 1989, p. 2436). Indeed, African Americans have a long known and utilized the power of storytelling (see Bell, 1987, 1992, 1996; Delgado 1989; Lawrence, 1992, Dixon, 2016b). Black women in particular have a unique relationship to storytelling, using their personal experiences as way to convey lessons and truths (Collins, 2000).

Bell (1995) one of the foremost scholars of Critical Race Theory empowers us to use storytelling, narrative, allegory, and generally “be unapologetic in our use of creativity” (p. 899). This unapologetic use of creativity coupled with multiple sets of data is congruent with what has been termed Critical Race Ethnography. As conceptualized by Duncan (2016) scholars who use Critical Race Ethnography are known for “bringing to bear on our work data from different sources, for example, sociolinguistic, interview, observational, statistical, documentary, and so forth, to provide stronger warrants for or even more plausible alternatives to the claims that result from our inquiries.” (p.79). Thus, drawing on data from different sources bolsters the validity and credibility of my claims.

I employ a kind of storytelling known as a ‘counterstory’. Used commonly in CRT scholarship counter storytelling works to expose, analyse, and challenge the often taken for granted majoritarian stories (Solórzano & Yasso 2016; Dixon & Rosseau Anderson, 2016b; Dixon, Buras, & Jeffers, 2015; Dixon & Dodo-Seriki, 2014; DeCuir & Dixon, 2004) . Ladson-Billings (2013) tells us,

Despite what story is presented to the public, the ‘counterstory’ is a contrasting story that describes the story from a different vantage point. The ability to tell that story is

important not just as a defense strategy but also as a way to unmoor people from received truths so that they might consider alternatives. (p. 42) In Ladson-Billings terms, I consider the counter story a means of unmooring us from the system of White supremacy. I agree with Delgado (1989) when he asserts that counter stories

...open new windows into reality, showing us that there are possibilities for life other than the ones we live.” (p. 2414). Counter stories are not just depictions of events that have happened, or events that very well could happen, they break us free of our confines and allow us to dream up a new reality.

By centring the experiential knowledge of people of colour counter stories work to bring awareness to and interrupt stories that make White racial privilege seem natural and unavoidable. The benefits of counter storytelling include:

- (a) build[ing] community among those at the margins of society by putting a human and familiar face to educational theory and practice
 - (b) challeng[ing] the perceived wisdom of those at society’s center by providing a context to understand and transform established belief systems
 - (c) open[ing] new windows into the reality of those at the margins of society by showing possibilities beyond the ones they live and demonstrating that they are not alone in their position, and
 - (d) teach[ing] others that by combining elements from both the story and the current reality, one can construct another world that is richer than either the story or the reality alone.
- (Solórzano & Yasso 2016 p.36)

My take on storytelling resonates with a premise shared within Dixon’s (2005) Jazz research methodology; doing what is ‘correct’ and doing what is ‘right’. She shares: My primary jazz professor, Clarinetist Alvin Batiste, spoke frequently about the contradiction in traditional conceptions of Western music theory between what is often “correct” theoretically and “right” musically. Thus, the task of the jazz musician is to understand music theory, but to know when to play music “right.” (p. 108)

I see my work as the researcher/storyteller to strike a balance between Western notions of

what is theoretically ‘correct’ and what is ‘right’ based on my experience as a Black woman. Critical Race scholars then need to have a strong theoretical underpinning but also know how to express work creatively, unbound from White norms, and how to write the research ‘right’. As my dear friend and PhD colleague Hine Funaki reminds us, “These stories are not here for your consumption, they are here to evoke change.” (Conference 10/23/2019). It is the ability of these stories to create change in praxis that is the ultimate measure of their success. My use of unapologetic storytelling in this thesis is meant to snap us out of complacency and spur us to action.

Now that I have made clear the methodology I used to put together this work, let me take you through this research journey. I begin with a fictional CRT counter story the envisions what *Ka Hikitia*, the Māori education strategy, would say, if I could interview it.

Chapter Three:

They Are Still There-A Counterstory

It's still happening and what is it? Is it this deeply inherent racism? Culturalism? Hatred? Or the need to feel like they have dominion? Like they deserve dominion? Why aren't we included as human? We are still being excluded. It's still there. Those same people that moved us are still there. The same people that signed off and drove us, forced us out of the South into Tulsa, they are still there.

-Joy Harjo, Creek Nation (Tippett, 2021)

The damn bus is cancelled again. Good thing I left early. The weather is bad, and I don't want to be late to my meeting today. It's the kind of Wellington morning where you can actually see the wind as it carries waves of rain crashing into you. I can feel the cold creeping up my legs from the now soaked bottoms of my pants. I turn my back to the wind and seek refuge deeper in the bus shelter. Of course the bus is packed, and I can feel the pangs of claustrophobia start to emanate from my stomach. The air is damp and heavy with all of us breathing. The bus lets out a mechanical roar as it lurches back into the flow of traffic. And so I ride like this, bobbing and weaving with the motion of the bus toward my destination- the Central Business District. I'm going there to meet Colin Whiteman, a senior official at the Ministry of Education. He offered to meet with me after I reached out to him with some questions I had in relation to my study. He seemed like a nice guy on email. He used more than the New Zealand business standard Māori greeting and sign off, so maybe he is more with it than other Pākehā I've talked with.

I don't know this part of town very well and start to perk up and pay more attention on these unfamiliar streets. The buildings on Willis Street¹ start to sprout taller and I can tell I'm in the CBD. Familiar, expensive retailer names fill the windows of shops as I go by. When we drive along Lambton Quay², I know that I am getting close. When the Beehive comes into view, I know I've arrived. I step off the bus into the cutting rain and begin to make my way to the Ministry of Education. The people down here in the CBD are all in a rush to get to wherever

¹ Willis Street is named after Arthur Willis, founder of the New Zealand Company. The New Zealand company was founded in England with the express intent of profiting from the colonisation of New Zealand.

² Lambton Quay is named after John Lambton, 1st Earl of Durham, first Chairman of Directors for the New Zealand Company

they are going. Expensive suits and dresses peak from the edges of raincoats. The way they walk, even in such rain, lets you know that they think they are important: chest out, head up, eyes bright, a smile hiding just beneath their lips. It's like they think they own the place, and in some very real ways, they do. They are businesspeople, politicians, lawyers, and public servants — the people whose interests steer the nation. And they are mostly White. Occasionally a Brown or Black person breaks up the monotony, but not for long. Skin colour notwithstanding, the colours here are muted — beige and navy and black under a grey leaden sky.

Walking up the sidewalk I see the building the Ministry is housed in. It's not the tallest or flashiest, but it has a certain late modern sensibility to it. I can imagine how it would shine on a sunny day, but today it just looks slick. White and black alternate all the way to the top of the building, with white floors containing the black glass. The rounded corners of the building are unusual — it is the lack of sharpness that makes this place stand out. It looks like what people in the 1980's thought the future would look like, all bulbous and round. As I approach the doors, I see the words 'Lifting aspiration and raising educational achievement **for every New Zealander**' imprinted across the entrance windows, and I know I am in the right place. I walk past the welcome desk and head directly for the lift. I'm meeting Colin on the 12th floor. The ding of the lift catches my attention and I spin my head back around and walk into the lift. I take a few deep breaths to ground myself as I ascend the many floors to Colin's office. When the lift stops, I disembark and walk to the desk set out prominently in front. I introduce myself and say that I'm here to meet Colin Whiteman. The woman behind the desk taps on her phone and informs Colin of my arrival. "He will be out to meet you in a moment" she says, and I take a seat on one of the benches.

I see him approaching from my left — a middle-aged Pākehā guy with reddish hair slicked to one side with a wave. He's wearing navy dress pants and a striped light blue shirt, no tie. He's got a swift gait and a serious face, but he smiles when I catch his eye. He looks so familiar. Maybe I've seen him somewhere before? Maybe not. He could just have one of those faces. But I swear I've seen him somewhere before. I stand up and stick out my hand as he approaches. We shake hands as he says, "Kia ora" in a real easy way. "Kia ora Mr. Whiteman", I say. "Colin, call me Colin" he replies. "Okay, Colin" I say.

We walk down the hallway to a conference room. There is water set out in a pitcher on a long table. "Would you like some tea?" he asks. I was just now starting to warm up from the

blustery weather outside so tea did sound delightful. “Yes, I would. Do you have any herbal tea?” I enquire. Colin pulls out a wooden box filled with a variety of teas. I choose a peppermint. He goes off for a moment and comes back, with a tea in each hand. He places my tea on the table and then sits down directly across from me. “So, tell me about your research. You told me a little bit about it in your email, but I would like to know more.” That’s always a loaded question for me. My research makes Pākehā uncomfortable. People are either really into my work or put off by it, there is no in-between. I didn’t want to make him too uncomfortable from the start. White people get freaked out, especially those with big offices, when they are talking about race or culture or colonisation. I would have to ease him into it.

“I’m looking at how schools shape Pākehā teachers’ views of culture. I’m curious as to what schools can do to help teachers better understand culture, both that of their students and their own. Obviously, I believe that the Ministry plays a role in all of this too as the entity that gives directions to schools. I’m trying to see if there is a through line from Ministry to schools to teachers.”

“Interesting question”, Colin said. There he was, smiling again. This smile was different though, like fake sugar, it carried bitterness under the concocted sweetness. His eyes narrowed as if he was putting me in his sights. “Is that an American accent I detect there? What brings you all the way to New Zealand?” he quizzed. There it is, I thought. Those questions let me know I hit a nerve. Implied in that question is a warning. Like, *how dare you come out here and study New Zealand when America is so much more racist. Back off.* Whiteness believes it is unseeable, unknowable. It works so hard to blind us to its very existence. I am at a decision point in the conversation, do I continue to talk about myself and the reasons I have chosen this research, or do I go for flattery? As my mama always used to say ‘you get more flies with honey than vinegar, so flattery it is. “Yes, it is. Good ear! I’m from the Seattle area and before that, from California. You know, I wanted to come to New Zealand because it has such a good reputation. I had heard such nice things about the way the education system worked, and how it included Māori culture and language. I just really thought I could learn a lot from the how New Zealand does things.”

The tension faded from Colin’s lips and his smile started to relax. I had appeased his ego for the time being. “So what kind of questions do you have for me today?” he asked.

“As you can guess from the title of my project, we are going to be talking a lot about culture, Colin”. I let out a small laugh and he followed suit. “Ask away”, he said. *Good, he’s feeling more comfortable now.* “Tell me about *Ka Hikitia*, the Māori education strategy.” I enquired.

His eyes lit up as he began, “*Ka Hikitia*, or to step up, lift up, or lengthen one’s stride is the Ministry’s strategy to better support Māori student success. We know the educational system is under-serving certain groups of students and we want to change that. We know that too many Māori students are getting left behind, disengaging from school and not doing what we know they are capable of. The negative impact of this ripples out from the student to their whānau, community and New Zealand as a whole.” (MoE, 2013)

I know administrative speak and the way it tries to smooth out rough edges. But two phrases bothered me: ‘getting left behind’ and ‘disengaging’. Someone can only be ‘left behind’, if you leave them. The word ‘disengaging’ carries with it the connotation of choice, as if students were choosing to leave school. I index this and move on. Maybe I’ll come back to it later. Now I just need him to keep talking. “Sounds, like an interesting initiative. How are you approaching this?” I ask in administrative speak. I know how to speak the language.

“*Ka Hikitia*’s focus is to make education more reflective of Māori students’ values, identity, language, and culture. We know that Māori students do much better when these are included in their education. To accomplish this goal we are looking to improve to key areas: provision, leadership, teaching and learning, supported by effective governance and getting strong engagement and contribution from parents, whānau, hapū, iwi, Māori organisations, communities and businesses” Colin responds. Through this collaboration Māori will be able to meet their potential (MoE, 2013).

“That’s a really big goal. Who is the main audience?” I ask.

“It’s meant to guide how education professionals, government departments, education sector agencies, providers of professional learning and development, education associations, Māori language organisations, school boards, communities and businesses work together to support Māori educational success. The audience that *Ka Hikitia* has the greatest influence over is those in the education sector, particularly teachers and principals who are subject to the Ministry’s policies.” he continues.

I had forgotten that I had brought a copy of *Ka Hikitia* with me. I reached into my bag and brought it out; brightly coloured sticky notes protruded from the beat-up edges. I knew that

this document served several purposes. It was: a strategy, an action plan, an official government communication, as well as a story that contributes to existing discourse about culture. It was a standard document as Ministry documents go, professionally produced with eye-catching fonts and bright colours. A graphic was produced specifically for this initiative, a triangle with three koru nested inside and poutama ascending and exiting the triangle from the left most corner. In the document, text boxes had been used to highlight particular messages in the text with diagrams illustrating important aspects of the strategy. There were many pictures of tamariki and rangatahi engaged in activities one would normally see at a school e.g. reading, writing, playing).

“Looks like a well-used copy!” Colin jokes. I laugh with a mix of pride and embarrassment at the state of my copy of the document. “Indeed, it’s like my bible as I try to figure out how the Ministry understands culture. Let me ask you Colin, how do you think the Ministry sees culture? Of course, I have my own ideas, but I want to hear what you have to say first.” I asked.

“Now I’m curious” says Colin raising his left eyebrow a bit as he says this.

“I’ll tell you all about what I think later, but you go first” I said, giving him a little smile.

“Okay,” he says, slightly shifting in his seat. “I would say that culture is what makes a group of people unique. Things like their customs, traditions, values, family structure, language, symbols... you know stuff like that.” It was striking how hard he had to work and how careful he was in saying these words. It was almost as if he feared that, where he to say the ‘wrong’ thing, he would start to unravel. He had been so confident before, self-assured. It was as if answering this question left him a bit shaken.

“Yes, I understand what you are saying.” I said, as I opened up my copy of *Ka Hikitia* and started examining it for examples of the way he had answered. “Here, I can see that there is a karakia to introduce the document, and a pepeha from the artist who designed the logo.”

Colin responds, “There is a closing karakia too. You know these karakia were specially written for *Ka Hikitia*. They are very meaningful for this work, as well as the logo. The logo was commissioned by an artist to create a design that incorporated meaningful symbols from Māori culture. The triangle represents a mountain that must be climbed to attain success, the koru represents the strategies that must be employed to reach the goal, and the Poutama is

meant to signify progressive development and the quest to reach potential (MoE, 2013). We are quite proud of that logo.”

I could see his pride through his self-congratulatory smile. I move on. “I see. So, the name *Ka Hikitia* is conceptually linked to the logo through the Poutama. Clever.”, I replied. I think for a moment and flip through some pages. “One of the other ways I see your understanding of culture reflected in this document is in a few of the pictures where it appears that a female Māori student is engaged in a weaving activity with a female Pākehā teacher. It looks like the student is showing her teacher how to weave.”

“We thought that was important to include since weaving is such an important part of Māori culture” he explains.

“I noticed in reading *Ka Hikitia* that family and extended family are brought up often. You said in the beginning that family structures are part of culture. Care to say more about that?” I ask.

“Sure. We know that Māori conceptions of family are different from those of Pākehā. We understand that Māori children and students are connected to whānau and should not be viewed or treated as separate, isolated, or disconnected (MoE, 2013 p. 17) We make a point to refer often to the contributions of family, whānau, hapū, iwi, and community to show the different view of family connections and relationships Māori have. *Ka Hikitia* recognises that Māori have a wide circle of relationships and supports that have an impact on their lives. Māori have the ability to reach their full potential when there is strong engagement with education.”

That last part seemed suspect to me. It’s like he’s saying that part of the reason Māori haven’t been able to excel in education is because their families are not engaged. That connected to something else I had been noticing. What was all this talk of Māori potential? He had already said that several times in the conversation. There was no need to convince me of that; it was more like he needed to keep saying it over and over to convince himself. All of this reeked of a deficit mindset cloaked in encouraging words.

“That reminds me of something I read in *Ka Hikitia*, the Māori potential approach. Can you explain that?” It’s not that I didn’t know what it was; I wanted him to explain it.

“The Māori potential approach comes from the Ministry’s belief that every Māori student has the potential to make a valuable social, cultural and economic contribution to the well-being

of their whānau, hapū, iwi and community and to New Zealand as a whole (MoE, 2013 p.15). Some educators don't hold high expectations for Māori, and that can really be detrimental to their learning. We know that we may have to take on the beliefs and stereotypes that some of those in the education sector hold. The focus is really on helping Māori realise their potential and distinctiveness whilst we tailor education to meet their needs."

"You mean racism, right? When you say beliefs and stereotypes, you are really talking about racism?" I ask.

"I don't find the term racism particularly useful. It puts up a barrier to people engaging constructively, when actually you want people to step out of their comfort zone a little bit and create a space where they say I will reflect on my own views, my own practice and maybe I am wrong, but simplistic phrases that get peoples' backs up actually discourage them from engaging in that kind of debate" (O'Brien, 2021 5:21).

"But it's what it is", I say matter-of-factly.

"Look, cultural norms change. Some behaviour that is racist was acceptable thirty or forty years ago and is no longer acceptable now and that's a great thing. But we have to accept that there are people who were raised in that culture thirty or forty years ago and we have to bring them on a journey. We have to do that in a way that builds them up rather than tears them down." (O'Brien, 2021 6:36)

"So you are more interested in protecting the feelings of White people than dealing with racism?" I observe.

"I am committed to dealing with that, but we've got to do that in a way that brings people along. There is no point in getting people's backs up and getting them to shut off from the debate." (O'Brien, 2021 7:16)

He had made it clear what his position was, so I shift the conversation slightly, "I also see that there is some te reo Māori used throughout the document."

"Oh yes. Both of the karakia are in Māori and then in English. We have also included a glossary of Māori words at the back for anybody who may not know what certain Māori words mean."

I flip to the back of *Ka Hikitia* and look at the glossary. There are a few words and their translations listed: *whānau*, *hapū*, *iwi*, *kaitiaki*, *te ao Māori*. “I know that the Ministry is putting a lot of focus on *te reo Māori* in *Ka Hikitia*” I add.

“That’s right. It’s the first area of focus in the strategy. Māori language is the foundation of Māori culture and identity (MoE, 2013p. 28). It supports students’ identity, language, and culture. It helps Māori students realise their unique potential to succeed as Māori. We are also looking to support Māori with intergenerational transmission and the survival of the language.”

Oh, that’s rich I think. Now they want to talk about the survival of the language when they were the ones responsible for so much of its loss. Education played a vital role in the decimation of *te reo*. “English Only” educational policies gave funding only to the schools that used English as the language of instruction. Many educators of the time believed that speaking *te reo* was getting in the way of students learning English. Consequently, the use of *te reo Māori* by students was subject to harsh punishment. Māori children literally had the language beaten out of them (Simon & Smith, 2001).

I must have gotten lost in that thought because then Colin continues, “Māori language in education is critical for the Crown to meet its Treaty obligations to strengthen and protect the Māori language.” (p. 27).

“Okay, yes the Treaty. How does the Ministry see their work in relation to the Treaty?” I ask.

“Well *Ka Hikitia*...gives expression to how the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi ... are applied in education (p. 13). We want to make sure that Māori are considered fairly in the way we develop policies and funding. Māori success is the joint responsibility of the Crown and Māori so collaboration and productive partnerships are essential.”

This guy is good, I think to myself. He’s smooth and practised with his words. Confident. Part of me wants to believe him, believe the Ministry. It would go down so easily. But that belief would come at the price of my own distinct awareness as a Black American woman living in Aotearoa. It would come at the expense of forgetting everything I have learned about Aotearoa’s history in the short time I have lived here. I would have to buy into the ‘consensual hallucination’ (Mills, 1997, p. x) of Whiteness, have to stop asking the questions that are begging to be asked so that things could be ‘easy’. But I don’t get to do things easily. My ancestors did not survive the middle passage and being treated like animals so I could sit

here with this White man and just accept what he says. Māori didn't get to do things easily either. Treaties and war and lies and death at the hands of colonists were certainly not easy. I was presented with a neatly wrapped package that I was going to have to tear open. I had had enough of holding back. A tingle of recognition started to come to me, *Where do I know you from Colin?*

“And where does the Crown stand on Te Tiriti?” I ask. I knew with that question the tone of the interview would turn, but I was ready for it.

Colin looks a bit taken aback by the question. He takes a sip of lukewarm tea and looks eyes with me. He says, “Te Tiriti is a very important document and the Crown, of course, takes it into consideration when we are developing our priorities and policies.”

So I begin - “Beyond being a grandiose claim that ‘*Ka Hikitia* gives expression to how the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi are applied in education’, this statement serves to give credence to the Crown’s assertion that the Treaty of Waitangi, not Te Tiriti o Waitangi is the document that should be upheld. The Treaty and Te Tiriti are often conflated as the same document, with Te Tiriti being a Māori translation, but the fact of the matter is that there are significant differences between the two. In the Treaty, Māori ceded sovereignty to the Crown, but in Te Tiriti, no such promises were made. In recognising only the English version, The Treaty history is misremembered and contorted to fit the version of history settlers find the most acceptable.”

“No. No. That’s not right.” Colin says. His cheeks go from pink to red before my eyes. “New Zealand is a bicultural nation. That means that both versions of the Treaty need to be taken into account. The ‘settlers’, as you called them, have no more claim to it than Māori. We are partners and have equal responsibilities to uphold the Treaty.”

Buckle up, Colin, I thought, *here we go*. “The problematic nature of the narrative of biculturalism lies in the gap between what you say and what you do. Just writing bicultural policies does not necessarily make a nation, or school for that matter, bicultural. To be truly considered bicultural there should be an expectation of equality of outcomes for Māori and Pākehā, and that is unfortunately far from being the case. The gap between what bicultural policies proposit versus what they deliver remains vast. These policies end up preserving the unequal power relations between Māori and Pākehā (Duhn, 2007; O’Sullivan, 2007; Smits, 2014). Māori are situated as the ‘junior partner’ (O’Sullivan, 2007), being accorded certain

affordances, but not coming close to having equal power with Pākehā. *Ka Hikitia* as a document follows the same tradition.

The narrative of biculturalism works to obfuscate the brutal process of colonisation whilst it provides ideological armour against attack. The flow of power appears to be one directional, with a focus on Māori issues, without addressing how the problems with Māori education have been created by Pākehā. Never once is there a recognition of the role the Crown has played in developing an educational system whose purpose it was to produce “Brown Britons” (Belich in Simon & Smith, 2001 p. ix). There is no acknowledgement that the school system was responsible for a steep decline in te reo Māori through its implementation and punitive enforcement of English Only policies. Where is the awareness that schools have been designed for Māori underachievement just as equally as they have been designed for Pākehā overachievement? ‘Equal’ responsibility is placed on Māori for fixing the education system without it being of their creation in the first place.”

I draw the teacup to my lips; I am parched after my mini lecture.

Well and truly red now, Colin replies, “That is not the case. We are trying to move on from the past and create a better future for *every* New Zealander.”

“The problem is that you can’t move on without accountability, Colin. Until the education system owns up to the harm it has caused and continues to cause Māori, you have no credibility. The Ministry is missing a big opportunity here to make meaningful changes to the ways that it works with and for Māori.” I say.

“That’s the whole point of *Ka Hikitia*, to lift the performance of the education system and be more inclusive of Māori” Colin shoots back. I have frustrated him now. He is sitting up straight in his chair, chest out.

“Even the way you are talking about ‘including Māori’ says a lot”, I continue. “Education remains a White possession. If you have the ability to include, then you have the power. Discussion about ‘support’, ‘inclusion’, “and valuing ‘Māori culture’ are just words if it is not producing substantive change. The MoE still gets to decide what is taught and how, with the core of its power remaining untouched.”

“A White possession? Your problem is that you are making this all about race! You Americans are obsessed with race. We are just trying to help Māori get a decent education.”

“Your problem is that you are trying to avoid race. The Crown wants to be colour blind by talking about culture. What you don’t realise is that you are already privileging race by taking a settler normative stance. There is an inherent contradiction in the way it both racialises Māori whilst simultaneously seeking to deracialise the settler normative position which serves as its basis. This continues to obscure Whiteness and racialise Māori since they are constructed as deviating from the implied settler norm. So yes, it is about race as well as colonisation.”

“You can’t be serious? Whiteness? Settler normativity? Pākehā are not even mentioned in *Ka Hikitia*, it’s about Māori, not us! Throwing labels like this around is not part of a mature debate.” (O’Brien, 2021 7:25). Colin’s calm demeanour had started to crack the moment I brought up race. He is angry, which was both expected and also oddly comforting, as I find it more authentic than the veneer he had presented initially. I wonder how much more of this he can take before he ends our conversation, or his head explodes. I push on.

“But it is a White document with Māori embellishments. Although it ‘includes’ several Māori elements, the core of the document comes from a Pākehā frame. There is no radical re-imagining of what education looks like in order to provide a more balanced system of education. Māori are expected to change in order to ‘fit in’ to an educational system that has effectively functioned to keep them out. Te ao Pākehā has been kept intact through the ways in which schools and teaching remain largely the imported European standard, and culture is deployed in ways that suit Pākehā. Even the existence of *Ka Hikitia* supports the idea of Pākehā being the norm. Would there ever be such a thing as the ‘Pākehā strategy’? No, because settlers’ needs are already centred; such a thing would be redundant.” I say. For the first time in our conversation, Colin has no words.

I continue, “Perhaps the most insidious feature of the *Ka Hikitia* is the way it works to reaffirm education as a White possession in the way it seeks to define Māori. Through the process of seeking to delineate Māori and Pākehā, conceptions of Māoriness become a White possession. By setting out a ‘Māori strategy’, it is presumed that what it is to be Māori is known by The Crown, and is reducible to set of cultural positions that act as signifiers of difference. Māori are included in ways that do not challenge the status quo and are therefore acceptable to the educational system. Parts of Māori culture are appropriated piecemeal by the educational system and therefore lose their deeply-held value and connection to the culture. What is left is a checklist of being ‘culturally competent’, and Māoriness is reduced

to acts such as kapa haka, students playing with poi, and learning to speak the most basic te reo Māori. Thus, these parts of Māori culture are subsumed by the educational system and — become a White possession, devoid of the relationship and connection needed for these aspects to be transformative. To enact more than surface level changes would challenge the Crown's claim to possession of the educational system and call for a radical reinvention of the model that the education system works from."

"You seem to have already made your mind up that Whites, or what do you call it, settlers, are bad, but the Ministry is working hard to do what's best for Māori. I'm afraid there is no changing your mind." Colin now has a vein popping out on the front of his forehead. His fake smile is there no longer - all he can manage is a grimace. A few strands of his once neatly-combed hair are now strewn across his forehead. He is red-faced and offended. I have taken away the valour that his Whiteness offers him. Now I recognise him for who he truly is. The face of the benevolent coloniser has faded away and all that is left is White hot rage. Rage at his perspective being questioned, rage at his Whiteness being laid bare before him. Colin is the same man who came to New Zealand and thought he could save and civilise the savage Māori — just in a modern suit. And he isn't going to give up any power or change the way things are.

"As it appears there is no changing yours. You know Colin, you think you own the place when you really need to think about what you owe this place." Colin turns his head and lets out a disapproving grunt. I quickly drink the rest of my tea, which is cold by now, and start collecting my things. I stand and extend my hand. This was a firm handshake, one meant to display his power. I give him strong squeeze back, not to be outdone. *I suppose this is the last time they will let me in the Ministry*, I thought, grinning from ear to ear. *Oh well, this is good trouble.*

"I suppose you know your way out?" Colin says, annoyed. "I do." I reply. I look around, trying to take in the sights of this strange place as I pick up my bag and walk to the lift. I have learned an important lesson today. The faces of the coloniser may change, but the same people who established colonial forms of education all those years ago, they are still there

Chapter Four: Policy Analysis

The previous chapter highlighted some of the tensions that are present in *Ka Hikitia* when viewed from a critical perspective. The character of Colin (short for Colonizer) Whiteman exemplified the ‘standard story’ that is presented in *Ka Hikitia* and some comments of the current Minister of Education, Chris Hipkins. My character disrupted this story by presenting a counternarrative which took into account aspects of race and settler colonialism in confronting Colin. The characters may have been fictionalized but the historical, social and political context in which the story is set is very real.

This chapter will continue to analyse *Ka Hikitia* by further addressing how this document helps to represent ideas of culture within the MoE and New Zealand education at large. The beginning of the chapter explores roots of formalised education in New Zealand. The next two sections give some information about the development of and overview of *Ka Hikitia* (2013) Using the main principles of BIPOW, this analysis will articulate how *Ka Hikitia* works to represent particular ideas about culture and Whiteness.

While ostensibly delivering a strategy for Māori student success in the NZ educational system, *Ka Hikitia* also functions to define Whiteness. This is because Whiteness relies on definition of the other through which to identify itself. It's by naming what it is not that Whiteness finds its own limits. By defining Māori, Pākehā are also defining themselves. The identity Pākehā would not exist if it was not for Māori. Whiteness is a ‘relational identity, constructed in response to an Indigenous or Black ‘Other’ (Aveling, 2004; Dyer, 1988; Hall, 1992). White identity relies on the ‘Other’ to not to show them who they are, but who they are not. The ‘Other’ in which Whiteness is constructed against in this case is Māori.

There is very little reflexivity in this document, no asking for Pākehā to examine their own identity, language or cultures and the way it manifests in education. By being so intently focused on defining the ‘Other, this document serves just as much to define Pākehā as it does Māori.

Historical context

White hegemony, as well Pākehā enacting their conceptions of culture have been present through the establishment of formalised education in New Zealand.

A thirst for evangelism was one of the main reasons the first European missionaries came to New Zealand. Missionaries from the Anglican Church Missionary Society (CMS) in England believed it “...the duty highly incumbent upon every Christian to propagate the knowledge of the gospel amongst the heathen.” (as cited in May, 2005 p. 23) and that is precisely what they came to New Zealand to do. The leaders of CMS employed a powerful tool in their quest to convert Māori to Christianity, they created schools to educate children. By targeting children the CMS was achieving two goals: swaying the minds of parents through their children and creating a new generation of Christians in the children they educated (May, 2005).

Beyond converting Māori to Christianity, another motive of the missionary schools became that of ‘civilising’ Māori, or assimilating Māori to European ways, which were assumed by the European missionaries and settlers to be superior (Bell, 2017). Naepi and Leenen-Young (2021) so eloquently point out that “[c]olonizers were convinced of the gift of colonization” (p. 23) and through their self-aggrandized notions of rightness, wanted to spread it to New Zealand.

Though English was taught in mission schools, at least initially, Māori was also spoken (Durie, 1998). This was in service converting the Māori to Christianity (Durie, 1998). Many of the first missionaries created lessons and designed supporting materials in Māori. But this bilingualism of the early missionary schools was not to last.

In 1847, the Education Ordinance was enacted by then Governor, George Grey. This ordinance was used to provide funding to mission schools, granted they met certain requirements determined by the ordinance (Barrington, 2008). One such requirement that the government placed on schools was that instruction take place in English. It was believed that students speaking Māori was an impediment to them becoming fluent in the English language (Barrington, 2008). This was the first of several assimilationist policies aimed at eliminating te reo Māori in schools (Barrington, 2008; Simon & Smith, 2001)

With the passage of the Native Schools Act in 1867 the New Zealand government created two separate systems of public education; Native schools for educating Māori and public or board schools for children of the Pākehā settlers. This act was the beginning of government control of education in New Zealand (Barrington, 2008). As Belich explains, the ultimate

goal of Native schools was to turn Māori into “brown Britons” (Belich in Simon & Smith, 2001 p. ix). Thus, Native schools were set up to facilitate a clash of cultures in which Māori culture was to be undermined and Pākehā culture was to be extolled and adopted (Simon & Smith, 2001). As was the case with the missionaries seeking to convert the ‘heathens’ to the ways of Christianity, so too did the New Zealand government seek to evangelize the ‘superior’ culture of the Europeans. The right to self-determination, so important to Māori, had been usurped once the New Zealand government took control of the teaching of Māori children. Pākehā would determine what was and was not important for Māori children to learn (Barrington, 2008). The expectation for education of Māori reflected the racialised thinking of the time. Māori were meant to become farmers, not scholars, and this was evidenced in the kind of schooling they received (Barrington, 2008). A Pākehā controlled government prescribed a second-class education that created a cycle that both created and maintained a system of Pākehā dominance over Māori.

None of this is to say that Māori were not agentic actors in the educational process. Māori had their own system for educating children far before any Europeans reached the shores of New Zealand. Great value was placed on the education of children within Māori society (Hemara, 2000). Māori were eager to learn new skills from the European settlers and use them for their own purposes. When the government pushed to amalgamate Native and board schools, many Māori were not pleased with the government's decision to take over the schools (Simon & Smith, 2001). These schools were seen as important social institutions where Māori could have a say in the decision making for their children (Barrington, 2008; Simon & Smith, 2001; Stephenson, 2006).

The New Zealand education system was not created to be equal. It was meant to convert, civilise, and Europeanise Māori. This is the lopsided foundation that the whole of the education system was built. Education in New Zealand was created as a White space, that as intended, privileges and reproduces Whiteness. Graham Smith (2011) asserts that, “New Zealand schools are locked into a cycle of social and cultural reproduction of Pākehā culture premised on an imperialistic presumption that Pākehā defined cultural capital is the most appropriate for *all New Zealand's peoples* (emphasis in the original p. 61). An understanding of the colonialist intentions behind the construction of education in New Zealand is critical piece in analysing the current educational outcomes.

Development of *Ka Hikitia*

The current iteration of *Ka Hikitia* grew out of the first Māori education strategy that was developed in 1999. The first Māori education strategy aimed to “raise the quality of English-medium education for Māori, to support the growth of high-quality Kaupapa Māori education, and to support greater Māori involvement and authority in education.” (Berryman & Eley, 2017 pp 94-95). After having shown some growth in Māori achievement, the 1999 strategy was continued in 2005. The Ministry of Education then began the process of outlining priorities for Māori learners both internally and in consultation with iwi and other key groups in the education sector and in 2008 published *Ka Hikitia—Managing for Success: The Māori Education Strategy 2008–2012*. Because it was developed in consultation with Māori and drew on both Māori and international research, the 2008 version of *Ka Hikitia* was regarded to be built on “sound educational research and reasoning.” (Office of the Auditor General, 2013 p.21). *Ka Hikitia* called for a “transformational shift in attitudes and practice” (Office of the Auditor General, 2013 p.21) in order to improve the educational achievement of Māori students. An internal report summarises the prioritisation of te reo Māori, positive and productive relationships between Māori students and their teachers, focuses on the importance of whānau in education, resourcing for *Ka Hikitia*, and ongoing research and development in relation to this initiative (Office of the Auditor General, 2013). After a period of public consultation, *Ka Hikitia—Accelerating Success 2013–2017* was released in 2013.

Overview of *Ka Hikitia*

Ka Hikitia (MoE, 2013) is the Māori education strategy put forth by the Ministry of Education. It fits in with a suite of other strategies such as the Action Plan for Pacific Education 2020–2030 (MoE, 2020), and Te Hurihanganui (MoE, 2020b), a plan for addressing racism and inequities in the educational system, as well several others meant to address systemic inequities.

Ka Hikitia envisions an educational environment where “Māori students are enjoying and achieving education success as Māori.” (MoE, 2013 p. 13). In order to achieve these ends *Ka Hikitia* leverages quality teaching, leadership, and resources along with engagement from whānau and Māori businesses and organisations. There is a strong emphasis on the use of te reo Māori in education as a way to bolster Māori student achievement. Ultimately, *Ka Hikitia* is seen as means to reduce on-going disparities between Māori and Pākehā. Berryman and

Eley (2017) cite the following from the MoE as proof that the vision of Ka Hikitia has been realised:

All Māori students will:

- have their identity, language and culture valued and included in teaching and learning, in ways that support them to engage and achieve success;
- know their potential and feel supported to set goals and take action to achieve success;
- experience teaching and learning that is relevant, engaging, rewarding and positive, and;
- have gained the skills, knowledge and qualifications they need to achieve success in te ao (the world) Māori, New Zealand and the wider world.

(p. 94)

BIPOW and Ka Hikitia

Whiteness as Possession/Property

Settler Normativity

White Possession in education asserts settler control and dominance through ideological, social, discursive and material means. One way that White Possession appears in *Ka Hikitia* is through its settler normative stance. Settler normativity rerefers how settler ways of being, thinking, and doing that have become the unmarked but ever-present standard by which all are judged (Smith et al., 2021). The fact that there is even a ‘Māori Strategy’ speaks to whom this education system was crafted for. The bones of the NZ educational system have been passed down from its predecessor in England. As it is formulated now, *Ka Hikitia* camouflages colonial education with Māori iconography. The structure of education remains the same, only now with a hint of Māori.

Settler normativity also operates in the way *Ka Hikitia* takes for granted educational practices. There is no wild re-imagining of how to transform education so it works for Māori. It is taking the existing structure and attempting to make shifts. *Ka Hikitia* envisions a classroom, with a single teacher (most likely with a Pākehā teacher), similar aged students together, desks and chairs, content areas to be taught and assessed. This is schooling as it has been done since the settlers arrived. *Ka Hikitia* as a strategy claims it makes big changes in the way education performs for Māori, but the changes are superficial at best.

Reflection of Settler/Indigenous Power Relations

Certain words in *Ka Hikitia* illustrate the power dynamic inherent in New Zealand's educational system. As reflected in the language used, the power to decide who is included, what is taught and how remains firmly in the hands of the government. This power is signaled in the document through the language it uses in talking about the changes in strategy. One of the words that show the power imbalance between the education system and Māori is 'support'. On face value support seems like an innocuous word. To support someone is to help them. But inherent in the word support is a relationship to power. To be the one who supports is to be in the more powerful position. To be the one supported means that you were lacking something, and that something is to be provided by someone else.

Let's look at the way the MoE uses the word support in relation to Māori students and whānau. "Providing accessible, practical information is necessary to support students and their whānau to understand how the education system works, what they can expect and the best ways to influence the quality of education provision" (MoE, 2013 p. 41) This statement exemplifies the power dynamics present in the relationship between Māori and the education system. Māori need to learn how to use the educational system, to influence the educational system to provide an education for their children. Implicit in this is that if Māori knew better how education worked somehow the education outcomes would be changed. What if the best way to 'influence education provision' is to be rich and White? Māori shouldn't have to petition education to receive an equitable education. Would the MoE ever tell Pākehā parents that they need to better understand the education system? They would not need to because the system is already catered to them.

Ka Hikitia goes on to say, "Supporting iwi and Māori organisations to play a greater role in education will be an important part of implementing Ka Hikitia – Accelerating Success 2013–2017" (MoE 2013 p. 41) In this way it seems like education needs to help Māori to help themselves when in reality the system is structured to keep Māori engagement out. It may not be that iwi and Māori organisations need support but need a system of education that compliments te ao Māori. The MoE fails to adequately address how the settler normative conception of schools has created the current situation where iwi and Māori organisations have been left out. The word support is used 107 times throughout the document. That's a lot of support. The frequency with which 'support' is used through the document constructs the MoE as in possession of power, while it is Māori which must be helped.

Another example that shows the underlying power dynamics in the document is about what the MoE would like to accomplish with the vision, "...all Māori students will: have their identity, language and culture valued and included in teaching and learning in ways that support them to engage and achieve success." (MoE p.13). The use of the word 'valued' signals that certain cultures are valued and other are not. The MoE is telling those it presides over that 'you will value Māori culture' a statement that would only need to be made if the opposite were true. So, the word value in this sentence is doubly important once as a command to its workforce and next as a counter to the prevailing deficit discourse about Māori. With the use of this the term value, the MoE is attempting to leverage its power as a governmental institution to influence the people who work under their discretion.

What does it mean, in practical terms, to value another's culture? How can that be measured? Is it an internal quality or an external action? Both? Herein lies the problem with only trying to change the attitudes of educators as a means of eliminating racism. What if people who previously to the MoE statements, didn't value Māori culture recognize the err of their ways and now they truly 'think' they value Māori culture. What then? Will it change their actions? Not necessarily. Some of the most depressing research I have encountered is how unsuccessful 'diversity' and 'anti-racist' trainings are at creating change in people's behaviour (Forscher et al., 2019; Lai et al., 2016). The focus therefore must not be on changing people's thoughts but changing people's actions. This is why tangible changes, such as accountability structures, concrete deliverable practices, policy, and resource allocation are so important. People can value Māori culture all they want, unless it changes the ways institutions function, it doesn't help Māori.

'Included' is a word that also points to how power works in this document. For something to be 'included' it brought into something that already exists. It's an add on. For something to be included, the people who hold the power decide, not just what to include, but how to include it. The way things were prior to inclusion remain unchanged and now it just has some extra bits and pieces. The MoE is going to 'support them [Māori] to engage and achieve success'. What is missing is an analysis of how the existing structures in fact led to Māori disengagement and lack of success. So, it's not as if Māori need help to engage, but they need an educational system that is catered to the material and affective needs of Māori,

which is more than valuing and supporting can achieve. It's about making education a Māori normative space.

Success 'as Māori'

In her (2019) article on Tātaiako, a teaching framework geared towards Māori students that came out of *Ka Hikitia*, Hetaraka problematizes the notion of identity that the MoE evokes when it states that it wants 'Māori achieving education success as Māori'. What exactly is it to be Māori? What does that mean in this context? Who gets to decide?

One of the important principles of White possession is how it creates different categories of people: those who can own property, those that can become propertyless, and those who are property (Moreton-Robinson, 2015). In seeking to define who and how Māori are White possession constructs Māori as something that can be known and quantified, and therefore as a category of people who can be possessed. What is important here is not so much how Māori view themselves, it is their relationship to the White nation-state, how it defines them, and the set of rights they are dispensed as a kind of possession. Although Māori are a diverse group with complex identities, *Ka Hikitia* essentializes notions of culture and race into a neat package. A lot of the complexity surrounding Māori identity is collapsed into 64 pages that make up the document.

Pākehā, arguably those least equipped to understand issues of race and Indigeneity, are the ones with the most power and control in the education system. Reflecting back to categories of people in theory of White possession, Pākehā are those with the power to possess. Much of how *Ka Hikitia* is interpreted and implemented is left up to them as they make up the majority of the teaching force (Education Counts, 2022). Milne contends that

As Māori” are the most important words in the whole document [Ka Hikitia] and will be the most ignored by schools who have no understanding of what “as Māori” might look like. “As Māori” is destined to become another white space, in that it will be reinvented and seen as no different to “as Pākehā.” This is not necessarily a deliberate action on the part of principals and school leadership, but is indicative of the lack of understanding that is endemic in our system. (in Hetaraka, 2019 p. 167)

Because Pākehā have both the power to possess and the power to define, the implementation of what it means for students to enjoy success ‘as Māori’ is largely in their hands.

Further, what it means to be Māori is a subject of discussion amongst Māori themselves. There is not one single background or perspective that makes up Māoridom, and the ways Māori view themselves is necessarily varied and complex (Penetito, 2011). As highlighted by the work of Tiakiwai (in Hetaraka, 2019), who explored her identity in relation to her work on Kaupapa Māori, even those who identify as Māori struggle with what being Māori means. Given all of this how is it that the Crown can know what ‘success as Māori’ is?

Colonial Mythmaking/Fantasy of Whiteness

Deficit Discourse

The myths of colonisation are an absent presence in *Ka Hikitia*’s pages. One of the ways colonial mythmaking works is to justify settler dominance in society. Deficit discourse around Māori function to place the onus for lower educational outcomes on Māori themselves without taking into account the significant impacts of racism and colonialism. This obscures White advantage and works to make educational gaps seem normal and natural. These deficit discourses have been in existence since the arrival of settlers in New Zealand and are based in the racist ideologies that normalised colonisation. Over time deficit discourse has become more covert, and more apt to look to cultural reasons for deficiencies rather than racial ones.

The document itself is carefully worded to avoid representing dominant deficit discourse about Māori, but still ends up tacitly reinforcing these notions. ‘The Māori potential approach’ in *Ka Hikitia* means essentially what it says, that Māori students have potential to succeed and become contributing members of New Zealand society. On the surface this seems like a positive thing, however this document is responding to the pervasive narrative of Māori deficit without ever confronting it directly. By not facing the deficit discourse head-on, and being accountable for creating change, *Ka Hikitia* ends up latently reproducing this discourse.

Since no real work has gone into dismantling the myths of colonisation they are allowed to persist just below the surface. The underlying myths about Māori, which often focus on perceived deficits serve as justification for differential outcomes. In *Ka Hikitia* the MoE is attempting to treat the symptoms of an inequitable education system without attending to the

cause. Failing to critically examine the ways such discourse is still present within the educational system aides in its concealment, not it's eradication.

Productive Partnerships

Ka Hikitia prescribes “productive partnerships” (MoE, 2013 p.13) with Māori. The idea of Crown partnership with Māori comes from the Treaty of Waitangi. The common conception is that the Crown and Māori entered a partnership with each other through the signing of the Treaty, treating this history as if it is ‘settled’ Kidman (2017). However, the Treaty remains a contentious topic some one hundred and eighty years later. The Crown interprets the Treaty as Māori ceding sovereignty, but Māori interpret it as agreement that gives The Crown power over its people, whilst Māori retain their autonomy (Orange 2015; O’Sullivan 2007). When the basic terms of the agreement are contested, the premise of partnership is thrown into question.

Yet it is this tense assertion of partnership that serve as the basis of biculturalism. It is for this reason that biculturalism is recognized as a colonial myth, widely accepted, used to legitimate settler dominance, and patently untrue. O’Sullivan (2007) argues Biculturalism inherently positions Māori as the ‘junior partner’ and illustrates unequal settler/Indigenous power relationships.

Ka Hikitia describes productive partnerships as a “two-way relationship leading to and generating shared action, outcomes, and solutions. Productive partnerships are based on mutual respect, understanding, and shared aspirations.” (MoE, 2013 p. 17). I question how productive ‘partnership’ is possible if the parties involved are not perceived as equals or when one party fails to be accountable for the damage they have caused the other. What is left is a one-sided agreement that may mimic partnership but maintains rather than challenges the forces that created it.

The idea of partnerships needing to be productive can be seen as emanating from a Euro-Western worldview, built on the framework of capitalism. Western educational systems can be understood to utilise a factory model of education where students are seen as standardized products to be produced by schools (Sleeter, 2015). Freire (2000) suggests that modern schools use what he called the ‘banking model of education’ where teachers deposit information into the awaiting empty student. Both of these educational models suggest that the result of schooling should be the production of some sort of student product.

Another way of conceptualising this notion of production when it comes to settler education of Indigenous people, a colonizing view. When colonizers came to Indigenous lands one of the justifications given for declaring *terra nullius* was the fact that the land was still in a state of nature and was not being used for any Western conceptualisation of production. Without clear signs of human manipulation land was thought of as empty, that it was being wasted (Pateman, 2016). This assertion allowed colonizers to claim the land as their own. Through this right of husbandry, production was tied to ownership. Settlers see Indigenous peoples like they do the land and assert their ownership through making Indigenous people products of a colonized society. In this sense a productive partnership means that colonizers seek to make Indigenous people into property (a White Possession) and their culture into products that can be commodified.

The Racial Contract/The Settler Contract

Māori are ‘Other’

The language used in this document depicts education as a settler normative space with Māori being constructed as outside the norm. Although ‘we’ is used a few times in the document, notably in the *karakia*, in the rest of the document Māori are referred to as they/their. For example, “We know Māori students do much better when education reflects and values their identity, language and culture, and this is a central focus within Ka Hikitia”.(p. 5). This example is interesting because it contains both a ‘we’ and a ‘their’ showing how the language used in this text positions the education system and Māori. Who is the ‘we’ in this statement? Based on the context of the document the ‘we’ refers to the MoE as it is the entity responsible for the creation of this document. I also infer this to mean those working within the education sector, teachers and principals included. Whilst the ‘we’ is assumed and unnamed, ‘they’ is clearly specified- Māori students. Māori continue to be referred to as ‘they/their’ through the remainder of the document.

The use of ‘we’ appears again near the end of the document, when the MoE is focusing on its performance as an organisation in meeting the goals outlined as *Ka Hikitia*. In talking about how this strategy will be put into action the Ministry states, “Monitoring will determine if we are on track in effectively implementing Ka Hikitia- Accelerating Success 2013-2017 and where we need to make changes in our approach (p. 56)”. Again, here the ‘we’ refers to the MoE.

Ka Hikitia perpetuates a view of culture as belonging to racialised ‘Others’. This situates Pākehā as centre, the unstated norm, from which those who possess culture deviate. The way language is used in the document signals White ownership. Take for example the how *Ka Hikitia* presents that Māori should be ‘included’ in education. Embedded in this notion is the unequal power dynamics between Māori and Pākehā. Pākehā control education if they have the power to decide who will be ‘included’ and conversely, who will be excluded. Indeed, inclusion can be seen as a strategy to maintain power in education through the illusion of change, whilst the underlying structures in education remain fundamentally unchanged with Pākehā standards and worldviews continuing as the norm. By making only surface level changes to the education system, the colonial roots of education remain unchallenged.

The language used in this document depicts education as a settler normative space with Māori on the outside who must be supported and included. The use of language in this document relays that education is a Pākehā institution.

Pākehā Get to Stay Comfortable

One of the hallmarks of Whiteness is the ability to stay comfortable (McIntosh, 1995). The physical and social spaces Whites inhabit are often made to suit their material and affective needs. Whites can choose to be in spaces with other Whites. When it comes to teachers, Pākehā are able to teach in ways that prioritize their comfort, teach in schools that are the colonial exports of their ancestors, and function within the Pākehā paradigm of what education is. Whites are rarely pushed outside their racial comfort zone.

The comfort of Whites is maintained in *Ka Hikitia* as it asks for little critical reflection or accountability from Pākehā. The part of the text that gets the closest to this is when it states, “...responding to this requires that all stakeholders develop a greater understanding of their own, language, identity, and culture and the ways in which they shape their lives.” (MoE, 2013 p. 17) I wonder about the usefulness of this when most Pākehā are unable to even recognize their culture due to it being normalised and taken for granted. To those who inhabit White identities, Whiteness seems invisible (Ahmed, 2007).

In New Zealand discourse around the harmonious nature of settler and Indigenous relations are prominent, which allows Pākehā not to have had to face the difficult and violent history of colonisation of New Zealand. This discourse allows Pākehā to believe that the grievances of the past are settled and have little bearing on what’s happening now (MacDonald, 2019). Moreover, this approach relies on individuals focusing on their individual histories to come to

their own ‘understanding’. However, this individual approach fails to address the systemic ways that Whiteness works within schools to privilege settlers and marginalise Māori. Maintaining the comfort of settlers over the needs and rights of Māori enforces the terms of the Settler Contract.

The MoE misses an opportunity to both educate Pākehā on the ways in which the systems of settler-colonialism and Whiteness manifest in education and to hold themselves and educators accountable for transforming policies and practices that can bring about change. By stopping short of contextualising the ways settler colonialism and Whiteness have worked in conjunction to privilege Pākehā, the MoE has allowed Pākehā to escape racial distress and fails to hold themselves accountable for disparities in educational outcomes.

I am a ‘Nice White Lady’

There are only a few visual representations of Pākehā in *Ka Hikitia*, but of the ones present there is a clear theme: that of the nice White lady. She can be seen smiling as she and a Māori student gaze at work on the wall together, sitting down as another Māori student teaches her how to weave, standing as she shows another Māori student her weaving, or looking on and smiling as a Māori student seemingly explains something to her. These images are representation of what Pākehā think of themselves in education, nice White ladies. It aligns with the aspect ‘feel good’ aspect of the Racial (Mills, 1997) and Settler Contracts (MacDonald, 2018). In most of these pictures the nice White lady and student share the frame about equally, each shown one side of the picture. In one photo, the White lady is featured in the centre of the photo with the Māori student off to her left. In another photo a White man holds the central position and is pointing at the screen of a laptop. A White woman sits at his right and a Māori student on his left, both looking at the same screen. All of the Māori students pictured with adults are girls. In each of these photos White people (mostly White women) are centred, whilst the Māori are placed on the margins. Through the visual medium of pictures, White women are the focus in this document.

DiAngelo (2018) talks about the good/bad binary that White people ascribe as racism. Only ‘bad White people’ (i.e. rednecks, White supremacists, uneducated, poor, or evil people) can be racist. Racism is framed as intentional acts of malice against people due to their perceived race. The only way that you can be a racist is have hate in your heart and act on it in a deliberate way. The ‘good White people’ are the opposite, they are liberal, open-minded, educated, middle-class, nice people. These people couldn’t possibly be racist, because they

would never mean to inflict harm on anyone based on their skin colour. These are the nice White ladies pictured in *Ka Hikitia*.

Racism is more than the way an individual interprets the intention behind their actions. It is a system of power that works to structurally advantage Whites within institutions whilst simultaneously disadvantaging Indigenous, Blacks, and people of colour. Constricting racism in this way clears ‘the nice White ladies’ depicted in *Ka Hikitia*, of any guilt shame or responsibility of being racist. The racists are the other ‘bad’ people. But racism is about the racist acts of individuals as much as it is about the ways that many well-meaning Whites are complicit in a system that continues to oppress Indigenous people- the two cannot be separated. Viewed in this way, these ‘nice White ladies’ are tied to the unearned privileges they have received operating within this system and are responsible for damage it continues to cause. Racism is not just something that happens, it’s something people participate in every day. As such, they are not able to shirk the responsibility of participating in such a system.

Conclusion

Ka Hikitia works just as much (if not more so) to define Pākehā as it does Māori. It is through the reflection of the racialised other that Pākehā come to know themselves. The centrality of Whiteness in the document is maintained through strategies aligned with the main principles of the BIPOW framework. Whiteness as possession/property was seen in the ways *Ka Hikitia* upheld schools as settler normative spaces that reflected the power relations of New Zealand society. Additionally, the main premise of the document, Māori students succeeding ‘as Māori’, was problematised not only for attempting to define the complex identities of Māori as well as they are the largest proportion of the teacher workforce, relying on Pākehā conceptions of Māori culture for *Ka Hikitia*’s implementation. The principle of colonial mythmaking/fantasy of Whiteness looked at how deficit discourse still functions in the document even though the stated focus is on the ‘Māori potential approach’. Further, the goal of productive partnerships in *Ka Hikitia* works through the myth of biculturalism, imagining equal partnership between Māori and Pākehā, when such a partnership does not exist. The Settler/Racial Contracts looks at how the language in *Ka Hikitia* constructs Māori as ‘Other’, protects the racial comfort of settlers, and allows teachers to view themselves as ‘nice White ladies’. Taken all together *Ka Hikitia* recentres the social and affective needs of settlers. This is not to say that the needs of Māori were not taken into consideration in the development of this plan, but that they have been ‘translated’ into a Pākehā worldview.

A fundamental flaw of *Ka Hikitia* is that it fails to address the structuring power of race and settler-colonialism in New Zealand society. Racism or colonialism is not ever brought up within its pages. By skirting these powerful systems, the document misses an opportunity to contextualise these forces within education and take responsibility for role it has played in perpetuating inequitable outcomes. Not owning up to the way the institution has not only impeded Māori success but was also designed for the purpose of assimilation makes it hard to see how this initiative will bring about the transformational change of the education system that is its stated goal.

Further, *Ka Hikitia* is limited in its ability to redress educational issues for Māori because it does not approach change with an understanding of structural racism. As conceptualised by powell (2008) “Structural racism or racialization emphasizes the interaction of multiple institutions in an ongoing process of producing racialized outcomes.” (p.791). Taking this structural perspective, the impacts of racism, or for that matter settler colonialism, cannot be confined to a single system as they touch every aspect of people’s lives. Thus, making a change in education alone is not likely to be successful unless there are also changes that impact racism within employment, housing, health, and the criminal justice system as well as the impacts of ongoing settler colonialism with which Māori must contend.

Chapter Five: Tuī Vignettes

Having analysed *Ka Hikitia* for the ways it constructed notions of culture, we now turn to examining the schools and classrooms themselves. The following is a series of vignettes comprising some of the more notable encounters at Tuī School. An analysis of these vignettes will be presented later in chapters Seven and Eight.

Painting Stories

Tuī is a large school with an imposing presence, with sprawling one- and two-story buildings. Visually, the first aspect you appreciate about Tuī other than its size, is how white it is. White buildings are flanked by other white buildings. From a distance it is hard to tell where one ends, and another begins. Blue trim cuts through the blur of white and creates an outline containing the white and making the buildings discrete. On a sunny day, the buildings amplify the sun's rays. On the colder, cloudier days, the white hue of the buildings stands in contrast to a dull sky. You know this is a school by the art hanging in the windows, the room numbers marking the walls, and the yellow lines painted on the ground outlining spaces for the ball-games of Four-Square and basketball. The logo of the school is a large black letter emblazoned on a shield of White. The architecture is not particularly memorable. It follows imported British architectural conventions and designs for schools (Richardson, 1988; Roberts, 2013). British design aesthetics sit on and contrast with the lush green backdrop of Indigenous land. Murals are dispersed around the school bringing different colours into the milieu, without which the school would feel entirely institutional.

The murals placed throughout Tuī's grounds help paint a visual story of the school. The first mural I come upon is on the wall behind the school office. It is made up of several panels that fit between the vertical mouldings of the building. It appears that this mural was commissioned for the anniversary of the founding of the school. Colourful lettering spells out the name of the school, and the year it was established sits on a background of white. Underneath the letters is a picture of the landscape of the suburb, complete with houses and names of the main street for reference. On the bottom of each panel is a fact about what life was like in this suburb at the time the school was founded including what it was like walking home from school, and what children did for play, or transport options. The landscape depicted includes European-style houses and manicured rows of planted trees, as well as

cleared spaces. Missing from this mural is any depiction of Māori.

The second mural I see presents a colourful map of the school and surrounding streets. Along the edges are tiles drawn by children portraying different activities students can undertake at the school: swimming, drumming, monkey bars, computers, the sand pit etc... Each tile has a white background with a student taking part in the respective activity. Whilst they may have black, blonde, or brown hair, all the people in the mural have the same colour skin as the white background. As in the first mural, only Pākehā are present. In both this mural and the last one, there is a focus on the land, depicting it as central to the story it is telling. *Pākehā have been here a long time. We have made this place what it is today.*

The third mural I come across is rendered in long panels to fit in between the vertical mouldings of the building, just like the first one I saw. It appears that this mural too was commissioned in celebration of the school's anniversary. It depicts a Pākehā teacher reading at the front of a class with three students sitting at their desks reading along. The first student is a blonde Pākehā boy, peering down at his book. He is the quintessential schoolboy in black shoes, long socks and shorts. Behind him is a girl with brown skin and black hair sitting at her desk, also looking at her book. She is dressed smartly in a yellow and red outfit with matching red shoes. The third student is a blonde Pākehā girl who sits at her desk with an orange bow atop her head. She, like the others, is nicely dressed in a pink jersey and blue skirt. She seems the most relaxed of the three as she follows along, her book on her desk and hand in her lap. The other two students hold their books off their desk, giving the impression that they are straining at the reading, but not this girl. At the top of this mural are the names of inventions that came into being over the course of the last hundred years. Above the Pākehā boy are the words 'Transport of the future', with a sentence discussing the approaching space age. The words that sit above the brown girl are 'Sputnik', with a sentence about how it was a Soviet unmanned satellite, the first manmade object to orbit earth. 'The jet age arrives' is written above the Pākehā girl with a sentence about the Boeing 707's first transatlantic flight. In contrast to the white backgrounds of the previous murals, the people in this one have all been given a skin colour. Pākehā have a sandy or peachy complexion and the brown-skinned girl has a soft, café au lait hue. I am left wondering why this mural includes skin colour and the others don't. Was it the inclusion of the brown girl that dictated that everyone had to have a skin colour, since Whiteness was assumed?

The fourth mural depicts a line of children standing at the back of a building, one child in each pane. This is a large mural and takes up a lot of space — the length of an entire building.

Each of the children is wearing colourful clothes and has a White sign with black lettering painted across their chest. Each of these signs has a personal quality written in black. Some of the qualities that made it into this mural are *inquisitive, supportive, caring, imaginative, respectful* etc... In contrast to their bright clothing, the children's skin is the same colour as the white background which creates a uniformity of presentation, a standardised whiteness.

Wandering further down past the playground and onto the playing field a number of more recent murals can be seen. Rather than having a White background, these are painted onto a black background. The colours of these murals are fresh and vibrant, and by comparison, made me realise how much the sun, wind, rain, and time had washed out the first set I had come across.

The first of these murals, entitled 'Respect', shows a white hand and a brown hand shaking, enclosed by a triangle with red, green, and yellow sides. Respect is written in white cursive lettering, with the Māori word 'Whakaute' in much smaller White print below. In fact, 'Whakaute' has the smallest lettering on the sign. To the right of the word 'Respect' are the words, *yourself, others, your school*. The desired effect in reading the sign is — 'Respect yourself', 'Respect others', 'Respect your school'. There are no other Māori words on the sign. The white hand overlaps the brown hand, giving the sense that the white hand is dominant and in control of the exchange. The fact that the words *Respect* and *Whakaute* are placed near each other creates a visual contrast in language, size, and style. Both the size and position of the word *Respect* makes it dominant with the much smaller *Whakaute* placed below.

The second mural depicts a brown hand and a white hand next to each other, fingers curved so that when they are placed next to each other they create a heart shape. In the middle of these hands is the word 'Empathy' written in big White cursive letters. Squished below are the Māori words 'Aroha Tetahi Ki Tetahi', in the same small print as in the previous mural. To the right of the hands is a cartoonish depiction of a Pākehā girl with yellow hair and a brown boy with black hair. They both have large smiles on their faces and are reaching out to each other but are not touching. The White girl sits with both her feet on the ground whilst the brown boy is kneeling on one knee and leaning towards the girl as if he is actively trying to reach her. To the left of the word 'Empathy' are the words 'Walk a mile in someone else's shoes'. There are pictures of shoes and dashes as if the shoes are walking. The last word 'shoes' overwrites part of the brown hand. It is not without significance that the brown hand is the one interrupted whilst the white hand continues undisturbed and whole. In this mural,

as in society, Māori are asked to give up a piece of themselves to be in partnership with Pākehā.

As in the previous mural the English word ‘Empathy’ is largest and is placed directly over the Māori words, creating a sense of dominance. Again, the Māori words are the smallest in the mural. In the portrayal of the two children, it appears that the White girl is sitting comfortably as the brown boy works to meet her where she is. This can be seen as a metaphor for the relationship of Māori and Pākehā in larger society. Having the words ‘Walk a mile in another person’s shoes’ is an interesting choice. Given that the audience for this mural is mostly Pākehā children, what does this mean? To walk a mile in the shoes of Māori? This rhetorical device is limited because at the end of said mile, Pākehā will get to retrieve their own shoes, if it is even possible for them to swap them for someone else’s in the first place. Pākehā will not be able to understand the views of Māori so long as they remain locked in a Pākehā worldview.

Tuī, the place, tells its own stories. Some of these stories are loud, clamouring for attention, whilst others exist in the silences. Imagine what we could hear, what we could learn if we reduced the volume of these loud stories, and let the others emerge from the quiet.

Teaching Culture

When I interviewed Mary for the first time, I asked her about how she taught culture in her class. She explained, “We’ve been looking at it from the start of the year when we were looking at gender bias. And that was just based off some of the things that a couple of the kids had said, and then we got this kit, which had loads of resources and things for us to use, that helped us explore it further. And now with it we’re challenging racism. And so that involves learning about each other, so that, you know, fear, I think fear is a big factor in people not behaving kindly towards each other. So, if we all understand something more about each other, they don’t have the fear or the uncertainty. We want less people being horrible.”

One of the ways I saw Mary teach her students about other cultures was through the use of ‘Window Books’. Every day after lunch Mary read aloud to the class. Mary was a lively and entertaining reader and I found myself getting caught up in the stories she read. Several of the books she read throughout the year featured non-White protagonists. She called these Window Books because “it allows us to see into somebody else’s life instead of a reflection of

your own” (Fieldnotes, October 2019).

One of the days I was there, Mary and the students had a discussion about one such book called *The Bridge Home*. The book was about the lives of four homeless children living in the streets of Chennai, India. The children faced many challenges and hardships in the course of the book. Family violence, abuse, and disability were all themes presented in the book. Mary opened up the discussion by asking if the students had any questions. Indeed, they did:

Why does Appa hurt the kids?

Does Rukku have a disability?

Why does Appa get drunk so often?

Why doesn't Appa get arrested?

Why does Appa buy gifts after he hurts them?

Are you allowed to break up with someone in India?

Based on their questions, I wondered what messages the students were taking away from this book. Did they see the characters as people, or just as an amalgamation of poverty, abuse, and despair? A popular phrase used in circles that advocate for diversity and social justice is that ‘representation matters’, meaning that children from minoritised backgrounds need to read stories, see pictures, and watch content with children that look like them. I would add that it is equally as important that White students see people of colour as agentic human beings, full of complex thoughts and emotions. But what exactly was this book representing? If this is the only story or one of a few stories that students read about non-White people, then this story may be doing more damage than good in reifying difference.

Another way Mary saw herself teaching about culture was through the use of Māori phrases in the classroom. She explained, “We have phrases that the children use, or they are supposed to use, when they leave the classroom. I want to go to the toilet. They tell me that they're going to the toilet, but in te reo ... They just have to say it in my general direction. I'll hear it. Or if they want to go and get a drink ... just to get a few phrases that they're using more regularly, so that it becomes more natural. We talk about the importance of understanding the three languages in the country as well. And that's why we're doing Sign Language this term as well.”

During my time in Mary's class, I heard her students utter these words to her en route to their destination. It was seamless and did seem to be a routine in the class. It was, however, always

the same children who used te reo to ask to leave. It did seem natural to the students who used it, but some students never used it.

She went on to explain that the attention-getting signal that she uses in class also utilises te reo Māori. “Ko mai tahi” means ‘give me one’. And so that's why they go (hits desk twice). “Ko mai rua” (hits desk in a different pattern, longer than the first), “Ko mai toru” (hits desk in a different pattern, longer than the last), “Ko mai Tuī” (hits desk in yet a different pattern, the longest of all). Knowing that Mary was a piano player, it made sense to me that she would use such a musical attention-getting signal. I was in for a treat the first time I heard her use the signal with the class. Mary called out ‘Ko mai tahi’ and the children started to hit their desks. By the time she had reached ‘Ko mai Tuī’ the entire class had joined in, and the air seemed to vibrate with the students’ percussion. Twenty-eight students doing anything simultaneously was sure to be significant. It certainly would be difficult not to pay attention with all that noise going on.

I have seen many versions of attention-getting signals in my time as an educator. So, although the language was different, the use of such a routine was familiar. It is used as a way to transition students’ attention back to the teacher. I have heard teachers say ‘1,2,3 eyes on me’ and the students say, ‘1,2 eyes on you’. Sometimes a teacher claps out a pattern and students clap the pattern back. What was unique about Mary’s signal was that it asked students to respond to directions in Māori. Whilst this is a useful classroom management tool, the practice of using attention-getting signals comes from a very Western notion of schooling and the role of the teacher.

I have seen schools take an initiative from a settler worldview, give it a Māori name and then call it ‘culturally responsive’. In one school that I visited (unrelated to this study), the expectations of their PB4L initiative (school-wide behaviour management programme) were made so that the abbreviation spelled out the Māori word ‘Mana’. In Māori, mana means “prestige, authority, control, power, influence, status, spiritual power, charisma - mana is a supernatural force in a person, place or object.” (Te Aka Māori, 2022). Mana is an important principle within Māori worldviews and much care is to be taken in regard to people’s mana. The mana of people is something to be both respected and enhanced (Mead, 2016). With mana being such a crucial element of tikanga Māori, it is hard to believe that the ideals of mana, especially the supernatural force aspect, could be contained within a set of behaviour expectations. Although the word mana may have been used to convey expectations, the

expectations themselves were based on settler ideas of schooling. This is similar to what was happening with Mary. She may use te reo in her attention-getting signal, but her expectations about how children should behave in the classroom remain the same. Māori words on settler ideals is a co-option of the language to suit settler standards and a continuation of colonisation in the educational context.

Mary continued talking about their use of te reo, “We do kapa haka once a week. For now, that’s songs and some games and things. And then we will get a time, it might start with the end of this term, go to next term, when a teacher will come in for 40 minutes. I think, I don't know if it's eight sessions or what? And that’s to do te reo with the kids.”

I got to see several of the kapa haka sessions that Mary was talking about. On the first day I went to kapa haka with them, when Mary announced it was time to line up for kapa haka, a Pākehā boy asked Mary if he could pay her \$2 to not go. Mary was taken aback and told him to stop being rude. He went to the end of the line and off they went. What started off as a line eventually ended up as pockets of children talking to each other on the short walk to the school hall.

The school hall was chilly first thing in the morning and most children were wearing hoodies or jerseys. Standing at the front of the hall was Bobby, the kapa haka teacher, with a guitar draped around his back. Bobby was multitasking when we first came in, greeting students as they entered, wrangling technology and organising equipment. With such a large school, a lot of children needed to fit into the hall. They sorted themselves out as they entered, girls going to the front of the hall and boys going to the back, as is customary in kapa haka. The teachers flanked the students, with most of the teachers closer to the front of the hall. Once all the classes had finished trickling in, Bobby started off the karakia. The voices in the hall which were once scattered switched focus as they recited the karakia. The first song was projected onto a screen hanging from the ceiling. Bobby started strumming the guitar and singing ‘Tūtira Mai Ngā Iwi’, and the students started joining in. As I looked around, I could see that most of the students were singing along, although in a somewhat reserved tone. There was a group of Pākehā boys in the back who didn’t seem interested in participating and were begrudgingly going through the motions, mostly to avoid being noticed. The student who made the comment to Mary before we left the room was among them. The teachers participated as well, with Mary the most enthusiastic among them. She knew the words well and sang with vigour. After the song was over, Bobby gave the students some feedback

suggesting that they put more emphasis on the 'aue' part of the song. There was a call and response element to the song, with 'aue' serving as the response, which is meant to stand out.

In preparation for the next song, Bobby went to the back and talked to the boys. He went over the words for the next song and showed them the movements. Bobby lifted his arm high in the air to show the boys how it should be done. He explained how the motion was symbolic of lifting your people, lifting your waka (canoe). The boys followed along with Bobby's directions although I could tell that some, especially those who were not participating earlier, felt awkward. Bobby got the whole group together again and they practised the song. I could see that most of the boys were trying hard to do as Bobby had told them.

The last part of the session was spent practising for the pōwhiri that was going to happen a few weeks later. Bobby talked about the importance of karanga as a song of welcome and as a song acknowledging those who had moved on or passed away. They ended their time together with a game, te ropi ropi, where Bobby called out a word in te reo and students had to make the accompanying hand movement: fist, triangle, hands apart and pointing straight out, hands together, or hands crossed to make an 'x' shape. When they made a mistake, they had to sit down. At first all of the students were standing up, but with each round swathes of students would sit down until there were only a few remaining. Bobby sped up the words until finally, there was a winner. They ended with a karakia and then students lined up with their teachers and headed back to class.

During my time in the class, I observed more resistant behaviour from this group of boys. On one such occasion I was sitting with a group who were working on designing a cover for the book they had just read as a class. After they had designed the cover, they started discussing if they should translate the words into Māori. I asked the group if they thought it was important to have books in Māori. The group of boys was sitting at the far end of the same table and one of the boys chimed in, "Yeah, then Māori people can actually read". One of the other boys offered, "Well, it is a dying language," as if to explain why having books in Māori is useless. The words that popped out of my mouth were, "That's interesting because when I saw you in kapa haka today, singing and dancing, te reo Māori seemed very much alive." The first boy responded, "Well it's because the people who speak the language are dying and they are trying to save it."

These children don't know it, but they are retelling a colonial myth, one that is intimately linked to White supremacy and colonisation. The colonisers brought death with them in the

form of war, dispossession, and disease. Viewing the decrease in the Māori population through a Social Darwinist lens, this was taken as proof of the innate superiority of Whites. It was assumed that Whites would continue to thrive, and Māori, made from inferior stuff, would eventually die out. It was the White man's burden to take over New Zealand from the less capable Māori. Lest they be mistaken for cruel people, some believed it was their duty to "smooth the pillow of the dying race" (Stafford & Williams, 2006, p. 114). Both the tone and the tenor of this colonial myth was matched in the boys' responses.

During my time at Tuī, there was an event called Cultural Day. Cultural Day was a veritable smorgasbord of culture. The entire school was split into 59 groups that were to experience two 15-minute workshops about a culture. Students were also to bring a dish from their culture (or another culture) to share. Mary was in charge of the Indian culture group and had students make henna designs on their hands and design a rangoli pattern. A mix of cultures and countries were presented at Cultural Day: 'Native American', New Zealand, Myanmar, Korea, Scotland, Papua New Guinea, and China. I don't know if Māori or Pacific cultures were presented because nobody, student or teacher, talked about them.

I asked Bob, a Pākehā boy in Mary's class, to tell me a little bit about his experience on Cultural Day. He told me that one of the activities he had the chance to do was to make an 'Indian American' dreamcatcher. When I asked him if he learned anything about the culture that they came from, he said "Not really, but they're just talking about what the things work for. Like catching the bad dreams and then the good dreams go down through the strings."

Mary and the school teach about culture every day in large and small ways. It is necessary to understand the ways Whiteness is sustained in education before action and meaningful change is possible (de Saxe, 2021). Through making visible the ways White culture in the classroom goes unmarked, this section calls all of us to problematise the notions of education that we take for granted.

Funny Money

After returning from kapa haka one week, Mary introduced a money game challenge to the class. The basics of the challenge were that students earned money every day for completing assignments, showing initiative, and doing good deeds. They would also be charged for necessities such as rent, power, wifi, desks and chairs; this money would be taken out of their account each week. If they misbehaved by talking out of turn or being rude, they would

be fined. If they ran out of money, they would be sent to a different room as punishment. Mary had students keep track of their own money, which she had them keep in origami boxes they had made.

Students seemed both intrigued and a bit wary of the changes. One student asked if they were still allowed to have free time. Mary said they were, only after they completed their work. The next question a student asked was if he could pass out the folders for the next activity. Mary responded, “Yes and thank you for doing that without me asking” and rewarded him with 50 cents. For the rest of the day, and indeed the rest of my time at Tuī, discussions about money pervaded the day. Earning or losing money was presented as motivation for the students’ actions. This was of course a behaviour management system that Mary decided to use, and all of the students knew it. It wasn’t a game or a challenge, but a way to get them to behave. The student who asked to give out folders had already figured this out.

Next, Mary transitioned the class onto their Maths activity. They were working on multiplication and division problems, each at their individual level based on diagnostic assessment. Those who got all the answers correct would be given 50 cents. Mary read out the answers for the varying levels and students marked their own sheets. A few students were not following along. Mary said, “Those who are not listening will get fined 50 cents. If you are not looking, then you are not listening” and then asked two students to bring her 50 cents. The students continued working and a few went to Mary’s desk to ask for help with the problems. Once she had finished helping the students, she began reading out the answers for the rest of the sheets. Noticing a low din in the class Mary said, “Make sure you are not talking on top of this. I don’t want to have to fine you... I kind of do (want to fine you).” Then she asked who had got a perfect score or moved up a chart and gave the students who had raised their hands 50 cents.

The next part of the day was devoted to reading time where students were to answer questions related to the book they were reading as a class. There were eleven questions; students got to choose which and how many questions to answer. Mary told the class that “the more fully you answer the question, the more chance that you will get paid.” She wrote the answer to the first question on the board for everyone to see. “If you want to use this answer, it will cost you \$1.50. The more questions you answer, the more chance you will get paid for your efforts. It does not cost you to sit at a desk and use a chair for this activity”. Students got to work answering the questions. After a few minutes, Mary says, “I’ll be coming by with effort money soon”. One student was standing at a desk so Mary told him

that he didn't need to pay for a desk and chair for the activity. The students were still busily working on the questions when one of them approached Mary's desk. "How many do we have to do?" he asked. "How many can you do?" was Mary's retort. Mary then collected their answers to go over and mark.

At the end of the day, Mary asked the students how much money they had and wrote each students' total on the whiteboard. The winner, the one who already has the most money, was given an extra dollar. The amount of money each student earned that day followed an expected pattern. The students who were conscientious, attentive, and quiet did well for themselves; the ones who struggled with work completion, attention, and calling out were in the lower ranks for the day. The student who won was regarded by the other students to be the best student in the class. The money game challenge did not shake things up, but instead ended up reinforcing the existing social order.

Over the following weeks the money game challenge ramped up. Instead of dealing in dollars and cents, the students were now dealing with hundreds of dollars. Initially, students used to keep track of their own money. But after several weeks, Mary switched to a website called *Banquer*, sponsored by Kiwi Bank. Using this website, she could automatically add and deduct money from the students' accounts and keep a running total of how much individual students earned and were fined over the week. Students also got to choose jobs in order to earn extra money each week. The amount students could earn varied by job, with a computer monitor earning \$300 a week, and a cleaner getting \$80. Mary asked the students to write a job description to go with their role. If they were found to not be meeting job expectations, Mary could fire them.

In addition, Mary gave students money, or took it away, based on their behaviour. The way students earned money was subjective and related to what Mary wanted to see. If she liked what a student was doing, they would earn money, and if she didn't, she would take some away. The chart below indicates the behaviours Mary rewarded and punished.

Behaviour	Reward	Behaviour	Penalty
Completing work	\$10	Talking	\$50
Being kind	\$20	Not paying attention	\$50
Speaking to Mary in a different language	\$50	Not completing work	\$50
Making Mary laugh	\$100	Sitting on tables	\$50
Winning class game	\$100		
Tidying up	\$200-500		
Bringing in 'really good bottle' for school Gala	\$500		

Figure 6: Monetary value of behaviours in Money Game

There was a wide range of monetary value of what Mary rewarded students for. It seems surprising that completing work and being kind are the two lowest-paid behaviours, whilst tidying up and bringing a bottle for the school Gala was paid the most. One would think that in a classroom, where the objective ostensibly was to learn, more value would have been placed on completing work rather than donating to the already well-off school. Based on the monetary value assigned these behaviours, it appears that helping the school earn money and cleaning up the classroom are the most highly valued. As for penalties, the fines were all the same, no matter the deed.

Although this activity was devised as a behaviour management strategy, it is instrumental in teaching students about culture. The 'Money Game' establishes and asserts a distinctly Pākehā worldview. In the end the 'Money Game' works to teach students how to be good settlers and capitalists.

Just Because...

It was a typical morning in class. Students had just finished their writing assignment when Mary had them gather on the carpet. She looked out over the class from behind her desk and began, "What is something that people might think about me by looking at me?" A student

eagerly raised her hand and Mary called on her — “You look like Professor McGonagall?” the student said, with just enough earnestness to make it not seem like an insult. Mary moved on quickly to the next raised hand. “You look British” the student said. “I am White” Mary responded. “I thought about three stereotypes about myself and made a poem.” I knew that they had been working on stereotypes as part of the *Not Part of My World* kit. Mary projected the following poem on the screen and read it aloud:

Just Because...

Just because I’m a woman,
Doesn’t mean I am weak
Doesn’t mean I am worth less
Doesn’t mean I’m more emotional
I am strong

Just because I wear glasses
Doesn’t mean people should judge me
Doesn’t mean I should be bullied
Doesn’t mean I’m ugly
I am beautiful

Just because I am White
Doesn’t mean I can’t speak Māori
Doesn’t mean I’m racist
Doesn’t mean I think I’m better
I am important

“What stereotypes or assumptions might be made about you?” Mary asked. She wanted the children to write a poem like hers, addressing the stereotypes others might hold about them. “This is not an easy task, but it is an important one” she said. And with that, she allowed the students to pick up a device and get started on the assignment.

The students sat down at tables and got to work. I started walking around the classroom to see what the students were working on. I came across Chuck, a Pākehā boy who looked lost. He looked at me and asked, “What are we supposed to write?”. I said, “What are some stereotypes people might have about you?” He shrugged his shoulders. Steve, an Indian boy

who was also sitting at the table spoke up, “You could say just because you have White skin doesn’t mean you can abuse people.” Chuck nodded his head and started writing.

I moved on to another table where two girls were talking with each other. I had come along at the tail end of what appeared to have been a longer conversation. “Just because I have brown skin doesn’t mean that I’m poor,” one of the girls said with vigour and conviction. “Of course you are not poor!” the other girl said back to her, as if that was unthinkable. Mary started counting down from five to get the students’ attention. That was all the time they had to work on that assignment that day. The students closed their devices and moved on to Maths.

The next week when I returned to class, the ‘Just Because’ poems were finished, all typed up, decorated and hung on the wall. A few of the poems that the students wrote addressed the stereotypes associated with being White. Although they may have written about other things, I noticed a consistency in how students wrote about being White.

Example 1

Just because I am White
Doesn’t mean that I am racist
Doesn’t mean I don’t acknowledge my privilege
Doesn’t mean I have better things
I am proud

Example 2

Just because I have White skin doesn’t mean I’m racist
Doesn’t mean I’m more important
Doesn’t mean I’m the best
I’m strong

Example 3

Just because I have White skin
Doesn’t mean that I am racist
Doesn’t mean I’m more important
Doesn’t mean I’m a bully
I am kind

Example 4

Just because I'm White
Doesn't mean I believe in slavery
Doesn't mean I'm better than black people
Doesn't mean I can't be friends with a black person
We're all people

These students had taken their cue from Mary's writing. All of the poems mentioned similar elements: being White not meaning that they were racist or being better than other people. Strikingly, all of the students in the above examples wrote about being White and not Pākehā or New Zealand European, just as Mary had. Not all the Pākehā students in class wrote about being White, but at least four did. This is an indication of how some students used Mary's example as a way to frame being White.

To be honest, I am surprised that some of the student poems took on the subject of Whiteness. Mary told me a story once about what happened when students were working on their pepeha. When Mary asked a Pākehā student in her class what country her ancestors were from, she broke down in tears. She had never considered that she was from any other place than New Zealand and thinking about that upset her. Mary shared with the student where her people came from and explained that many people came to New Zealand from elsewhere. Equally as telling to me were the poems from non-White students in the class:

Example 5

Just because I'm Asian
Doesn't mean I know martial arts
Doesn't mean I eat rice everyday
Doesn't mean I should be bullied
I am different

Example 6

Just Because I am Cuban
Doesn't mean I can't speak English
Doesn't mean I should get bullied
I can speak perfectly.

Example 7

Just because I'm Argentinian
Doesn't mean I can't speak English
Doesn't mean I have no friends
Doesn't mean I'm not good at rugby
I speak perfect English

Example 8

Just because I'm Filipino
Doesn't mean I don't speak my language
Doesn't mean I don't speak English
Doesn't mean I shouldn't be here
I'm worthy

These students couldn't use Mary's example in the same way Pākehā students could and needed to develop for themselves how they were going to frame race in this poem. In each of these examples, students resisted the label of 'Other' that came along with not being White. Their poetry gives us a glimpse into what it is like to be them in this country and at this school. Speaking English well is an important issue. Three out of four of these examples deal with being able to speak English. If we think of language as an important aspect of culture, then being able to speak English appears to be crucial to New Zealand settler culture. Although two out of the four poems explicitly use the term "bullied", all four poems allude to behaviours that could be considered bullying. Looking at these poems we could surmise that being the object of bullying due to not belonging to the dominant culture is common.

This activity, although not intended to, recentred Whiteness. In the poems that explicitly dealt with culture or race, the affective needs of the Pākehā students who did not want to be perceived as racist took precedence over the real experiences of bullying and racism experienced by the students of colour. If the experiences of the students of colour in the class had been the focus, this could have been a very different kind of lesson. The students of colour might have felt their input was valued and the Pākehā students could have learned to empathise with (rather than ignore) their needs. Just because the needs of Pākehā students have been at the centre of education in New Zealand doesn't mean that it has to continue this

way. It is possible to create a classroom where all students' experiences and concerns are valued.

Only Joking

After dismissing the students for morning tea, Mary and I walked across the courtyard to the staff lounge. It was a bustling place. At such a large primary school a lot of staff utilise the space during teatime. It can be overwhelming to be a newcomer in such a busy place. I stood back for a moment and watched how things were done in the kitchen. I saw that the teacups were in the cupboard near the refrigerator, and I walked over and took one. There was an assortment of tea on the counter — standard black tea as well as some fruit and herbal options. I made my choice and filled up my cup with hot water. When I looked up, I saw Mary waving to me from a table where she had saved me a seat. Mary usually sat at the quiz table, and today was no different.

Mary loved the daily quizzes and puzzles printed in the local newspaper. There were usually a lot of questions about New Zealand pop culture or geography, both of which I was horrible at. On this day, Kyle³, another Pākehā Year 5/6 teacher who taught in the classroom next to Mary's, sat at the table with us. When the quiz was over, more open-ended chatter began. Seemingly out of nowhere, Kyle said "How do you find Will Smith in the snow?" He paused. My mind raced. Was he really going to do this? Was he really going to tell a racist joke in the staff lounge? In front of all these people? In front of me? This joke was a play on the old racist joke, 'How do you find a Black person at night?' The structure of the joke was almost identical. Instead of the set up being a Black person at night, it was a Black person surrounded by White. Where exactly was he going with this?

Then he continued, "You look for the fresh prints." You fucker, I thought. His Fresh Prince of Bel Air joke had set me on edge. But of course, it was more than that. The people at the table let out an uncomfortable, forced laugh. Without telling a racist joke, he had managed to tell a racist joke. The Will Smith joke brought the overtly racist joke to mind, accomplishing the same thing. A few people excused themselves at this point, signalling their displeasure with Kyle's antics. I was angry, but also curious and looked straight at him. A little later in the conversation he asked me what I was doing in Mary's class, inquiring if I was looking to see how culturally competent she was. It was a dismissive question. For a moment I fantasised about giving Kyle his cultural competency rating right then and there. I hadn't had

³ Not his real name

a conversation with him about my research, but he was one of the teachers I had emailed when I was looking for participants for this project. He had some idea of the purpose of my observations, which made his joke and this question all the more significant. Through both of these moves he was claiming the space and trying to assert his dominance. My very presence was threatening the status quo, so he attempted to reclaim the space for Whiteness, and remind me of my position in the racial hierarchy. It was a warning shot — he may as well have said ‘Back off N---- !’. But hey, he was only joking, right? Violence camouflaged as humour is still violence.

“No”, I said. “I’m looking to see how schools shape teachers’ understanding of culture.” He didn’t respond, but other people at the table did. They wanted to tell me who I should talk to, suggesting the ESOL teacher, the kapa haka teacher, the te reo teacher and the teacher who organised Cultural Day. According to their understanding, these were the people in the school who were responsible for teaching culture, not them. I did end up talking to the ESOL (English for Speaker of Other Languages) teacher and she told me about how they were putting together a survey of the ‘ethnic students’. She said that she had about 45 ESOL students, which was a low number for such a large school. She went on to explain that the previous year the survey they had completed showed that the families of the ‘ethnic students’ felt welcome at the school. Based on the welcome I had just received, I doubted that they did.

Chapter Six: Pīwakawaka Vignettes

Stories All Over the School

It's hard to tell what the school looks like from the parking lot. The drab-coloured office building blocks the view of the school's interior. The buildings are a mix of composite and brick, the red of the brick standing in contrast to the rest of the taupe exterior. Through the office and down a short hallway to the left is the entrance to the school grounds. You can see all of the school as you walk out that door. A long single-story building with several classrooms extending down the left of the main building. Down a slight hill is another outstretched single story building housing more classrooms. Lush green grass flanks the classrooms, and in the centre is a blacktop with two portable basketball hoops. In relation to the hoops, the New Zealand flag that shudders and slaps in the wind seems giant. Just beyond the blacktop is a bigger, taller building that is the school hall. Wooden play structures sprout from the bed of woodchips at the far end of the school. The playthings are not dilapidated but are well used. The wood is bleached and smoothed from weather and the hundreds of hands and feet that have graced it over the years. Past the playground is a grassy field fenced in by neighbours' houses.

At first glance it is a typical school, quintessential even. Something about it makes me nostalgic for my own primary school, some forty years and half a world away. Maybe it is the beige buildings or familiar musty smell of an old school. But this is not my old school. Pīwakawaka has its own history and story, a story that fittingly, I found in the school library. Hanging on the wall is a typed-up copy of *How Pīwakawaka got its name* as told by an Ariki of the local iwi. It is a beautiful story and one that I wish I could share with you here. However, for fear of breaking my promise to not identify the school, I cannot. Suffice to say that the school rests on an honoured place that has a long history of manaakitanga. The beauty and fertility of the land, as well as the generosity of Māori who have lived here, particularly the māreikura, are central to the story. The story also recognises the changes that have taken place since the arrival of Pākehā in the area. In this story, manaakitanga is a way that the school makes sense of itself, both in the past and the present. Perhaps it was the spirit of manaakitanga that made this place feel so familiar.

Next to the story is an illustration of 'The Legend of Pīwakawaka'. The laminated card next to it informs the reader that this was created by 'all of us' during Māori Language Week. It is

a poster depicting the lush landscape, wildlife and agriculture in the area. A stream flows through the middle, with a cheeky taniwha in tow. There is a marae and houses in the distance, and people are gathered near the stream. A single person sits to the right of the stream smiling whilst gathering sticks. The picture is neatly drawn but retains the child-like essence of ease and wonder.

In my exploration of the school, I encounter many pieces of art. Prominently placed in the office, just above the receptionist's desk is a carving related to important aspects of the school's history and story. A rich dark brown wood carving is mounted on a dark blue background. The intricacy of the carving makes it hard to keep my eyes off it. Without knowing the story of this place, the carving would not make sense; it would be just a carving on the wall. But knowing the story gives me an understanding and sense of connection.

In the hallway on the way to the staff lounge, woven mats are hung on the wall. Dark red triangles outlined in beige form patterns around the outside of the word 'Tuvalu', written in black. In between two of these mats is another, with red diamonds enclosed by black and beige lines. There are so many patterns displayed on this mat, I take a moment to contemplate the knowledge and skill required to make it. Written on the inside in black letters is a word I don't understand. Having fresh eyes is an advantage, but there is so much that I miss because I don't have the cultural understanding. As I walk away, I know that there is meaning to the mats that I don't see.

On the way to Kate's class, a mural enlivens an otherwise dull wall. Bright colours burst forth from the wall: yellow, various shades of blue, and red. The mural seems perfectly placed at a primary school: happy faces, stars, lightning, and the sun create a decorative impact. Upon closer inspection however, there are White words, cloudlike, written against the light blue background: *kia kaha Māori: stay strong*, *pono Māori: be true, valid, honest, genuine, sincere* (Te Aka Māori, 2022), *alofa Samoan, Tokelauan, Tuvaluan: love*, and *fa'aaloalo Samoan: respect* (Misatauveve, 2015).

Another mural stands on the side of the school hall. I am taken in by the beach scenes which show people at work and leisure. Their brown skin is offset by the blue and White of the waves. At the top there is also the depiction of a tapa cloth and at the bottom, blossoming white flowers. The remaining outside section of the mural is made up of a guitar on one side, and a coconut tree on the other. The centre of the mural consists of a Pātē, a log slit drum. Enclosing the Pātē are the words: high expectations, respect, kindness, effort, and honesty.

These are words that I have seen in many primary schools in the U.S. to reflect the school values. The images on this mural reflect Pacific cultural elements, but I wonder if the values do too.

The last mural I see is on the side of the senior school. At the top of the mural are the words ‘Kaitiaikitanga’ (guardian) and at the bottom is the word ‘manaakitanga’. A Māori figure stands atop a stop sign in the middle of the mural. A map of New Zealand, green land on a backdrop of yellow, is just to the right. Further to the right are blue clouds floating above the steeple of a church. To the left of the figure is the world being cradled by a brown finger. Underneath the world is a seatbelt with the reminder ‘fasten your seatbelt’ written nearby. On the far left is a tree with both English and Māori words written on the branches. On the left side of the tree are the words: love, fun, caring, happy, and hope. On the right side of the tree are the words whānau ora (family health), tu meke (an expression of gratitude or appreciation), aroha (love, empathy, compassion), and kia kaha (stay strong). All words are written the same size, using the same font. There is a lot of imagery in this mural. Without the mural title of ‘Kaitiaiki tanga’ to guide the interpretation, it would be hard to figure out what it all means.

Around the doors that form the entrance to the school hall a mural is painted that mimics the entrance to a marae, with a tukoteko (carved figure) set as the apex where the two maihi (carved bargeboards) connect. All of the entrances of marae I’ve visited have been a deep red colour, but this depiction is a mix of green, blue, and grey, giving it an earthy feel. As the tukoteko greets me upon arriving at the hall, their grey eyes and tongue stand out from the darker background, creating a resolute and piercing effect.

The school hall is newer than the rest of the school, and the inside still has that plasticky new carpet smell. On the walls hang le tōga (fine Samoan mats) and piupiu (Māori flax skirts). At the front of the hall is a mural with the school’s name on it decorated with tiles. Each tile has been decorated by a child; there are hearts, rainbows, people, and the odd kiwi. But by far the most frequent decoration is a flower pattern: a symmetrical flower with its four petals extending to the edges of the mural. Some are simple whilst others are more intricate, but they all follow the same basic pattern.

At the back of the hall, stairs lead to an upstairs area. As I get closer, I notice a gorgeous carving hanging above the stairwell. It is an illustration of the legend of Pīwakawaka that was

also on the poster in the library, only now it is brought to life in this carving. The colours leap off the carving at me. It mirrors the poster exactly, with the stream, the marae, the houses and the people all accounted for. The taniwha doesn't look nearly as cheeky as it did on the poster where it was more serious, although not overly foreboding. The māreikura holds a revered place in the middle of the carving. The wood she was carved into retains its natural colour. She sits on her knees, palms facing outward in a welcoming fashion. This piece is truly breath-taking. I feel the urge to reach out and touch it, but I dare not disturb it. As I leave the school hall my mind is just beginning to appreciate that there are pieces of the story of Pīwakawaka all over the school.

If You Want to Learn About Culture, You've Come to The Right Place

There is a large circular blackboard sign on the outside of the Pīwakawaka office building facing the parking lot, that each week displays a different handwritten message. There is something nostalgic about their use of this sign, as blackboards long ago gave way to whiteboards in schools. This is where parents drop off and pick up their children every day, so it is a natural location for such a sign. Each week as I drive into the parking lot I am welcomed by a new message. This particular week the sign proclaims it is Cook Islands⁴ Language Week, with the theme “Taku rama, taau toi: ora te reo” written in blue chalk. Just below is the English version in yellow, “My torch, your adze: the language lives”. I wonder if the school will do something to celebrate Cook Islands Language Week.

The day was fairly usual. A student in Kate's class started off the morning by leading a karakia. Kate took the roll and gave the overview of the day: fitness, Hauora (health), Reading, Maths, and then an assembly celebrating 'Cook Islands' Language week in the afternoon. As I looked around the class, I noticed that several of the girls were wearing floral crowns and brightly-coloured wrap-around skirts emblazoned with large flowers. But other than that, it was business as usual. Kate lined the students up and we headed to the hall for fitness.

The school hall was cold first thing in the morning. It was a large open space for such small heaters to fill. No matter, because fitness would surely warm the students up. Kate was at the front of the hall urging students to get moving in order to combat the cold. Three students

⁴ The name Cook Islands is contested within the Pacific communities. The preferred name is Kuki Airani. I use Cook Islands here as it was the name used at this school.

joined her in the front and took turns making up moves for the students to follow. Kate's enthusiasm was contagious. It was hard not to want to get up and join in as she and the students seemed to be having so much fun. When Joe, a teacher's assistant, came in, he started moving and dancing with Kate and the students. Hoodies and jerseys started coming off as the dancing warmed the students up.

After fitness, the students went to their Hauora groups which were a mix of the same aged children from different classes. Kate's group was working on an assignment called Identity Charts. Students were to write their name in the middle of the paper and write adjectives to describe themselves around it. Kate called off students' names to check in with them and see if they needed help with the assignment. There was a piece of paper with a list of things they could write about sitting on the floor near Kate. Culture, values, personality, job, favourite things, hobbies, religion/beliefs, emotions, family, and what makes them unique — were all possible topics for their chart. Kate had also done an identity chart for herself that was set out as an example. Her name was in the middle surrounded by her descriptors: teacher, born in England, lives in [a suburb], speaks English, has three brothers, loves swimming. Kate answered students' questions when they came to her, but also directed them to their peers for help when possible.

As students finished, I looked at their Identity Charts. I noticed all of them included something about culture. I mentioned this to Kate who told me that when she introduced the assignment they used the principal as an example. The students were the ones who had mentioned culture in the example of the principal (she is Māori), and then had taken to adding it to their own.

One of the students from Kate's class had written her name in big letters, each a different colour and surrounded by a cloud in the middle of the page. Arrows pointed to her attributes: I'm curious, I'm Samoan and American, my favourite colour is blue, I love going to church, my favourite sport is soccer....

When Hauora was over, students returned to their classrooms. As students came back to class, Kate told them to get a book and begin their DEAR (Drop Everything And Read) time. Students sat in groups at tables whilst reading to themselves. I wondered what kinds of books the students were reading and took a quick inventory. I saw *Ella and Oliva*, *The Ella Diaries*, *The Diamond Girls*, *The Billionaire Boys*, a book on sharks, and a book on paper airplanes. Most of the characters in these books, apart from the ones about animals, were White.

At the end of DEAR (Drop Everything and Read) time, two White women came into the classroom with their hands filled with papers and bags. I found out that they were student teachers who were there to teach a Maths lesson. It took them a few minutes to get set up, and as soon as they were ready, Kate transitioned the class over to them. This was to be their last lesson at Pīwakawaka. The teachers taught their lesson and the students followed along. When the lesson was over, a student stood up and started leading the class in *Ua Faafetai*, a Samoan song of farewell. The student teachers were clearly surprised and touched by the students' gesture. The student teachers expressed their gratitude to the students and left right before morning tea.

Morning tea was the main event on Fridays, as it was day that everyone on the staff brought in some kind of treat to share. I quickly had become a fan of sausage rolls and could smell the savoury aroma wafting down the hall before I got to the staff lounge. We were greeted by all sorts of deliciousness —cakes and brownies, fruit, cheese, crackers and chips. And of course, there were the savouries. The lounge was arranged into two main sitting areas: a couch area where the teachers usually sat, and near the windows were tables and chairs where the TA's sat. There were of course times when people sat in different places, but that is how things worked most of the time.

The TA table was very welcoming to me at morning tea, waving me over to make friendly conversation. It was here that I would find out about what was going on at the school. They all knew that I was from the university and today Joe asked me what I was researching. I told him the topic of my research and little bit about the other school that I was going to. Joe seemed pretty interested in what I was studying. He told me that the reason they talked about culture at this school was because the TA's pushed for it. He went on to say that he thought schools with mostly Whites wouldn't talk about culture as much because it would just be seen as normal. Before we ended our brief conversation, he told me there were some children at the school from Ecuador and Somalia and he wanted to learn about their cultures too. Betty overheard our conversation and said, "You've come to the right place if you want to learn about culture." This comment struck me; I wondered exactly what she meant. Her comment seemed to convey that by not doing things the same way as other schools, in other words, by focusing on Māori and Pacific cultures, Pīwakawaka School marked themselves as different, as 'cultural'.

Next it was time for Cultural Groups. Kate was filling in for Marge who was away that day. When she was going over the schedule for the day with the class that morning, Kate had explained that she was feeling nervous about taking over the Niuean group, and that she would need students to help her with pronunciation and be good participants. When I came in, the group was playing a game. A student read off the names of body parts in Niuean and the other students were touching the corresponding part on their body. “Ulu” she said, and the students touched their heads. “Manava” she said, and the students touched their stomachs. If they touched the wrong body part, the students had to sit down. The student started off slowly, but the pace got faster and faster until most of the students were out. Kate was part of the group and played along with the rest of the students. When the game was over, the students completed a worksheet where they labelled the parts of the body in Niuean. The students took the papers with them and shuffled back to their classes, just in time for lunch.

After some outside play time, the bell called the students back to class. When they had all settled back in, a student started a karakia. Taking their cue, the rest of the students added their voices. Whilst the students got out their meals, Kate played some music through the TV. The students ate accompanied by the melodies of Samoa and the Cook Islands. Then Kate told the class it was time for them to clean up and put *The Roimata Song* by Brother Love on the TV. It was an energetic song with the high-pitched ukulele carving a strong beat, the perfect tune to serve as motivation for a tidy up. The students finished the last few bites of their lunches, packed their bags, and put their rubbish in the bins. I don’t know very much of the Cook Islands language, just what I had learned through participating in cultural groups, so I couldn’t understand the lyrics. Then, about halfway through the song, the lyrics changed to English for a few lines:

Have you ever loved a woman so much you tremble on in pain?

Have you ever loved a woman so much you tremble on in pain?

All the time you know baby she belongs in another man's arms.

This upbeat melody belied the longing and heartbreak carried in the lyrics. Now this felt familiar. This felt like the Blues. The riffs may have been different, and the cadence, but this was definitely the Blues. A way to shake off the everyday ails of the world, to put your particular pain in conversation with others. A way to feel less alone. And in that moment, I did feel less alone, connected to the Cook Islands through our common musicality and the common human experience.

Kate gathered the students on the mat in preparation for the afternoon's Cook Islands assembly. "What do we need to do at the assembly today?" Kate asked.

"No hats" a student replied.

"No hats, what else?" Kate prodded.

"Sitting up and listening" another student offered.

"Be sure to show the school values" Kate concluded.

As we walked into the school hall, students sat down on the floor in their designated areas. Kate went to the front and put on some music which the students sang along to as the other classes started to fill the hall. At the front of the hall were six log drums, with long slits down the centre, sitting on stands. These Pātē/Tokere were of different lengths and come in varying shades of warm brown. The assistant principal stood in front of one of the Pātē and started playing it. "Listen to the beat" she said, and the students started clapping along.

"Stand up and move to the beat of the drum. Let's do our Cook Islands moves." The students complied, though hesitantly at first. Perhaps as a way to break the ice, the assistant principal started dancing along with the students.

The students remained standing as the Cook Islands National Anthem played on a large screen at the front of the hall. The lyrics scrolled over an image of the flag as the students sang along. The assistant principal led the students in another round of dancing. She brought some students to the front of the hall so that the others could follow their movements. As they were dancing, four students from Kate's class started setting up their PowerPoint. When the dancing ended, Kate's students began their presentation. They gave some basic facts about the Cook Islands and simple phrases, such as hello and goodbye. With the PowerPoint completed, two of Kate's students, a boy and a girl, stayed at the front to put on a dramatic re-enactment of some of the key dates in Cook Islands history. The boy was dressed in a British Sailor's jacket representing the British, and the girl (who stayed in her regular clothes) represented the Cook Islands. Some of it was hard to hear and understand, but the acting carried the meaning even if I missed some of the words. The items that the students acted out all involved the British: from James Cook to the scuffle between the British and the Cook Islanders. In one of their final scenes the girl fell to her knees and pleaded "Help me!" to the boy.

The imagery was disturbing on several levels: the image of the girl on her knees, almost grovelling to the boy was hard to digest. That they had chosen to do this at an assembly celebrating the 'Cook Islands' was equally upsetting. Here they were, acting out settler notions of the history of Kuki Airani for their peers to see. Although it was upsetting, it was completely understandable. Most of the historical resources that students have access to are told from a Eurocentric perspective. They were simply reflecting what they had learned.

The assembly ended with a dance off. Some boys up had their hands on their hips, quickly bringing their knees together and apart. The assistant principal shuffled the students around so that they had more space and didn't get in each other's way. And with that, the assembly was over. The students began to slowly file out of the hall and back to their classes.

As I reflected on the day, I thought again about what Betty had said to me in the staff room. Perhaps this was the right place to learn about culture, but so too was any school. It just depended on who you saw as having culture.

If You Are Not Talking, Then You Are Not Learning

It was just after lunch and Maths time was about to begin. "Two more minutes before we get started" Kate prompted the students. Some were finishing their last bites of lunch, others were drawing, and a few were playing cards. After returning from the copy room, a student started handing out worksheets. "I want all of your stuff away. No Math book but you need to be on the carpet. Rubbish away." Kate instructed the students. They finished up their last few tasks and made their way to the carpet where Kate was waiting. "Put your Maths brain on. We are counting by 20's from 170" Kate said. The students called out the numbers and Kate wrote them on a tripod whiteboard: 190, 210, 230 ... Kate wrote the numbers directly underneath 170, being careful to line up the place values. After she had three columns of numbers she said, "Turn and talk, what patterns do you see?"

The students turned to whoever was near them on the carpet and began talking. They formed loose groups rather than working strictly with selected partners. Some worked in groups of four. Kate listened in to some of the conversations. "Good Maths talk" she mentioned as she walked away. "Charlie is going first in five seconds ... Let's give him a chance before we wave our hands."

170	270	370
190	290	390
210	310	410
230	330	430
250	350	450

Figure 7: Kate's writing on the whiteboard

“There are 3’s and 0’s going down in each line. And 7’s”, Charlie answered.

“I wonder why the 7’s are going down? Turn and talk,” Kate responded. After a few more moments of talking to their partners Kate regained their attention by counting down from five. Adam and Goofy (from the Focus Group) were the first to share. Adam said, “It’s restarting.” Goofy added, “It’s like your adding hundreds.”

“What number would go here?” Kate says as she points to the right of the number 410.

Someone said “510” aloud. “Is it 510? Why?” Kate asked.

Tina waved her hand in the air. She was having a hard time containing herself because she wanted to share her answer so badly. Kate called on Tina who was bursting to share, “Yes, it is 510 because it changes the hundreds.” Satisfied having shared her answer, Tina was able to relax again.

“I’m looking for another pattern” Kate said, “Turn and talk”. The din of voices was less noticeable this time around. “You need to be using your voices. If you are not talking then you are not learning,” Kate reminded them.

“What is an even number?” Peggy asked.

“Who can answer her question?” — Kate turned it over to the class.

Debbie answered, “It’s a number you can divide in half.”

“So, are all these numbers even, Debbie?”

“Yes, because you can divide them all in half,” Debbie responded.

Tina noticed, “Wait — you can’t halve 510, to which Kate replied, “Let’s see. Halve the hundreds and then halve the tens”.

“Oh, I see now,” said Tina, a bit sheepishly.

“Say yours, Stevie,” Kate encouraged. Stevie explained a pattern she had noticed where if you start from the bottom of a column and move diagonally to the right, the number in the hundreds place increases by 100.

Kate transitioned the class to small group work. Kate sat on the floor at the front of the classroom with a few students. All the other students were working in pairs or small groups at tables. “We are all sitting down now. Still waiting ... We are learning to have our full focus on.” Kate went around and passed out slips of paper with a word problem on it. “If you are solving the problem already you are at the wrong stage. We are reading the problem first. If you are going to do that, I have given you the choice to work independently.”

The question was about Cherish and her Nan driving to the local mall and disagreeing about the distance they had to drive/driven. The students had to decide which one was correct by estimating how far the mall was from their neighbourhood.

Settling back down on the floor Kate asked the group she was working with— “Who has walked to the mall before? Is it a long way or not?”

A student observed — “Depends how fast the car is going.”

“The speed is important, but the distance too, eh?”, Kate said. “Any questions?” — she continued.

“I don’t understand what Nan means,” Pikachu responded.

“Can we just all pause for a minute. Pikachu doesn’t understand what Nan means. Who can explain it to her?” Kate gave Pikachu’s peers a chance to answer her question.

“Nan thinks it’s a kilometre there and back” Goofy clarified. With that, the students in the group all began working on figuring out the problem.

Kate got up and started checking on the other students. Each group had a set of maps they could use to help them calculate the distance. “Well done, you turned it right around,” Kate said to a student who had had some trouble getting started. Then, she checked in with another student and said, “Well done. Fantastic”.

One student accidentally dropped something on the ground that made a loud noise and startled the class. He looked at Kate as if he is expecting to be chastised, but all she said was “Don’t worry about it.”

Kate looked around the room and said, “I think we are nearly done. One minute until sharing.” Students quickly finished their conversations and then Kate began, “Are you ready? Are you confident? Go you! Let’s sit up and face our bodies toward the group. Everyone sitting up and facing Charlie’s group.”

Kate sat back down on the floor with the group she was working with. “We might all have time to share. Now, loud voice. Loud and proud. How far is the mall?”

Charlie said, “I got 500 meters.” Another student in his group offered, “I got 600 meters.”

Kate asked “Did you go along the road or just straight there? Grab a ruler and check it again.” The students got out their rulers and started re-checking.

“What if you had to go to KFC? How long would that be?”

Charlie’s group started having a laughing fit. “Are you laughing because we’re going to KFC?” Kate wondered.

“No, Ms, Kate it’s because I farted,” Charlie confessed.

“Well, that’s worse than going to KFC!” Kate joked, and the class broke into laughter, releasing the tension.

“I got something different” Stevie shared.

Kate walked over to Stevie and said, “You got something very different. Let’s see!” Stevie had used a Chromebook to map the distance to the mall. She showed the class the route she had taken on the screen. “I got 800 meters” Stevie shared.

After re-checking his work Charlie shouted, ‘I got it! I got it Miss!’

Kate went over to look at the work Charlie had done and gave him a high-five.

It was time to pack up and get ready to go. As students were getting sorted, Kate wrapped up the day by saying, “Sadie (a student who had joined the class that day), I would like to give you a special welcome to our class. Charlie, it was so good having you in our Maths group today, you had us all thinking.” Then the bell rang, but before the students started heading out

Kate said, “Let’s clap him out.” The class started clapping for Charlie, who was heading out the door equal parts embarrassed and proud.

We Have All the People On Our Shoulders

It was a relaxed, quiet morning at Pīwakawaka. The morning bell had rung, and the children had all made their way to class. After karakia and roll, Kate set students up to complete their work for the week. The way Kate ran the class was that student had to complete a certain number of assignments each week. The assignments ranged from writing, responses to reading, language/grammar worksheets, Math problems, and online assignments through *Study Ladder*, an online mathematics and literacy program. Students were able to complete the tasks in any order they wished; they just had to get them done. When a student completed an assignment, a green box appeared for the assignment by the student’s name on the spreadsheet that Kate had displayed on the TV screen. There was a productive hum in the classroom as students busily completed their work. “If you are in *kapa haka*, line up.” Kate said. Seven students lined up and walked the short distance to the school hall for *kapa haka* practice.

When we arrived in the hall, students took off their shoes and lined up in the front where kaiako Ahika was waiting for them. Ahika was wearing shorts and a t-shirt, with short black hair. His face carried a look of steadfastness and determination. There were nineteen students here today — twelve girls and seven boys. The girls lined up in the front with the boys just behind them. They began by singing *Whakaaria Mai* together. They stood close together and shifted their weight left and right as they sang, bringing a steady wave of motion to this melancholy hymn. “Boys, stand with your heads up and smile,” Ahika insisted. He spoke directly and with gravitas. The students did as he asked without delay or complaint.

“Everybody is relying on us to uplift the Māori taonga. We got this,” Kaiako Ahika added.

They went on to the next song and Ahika split the girls and the boys up and worked with them separately. After a few rounds of practice he brought them all back to practise together. “Remember to keep those pukana going” he directed. After practising for a few more minutes, he asked all the boys but one to sit down. He looked at the boys who were sitting down and said - “He is louder than all of you.” Motioning to the boy who remained standing, Ahika said - “He is carrying you all.”

The last song they practised was *E Rere Taku Poi*. This song had a lot of choreography to it.

The boys and girls had to come together from the sides to form a long line. From there, the girls went to the front. Halfway through the performance, the boys and girls had to switch positions. Ahika often had to help the students remember their spots and move them to the correct spots when they were out of place. They practised this song over and over again. Sometimes Ahika would stop them and have them start over if they were not getting it right. It seemed like it was hard work for the students as well as for Ahika. He ended the session with a speech:

What you are doing is bigger than all of us. We have all the people on our shoulders. We aim to inspire people... You are going to leave a legacy. Others are not going to want to do this if you don't stand strong... You represent Māoridom. It is hard work setting the bar. You are only little kids and usually we teach this to adults ... I see potential in this rōpū.

And with that, Ahika dismissed the students and they all headed back to their classes.

Since kapa haka wasn't compulsory, I was curious about why students decided to join. I asked three students in Kate's class why they chose to join kapa haka. One student said that she had joined to be closer to her dad. Another said that he wanted to be loud and that *kapa haka* helped him to work out his emotions. A third student said she joined because she liked to sing. Although they all had their personal reasons for joining, being part of *kapa haka* came with a certain amount of status and respect. Although it was not easy, it seemed they welcomed having the responsibility for having all the people on their shoulders.

Cotton Eye-Joe

It was a crisp, clear Spring morning and Kate was leading Fitness. All of the one hundred fifty students were lined up on the blacktop in the centre of the school. The student's clothes varied by individual constitution; some wore shorts and a t-shirt whilst others wore long pants and a hoodie. The youngest among the students stood in loose lines in the front near Kate, with the much taller senior school students at the rear. Some senior school students rolled out a sound system on a sturdy looking cart and brought it to Kate. Music started to play as soon as Kate took out her phone and connected it to the sound system. She guided the students through some stretches and all I could see was a mass of small bodies twisting and bending as they tried to mirror Kate's movements. The Year One children were earnest and eager in their attempts to mimic Kate, but the older children, whilst also doing the movements, were more

reserved. The other teachers and teacher assistants were spaced around the students with some playfully joining in.

The first song that came on was *Shotgun* by George Ezra. “Okay alligator, see you later. Gotta hit the road ...” were the lyrics that floated across the yard. The steady calm beat and rhyme of this song was perfect to get the students moving. Kate called up a student from the crowd, who joined her at the front. As soon as they reached the front of the group, the student turned around and started doing star jumps. Following this student’s lead, everyone else started doing star jumps on (or near) the beat. The student changed moves a few times and then the song was over.

The next song that came over the speakers was *That’s What Makes You Beautiful* by *One Direction*. Talk about a song being perfectly crafted for the primary school audience. Its staccato guitar paired with a positive message is just the kind of saccharine pop that young children (and their teachers) adore. With the change in song, Kate invited a different student to the front. This youngster started off with some exuberant jumps, like she was reaching for the sky. Everyone was involved, from the children to the TA’s to the teachers. Some days the principal even came out and joined Fitness, although she was not there this day. It was hard not to smile watching everyone.

Next a voice with an exaggerated American Southern accent radiated from the speakers:

*If it hadn't been for Cotton-Eye Joe
I'd been married long time ago
Where did you come from, where did you go?
Where did you come from, Cotton-Eye Joe?*

The shrill of violins overlaying a synth dance track came in as the song continued. My insides recoiled at the sound of this song, and a low-level nausea started to come over me, but I wasn’t sure why. The song itself was familiar, I had heard it many times growing up in the United States. I always thought of it as the quintessential Southern ballad, stereotypically so. The song seemed to be made to bring out the twang of the singer and the whine of the fiddle. I had even heard this dance version before, although I couldn’t say, then or now, that I liked it. But liking it was beside the point. It was an earworm that would stay with you long after the song was over. Something about this song, for lack of a better explanation, just felt wrong. It sat there like a rock on my chest.

Maybe it was the mismatched context. What was a song originating from the American South

doing at a small primary school in New Zealand? Maybe it was this synthetic medley of the dance version, removed from context and meaning when performed by a group of Swedes called the *Rednex*, that made me feel uneasy. And what exactly was a Cotton-Eye? Whatever it was, it didn't sound good. Perhaps I could find the answers to my uneasiness in the origins of the song.

A good first lesson that this query offers is to not expect a single 'right' answer. Much of the history surrounding the origins of Cotton-Eye Joe is murky. What we do know is that the song existed before the Civil War and was sung as a work song by the enslaved people who worked on plantations (Jackson, 2015; Talley, 1996). Before the advent of commercial recording, songs were passed along from musician to musician, leaving room for interpretation and reinterpretation as the song travelled through. As such, there are different versions of the song depending on the time and region. Although Cotton-Eye Joe may have been based on an actual person, there is no single version of the song.

Likewise, there are several different ways to interpret the song, largely dependent on whose point of view is taken. Viewed from an enslaved African American woman's perspective, Cotton Eye Joe is a song depicting unrequited love, but also functions as a commentary on race, sex, and the failure of American democracy (Jackson, 2015). From an enslaved African American man's perspective, Cotton-Eye Joe would have been a rival suitor who ran away with the narrator's love interest (Partridge, 2016). The song has also been interpreted from a jilted White enslaver's point of view, with the Joe being an enslaved man who ran away with the narrator's love, who may have been enslaved herself (Boboltz, 2015).

The song also has a history of being used in minstrels, where White actors would dress up in blackface, using racist tropes of Black people for the entertainment of White Americans (Bean et al., 1996). And here the issues of perspective get more complex. Cotton-Eye Joe is an African American work song, that in Minstrel Shows was parodied by White actors in blackface for the White gaze. What the *Rednex* do in their rendition is not dissimilar. They have adopted the characterisation of the stereotypical White southern person to parody in their song, but an uncritical parody of a racist parody is still racist.

What was this about being Cotton-Eyed? There are several interpretations of what this may mean. Cotton-eyed is a way of describing the prominence of the Whiteness of the eye. Joe may have light coloured eyes, such as blue or grey (Lomax & Poston, 1964). Perhaps he may have had an eye condition such as cataracts, glaucoma, or trachoma which can make the eyes look cloudy (Abernethy & Beaty, 1994; Thede, 1967). Cotton-eye may also have something

to do with Joe being drunk or going blind from alcohol. It also could have been a way to communicate that Joe was Black, with the Cotton-Eye being in reference to the contrast between the Whiteness of his eyes to the darkness of his skin (Boboltz, 2015). I suggest that, as we saw with the different interpretations of the song, the meaning is not singular and depends on the perspective of the narrator (and audience). Perhaps for some it meant Joe had light eyes, and for others it was meant to highlight his Blackness.

The reach of this song is far and wide. After all, it did find me all the way in New Zealand. It lives on almost as background noise, something familiar, perhaps even bothersome, but something that escapes closer scrutiny. It lives on as entertainment for the masses. This song was most likely sung to help my enslaved ancestors get through backbreaking and tedious work on plantations. This song was used to mock and deride Black folks for Whites' entertainment. This song was made into a techno dance hit by a Swedish musical group. This song made me feel sick. This song, right now, was the backdrop for Māori and Pacific children and Pākehā teachers in New Zealand to do fitness to.

They had no idea what this song was about, or what this song would mean for somebody like me. It was just a mindless tap on the phone, a silly song with a good beat that the kids would want to dance to. And that's just it. It's so easy to look past, or indeed not know the history of things. You are not supposed to know. But I knew, or that is to say, my body knew what was going on even before I did. This song that was plucked from the fields of the South, and was rejigged through time and space, culture and race, had landed here with me. I wished I could hear the song as it was originally sung and not this abomination. That I could hear the strength and determination, the collaboration in the voices of the people who worked those fields. So, I closed my eyes and blocked out the cacophony, and that's exactly what I did.

Chapter Seven: Practices

The previous vignettes present the different ways that culture, and ideas about culture, showed up at the schools where I conducted my research. In this section I will focus on the practices within the schools and how they convey certain understandings about culture. This chapter as well as the following one answer the research question, *how is culture constructed in Primary schools?* In analysing the observational data from this project I found that the schools use of the colour white, murals, cultural events, and kapa haka all represented different conceptualizations of culture.

Use Of the Colour White

Tuī is a white space, quite literally, through the prominence of the colour white as feature of the buildings. Pīwakawaka's buildings were combination of beige and brick. This detail may seem minor or trivial, but colour brings with it certain meanings. White carries with it connotations that have been socially produced through dominant ideologies. Interestingly, there are intersections in the ways that the colour white operates a design feature within institutions and how Whiteness operates as a global socio-political system. Fundamentally, Whiteness as system and whiteness in design both seek to claim spacial dominance (Connellan, 2007).

White has been long been considered a non-colour, an “absent presence” (Connellan, 2013 p. 1530), seen but unseen, in the ways institutions organize space. Design, as a discipline, conceptualises white as negative space - that which is nothing, empty waiting to be filled (Connellan, 2013). As such Whiteness is the unacknowledged backdrop through which ‘colours’ are highlighted. An apt example of this phenomenon is a colouring book we are asked to fill in the white page with colour without giving a second thought to the colour already on the page (Milne, 2013). This ‘strategic blindness’ is further highlighted through the lack of attention given White as a prominent design feature in modern architecture (Wigley, 2001).

Next, the colour white conveys a sense of superiority and purity. Modernist architect Le Corbusier expounds on the virtues of white as being ‘free’ and ‘pure’ and that the ‘white wall ... makes you think clearly’ (in Connellan, 2013 p. 1532). During the European

Enlightenment, Science and Christianity reinforced for each other the primacy of white. In Christianity, white became symbolic of purity and the cleansing of sin from one's soul. Thus, when Isaac Newton privileged white light over all others in his experiments, he rationalised the Christian notion of white being pure and superior to other kinds of light. The ideology of White supremacy manifested itself materially through the ways spaces such as churches, hospitals, government buildings incorporated white into its architecture. As they colonised other territories, Europeans brought with them their interpretations of white and their use of it in design (Connellan, 2013).

Lastly, white within the aesthetics of institutional design is a mechanism of power and control. Connellan (2013) contends that white is an articulation of institutional power. By homogenising both place and the practices therein, institutions manifest a particular kind of power to orient people's bodies in different ways (Ahmed, 2007). Institutions leverage whiteness in design in specific ways in order to achieve outcomes aligned with their purposes. The colour white in churches connects the place and the people within to the pure, superior light of god; white in Western style government buildings reflects the assumed power and stability of Classical traditions; white in the university setting is a symbol of homogenization of knowledge and order (Connellan, 2013).

Schools in New Zealand can be thought of as being enmeshed with several national institutions. Through the history of the establishment of European forms of education can be connected with the church. The first European schools in New Zealand were in fact established by the Anglican Church in an effort to convert and civilise Māori. Teaching the ways of Christianity as well as the English language were some of the first goals of these schools. After the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840, schools became a tool through which the newly formed New Zealand government could assert power. English only initiatives, different curricula for Māori and Pākehā, and the establishment of separate Native Schools were a few means through which the Crown sought to colonize and control. Schools in New Zealand were also a means of homogenising knowledge and prioritising the European colonial epistemology over all other others. Schools were established as a way to create the order and tidiness that Māori lacked in the European worldview. In my time in the schools, I read the prevalence of white as design feature at Tuī and the lack of white at Pīwakawaka conveys meanings that stem from European the use of white for dominance, superiority, and control.

Murals

Murals are a visual medium of storytelling which function on several levels simultaneously. The walls they adorn, just like the artistry of the mural, convey meaning. Tamaira's (2017) framing of walls gives a valuable starting point for thinking about these issues. She contends that walls shape both the physical and social spaces that we inhabit. Further, she argues that walls serve as expression of human power and control and delineate who belongs and who doesn't as well as showing us who has the power to decide what walls are built where. By their mere existence, walls claim and define space, be it the Border Wall in the US or the walls of a school building, concretising the dominance of one group over another. Tamaira (2017) describes settler colonialism as an ideological wall which is expressed through the built environment. In thinking about walls in this way we can see how murals can be used to discursively claim or reclaim space.

Much of the research on murals focuses on communities of colour, not White communities (Salim, 2017). Therefore, much of what is discussed is mural work as protest, reclamation, and empowerment of minoritized populations within White dominant socio-political structures. For the purposes of this study however I am interested in including how murals produced by Pākehā claim space, both the physical and discursive.

The murals at Tuī manufacture a sense of belonging for Pākehā. The murals tell the stories of the school from a distinctly Pākehā perspective. Pākehā families get to see their history being shared and declared on the walls of the school. Indeed, the directive of schools to educate children make these historical murals all the more potent as it is aligned with the understood objectives of schools. If their families have lived in the suburb for generations, Pākehā student would get a sense of how their parents or great grandparents lived. Students would be able to identify local landmarks on the maps at Tuī and feel a sense of connection to the place where they live. Although these murals profess historical aims, and with that an heir of objectivity, these depictions, through silencing the colonial aspects of New Zealand history, depict a curated version of history acceptable for Pākehā audiences.

The murals at Tuī also work to create a sense of identity for Pākehā. By leaning heavily on colonial mythmaking, the murals reinscribe the idea of the early settlers of New Zealand being a sort of hero, overcoming nature to make a better and more advanced place. It was through their hard work, ingenuity, and community-mindedness that they were able to be

successful (Bell, 1997). This nostalgia brings with it positive associations and pride with being descended from the hearty stock of these early settlers.

In the first mural, the land has been settled by Whites. The land itself has been manicured in ways consistent European ideas of husbandry of land with houses, churches, farmland, roads, fences, and trees demarcating property lines. There is a kind of nostalgia present in the mural, harkening back to different time, in some ways simpler and in other ways harder, but in all ways without Māori. There is no mention of Māori anywhere in the mural, even as it talks about life in the suburb over one hundred years ago. By erasing the existence of Māori through their exclusion, this mural paints the picture of this area being a White Possession. This colonial gaze helps to solidify settler sense of belonging and entitlement to control the area.

Progress was central theme to murals celebrating the 100-year anniversary of the school. From looking back at the ways students got to school 100 years ago, to tracing the arrival of the jet age these murals stress the advances that the world made over these hundred years. The representation of progress in these murals mirrors the narrative of colonial myth making that stresses how colonisation was overall beneficial for New Zealand. The idea of ‘progress’ has been a core tenant to the colonial project and is still very much alive today. Educational spokesperson for the National Party Paul Goldsmith stated that with colonisation came “...all sorts of wonderful things such as literacy, such as freedoms and democracy, ... so it was good and bad” (Hogan, 2021). However, when pressed, Goldsmith opines that colonisation was good for Māori “on balance”. The idea that all ‘progress’ is good, despite the cost in human life, culture, language, and sovereignty underpin the myth that colonisation was net positive.

The murals at Tuī also communicate an origin story for the school and surrounding suburb. In her research into murals in East Los Angeles, an area with a predominantly Chicano/Latinx population, Salim (2017) found that one of the prevalent themes was that of origins. These origin stories play a part in the socialisation process of those with a shared identity and validate their knowledge and perspectives. She argues that creating such origin stories allows a group to cultivate a sense of place and place-based identity. Although the populations are different, Pākehā employ the same strategy in the murals at Tuī. Without claims to indigeneity, settlers must find alternate means to justify their continued presence and control, and murals are a discursive way to do this. By locating themselves visually within the

creation and development of the suburb, Pākehā create an origin story palatable for their own consumption. The absence of Māori mean they don't have to confront the uncomfortable history of how the suburb came to be.

Nietschmann's (1995) assertion that "more indigenous territory has been claimed by maps than by guns..." resonates with what is happening in three of these murals. Bellone et al. (2020) proves instructive to the analysis of tacit colonialism present within maps. The authors suggest that maps are not and cannot be separated from the people who make them. There is no objective Truth, no impartial observer, rather maps reflect the position of the maker within larger society. Maps therefore come out of situated, embodied, and necessarily partial knowledge. This makes the maps that we view subject to, and reflective of, the power relations of dominant society. All maps belong to the particular culture from which they were created and their conceptualizations of space and time. A central paradox of mapmaking then is that 'all maps must lie' (Monmnier in Bellone et al., 2020) in that they favour some stories over other, thus uplifting some whilst silencing others. The perspective taken in cartography centres the colonizer and reflects their "desire to control, objectify, manipulate and exploit colonised people's environments." (Bellone, et al. 2020, p. 31). This is in line with Said's (1978) contention that Europe, through its production of the 'Orient', attempts to have power over the world by 'knowing' it. Therefore, mapmaking creates a particular story of the world, a colonized understanding that shapes our ways of knowing, seeing and relating to the world we inhabit.

The use of maps in these two murals illustrate many of Ballone et al.'s (2020) points. First, the murals were 'told' from a settler perspective. Settler sensibilities of manicured land and building layouts were predominant in these murals. Given the settlers need to claim ownership of the land, these maps help legitimate settler presence in the area and create a sense of belonging. It makes sense then that no Māori were included in either of these murals because to do so would contest settlers claims to the land. In mapping the land and leaving out any representations of Māori, these murals operate to 'control, objectify, manipulate and exploit' Indigenous land. The erasure of Māori is key to this project, otherwise settlers would have to confront the violent colonial history of New Zealand. Such historical amnesia protects settlers and allows them to cling to 'lovely knowledge' (Lehrer & Milton, 2011). The murals work to solidify Tuī as a White possession. Through utilising the 'logics of possession' (Moreton-Robinson, 2015) the murals not only mark, but tell a story about the school and the surrounding suburb as belonging to Whites.

Murals serve similar yet distinct functions at Pīwakawaka School. Thinking of walls as Tamaira (2017) does, as a means for marking and delineating space, and concretising and contesting power relations, the murals at Pīwakawaka serve to reclaim space for Māori and Pacific within the colonial education system. Murals are used to create sense of belonging for Māori and Pacific students at the school. All of the murals that include people at Pīwakawaka feature either Māori or Pacific people. The stories within the murals are told from a Māori or Pacific perspectives. In the mural that features the slit drum at the centre, Samoan flower iconography and patterns signal the cultural affiliation of the mural. In the Kaitiakai mural, a Māori figure stands at the centre and is surrounded by natural and religious aspects. Both of these murals through their words and imagery attempt to relay values associated with education. Importantly, these murals are representative of two of the main cultures at this school. To have these murals incorporate aspects of Māori and Pacific cultures creates a sense of belonging and reflects aspects of the identities for the students who attend this school.

The murals also create a very clear origin story, ‘The Legend of Pīwakawaka’. From the sharing of the story of the area where the school is located by an Ariki from a local iwi, students collaborated to make a poster that tells the story of the school. From that poster came masterful carving that is located prominently in the school hall. The depictions of this school story centre on the beauty and fertility of the land as well as the manaakitanga shown by the māreikura. From this shared origin story comes a sense of connection to place as well as the shared value of manaakitanga. This story permeates the schools and from a place of connectedness to history, place, and tipuna gives meaning to the value of manaakitanga (Smith et al., 2021).

Cultural Events

The way that both schools conceptualised culture was conveyed through how they approached cultural events. I will discuss these differing understandings of culture through ‘Cultural Day’ at Tuī and Cultural Groups at Pīwakawaka.

Cultural Day

The assortment of cultures brought together for a one-off Cultural Day at Tuī highlighted a multicultural ideology. There is nothing inherently wrong with wanting to be multicultural, indeed it is the reality that New Zealand hosts many cultures who have come here as migrants or refugees. Multiculturalism is the ideology that a society uses to makes sense of being a

nation comprised of many cultures and the policies enacted that uphold these notions (Berman & Paradies, 2010).

Banks and Banks (2019) envisage Multicultural Education to be “an approach to school reform designed to actualize educational equality for students from diverse racial, ethnic, cultural, social-class, and linguistic groups.” (p.13). But there is a wide chasm between the promise of multiculturalism and the way it functions in schools. Rather than retaining its radical, transformative potential, multiculturalism in some schools has become the “superficial celebration of ethnic difference” (Watkins & Noble, 2019 p. 297). By de-racing and de-politicizing cultural differences, multiculturalism as enacted in schools has become a flourish, something you tape to the door as mere decoration. This kind of ‘lazy multiculturalism’ (Watkins & Noble, 2019) fails to incorporate analysis of systemic racism whilst essentialising difference. Lazy multiculturalism is enacted when events and artefacts take the place of systemic change. Artefacts such as having the flags of different countries on display, cultural days, food fairs, holiday celebrations, language weeks, etc... are all examples of ‘lazy multiculturalism’.

Cultural Day fits within the ethos of such lazy multiculturalism. By presenting different languages or cultures as ‘equals’, this kind of depiction camouflages the dominance of Whiteness and allows it to go unchallenged. No structural changes to schools will come by having a Cultural Day, but schools will benefit by being perceived as progressive, neoliberal institutions.

Multicultural education has been critiqued for being problematic for many reasons: it sets different groups up for conflict by the need to compete for power and resources, it does nothing meaningful to bring about social equity, it presents the ‘decorative’ aspects of cultural others, and it lacks the nuance necessary to accommodate the needs and claim of each unique cultural/ethnic group. (St. Denis, 2011). Multiculturalism is further problematized when taking into account Indigenous peoples in settler colonial societies. Lumping Indigenous people in with immigrants works to distract from Indigenous claims for sovereignty and redress and as such is a form of continued colonialism (St. Denis, 2011). Thus, despite its stated claims, multiculturalism functions to maintain education as a racist and colonialist system (St. Denis, 2011).

In a quantitative study of Pākehā in New Zealand Terruhn (2014) found that multiculturalism, not biculturalism was the predominant way Pākehā made sense of difference in New Zealand.

Where biculturalism was viewed as divisive, multiculturalism appealed to Pākehā's imagined sense of harmony. By framing biculturalism as outdated, Pākehā were able to appear as forward thinking, tolerant, and colour-blind for adhering to multiculturalism. This simultaneously works to erode Māori claims for redress and sovereignty by the Crown as it places Māori concerns equal to those of immigrant populations.

Ultimately, the practice of multicultural education works to maintain the dominance of Whiteness. Through asserting the 'Otherness' of different cultural groups, Whiteness remains the referent. The differences which multicultural education marks are not inconsequential, they mark difference from the hidden yet normalised standards of Whiteness. As such, multicultural education recentres Whiteness through the pretence of 'celebrating' difference. Even in its attempts to humanize the cultural 'Other', multicultural education asserts that 'they' are just like 'us'. The 'us' of course are White people, which illustrates how essential Whiteness is to the functioning of multicultural education. Simultaneously, multicultural education ignores the existence of systemic power imbalances, thereby shrouding Whiteness and avoiding critical examination (Castagno, 2013). When paired with a belief in meritocracy, multicultural education, by reifying differences as existing within individuals and cultures, creates the means by which to continue deficit discourses about marginalised populations. (Castagno, 2013).

Tuī had a hunger for culture that was satisfied only by 'eating the other' (hooks, 2015). By consuming the easily digestible and tasty bits of other people's culture, this hunger was temporarily satiated. 'The other' was there for the enjoyment, pleasure, edification, and general use of Whites. Whilst claiming Cultural Day was a celebration of culture, the unstated purpose appeared was for Whites to have gain knowledge through their pleasurable encounters with cultural others (hooks, 2015). Akin to this, Jones (1999) theorizes that Pākehā experience 'cannibal desire' to consume the other whilst simultaneously refusing to know them.

Cultural Groups

Cultural Groups took place weekly at Pīwakawaka. All of the students were split up into one of several groups: Māori, Cook Islands, Niuean, Samoan, Tongan, Tokelauan, and European. Students were in groups that rotated through each Cultural Group, so every student would have the opportunity to be in each cultural group by the end of the year. The TA's, who were from these cultures, planned and taught the groups. Occasionally, if a TA wasn't there a

senior student, with the help of a teacher would lead the cultural group. In what I saw of the different Cultural Groups they would teach language, song, and dance. At the end of the year there is celebration where student shared what they learned from each culture

The ideology underpinning the use of Cultural Groups was also multiculturalism, but a kind of multiculturalism that had a connection to the cultures of students at the school. The multiculturalism expressed at Pīwakawaka would be more closely aligned with Banks & Banks (2019) vision for what multicultural education is. So often, Pacific peoples get lumped into the designation Pasifika or Pacific, but at Pīwakawaka the distinctiveness of different Pacific cultures is recognized. There is also a culturally responsive element to the creation of the cultural groups. The parents and TA's liked having cultural groups, so leadership at the school responded by making them part of the schedule. Rather than being a one-off event, learning about culture became a regular part of the school routine.

There are however places where the multiculturalism at Pīwakawaka deserves closer examination. One such area is the responsibility of TA's in students in the teaching of culture. Karamcheti (1995) discusses the role of racialised "Others" in academia as being that of 'native informant'. She explains:

We are flesh and blood information retrieval systems, native informants who demonstrate and act out difference, often with an imperfectly concealed political agenda... We always teach, at some level, the personal but usually unspoken story of ourselves in the world. We teach with ourselves as our own most effective visual aids.
(Karamcheti, 1995 p.138)

This is the same role that the teacher aides, and to a certain extent, students play at this school. They are the 'native informants' meant to use themselves to instruct in ways the Pākehā teachers cannot. As Kate explained,

I offered to do it, planning this cushion concert and the Samoan Betty, who's the cleaner and one of our teacher aides, did a Samoan group and then I was going well, you know, Marge, you should do a Niuean group, and she did. There were all these different cultures, and it was amazing, parents loved it. Teacher Aides loved being valued, kids loved their culture being valued.

Again, the teacher aides acted as ‘native informants’, using their cultural difference, and themselves as the model the mode of instruction. There is the ‘Samoan Betty’ and less explicitly stated, the Niuean Marge, both marked by and instructive because of their culture. This reinforces the notion of non-Whites as being the experts in ‘culture’, whilst camouflaging the central position of Whiteness. Notably, no one identified the teachers by their culture- Kate was never called English Kate.

I was not invited to be part of the ‘Euro Group’. The one time I went into the Euro Group in search of somebody, they were watching a cover of the *True Colors* by Cindi Lauper. A diverse crew of young people were wearing White clothes and singing along to the songs whilst waves of different colours paint splattered against them. It isn’t a lot to go on, and don’t wish to generalize about what happened in there. I will say that this is illustrative of the ways people tend to think about Whiteness and culture, that Whiteness has no colour until other cultures add it. Euro Group functioned primarily as a filler. The school was not able to secure the people needed to have a Fijian Cultural Group and so they created the Euro Group to put in the schedule instead.

What is taught in the Cultural Groups exposes what is thought of as culture. Language, song, and dance are important aspects of any culture and are taught in cultural groups. These material elements of culture are the easiest to recognise and teach. There were also some instructional practices that reflected elements of Māori and Pacific worldviews. One of these was each student learning how to introduce themselves in language of the Cultural Group. In Māori, such an introduction is called a pepeha links the person to both the land and their family (Murton, 2012). Another instructional practice was that of having the older student’s pair with the younger students to serve as helper.

Whilst it is important that students learn about their own and other cultures, it is equally important that there is systems level change that acknowledges and counteracts systemic racism. Cultural groups in and of themselves can be constructive in building student’s identity and self-image, but need to be paired with changes to policies, instruction, curriculum, and attitudes of educators in order to bring about school-wide change (Banks & Banks, 2019). There is much to be gained in helping students think critically about the racial and cultural viewpoints of the information they are exposed to. Banks and Banks (2019) calls this the Knowledge Construction Process whereby students learn to evaluate information for viewpoint and biases.

At both schools, it was the material aspects of culture that received the most attention. Pīwakawaka did have some of the symbolic aspects of culture reflected in its Cultural Groups and elsewhere. Attention to the symbolic aspects of culture is critical as it is the symbolic elements that people use make sense of the material. Without understanding the symbolic aspects of a culture, a person may use their cultural viewpoint to evaluate aspects of another culture. This means of evaluation is deeply flawed and imposes one set of cultural values over another. It is where people get the idea that the ways other cultures do things is ‘weird’ or doesn’t make sense. The taken for granted status of White supremacy is what makes putting Māori and Pacific worldviews on the same level as Western worldviews so difficult. Said another way, to take Māori and Pacific worldviews as equal to White worldviews disrupts the epistemological White supremacy that has been the bedrock of colonial education systems. The power of White settlers to determine whose worldviews are centred and valued is a manifestation of Whiteness as Possession and the Settler Contract.

Kapa Haka

Kapa haka is “a cultural taonga (treasure) passed down through the ages from one generation to the next where individuals are able to share their life stories through creative self-expression and pure emotion.” (Whitinui, 2010 p. 4). It is a cultural icon (Pihama et al., 2014), a performing art and a cultural practice (Sakamoto, 2012) rooted in Māori culture, ontology, and epistemology. Kapa haka is taught in schools as a means of supporting Māori students’ identity, sense of belonging, and wellbeing (Whitinui, 2010). Additionally, kapa haka has been utilised by schools to teach non-Māori students about Māori culture (Sakamoto, 2012).

There are numerous benefits to kapa haka being taught in schools. Kapa haka is considered a critical component in Māori student success (Pihama et al., 2014; Whitinui, 2010). Schools that embedded kapa haka into the curriculum showed more appreciation of Māori language, culture and traditions (Whitinui, 2010). Also, schools that incorporated in kapa haka or other forms of cultural involvement showed lower levels of learning and behaviour issues (Ministry of Education, 2000).

Both schools utilised kapa haka, albeit very differently. At Tuī kapa haka was compulsory and students went with their class to the school hall once a week. On top of the weekly compulsory sessions, student could volunteer to do further work in kapa haka with the te reo Māori teacher. Pīwakawaka took a different approach where students participated in kapa

haka on a voluntary basis each week. In addition to the kapa haka, Pīwakawaka engaged with a variety of cultures, including Māori, each week through Cultural Groups.

At Tuī, Mary was personally very committed to kapa haka. She knew all the songs and movements and was up front every session. Once the kapa haka teacher was out and Mary took over the instruction of kapa haka for the group of over one hundred students. For the most part students participated in kapa haka and did what they were asked to do. Some of Mary's students chose to participate in the extra kapa haka sessions with the te reo teacher.

But what was also evident was that there was resistance to participating in kapa haka, especially by a few Pākehā boys. Kapa haka did not have a high status at Tuī. The feeling was like, *Its a Wednesday kapa haka day*, it was not a big deal. The compulsory element of kapa haka made it so that it was an expectation that everyone went. All of the students who were there went, and most of those students participated. Yet there was a reservedness that Kaiako Bobby encountered from the students. He consistently tried to get the group to raise their voices and move with more vigour. Participation felt more like compliance than engagement.

At Pīwakawaka Kate coordinated with Kaiako Ahika to set up the kapa haka schedule and to make sure he had the resources he needed, but she didn't participate in kapa haka with the students. Because kapa haka was voluntary, all the students who were part of the group appeared to really want to be there. All of them actively participated in kapa haka for the entire session. Indeed, because the group was so small (about 20 students), there was nowhere for them to hide if they didn't participate. The kapa haka group was not exclusively Māori and consisted of students from the various other cultures at the school.

Kaiako Ahika made it seem like participation in kapa haka was a privilege and responsibility both through his actions and his words. He worked the rōpū hard, having them practice the same parts over and over again until they got it right. He told them how important what they were doing was. "What you are doing is bigger than all of us. We have all the people on our shoulders... You represent Māoridom." It was represented as very big work indeed.

Kapa haka enjoyed a high status at Pīwakawaka. One of the students commented that he wanted to join the rōpū after seeing them perform because they looked 'awesome' and he wanted to be awesome too. Another student afforded it personal value of wanting to use kapa haka to learn more about her culture and connect with her dad. A different student wanted to be part of kapa haka so he could work out his emotions. These were all very valid and personal reasons that allowed them to connect to kapa haka. It showed in their performance

as well, as a rōpū they were small but mighty with their voices filling up the entire school hall.

The way that each of the school implemented kapa haka as a practice had an outcome on its status in the school. The fact the Tuī's kapa haka was compulsory and Pīwakawaka's was voluntary was a factor, but I suggest, not the biggest factor. The real difference between the two schools was the status of Māori language and culture in general. There was active resistance to acceptance of Māori culture as the group of Pākehā boys in Mary's class showed us. The same was not true in the case of Pīwakawaka. Culture at Pīwakawaka was recognized as a central feature to student's education. Rather than seeming like something that was added on to their school schedule, kapa haka was given a lot of respect, and being part of the rōpū was understood as a responsibility.

Kapa haka is an important yet undervalued resource within schools (Pihama et al., 2014). It has been shown to be helpful for Māori student success and has the potential to benefit all students within a school if it is done in a way that does not tokenise Māori culture. Doing so can teach students about Māori culture through the taonga of kapa haka. Kapa haka can also add to the overall wellbeing of the students at schools. Students who find it difficult to sit and learn will be able to use the active aspects of kapa haka to learn in a different way. Kapa haka can be a strenuous task and as such can add to students amount of physical activity (Moy, et al. in Whitinui, 2010). As one of the students at Pīwakawaka noted, kapa haka may also help students to express and regulate their emotions.

Beyond aspects of wellbeing, kapa haka has other specific benefits for Pākehā students. Kapa haka provides an opportunity for Pākehā students to learn humility about their culture that White supremacy has robbed them of. By having kapa haka be a valued part of the curriculum at school, Māori worldviews and culture can become central to the ways they think about the world. Normalising Māori worldviews has the potential to disrupt White hegemony. Teachers will be able to disrupt colonial myths and replace them with context and empirical accounts of history. As a result, when these Pākehā children become adults, they will be better able to function in both Māori and Pākehā contexts. This would bring New Zealand society closer to its aspiration of being a bicultural society.

Educators should examine their underlying assumptions in regard to what they believe knowledge is and how it is produced. By looking at these assumptions they should pay particular attention to how White supremacist notions of knowledge production become

apparent. Often the kinds of epistemology that we take for granted is laden with Eurocentric Enlightenment based notions of what knowledge is. What if White ways of knowing were but one way, and there exist equally valid ways of producing knowledge? This will be difficult for a lot of people because it asks us to abandon normalised White supremacist epistemology, and instead situate it as not above, but in relation to Māori epistemology. If not dealt with, educator's epistemological biases will be communicated to students in overt and covert ways.

Next, as Whitinui (2010) suggests, kapa haka should be central to a school's curriculum and not be done as an after the fact 'add-on'. Doing so implicitly communicates the value of kapa haka and Māori culture and epistemology to students and the wider school community.

Schools should examine their schedule, funding, staffing and school policies so that they are in alignment with supporting kapa haka as a valuable academic resource.

Incorporating aspects of kapa haka and Māori culture in general into what is taught and how things are done in the classroom is important. Kapa haka should not be a once-a-week activity, rather an extension of learning that is already taking place. It would benefit educators to look at kapa haka as a resource that they can draw from other than a separate compliance activity.

Lastly, teachers need to 'walk the walk and talk the talk'. Students learn as much as by what we do as by what we say and educators must lead by example. Perhaps that means learning to kapa haka with the students, deepening knowledge of Māori culture, or learning to speak better te reo Māori. Students will engage more fully with Māori culture when educators themselves do. Pākehā must do this in a way that honours Māori whilst recognising that Māori culture is not theirs to consume. Pākehā must be cognizant that colonisation is not over and act carefully to not further harm Māori through their attempts to learn more about Māori language and culture.

Conclusion

Although each school and teacher expressed their understandings of culture differently, there were a few main ways that ideas about culture manifested in practices of the school. One such way was the way that the colour White was used (or not used) in the design of the school. As was discussed, in the Western modes of thought the colour White with it brings connotations of 'absent presence', purity, superiority, power, and control. Thus the colour White in design works like the racial system of Whiteness in that it claims spatial dominance (Connellan, 2007).

Another way notions about culture were enacted was through the schools use of murals. Tuī utilised murals in a way that manufactured a sense of belonging for Pākehā through literally claiming space, both physical and discursive within the school. Pākehā were offered sanitized origin story conspicuously absent of Māori and with a strong sense of settler pride. Maps were another way that murals worked to claim space by recreating notions of the land the school sits on from a distinctly Pākehā perspective, and therefore being a reflection of unequal settler/Indigenous power relations. Pīwakawaka also utilised murals to create a sense of belonging, only not for settlers, for the Māori and Pacific students that attended the school.

Cultural events at the schools also served to communicate different conceptualizations of culture. Tuī's use of Cultural Day signalled a superficial display of multiculturalism, meant to gratify the 'cannibal desires' of Pākehā to consume the 'Other' (Jones, 1999). Pīwakawaka used their Cultural Groups to teach some basics about the cultures of the students who attended the school. Whilst this was well received by the students, this practice stopped short of creating meaningful school-wide changes to combat the impact of racism preparing student to critically evaluate information they are given for cultural and racial bias.

The ways that kapa haka was practiced at the schools communicated vital information about the place Māori culture. At Tuī, kapa haka was compulsory and I observed resistance to participation by a few Pākehā boys. At Pīwakawaka kapa haka was voluntary and was viewed as an activity that garnered status and respect. Whether kapa haka was compulsory or not was less important in its success than the status of Māori culture at the school.

As I have just shared, the practices of the school communicate particular understandings of culture. In the next chapter I will explore how the Hidden Curriculum in the classroom also conveys crucial messages about teachers' conceptions of culture.

Chapter Eight: The Hidden Curriculum

The previous chapter dealt with the ways schools enact and construct understandings of culture through the differing practices that they have adopted. Following from that, this chapter deals with the ways culture is constructed in classrooms through enactment of the Hidden Curriculum. The Hidden Curriculum is conceptualised as the informal education that takes place simultaneous to the stated curriculum. Giroux (1978) explains that the hidden curriculum “refers to those unstated norms, values, and beliefs transmitted to students through the underlying structure of schooling, as opposed to the formally recognized and sanctioned dimensions of the schooling experience” (p. 148). Sharing a similar understanding of the Hidden Curriculum, Apple (1971) contends the Hidden Curriculum is “the norms and values that are implicitly, but effectively, taught in schools and that are not usually talked about in teachers’ statements of ends or goals” (p. 84). The insights of Giroux and Apple make clear the invisible yet deliberate nature of Hidden Curriculum in schools. In both conceptions, the Hidden Curriculum works to reproduce dominant social structures and ideologies in schools. Adding the lens provided by MacDonald (2019) the Hidden Curriculum works to uphold the Settler Contract of colonial power through enacting a regime of silencing.

The critique of the Hidden Curriculum is that it relies too heavily on the notion of reproduction and treats students as blank slates waiting to be filled with information. Further it does little to take into account students’ agency in response to the messages contained in the Hidden Curriculum. Additionally, it does not consider the diversity of prior experiences, values, relationships to non-dominant epistemologies. An article by Pratt (2019) seeks to allay some of these concerns through conceptualising the Hidden Curriculum through a Black American and Indigenous lens. Pratt argues that it may be more productive conceptualise how racialised students interact with the Hidden Curriculum as a negotiation with conflict and loss. Conflict in the sense that many Black and Indigenous students come to school already equipped with their own epistemologies and when they encounter the differing Eurocentric epistemology, their own is thrown into conflict. Students can choose to maintain their ways of knowing, risking being further excluded from the institution of schooling, or accept the assimilationist narratives at the risk of losing connection to their own cultural understandings. I would add to Pratt’s assertion that negotiating conflict and loss is the

constant state of Black and Indigenous people in White dominated forms of education. The choice however is not so cut and dry as accepting or rejecting these narratives, each of us must exist with the gradations of conflict and loss. Whites are not faced with the same conflict in their education as their epistemology and values are largely reinforced through the sanctioned and Hidden Curricula. It is in this spirit of conflict and loss, or congruence and reinforcement that I discuss the curriculum that I observed in schools.

Window Books

Even lessons crafted with the best of intentions can end up reinforcing notions of cultural/racial superiority. Mary used what she called ‘Window Books’ as a way to ‘see into somebody else’s life instead of a reflection of your own’. Inherent in this description is a construction of the self (i.e., Pākehā) as normative and the voyeuristic tendency to view the lives of ‘Others’ as separate from the self, as somewhere ‘out there’. Viewing reading books from other cultures in this way is not only indicative to a lack of relationship and connection to the people you are reading about, but also speaks to the limited view of others that one can have. Looking out a window, you can only see what is right in front of you and you are missing context, what happened before and after the action came into view.

Especially in teaching books about non-dominant cultures, context is important. If this is the only story that students will read about a group of people, it faces the possibility of becoming a single story. Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (2009) warns us of *The Danger of a Single Story* in her famous TED talk. She tells us that single stories “show a people as one thing, only one thing” which contributes to stereotyping. “The problem with stereotypes is not that they are untrue, but they are incomplete. They make one story become the only story.” (2009). If *The Bridge Home* is the only book students are reading about people who live in India, it runs the risk of becoming a single story. Students may be left understanding India to be the way it was portrayed in the book.

Counter to the single story are multiple stories. Those in positions of societal power are able to produce many stories about themselves and others. They don’t have to worry about being impacted by a single story simply because there are so well represented. Whiteness ensures that stories about White people continue to be regarded as ‘the cannon’, the standard by which ‘great’ literature is measured. As Adichie emphasises (2009), “Power is the ability to not just tell the story of that person, but to make it the definitive story of that person.” In this way, Whites get to have a variety of experiences and depth and everyone else gets to be viewed in

ways that fit with dominant conceptions. There are stories about White children who have abusive alcoholic fathers and mothers who stay with them. There are stories about homeless White children. But the difference is that these are not the only stories about Whites that students will be exposed to. They will have access to a variety of different stories about White people, so that story will not become the single story.

Another crucial point is that embedded within the White worldview are the unstated assumptions of White hegemony and White supremacy. This is problematic because they skew student interpretations toward White normative and White supremacist assumptions. When they are confronted with different cultural values, they judge other's values using the lens of their own. Coming from this standpoint the way others do things may seem strange or don't seem logical. Using the familiar frame of Whiteness, students could easily interpret the events in the book as proof that White culture's superiority. It's not just that the way other cultures do things is different, it's that *our way is better*. White supremacy and colonialism are often hidden in teachers and students unquestioned assumptions.

A White worldview often presents material out of historical context- it doesn't take into account the larger societal structures that have led to the outcomes that we see in this book. What have been the negative impacts of English colonisation on Indian society? What else would contribute to the social outcomes of the characters in this book? Doing so not only leaves Whiteness unseen, but also allows it to escape culpability for the damage it has caused.

The ways that Mary uses *The Bridge Home* once again reinforces Eurocentric notions of the world. She does not use the opportunities presented in the book to challenge dominant thinking or contextualize Indian culture. In the end, even though students read a book about a different culture, White superiority was reaffirmed through passively accepting 'the ways we do it here' as implicitly better than the way things are done in India. This is the danger of 'window books' used as a single story.

Teachers must be intentional about the way they approach reading books about racialised characters. Consider the hidden curriculum, what are the unstated things that students will learn by reading this book? Is this story a single story or part of a chorus of voices about this group? As teachers, we know how to counter common misconceptions in maths or reading, but how will we counter these misconceptions when it comes to culture/race? How will you deal with the unstated assumptions about White superiority that students may make? de Saxe (2021) reminds us that it is our responsibility as teachers to "penetrate the walls of Whiteness

that continue to reinforce the systems of power and marginalisation.” (p. 72). Before teaching from a book about a racialised group it is critical that teachers attend to the White hegemonic assumptions that they or their students may make and actively counter it when (not if) it emerges.

Just Because Poem

Mary asked students to write a ‘Just Because’ poem that countered stereotypes people may have about them. All of the poems that mention being White have similar elements: being White not meaning that they are racist or being better than other people. Strikingly, all of the students in the above examples wrote about being White and not Pākehā or New Zealand European, just as Mary does. All the Pākehā students in class didn’t write about being White, but at least four did. This is an indication of how some students used Mary’s example as a way to think about being White.

But this begs the question, what exactly do Mary and these students think being racist is? Thinking Whites are better than everyone else? Being a bully? Believing in slavery? Not being able to be friends with people of a different race? Anyone who openly held such beliefs would rightly be labelled a racist. But is that all being racist is, overt intentional acts of malice toward BIPOC? What these conceptions of racism fail to account for is the adaptability of racism to current social mores (DiAngelo, 2018). What would have been acceptable fifty years ago, is no longer acceptable now. But that doesn’t mean that racism has disappeared, just changed its appearance to better fit with the times. With the emergence of colour-blind ideologies in the late 1960’s, anything that seemed to acknowledge the existence of race was itself labelled ‘racist’. With this came discursive shifts that explained differences in people as not pertaining to race, but to culture and family upbringing. Whiteness remains the standard and deviation from that standard must be due to some cultural or familial deficit. Colour-blindness doesn’t attend to the reality that race has real and meaningful impact on peoples’ lives and fails to acknowledge the bias that is foundational to the current functioning of institutions. It does however teach people to accept the status quo as the natural outcome of differences between people, to say ‘Oh, that’s just their culture’ as a means for justifying disparate outcomes.

In two of the examples, rather than saying ‘Just because I’m White’, students opted to say ‘Just because I have White skin’. Recalling an interaction I witnessed when Steve, an Indian boy, helped his Pākehā table mate get unstuck in his writing by offering, “You could say just

because you have White skin doesn't mean you can abuse people.”. He provided a way for Chuck to talk about being White, but he did it from a racialised worldview. I recognize the way Steve talks about skin colour as something common among people of colour. I imagine Steve's parents preparing him for living as an Indian kid in a mostly White school, ‘Now, just because you have brown skin doesn't mean you are any different from those White kids’. Indeed, many parents of colour have had to have some version of this pep talk with their kids as they confront the realities of racism in the world children (Huynh & Fuligni, 2008; Lesane-Brown et al., 2010).

Saying ‘I have White skin’ operates to distance Pākehā students from White identity. In recent years there has been increased focus on White privilege and racism through media coverage of global events such as Black Lives Matter, to more local events like the removal of colonial statues (O'Dwyer, 2020). White guilt over the historical and contemporary inequitable treatment of BIPOC may cause Whites to want to separate themselves from the White identity. Studies suggest that those who select the label Pākehā may be trying to create a distinction between themselves and other Whites who identify as European New Zealanders (Gray et al., 2013; Liu, 2005). This is due to the belief that those who identify as European New Zealanders do not share the same beliefs positive beliefs about Māori as they do.

Saying you have White skin is not the same as saying you are White, one is skin colour whilst the other brings with it a whole host of associations, histories, and systemic privileges. It's akin to saying, ‘sure racism and colonisation are bad, I'm against it, but it was those White people of the past that did that, not me’ whilst profiting from the racist systems that your ancestors created. It may not be you who did it, but it is you who are being served by it. Saying ‘I have White skin’ is not enough to extricate oneself from profiting from systems of oppression.

The story that Mary shares about one of the Pākehā girls in the class starting to cry when she realized that all of her ancestors were not from New Zealand is an example of how a lack of racial comfort can create big emotions in Whites. DiAngelo (2018) contends that White people are ill-equipped to deal with racial distress and even the smallest amount of unease in this area can provoke an emotional and protective response she terms ‘White fragility’. Tears are a way that White women may respond to being racially triggered. White women's tears work in racialized and gendered ways to assert power and re-establish control (Phipps, 2021). It allows the affective needs of White women to be centred over that

of people of colour. We can see how this works in Mary's story in the ways she tries to comfort the student by sharing her own history. In doing this, Mary is both sharing that she has a common history with this student at the same time she is avoiding the larger conversation around colonisation. It appears that White girls' tears are as effective as White womens'.

There were fewer students of colour in Mary's class than there were Pākehā. The fact that so many of these students wrote about racial stereotypes was telling. These students couldn't use Mary's example in the same way Pākehā students could and needed to develop for themselves how they were going to frame race in this poem. In each of these examples, students are resisting the label of 'Other' that comes along with not being White.

Some of the lines in the students' poetry were heart-breaking. The ending, "I am different" in Example 5 is one such case. I wonder what this student means by different, different as in 'I am different from the other Asian people you know' thereby asserting his individuality or different as in 'I am not White'. In either case this line brings with it the burden felt by this student trying to combat stereotypes. The other line is in Example 8 where the student writes, "Doesn't mean I shouldn't be here/I am worthy". It makes me wonder what he has faced to make him say that. Somewhere along the way he has gotten this message and that is not okay. To him and all the students who expressed feeling 'Othered' I just want to say, you are worthy, more than worthy, you are deserving of feeling like you belong and are important. The feelings of otherness and exclusion expressed by students of colour is more evidence of operation of Whiteness as Property/White Possession and the Racial and Settler Contracts.

Ultimately, the White students concern with not appearing racist took up all of the room in the conversation. By saying they were not racist or were not a bully, they were able to represent themselves in a positive way. What is missed in doing this is an exploration of the students of colour's experiences of racism and of feeling different. By shifting the focus of the lesson away from White students and to students of colour, a meaningful conversation could have taken place- one that asked White student to reflect on how they may or may not contribute to their peers of colour feeling this way. Doing so would have created conflict in the White students, but such conflict is necessary for growth. Managing a lesson in such a way is possible only if the teacher has enough racial literacy to understand the concerns of students of colour of and has worked through enough of their defensiveness to hear what their students of colour have to say.

Identity Chart

The Identity Chart lesson that Kate taught uses goes against the Hidden Curriculum by openly disusing the importance of culture in a person's identity. The lesson was situated in the subject of Hauora (Health and wellbeing) and addressed different aspects, including culture, that made up students' unique identities. Kate used herself and the school principal as examples for this activity, including both of their cultures. This activity, when placed in context with activities such as Cultural Groups and Language Week assemblies, helped to communicate to students that culture is a part of who they are and ascribes non-White cultures, value.

Kate's general disposition means that she may have done an activity like this on her own, but an important element of this lesson is that discussions like this are not just normalised in the school, they are supported by structures within it. Pīwakawaka had the expectation that teachers would talk about culture and structural pieces to support it. Pīwakawaka gave teachers the opportunity to plan lessons that addressed students' cultures, just as a school would in reading or Maths.

The New Zealand Curriculum (NZC) fits within what is expected of a curriculum document: it goes over Ministry's principles and values, outlines key competencies, separates learning into discrete subjects, and breaks down each subject into progressive levels. It seems quite ordinary and in that lies its power. Most people just accept that this is the way to 'do' education without questioning the assumptions and worldview it's based on. The theories that undergird the NZC go unchallenged and continue to be normalised. Let's not take for granted what has been understood as 'right way' to educate children has been 'White way' to educate children since the foundation of colonial education in New Zealand.

Although the NZC regards 'Cultural diversity' as one of its principles, it does little to operationalise this principle in the curriculum. The areas in the NZC that deal specifically with culture are in the areas of Hauora, Social Sciences, and Language Learning.

Pīwakawaka leveraged the NZC in these areas in order to substantiate their focus on culture. On the surface, the NZC seems to support the inclusion of culture in the curriculum, but by remaining largely silent on what or how to teach about it, it furthers the Settler Contract's aim. The NZC could actually be a barrier to teaching about culture. Teachers who dare to address culture honestly and openly in their classrooms although not explicitly going against the NZC, are going against the Hidden Curriculum of silencing in the Settler Contract.

With the take that, “The curriculum reflects New Zealand’s cultural diversity and values the histories and traditions of all its people” (MoE, 2007 p. 9) the NZC both homogenizes and deracializes. This plays into the dominant colour-blind ideology that insists race is in outdated notion that has nothing to do with a person’s outcomes and focuses instead on individual motivation and meritocracy as determiners. Additionally, as was discussed in a previous section, placing Indigenous peoples in the catch all group of being ‘culturally diverse’ waters down Indigenous claims for sovereignty and redress. Indigenous people hold a distinct position in relation to settlers, one that gets erased by grouping them in with people who are considered ‘culturally diverse’.

It is also true that one of the NZC principles is the Treaty of Waitangi. But what does it add in relation to the special relationship Māori have in New Zealand as *mana whenua*? In discussing it the document states, “The curriculum acknowledges the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi and the bicultural foundations of New Zealand. All students have the opportunity to acquire knowledge of *te reo Māori meōna tikanga*.” (MoE, 2007 p.9). As was discussed previously, the two different version of the document are very different, and in *te Tiriti*, the version that most Māori signed, Māori did not cede sovereignty. This of course if a very big deal because the validity of the document that the NZC bases one of its core principles is contested. By using the Treaty of Waitangi rather than *te Tiriti o Waitangi* as the measure, the NZC is prioritising settler constructions of the relationship between Māori and the Crown, even if it is not legitimate. The colonial myth of biculturalism works to distract from colonial conquest because it appeals to settler notions of fairness and egalitarianism. The same education system that was responsible for trying to beat the language out of Māori now wants to give *all* students the opportunity to acquire it. But the language wasn’t taken from all students the way it was Māori. As such Māori should be given priority in learning *te reo*. Although the principle sounds nice, there is not much substance to it.

Curriculum is not, nor has it ever been, neutral. It is a product of the unequal power relations between Māori and Pākehā and works to maintain the country and education as a White Possession (Moreton-Robinson, 2015). The creation of disparities is the point, not an unfortunate side effect (Yosso, 2002). At its most basic, education and curriculum have been used as tools of colonisation. The curriculum privileges Eurocentric ideas of what learning and knowledge are. Before it ever serves to outline what it taught in schools, a Eurocentrically designed curriculum privileges White ways of knowing and doing over all others. It is therefore not only at the content level but at the epistemic level that Whiteness

manifests in curriculum.

Like other forms of colonial education, the NZC understands learning from a Eurocentric point of view. In this way, learning is mostly a mental experience. One of the key competencies of the NZC is thinking which is presented as, “using creative, critical, and metacognitive processes to make sense of information, experiences, and ideas.” (MoE, 2007 p. 12). Although it seems an effort has been made by the developers of the curriculum to include broad ideas around thinking, it is still a process that centres on one way of attaining information.

The NZC focuses on learning as an individualistic endeavour. Although there is some language included in the document that encourages participation and contribution to the community, these are not operationalised in the curriculum. Learning is viewed as a personal achievement that comes through metacognitive processes. The value of learning is that it students “...gives students access to the understanding, knowledge, and skills they need to participate fully in the social, cultural, political, and economic life of New Zealand and the wider world.” (MoE, 2007 p. 18). The focus is on the individual and what they get out of education. Likewise, the achievement indicators focus on what success looks like at the individual level.

Indigenous theories of learning and epistemologies provide another equally valid but overlooked way of conceptualising how to ‘do’ education. One of the advantages of Indigenous Knowledge is that it both highlights and addresses the limitations of western knowledge systems (Battiste et al., 2002). Take for this conception of epistemology:

The need to walk on the land in order to know it is a different approach to knowledge than the one-dimensional, literate approach to knowing. Persons schooled in a literate culture are accustomed to having all the context they need to understand ... embedded in the text before them.... Persons taught to use all their senses—to interpret a complex, dynamic reality—may well smile at the illusion that words alone, stripped of complementary sound and colour and texture, can convey meaning adequately.” (RCAP, 1996, pp. 622–623 in Madjidi & Restoule, 2008).

This understanding of knowledge is not limited to what can be read about in books, but rather values the complex and differing ways that knowledge can be integrated. When viewed from outside White ideals, the notions of knowledge and learning are more expansive. Indeed, it is this understanding of learning that brings the conflict between Western and Indigenous epistemologies to the fore. Whereas learning is seen as a cognitive exercise in Western notions of learning, Indigenous Knowledge (IK) understands learning as a holistic, body-centred process (See table on next page).

Western	Indigenous
Four Stages of Development (Jean Piaget)	Learning from visions and dreams
Behaviorism (B.F.Skinner)	Learning from Origin Stories
Control Theory (William Glasser)	Learning from Elders
Observational Learning (Albert Bandura)	Rite of Transfer
Social Cognition (L.S.Vygotsky)	Experiential Learning
Brain Based Learning	Developmental Learning
Neuroscience	Holistic Concept
Right Brain vs. Left Brain	Critical Thinking
Learning Styles	Environmental Learning
Multiple Intelligences (Howard Gardner)	Protocols and Taboos
Constructivism	Extended Family and Community
	Learning from Symbolism
	Effects of Oppression and Cultural Conflict
	Spirituality
	Revitalization
	Language
	Philosophy

Figure 8: Comparison of Western and Indigenous ideas of learning

(From Littlebear, 2009)

Eurocentric and Indigenous understandings also differ in what is understood as the goal of education. In Western philosophy the goal of education is the betterment of the individual. (Madjidi & Restoule, 2008). The same is not true in Indigenous cultures, where “The goal of

Indigenous education is not individual prosperity or success, but dignity and responsibility to the community. The ultimate purpose of learning is to understand one's place in relation to the web of life, and to gain the skills and knowledge needed to contribute to the advancement of all beings." (Madjidi & Restoule, 2008).

Bringing it to a New Zealand context, Kaupapa Māori (Smith, 2017) outlines several key interventions that would improve educational achievement for Māori: self-determination and relative autonomy, validating and legitimatising cultural aspirations and identity, incorporating culturally preferred pedagogy, mediating socioeconomic and home difficulties, implementing cultural structures that emphasize collectively, and a shared and collective vision and philosophy. This philosophy addresses many of the epistemological concerns raised with Eurocentric curriculum. Not only are Māori ways of knowing and learning legitimated but cultural structures as shifted toward collectively. I wonder how different the NZC would look if it were based on Indigenous and Māori understandings of learning and epistemology rather than Eurocentric ones? What could learning at Pīwakawaka look like if it wasn't limited by Eurocentric curricular structures?

Pīwakawaka had to innovate within the NZC. The teachers and staff were committed to teaching students about culture and leveraged the curriculum to support their aims. There was conflict in the way Kate wished to teach her students and what the NZC supported. In this conflict is a generative space where culturally informed ways of teaching come to be. This happens within the constraints of the expectations of the wider educational system and expectations as to what is taught. There is an unspoken assumption that to teach about culture there must be a trade-off where other 'more important' things must be left out. Challenging the colonial assumption that culture is separate from education is an important shift. Teaching settler culture has always been an important, if not the most important, aspect of colonial education.

If we wish to see education in New Zealand take on culture more directly, the Ministry of Education must include more specific guidance for schools and teachers. A logical place for this to start is by including culture in each of the learning areas and making cultural/racial awareness one of its principles.

Coloniality Lives in the Details

Leonardo and Grubb (2018) contend that race is not only a social construction but an educational construction that is continually reinforced in schools. Ideological shifts over the past several decades have not eradicated racism and colonialism, only made what was once overt become more hidden. White supremacy still operates underneath the surface of the resources that teachers provide for students to learn from. Although the activities I will discuss may have been well meaning, they can nevertheless cause harm by taking the colonizers lens and reinforcing racist stereotypes.

There are two specific instances I would like to recall; the presentation of the Cook Islands timeline at the assembly and what Goofy said he learned about his culture in doing research. In preparation for the celebration of Cook Islands Language week Kate asked students to research the history of Cook Islands on order to make a timeline. On the surface this seems like a culturally affirming assignment for students, including those of Cook Islands ancestry, because they would be learning about some of the history of this place.

But beyond dates, and some names of the Europeans that came to Cook Islands, what did they learn? In the focus group, when I asked Goofy, who is a Cook Islander, what he learned about his culture he said, “I learned what was special about it.”

“Do you remember anything you learned about your culture?” I enquired.

“James Cook. That before that it was a savage island because of like these red bananas or something like that. They ate red bananas.” Goofy said.

There was no sarcasm in his voice, his answer was earnest. Here, in this assignment that had the potential to be culturally responsive, Goofy learned that what was special about his culture was that his ancestors were savages that ate red bananas. Not only was this understanding damaging to his sense of self, but it also elevated the place of Whites. Simultaneously he is learning about the lower status of Cook Islanders in relation to Cook, the White explorer. He also was learning about his history in relation to Whiteness, as if there were no history to speak of before the Whites made contact. This puts Whiteness in a central position in Cook Islands history.

What about the student who staged the dramatic re-enactment of the Cook Islands timeline at the assembly? What did they learn? Again, there were some key dates and events, but the part that sticks out to me is the scene where the girl, who represents Cook Islands, drops to her

knees and asks the boy who is playing the part of Britain to save her. This depiction is emblematic of conceptions of the power relations between settler and Indigenous, that the Whites came and saved Indigenous people from themselves. In undertaking this activity, racist and White supremacist ideals were reinforced. Not only does this information come from a White worldview, it once again solidifies the idea of Whites being superior to Cook Islanders. No context was given about the history of colonisation in Oceania, and in presenting it as a stand-alone event, it leaves out crucial information necessary for a more nuanced and balanced view.

Kate did not actively teach these things to the students, but by her reliance on resources that reflected a White perspective of the history of Cook Islands put her students in the position of learning racist and colonialist information. Indeed, so much of what we consider history is biased in favour of Whites. Consequently, the history that is learned in schools is truncated and incomplete (Leonardo & Grubb, 2018). The types of resources teachers utilise to in their lessons can serve to either reinforce or disrupt White supremacy in the curriculum. Teachers need to be able to assess curricular resources through a critical lens in order to select materials that appropriately support not just learning, but that also weed out racist and stereotypical versions of history. Likewise, before students are encouraged to do their own research, they should be equipped with knowledge that helps them understand and critique the cultural viewpoint from which the information is being presented as Banks and Banks (2019) suggests in the model of Multicultural Education. This example show why teachers must be actively engaged in contesting the racist and colonial ideologies that are present in teaching resources. Without critical examination of teaching materials teacher can end up tacitly teaching students the very lessons they were intending to subvert. Racial literacy for teachers is fundamental to disrupting the Hidden Curriculum.

I am struck by the loss that the students in the previous example suffered the loss of the standing of their culture in the eyes of White supremacy. A certain amount of it may be unavoidable but at least schools and teachers should not contribute to the internalisation of such ideals. What they learned about themselves is unfortunately congruent with the ways dominant culture perceives them. Although this activity was meant to teach students more about their cultures, it ended up reinforcing Euro-Western ideas of White culture. This highlights the extent to which education is a White Possession, continuing the settler logics of domination. The concurrent silencing of competing perspectives underscores the aims of the Settler Contract.

Reproduction of Power Relations in the Classroom

One of the most noticeable differences in the classrooms I observed were the pedagogical styles and classroom management of the teachers. In this section I will discuss how each of the teacher's styles reinforced or disrupted dominant power relations in the classroom setting.

Whiteness, the racial identity and accompanying politicoeconomic system, was created for the purpose of domination (Doane & Bonilla-Silva 2003; Kincheloe et al., 2000; McLaren et al. 2008; Mills, 1997; Rodeiger, 1994). In very real terms, Whiteness is about the maintenance of a set of power relations based on White supremacist ideals. Moreton-Robinson (2004) explains, "Whiteness is constitutive of the epistemology of the West; it is an invisible regime of power that secures hegemony through discourse and has material effects in everyday life." (p.75). The presence of Whiteness in the classroom is not amorphous but exists in the strategies and techniques that these teachers used to manage their classrooms. Whiteness structures the social space of the classroom enacting domination and reproducing settler culture.

Power relations in New Zealand stem from a history of British colonialism which serves to maintain settler dominance and Māori subordination. It is the unequal nature of this power dynamic which shape settler and Indigenous relations. The respective relationships were formalised in the Treaty of Waitangi and continue to be enacted in formal and informal ways. Schools perpetuate inequality between Pākehā and Māori through the ways teachers interact with students (Bishop, 2010).

Although there is much discussion of internalized oppression on the part of racialised groups, there is less consideration given the other side of the coin, the internalised dominance of Whites. Internalized dominance by Whites is understood as:

...a belief system grounded in miseducation and in the politics of social inequality. This belief system is the result of an advantaged relationship to privilege, power, and cultural affirmation. The premise of White superiority undergirds the various attitudinal and behavioural expression of internalized dominance." (Hitchcock in Tappan, 2006 p. 2121)

Tappan (2006) urges us to move beyond framing internalized oppression and dominance at the individual psychological level, and instead to interpret them as sociocultural phenomena that are structurally based. Calling it appropriated dominance, Tappan (2006) wishes to stress that this behaviour is a form of mediated action which "...results from the mastery and ownership of cultural tools that transmit dominating/privileging ideologies, messages, and scripts" (p. 2127). It is through appropriated dominance within the pedagogical and classroom management structures that power relations are sustained and reproduced. White children learn about domination through various cultural tools, one of which is education.

Recall the money game challenge that Mary used as form of classroom management, where she rewarded students for good behaviour by giving them money into a fake bank account and punished them by taking it away. I can see a several reasons why this activity would appeal to a teacher. First, it is a behaviour management strategy that would fit well with the neoliberal ethos of most schools. Work hard and you will be rewarded, slack off and you will be punished. This activity can also seem as if it is teaching students to take responsibility for their actions from a behaviourist perspective by delivering swift rewards and consequences based on their actions. There is a connection to Maths, with the necessary computations needed for student to keep track of their money. It may be fun for some students to earn and spend their money as they see fit. Lastly, this activity can be seen as giving students a glimpse of the real world, what it takes to earn money and pay bills, preparing them to live on their own.

The money game challenge was teaching students something, but perhaps not what was most obvious. It was teaching students settler culture. One way it does this is by reproducing the ideology of meritocracy at the classroom level. Meritocracy is understood as the notion that "... one's work ethic, values, drive and individual attributes such as aptitude and intelligence, determine success or failure." (Zamudio et al., 2010, p.12). Essentially then, success or failure is up to the individual. In this classroom example, if students did their work and followed directions they would be rewarded. If they slacked off or talked too much they were punished. It's easy to get into the mindset of 'good' and 'bad' and blaming students for losing money. What meritocracy does a really good job of is hiding structural privilege. The students who were always doing well, who could sit quietly for long periods of time, listen to Mary, and complete their work were always going to do better. The system was made by Mary to privilege students like them. Conversely, the students who need more movement,

have shorter attention spans and need to learn in social ways were always going to struggle. There is nothing inherently different between the groups of students other some fit better into the behaviours Mary privileges. The system that Mary developed was trying to get them to be more like the other students. What the money game challenge did was reify who were the ‘good students’ and who were the ‘bad students’ by attaching monetary value to their actions and displaying the money in their accounts for all to see.

The ideals of meritocracy are widely held in New Zealand. Mijs (2018) found that although income equality increased in Westernized countries, including New Zealand, between 1930-2010, there was no indication that citizens of these countries were acutely concerned by this development. During the same time period there was also growth in the belief of the ideals of meritocracy. The author suggests that the lack of social unrest about income inequality is linked to the rising belief in meritocracy: people were rich because they worked hard and other people were poor because they did not. Using meritocracy to make sense of the world meant that people deserved what they got. If the poor wanted to make more money, they just had to work harder. Thus, individual effort, not systemic privilege, was the reason for success or failure. These are the same ideas that are reflected in the money game challenge Mary used with her class.

There are other subtle ways that money game challenge taught students settler culture. Once two students were making pirate hats out of paper for the class to use for a treasure hunt the next day. The students asked how much they are getting paid to do this. Mary said, “What, you are not just doing this out of the goodness of your hearts?”. Perhaps they would have made the hats without the expectation of payment before the money game challenge was introduced, but not now. Rather than contributing to the whole, they have learned that they deserve to be remunerated, making the act of helping an individualistic endeavour.

Individualism places the needs of the individual over that of the common good, such as we see above. The idea of acting independently and for your own good is reinforced through the dynamics of this game.

I can’t talk about the money challenge game that Mary used without also talking about capitalism. Capitalism is the reigning economic system in New Zealand and most of the world. Jahan and Mahmoud (2015) define capitalism as “an economic system where private actors own and control property in accord with their interests, and demand and supply freely

set prices in markets in a way that can best serve the interests of society” (p. 1). They go to assert that, “The essential feature of capitalism is the motive to make a profit.” (p.1).

Already, given this understanding of capitalism, a connection between capitalism and the money game in Mary’s class can be established. This can clearly be seen in the examples I have given above, where students are encouraged to behave in ways congruent to Mary’s expectation for money. The students serve as the private actors which are free to act in ways that can earn them a profit. In class Mary is in control of the market and sets prices that are in accordance with her values. Rather than the goal of the game being to improve student learning outcomes, the goal is to get students to behave for money. The game teaches students to be good little capitalists.

But I would like to further complicate the idea of capitalism by insisting that all capitalism, by its very nature, is racial capitalism (Kelley, 2017; Robinson, 1983). That is to say that capitalism isn’t something that formed separate from race and gender, rather they are foundational to it. Modern day capitalism and racism grew out of European feudalism which was dependent on slavery, violence, imperialism, and genocide (Kelley, 2017; Robinson, 1983). Money has come to represent capital, but really it is just a medium of exchange. Land and labour are key to the functioning of capitalism (Kelley, 2017). Land is needed for its natural resources, and labour is needed to extract those resources. Capital begins with the seizure of land and the dispossession of its original inhabitants. Slavery is an outgrowth of capitalism’s need to uncouple the land from its resources in order to profit from it. Therefore, racism is necessary in justifying the violence needed to create and maintain colonialism (Kelley, 2017).

In keeping with this theory, I propose that the capitalism present at Tuī, as manifested in this game, also relies on racism and colonialism for its functioning. At the most basic level, the land that the school sits on as well as the surrounding neighbourhood where most of the students live was confiscated from Māori. Māori never ceded their right to sovereignty or the land, so colonial violence and duplicitous land seizures allowed settlers to lay claim to this present-day suburb. As property ownership is foundational to capitalism, the wealth accrued from this land seizure has been passed intergenerationally through settlers’ families, to the school’s present-day pupils. In the classroom the founding physical forms of violence are transformed into epistemic violence or “the remotely orchestrated, far-flung, and heterogeneous project to constitute the colonial subject as Other.” (Spivak, 1988 p. 280). This

is accomplished through policy, procedure, curriculum and pedagogy (MacDonald, 2018) by placing settler norms at the centre of education. The money game is a particular example of the ways settler notions of what it means to be a good student are operationalised within classrooms. The result of which is positioning Māori ways of being, thinking, and doing as ‘Other’ to the settler norm.

Mary may have meant to use this game a behaviour management tool, but in the end it taught students more about Pākehā values and culture. They learned about some of the critical components of racial capitalism such as meritocracy and individualism. They also learned how all of these aspects work to hide the structures of oppression that make them function. In essence, they learned what was necessary to be successful in Pākehā culture.

Additionally, Mary’s style of teaching made it clear she was very much the one in possession of the power and control. Her pedagogy and management created an authoritarian culture in her classroom, one where she made the rules, and the rules of the game changed based on her wishes. She exerts power over the students through the use of imaginary money. The money game is a perfect allegory for White privilege because the students must do what is asked of them, otherwise they will be punished through the loss of money (power), much the same way Whites are if they break White solidarity. Through this lesson Mary is reinforcing through the Hidden Curriculum lessons about Whiteness being about dominance. There is an aloofness and detachment that she displays during this lesson that keeps her separate from the students and through which she is able to maintain her power and dominance.

Kate’s classroom management, however, was not based on dominance but relationality. Rather than using extremal reinforcement to get students to comply, she was able to leverage her relationships with students to keep them motivated and engaged on their tasks. Bishop (2003) notes that “...it is the patterns of dominance and subordination and their related classroom interaction patterns that perpetuate the non-participation of many young Māori people in the benefits that the education system has to offer.” (p. 222). It was interactions and exchanges that Kate had with the students in her classroom that helped to shift the power dynamics away from the status quo and toward more equitable relations. Kate knew about what was going on in their lives, who was in their whānau, what soccer team they played on, and what instruments they played in addition to their academic strengths. It was this connection that she had to students that made learning possible. In their research Bishop et al.

(2014) explain the importance of whānaungatanga, or extended family like relationships, is the prerequisite to Māori student engagement. This finding supports Bishop et al. (2014) research which asserts that in classrooms with high levels of whānaungatanga the likelihood of having high levels of discursive practices and engagement were increased.

A sense of community was also important to the way Kate ran the class. In the math lesson there is a moment where Pikachu didn't understand the question. Rather than push on, Kate paused the lesson until someone could help explain it to her. This gives students the sense that they are in this together and they won't leave one of their own behind. Towards the end of the lesson Kate pauses to welcome a new student to the class as it was her first day. She also appreciates the work that one of her students, Charlie, had done that day by saying. "Charlie, it was so good having you in our Maths group today, you had us all thinking." She and all of the students clapped Charlie out as the students left for the day. Seemingly small things like this gave a sense of belonging to everyone in the class, including me. I spoke earlier of how much of the identity of the Pīwakawaka was built on the principle of manaakitanga, and these instances were a manifestation of that. Macfarlane et al. (2007) consider manaakitanga an important feature in the creation of schools that are culturally safe for Māori students. The 'Educultural wheel' developed by Macfarlane (2004) places manaakitanga alongside other important factors that create safety such as Whānaungatanga (relationships), Rangatiratanga (self-determination), Kotahitanga (unity and bonding), and Pumanawatanga (a beating heart). Referring once again to Bishop et al.'s work (2014) the interactions that Kate had in her classroom can be seen as an extension of whānaungatanga. In both of these frameworks, a welcoming and caring classroom environment, such as the one in Kate's class, is key to student success.

Kate's instruction also made it clear that she was not the only teacher in room, and she deliberately used the other students in the classroom teach their peers. She utilised turn and talk strategies to allow students to share their thinking and also learn from one another. During the Maths lesson, when a student asked what an even number was, rather than answering the question herself, she asks which one of the students can explain it. In my observations of Kate she was constantly turning students towards each other as a way to answer questions. Students can see that Kate is not the only one with knowledge in the class. This strategy reflects the principle of Ako, or reciprocal teaching. Bishop (2010) discusses Ako as the teacher being a partner in the conversation of learning with the student. Such

positioning reduces the need for the teacher to be in a place of dominance and instead envisions teaching as co-construction of knowledge, with each party contributing (Bishop & Berryman, 2009).

In thinking about how Kate called on students to help her teach Cultural Groups, I hesitate to call that Ako. It is true that students were able to be in the position to assist the group, but borrowing from Bishop's metaphor, it wasn't a conversation. There wasn't back and forth co-construction going on in the Cultural Groups, students were doing all the explaining. Because Kate is Pākehā she hasn't had to learn to navigate cultural spaces outside of Whiteness (McIntosh, 1995). Kate is able to choose to be in spaces that are culturally different from her, whereas Māori and Pacific students must become proficient in White cultural spaces. Another issue that presents itself in Cultural Groups is that the knowledge presented there is seen as cultural and does not receive the same status as White cultural knowledge which is presented as superior, unbiased, and universal (Cooper, 2012). Indeed, the very act of having Cultural Groups is calling it out as somehow different from the rest of the learning they are doing.

One final aspect that helped to decrease Kate's dominance in the class the way she handled praise and discipline. Kate's class was a positive environment where students received praise for their work. In the Maths lesson there were several instances of this, such as when Kate said "Well done. Fantastic" to a student as she walked around and checks-in. This was also evident when she prepares students for sharing with, "Are you ready? Are you confident? Go you! Let's sit up and face our bodies toward the group.". Yet another example of her positivity was the high-five she gave Charlie at the end of the lesson after he worked to revise his answer. All of this creates a positive atmosphere in the classroom.

There were times when Kate needs to redirect students, and she does so in a gentle and sometimes humorous way. Rather than chiding a student when he is off-task, she praises him when he sees that he is re-engaged with "Well done, you turned it right around.". There was also an instance where a student dropped something that made a loud noise. She could have said something negative but instead she said, "Don't worry about it.". Then there was the group of students that started giggling during the lesson.

Kate: Are you laughing because we're going to KFC?

Charlie: No, Ms. Kate it's because I farted.

Kate: Well, that's worse than going to KFC!

Not only was Kate's response funny and non-shaming, it broke the tension. They barely missed a beat before they continued on with the work. In all of these re-directions Kate had the choice to prove her dominance as the classroom teacher or to lean into the relationship she had with the students to get them back on task. In each of these cases she chose relationship. By not relying on dominance as strategy to run the classroom Kate was able to change the power relations between her and her students.

To relate to students in different ways will no doubt cause conflict for Pākehā educators. They will have to evaluate where their ideas about learning and teaching come from and confront their settler origins. Perhaps the more difficult task will be placing Māori epistemology on par with Eurocentric notions of knowledge production because doing that strikes at the core assumption of White supremacy. We have been socialised to believe that White ways of doing and thinking are superior to all others. Reimagining classroom relations in a way that does not centre commodification, capitalism, colonialism, and domination asks educators to take what they 'know' and call it into question. Interrogating these taken for granted assumptions challenges and disrupts the status quo (de Saxe & Trotter -Simons, 2021) and shows that a different way of being is possible.

Conclusion

The Hidden Curriculum was present at both schools but played out in distinct ways. Mary's use of 'Window Books', though ostensibly meant to teach students about other cultures, worked to reinforce notions of White superiority through the use of a 'single story' which decontextualized and pitted the worldview of 'Others' against an implicitly assumed superior White norm. Although meant to address stereotypes, the Just Because poem in Mary's class centred the perceived injustices of Whites being called racist over the actual experiences of racism that student of colour in the class had actually experienced. With the support of her school, Kate found ways to resist aspects the Hidden Curriculum through using pieces of the NZC to support her explicitly teaching about culture. But even in trying to adopt a more culturally responsive stance to her lessons, the underlying colonality of the resources students used learn about their cultures ended up recentring Whiteness as central to their identities and reinforcing notions of White superiority. In both classrooms, behaviour management and pedagogy either reinforced or disrupted settler/Indigenous power relations.

An important finding in this research is that regardless of intention, Whiteness and coloniality live on in the overlooked aspects of curriculum and pedagogy that centre Eurocentric worldviews. In order to counter this, teachers must have developed their racial literacy to be able to detect and respond to privileging White worldviews and teach their students to think critically in order to do the same.

Chapter Nine: The Mary Interviews

The next set of chapters present the interviews I conducted with Mary and Kate to gain some insight into how they thought about culture. I wanted to know what they generally thought about the term, how they thought they taught culture in their classrooms, and how they felt the term related to both them and their students. What follows is a narrative of interviews I conducted with Mary, presented with some context.

First Interview

The room that had been so full of energy during the day was now quiet and empty. It has always amazed me how a school feels like a different place when the students aren't there. The afternoon winter sun streaked through the windows behind me as I took a seat near Mary's desk. Her desk was neat and organised with all the things you would expect on a teacher's desk: sticky notes, pens, tape, a stapler, and her computer. She swiveled around the crook of the kidney-shaped table to face me. Despite having wanted to have committed the interview questions to memory so that the experience would feel more like a conversation, I had a copy of the questions in front of me because I didn't trust my memory.

Mary grew up in a small town in New Zealand. It was the kind of place where everyone knew everyone. "I was always impressed with mum," she said. "I could say — Who lives in that house? and she always knew who it was. She said later that sometimes the names were on the letterboxes, so that helped. But as a child I just thought she knew everything."

"What about cultural diversity?" I inquired.

"It was majority White, although there were Māori kids at school, and maybe a couple of families of kids whose parents were of Chinese descendants. There was one family, they owned the market gardens at [place name]. That was pretty much it."

She continued, "When I was really little, they made a boy's home at [place name], but a lot of those boys were Māori. And a lot of those kids had lots of, I mean God, they were in an orphanage so, there were lots of issues that those kids had. I don't think that it was ... because of being Māori, but just the fact that you've got these little kids without parents. And I think it was a horrible place for them to live as well, from what's come out later." There was one particular Māori boy from the home in her class in primary school that stood out to her as being "...really naughty... not that it made any impact on me. He wasn't ever horrible to me."

Mary told me about a Māori boy who was a bit older than her dying when he was trying to run away from the nearby boy's home. It was a sad ending to a frequent occurrence at State-run care facilities. Children would often run away from these facilities only to be caught and brought back. If the child continued to run away, they would be put in more restrictive housing in attempts to keep them there (Smale, 2017).

Disproportionally large numbers of Māori children are taken from their homes and placed in State care (Haenga-Collins, 2017; Judge, 2018). Although they constituted 12% of the population in 1980, Māori children made up 50% of those in State care (Judge, 2018). In some institutions, Māori children made up 80-90% of the residents (Judge, 2018). Indeed, the forced removal of Māori children from their homes has been called New Zealand's own 'Stolen Generation' (Judge, 2018). 'Stolen Generation' is a term borrowed from the history of Australian Indigenous peoples being removed from their families and being placed in State care. Although Australia and New Zealand have different colonial histories, the term is used here to highlight the violence and dispossession Māori face at the hands of the Crown.

In being removed from their homes, "these Māori children were stripped of their identity and alienated from their families, the resulting prejudice of which has been life-long and intergenerational" (CLAS Report in Judge, 2018 p. 16). It is important to see these events as taking place within the larger context of colonisation. The disproportionate rate at which Māori children are removed from their homes is the ongoing work of colonisation, contributing to the displacement, assimilation, and institutionalisation of Māori by the government.

Mary recalled that she was part of the 'Māori club' in primary school. She said, "I remember having the outfit and doing a performance. And there were a few songs that we would sing at assembly every week. Some of the same ones that the kids do here, which is quite funny." I wondered what she meant by funny: funny as in humorous, or funny as in strange? Maybe it was some of both. More importantly, what has endured as signifying 'Māori' in the dominant education system since Mary was in primary school? As I would see in my time at Tuī, song and performance were still a staple of teaching Māori. By adopting the material versions of Māori culture, schools were able to claim that they were being inclusive of Māori culture and feel good about it. This settler-approved version of Māori culture is carefully curated to give Pākehā a safe encounter with difference, satiating their 'cannibal desire' (Jones, 1999), or

desire to appropriate and consume the ‘Other’ for their own benefit. None of the activities that have been taken on are a threat to settlers or the overall White Possession of schools.

Mary shared another memory of learning about Māori culture:

“I did a unit when I was in year 8 about, what was it called? ‘Māori and European integration’ or something I think I titled it. Some study that I wanted to do. I remember decorating my book black and red, and having two hands shaking hands, like a White hand and a brown hand.”

The title, ‘Māori and European integration’ stood out to me. From my position as a Black American, the word integration comes with a certain connotation. I can’t hear the word integration without thinking of segregation. Integration, in my mind comes with associations of Black and White children being able to attend the same schools and the end of Jim Crow era legislation. I am well aware that Whiteness impacts Indigenous people differently than it does me. What does integration mean in a New Zealand context?

‘Integration’ within settler/Indigenous power relations has been used by colonisers as a tool for assimilation. In New Zealand ‘Integration’ went from unofficial policy to government mandate with the publication of the Hunn Report in 1960 (Hill, 2010). The prevailing sentiment of the day was that, echoed here by then Prime Minister Nash, “integration is not only the best path to follow but ultimately and inevitably the only path that will lead to the development of a happy, harmonious, and progressive community.” (Nash in Williams, 2019 p.37). The intention behind the policy of integration was that Māori would become more like Pākehā.

Next, Mary told me about a teacher she had learned about Māori culture from:

“My teacher in year 8, who played the guitar, taught us a lot more about Māori culture, but not really about tikanga Māori or anything. I didn't learn any of that. We knew not to sit on tables. We knew not to pat someone on the head. But nothing more than that really. And we might get ‘Tūtira Mai’ but not much. We wouldn't get any whole phrases really in Māori in the classroom.”

The waiata Mary remembered from her youth, ‘Tūtira Mai Ngā Iwi’ is very popular in New Zealand and has been taught in schools since the 1960’s (News1, 2017). Translated into English, the ‘Tūtira Mai Ngā Iwi’ chorus means ‘Stand up together, people’. It’s an extremely catchy and upbeat song meant to inspire unity and bring people together. It is a

song that inspires pride in New Zealand for its ideal of harmony. For Mary it was one of the few things she learned about Māori culture. But ‘Tūtira Mai Ngā Iwi’ has different connotations for some Māori, as it was taught as a song of protest or a call to the power of the collective (Kidman, personal communication). As such, it transgresses notions of an imagined national unity and represents Māori solidarity and resistance in the face of oppression.

Our conversation had been flowing well, and the longer we talked the more comfortable we got with each other. But with the next question, Mary seized up. “What is your personal definition of culture” I asked. I could almost hear the loud thud of a wall slamming down between us. She must have known I would ask some version of this question. Still, she seemed taken aback. Mary started tentatively, “My personal definition of culture, it’s the customs and the traditions that I have been raised in. For me.” Her answer was careful yet limited, almost as if she had gotten it from a dictionary. I can understand why this question would have been tricky and emotionally high stakes for her. This was not an answer she wanted to get wrong. Mary is the kind of teacher who thinks of herself as progressive, liberal, and inclusive.

Next, I asked her what she thought of culture when it came to her students. She responded, “Well it’s the customs and traditions that they’ve individually been raised in, so it’s different for everybody. In the culture of my family, even if there was someone whose parents were exactly the same, colour wise or anything, then no doubt it would be completely different. The emphasis that my family placed on you know, going to church every Sunday, learning a musical instrument being a really important thing. Writing a letter to our grandparents, anytime we went there for dinner to say thank you. All of those kinds of things would be really different to some of my friends.”

I went on to ask Mary what role culture played in her life, to which she answered, “I mean, a big role because it’s not just my culture that I’m dealing with and interacting with and learning about, it’s so many different cultures. And to be honest at this school it’s not as many cultures as what I’ve previously been exposed to. If I think about my children, I don’t think they’ve got anyone in their friendship groups for example that has got the same background as them, whereas if they would have stayed in England it would have been a different case. But yeah, it’s continual learning. Even reading a book the other day, of course one of our kids [student] although they’re not fluent in Tamil, they speak and listen to Tamil

at home, so they were able to say ‘Oh, no, I know what it means. You don’t have to look it up.’”

As we finished the interview, I thanked Mary for her time and told her that I looked forward to seeing her again next week.

The Second Interview

It was early Spring and there was still enough of a bite to the air that it felt good to be holding two warm cups of coffee in my hands as I made my way back to the school. School was almost out for the day, so parents had begun gathering outside the school in order to meet their children. I wound my way through the parents and walked briskly towards Mary’s room. I arrived just a few moments before the school day ended to see students clearing their desks and packing their bags. And then, just like that, they were off.

I walked over to Mary’s desk and gave her the coffee. She, in turn, gave me an appreciative smile. “Thank you” she said. “Of course, no worries.” I returned and settled with my own coffee on the piano bench by her desk. We started talking about how her perspective of teaching had changed over the 20 years of her being a teacher. She talked about the different styles of teaching she had experienced in New Zealand, South Korea, and England. Talking about what it was like in South Korea and England seemed like the perfect segue into talking about her culture.

I asked, “Do you see yourself as having a culture?”

“Yeah” she replied. Then silence. It couldn’t have been more than a few moments, but it felt like an eternity. Her answer was short and to the point, but there had to be more. Was this that wall again?

I continued, “So how do you experience your own culture I guess?”

“My own culture and traditions and things, I would experience oh, I don’t know. I’d be more immersed in it if I went back home to my mum’s house because it’s more traditional there. But it’s a funny thing being a Pākehā because here in this country, that doesn’t belong to you, although I really feel like I belong to New Zealand. My family traditions would be more English traditions you know, being raised in an Anglican family and probably very English, but with the weird little bastardized New Zealand-isms in there. Yeah, that’s a funny old thing.

“What does being Pākehā mean to you?” I asked. Mary looked thoughtful and replied, “I belong here, but it doesn’t belong to me. But then maybe that’s through the different kind of thinking and understandings that I’ve come to as well, because I know lots of people who are Pākehā who would say, yeah, of course, this is my country. It belongs to me but it’s, I don’t know...”

Mary’s voice trailed off. She didn’t finish the sentence and I was left wondering what she had left unsaid. She was grappling in real time with the legacy of being the descendant of settlers. Mary’s words held an uneasiness, longing, shame, and a kind of exceptionalism.

“Now you have a different sort of awareness or understanding about being Pākehā?” I asked, genuinely curious.

“I think so,” she said, “[more] than some people.”

“And how do you think you got that awareness? Where did that come from?” I nudged her on.

Mary continued, “Probably just as I aged and grew, and, you know, the different understandings and talks and things that I would have had with the father of my kids and realizing the kind of, well the differences that he experienced, because he’s not White. And realising that, you know, seeing it with my own eyes as well different experiences that we had in London. And then just listening to people talk about other people or observing conversations and things between people and how they might change the way that they’re talking if they’re talking to someone of a different colour. And just kind of waking myself up a little bit about probably the different things that I’ve been able to have in my life just because I was born White.”

I asked, “Was there a time when you realised that you were Pākehā? Was there this moment where you were like, yep, this is me. I’m from New Zealand but I’m not New Zealand European, I believe I’m Pākehā? Did you have one of those A-ha moments? Or was it just something you kind of came to over time?”

She didn’t have to think very long before she started, “I think just once I started filling in forms about myself, I didn’t like putting European on forms. And it wouldn’t have been in that time that I would have seen Pākehā either. I was just a New Zealander. I wouldn’t have put, any race or colour or anything in it. Until I understood how actually important it is for people that aren’t me.”

“Right.” I replied. “So, it was the filling out forms really that brought it into your awareness?”

“Yeah.” She said. “You don’t have to fill out forms like that until you’re an adult...I think back to when I was little, I didn’t have any idea. I came from quite a White town I suppose. I had a couple of friends who were Māori at school.”

I asked what Mary thought about culture when it came to her students. She took a breath and said “I think a big role, but I’m not sure that many of them, I don’t know that many or all of them will actually understand so much about it. Unless they were thinking about cultural traditions and things within their family. And I’ve got a couple of kids who really struggle with the fact that we learn te reo in the classroom. And they, they really don’t want to participate. And you see them really shutting down whenever we say anything in te reo Māori or you know, like this morning when we had (te reo teacher), come in for a lesson, so she’s doing some lessons for a number of weeks. You know they were just shutting down looking down not wanting to take part. It makes me wonder what the culture is at their house or what discussions are had? Regarding if it’s just them or if it’s a family thing...”

It seemed like she wanted to put some distance between herself and the students in her class who were resisting learning Māori. It was the end of the interview and our discussion started to trail off, but then we ended up talking about implicit bias. Mary had recently taken the Implicit Associations Test on the Harvard website. The tests are scored by how quickly you match positive and negative associations with the target population. The faster you are to match the negative attributes, the more unconscious bias you have towards that group of people. I shared that I had taken a few of those tests myself and I found the results interesting, though not necessarily surprising. She started looking through the list of available tests and listed off, “race, gender, weight, and sexuality”. It was an odd way to end an interview, by looking at different kinds of prejudices and seeking to quantify them. It was almost approval seeking, as if, were she able to pass the test, then she would be verified as ‘definitely not racist’. Even if one was able to somehow have evidence of not being racist, what then? Not being racist is the bare minimum. What we need are White people who will work against systems of oppression, who will forgo their tacit acceptance of the Racial and Settler Contracts to do their part in bringing about a more just and equitable world. A test on a website cannot give you that. It’s something that is earned through toil and struggle with BIPOC.

Chapter Ten: The Kate Interviews

What follows is the interview I conducted with Kate in a narrative and contextualised form.

The First Interview

Kate had taken down the stools from around one of the tables and set them up opposite one another. She didn't really have a desk, but more of a corner with a bookshelf where she kept all her things. I sat down on one of the stools across from Kate and we began talking. Kate had on her Converse sneakers and jeans, with her light brown hair pulled back into a ponytail. She was so open in sharing her teaching practice and seemed eager to have this conversation.

Kate moved to New Zealand from England when she was seven. She and her family ended up settling in a coastal area in the Wellington region. She reflected a lot on her family in the interviews and it was clear that she had a close and loving relationship with them. Her parents were successful businesspeople who were able to provide materially for her and her family. In thinking about it she commented, "I just had a very normal, well actually I think it was very privileged upbringing. I never even needed anything. Hard working parents. So, we got a lot."

When I asked for her cultural affiliation, Kate said "I call myself New Zealand European. I was born in England. But we moved here when I was seven years old with my family. And we've been here ever since". I was intrigued by her response as it made me think about the way English migrants form their identities in (former) English colonies. What distinguished New Zealand European from Pākehā in her mind, or was there even a difference?

Having gotten a little bit of her background, we moved into more explicitly talking about culture. I asked, "What were your experiences with Māori and Pasifika cultures as a child and young adult?"

Kate replied, "I think Māori culture is much more dominant in New Zealand, which is a bicultural nation and society as the basis of it. In primary school we learnt to speak very basic te reo Māori. And we could choose to do *kapa haka* or not. I mean, it wasn't forced on us, but we would sing Māori songs, you know, see performances."

She continued, "I didn't go to just a single ethnicity school. So, Māori friends, Māori families were around us. And college, it's less compulsory so you didn't have to learn te reo Māori, but we still had marae stays. And, you know, it still was very important to the school. It was

always performances, speeches, always in te reo Māori, which you'll start to notice too, eh? It's that it's both."

Relating to her experiences with Pasifika peoples she said, "And Pasifika, not until I arrived here as a student teacher. I mean, obviously, I know Pacific Island people, but I didn't know a lot about Pasifika culture until I came here, and then obviously, I was fully immersed. The children are, 50% of our school is Māori and 50% Pasifika, so something like 47%, because we have a couple from America or something. That's where I kind of got my eyes open to Pasifika culture. And, yeah, that's through the children, and our families, and teachers, and our kind of responsibility to, my responsibility to understand, or even not understand, but to facilitate that we integrate Pasifika culture. So, Pasifika was definitely not as big growing up for me, maybe because [the place where I'm from] doesn't have as many Pacific Island people as [where this school is located], I don't know."

For Pākehā, experiences like Kate's would not be uncommon. Although she described not going to a 'single ethnicity school', based on census data from the 1990's Pākehā were a significant proportion of the population, making up around 80% of the people who lived in her area, with Māori comprising about 12%. So, when she said she went to school with Māori, she did, but it wouldn't have been very many. Of all the main ethnic groups in New Zealand, Whites are the most isolated from Pacific people (Grbic et al., 2010). This is due to the Pacific populations being concentrated in a few areas of New Zealand (Johnson et al., 2005). Unlike Pacific populations, Māori are more spread out, with most living in smaller urban areas (Johnson et al., 2005), similar to the one where Kate grew up.

Like many settler colonial countries, in New Zealand there is racialised segregation in housing (Norris & Nandedkar, 2020). This is not surprising if we look at how Whiteness becomes codified in settler colonial contexts. Breaking away from their European ethnic identities becomes necessary for colonisers as they invest in a new racialised White identity that gives them power in their new context. Baldwin's (2011) discussion of the social construction of Whiteness in the United States gives insight into this racialisation process. He explains that Whites were not White before they arrived in the United States, they were English, German, Polish etc ... All of these identities were subsumed under the banner of Whiteness in order to claim primacy in an established racial hierarchy and oppress Black (and, I would add, Indigenous) peoples. Awatare (1984) further supports this notion when "argue[ing] that colonisation and the desire for land levelled ethnic differences between

European groups in New Zealand and ‘sublimated [them] to the greater racial demand for White ownership and White power’” (in Higgins & Terruhn, 2021, p.4). This racialisation process, resting firmly on the foundational belief in White supremacy, becomes codified through the legal system, enacted through institutions, and embodied in people.

From the signing of The Treaty of Waitangi in 1840, Whiteness has worked to dispossess and marginalise Māori. Through wars and legal action, the government forced Māori from the land to make space for settlement (Webb, 2017). Assimilationist housing policies created the conditions for the rapid urbanisation of Māori in the hope of speeding their adoption of Western values (Walker & Barcham, 2010). The confiscation and loss of property at the hands of colonisation has put Māori at a distinct disadvantage in a capitalist, settler colonial society such as New Zealand, where wealth is accrued through property.

I knew that the students at the school had taught Kate about Pasifika cultures, but I wondered what the school had done to help her learn. Kate said, “Well, I think we’re...we’re quite strong on our school being for our kids, and still opening them up to the broader world. But obviously, because our kids are from [this neighbourhood], and our kids are Māori or Pasifika, we aim to always value that, I think. And so, I can see from the principal down, that it’s important.”

Kate continued, “Our teacher aides, you know, our teacher aides are almost all Pacific Island or Māori themselves, and they’re the real experts as well. So, I think the principal shows that it’s important to her that we have staff that can relate to our children and that we as non-Māori and Pasifika staff can have access to the world of our children, I guess. Not a lot of Māori and Pasifika teachers get trained. So that’s a real challenge. And we see like, our teacher aides, like Marge, I mean, imagine. She would be amazing; I would want to go back to school and be in her class!”

I shared with her that from my time in her class I noticed that she interacted with the students in a relational way. I asked her if she had brought that over from her time as a mental health nurse before she became a teacher. Kate reflected, “Yeah, I think so. And I think that knowing that helps me understand a lot of the behaviours that the children have, and even some of the social situations for some of our kids. I think I can draw experience from that. And obviously Ethics and Law as well because you had to do that in Nursing. So that’s quite helpful when it comes to conversations about wellbeing, like student safety and wellbeing

and stuff. It definitely wasn't a waste. I think it was actually a value, it cost a lot of money, but (both laugh) it will pay off one day."

My next question was, "What is your personal definition of culture?"

We both laughed because I had started to ask her this question earlier in the interview, but I had skipped a question so went back to ask that one. Joking, I told her that I would just let her think about that one. Kate had a good sense of humour about herself, "I haven't been thinking about it! I can't think and talk at the same time. I think culture, it's more than just, ethnicity. I think culture is things we value, things we enjoy doing, you know, things that make us unique. And others obviously, the same for others. I think the school has a culture, I think the community has a culture, I think that our ethnicity is one part of it, and values are one part of it."

"How do you teach culture in your classroom?" I enquired.

"We teach to our values, just to start with, so that's kind of our school's goals, culture. I try to pull on my children's values, and personalities, and have that be a strength for them. I do spend quite a lot of time talking about who we are, as in who you are, the children are, and what they're good at, what they enjoy, and that they're important, and they're powerful. That's all that kind of healthy identity stuff.

"We have our cultural groups, which are very language and culture-focused, and our singing, which is also very language and culture focused. Obviously, when we have a Language Week, it's that language that is the focus for the week. Our pōwhiri is, we teach our pōwhiri protocol, and then I run it. We get someone in to do the *kapa haka*, but I kind of support that since I'm the teacher in charge of kapa haka.

"I think for me, because I believe culture is, one, your ethnicity or where you're from, so we talk, we talk a lot about that. They might present 'things about me' or their pepeha. But also, that we all have things that we're good at, and that we're all important to each other. And that kind of relationship between each other. Teaching is quite big for us. It's more like friendship, but it's pulling on your strings that, you know, strings base, your strings help this person, and then they help me. And just always having expert kids at something. Because I'm not the expert, you know... What we in school are focusing on, kotahitanga, working together and reciprocity - doing things for each other."

I asked Kate if she felt comfortable teaching about Māori and Pacific cultures in her classroom. She remarked, “Yes and probably no. I don't feel that I have enough knowledge. But I don't feel that I can't find the knowledge within my class or within the staff. So, I feel very comfortable giving it a go. And I think the kids appreciate it sometimes, actually, that they're experts. I don't shy away from it and just make a mistake and then go sorry if it's wrong, I'll fix it. There is always someone who knows the answer, or I can find out. So, if I'm really nervous, I'll plan it hard out so then I've got it under control.”

The thing that's nice with you,” I replied, “is that you do have the kids, and you also have the teacher's assistants to be able to help”.

Kate nods in the affirmative and says, “Yeah, that's right. I don't feel like I'm out of my depth at all, because there's always someone to turn to.”

As was discussed previously, Kate used the students and teacher assistants as ‘native informants’ (Karamcheti, 1995) to teach culture in ways that the Pākehā teachers cannot.

“Do you feel like there are barriers to addressing culture in the classroom?” I asked.

“I suppose one of the barriers would be my knowledge,” she adds, “but I do my best, you know, to follow the resources that we get as teachers, this Māori education plan type things and there is Pasifika education plan type things, and our curriculum helps us. So, you know, we get the guidance, there's no shortage of advice, and resources for teachers to pull on. But that doesn't mean that every teacher knows everything. So that's probably one of the barriers.”

But if there is no shortage of advice and resources, why would lack of such knowledge be a barrier? Underlying the desire for more culturally responsive teaching is the assumption that all Pākehā teachers need is the information, and with that information they can ‘know’ different cultures. It's overly simplistic to assume that the problem of Pākehā teachers not knowing about Māori or Pasifika culture is a lack of knowledge, especially when we consider culture's deeply racialised construction. On this topic, de Saxe posits that “Power works through knowing and unknowing to maintain systems of social injustice.” (2022, p. 218). As Kate indicated, there are resources there if teachers wish to use them. Not knowing about other cultures may be more about a “passion for ignorance, or resistance to knowledge” (Jones, 2001 p. 289). When learning about other cultures, Pākehā must reckon with their “struggle to suppress, recognise, and live with [their] capacities to and passions (needs) for

ignorance” (Jones, 2001 p. 289). Lack of knowledge of other cultures may be a more active process than it is given credit for as resistance protects against “the loss of the fantasy of knowing and its promise of fullness, unity, certainty, and ‘peace’” (Jones, 2001 p. 290). Perhaps then the biggest barrier to such knowledge is not the content, but Pākehā willingness to let go of a fantasy which props up the peace they are able to enjoy. In the absence of such a fantasy, discomfort emerges.

Kate went on to say, “And I suppose teaching specifically about culture would be that would actually come under the Health and Social Studies parts of the curriculum as in they’ll be achievement objectives, probably a thing about culture. But we try and put it into most of our learning. So, I suppose the curriculum could be a slight barrier, but the way we use the curriculum you can kind of overcome it.”

From there I asked her to talk about the cultural groups that I had observed at the school.

“That’s new this year. So, what happened was, we had a cushion concert, we used to have one. [Name of former teacher] used to do it and I thought I’ve got her job so now, so I have the job of planning the concert. I offered to do it, planning this cushion concert and the Samoan Betty, who’s the cleaner and one of our teacher aides, did a Samoan group and then I was going well, you know, Marge, you should do a Niuean group, and she did. There were all these different cultures, and it was amazing, parents loved it. Teacher aides loved being valued, kids loved their culture being valued. It wasn’t that we didn’t value it before. It’s just that we didn’t do a lot of it. So, the suggestion came at the end of the year, why don’t we have all the children, because it was by choice, have all the children do all the cultures, or most of the cultures to see what it’s like, and then we can share at the end of the year. And really, you know, you can choose. I really like the Cook Island group, so I’m gonna go with that. And it’s been really good. Kids look forward to it. And the teacher aides have felt really empowered, which is good because they are a huge valuable resource for us. Yeah, I can’t overstate that enough, without them the school would be very different. So, it’s good.”

Again, the teacher aides acted as ‘native informants’, using their cultural difference, and themselves as the models for the mode of instruction. ‘Samoan Betty’ and less explicitly stated, Niuean Marge, were both marked by and instructive because of their culture.

“So, it grew out of the concerts?” I asked.

“Yeah, we still sang tons of songs and our singing and we, but there wasn't that specific learning, because only in the Language Week, which is one for each culture. Yeah. So, it kind of grew from there. And I think that was a lot of parent voice and a lot of, well, parent enjoyment and engagement with it and Teacher Aides. And so we said, this is another school, the road that does that as well. It works. So let's give it a try. Yeah. And learning languages is part of the curriculum, too.”

I questioned if there had been any push back against the cultural groups. Kate replied, “No, which is surprising, because the reason we have a Euro group is because we wanted to have a Fijian group, because we do have Fijian Indian students at our school, but they didn't want to come in and do that, which was fine, obviously. We were going to have to get parents in because we don't have any Fijian Indian teacher aides. So, they didn't want to do it. We put the Euro group in because we want to see us all, we're all together and the teachers are European so, let's do that. And the kids like it. Yeah, so we put that in, and kind of, which was a shame, because they are big part of our school, actually the Fijian Indian community were growing within our school.”

“We have already talked about this throughout the interview, but what are some ways your school discusses and teaches about culture?” I enquire.

The answer came to Kate straight away, “I think it's at the forefront of everything. Our planning, discussions, our strategic planning. It's very important. And even building a culture within the school of voice, our vision, collective vision, the [Kahui Ako] vision of voice, agency and identity is very culturally driven, that you know, that you have voice, that you are active learners, and that your identity is valued, and you feel safe. And yeah. So, I think that being the vision, obviously, at the top of all of our strategic planning and strategic goals, and, you know, classroom planning, is pretty telling that we value, you know, that culture is important, that we want to show our students that culture is important and that they're awesome. They have a voice, they are powerful, you know, that they matter and that they are successful, because a lot of the time the media doesn't spin it that way for Pasifika and Māori people.”

“It's true” I say.

Kate went on, “I mean, there's a lot of positive media, but I think there's a little bit not so positive. And it might not even be the media, it might just be reports, you know, coming out. That whole I'm good at Maths because I'm ... you know. Before we put in this Math, it used

to be oh, well I'm Samoan I don't do Maths. You know, even though they do Maths all the time... And it's so not true. It's just that it wasn't being taught in the way that valued Samoan Maths, and you know, Tokelau Maths."

"It's about countering deficit narratives that kids internalise for not being White." I interject.

"That's it. Yeah, yeah." Kate agrees. "You come here and you're like, this is amazing. That's how I felt when I came here. I was like, these kids are amazing. So why is it that some people go, oh?... because you're saying that about [the kids], what do you think children think of themselves? I think it's just rebuilding that."

It is no surprise that the students in Kate's class would feel that way. Media has played a crucial role in perpetrating negative stereotypes of Māori and Pasifika. The ways that the media represents Māori are deleterious to Māori/Pākehā relations and have a negative impact on Māori mental health and wellbeing (Barnes et al., 2012). Likewise, negative portrayal of Pacific people in the media also impacts their self-image and health outcomes (Loto et al., 2006). Although Māori and Pacific people are subject to negative representations, the state of racial affairs in New Zealand is represented as harmonious (MacDonald & Ormond, 2021) where colonisation and racism are not addressed. Such silencing reinforces colonial mythology and legitimates the settlers as the rightful holders of power in New Zealand. Māori and Pacific people are robbed of a positive self-image whilst Pākehā get messages that justify the current power relations.

"You said culture is at the forefront of planning and everything. Do you think that comes from the principal? Or the Kahui Ako (Professional Learning Community)?" I asked.

"I think it comes from the children. Because the other ways weren't working for our children. So, I think it started at the children and our families. But of course, the smart people know, our principal for example. She's the leader of our Kahui Ako so she definitely feeds that back down. The evidence clearly shows that when you adapt your teaching to certain cultures of your children, the children are more successful...But it's obvious to me because when you change that, you get a different vibe, different feel. Even when I use those Math books that we used last week, those ones, you get a different feel. It's not the same. And that's just one little thing."

Kate was referencing a day that I was there when she had students work out of a Maths book instead of their usual group work Maths lesson. Student engagement wasn't as high as it

usually was. You could see that student confidence eroded as soon as they opened those little yellow books.

As we wrapped up the interview, it was evident that Kate was proud of her students and what they have and will continue to accomplish. Kate was telling me about a conversation she had with the principal of the Intermediate school where her year 6 students will go, “I’m like watch out! I’m sending you 24 very, very able but very firm students. Be ready. And that’s exciting for [the Intermediate school].”

Kate and I took our teacups and headed to the staff lounge, still chatting on the way. After we had rinsed the cups and placed them in the dishwasher, we parted ways until the following week.

The Second Interview

The day of our second interview was just after Pīwakawaka had had its Cultural Group celebration. After a day full of singing, dancing, speaking, games, and crafts, Kate and I sat down for interview. Kate was one of the organisers of the day, but if she was tired, she didn’t let on.

After explaining that we would be talking about her cultural identity in the interview today she said, “Cool. Alright. I will do my best.”

“It’s not a test.” I teased.

“No, it’s not, it’s a good thing.” She grinned at me.

“Is your amygdala okay? I continued in jest. During the first part of class that day Kate had read a book called *Hey Warrior* to the class. It’s a book about the role the amygdala plays in keeping people safe but also how it can produce anxiety.

“No, my amygdala is fine.” She assured me.

I started off with some general questions about teaching and then moved into the realm of culture. “What role does culture play in your life?” I asked.

Kate looked thoughtful, “I don’t really know,” she said. “I think culture, as in like where you’re from, plays less of a role for me since I’m from England, born in England, and I have family in England, but I see myself as a New Zealander. But I don’t see myself as like a True Blood Kiwi because I’m not. I don’t like you know, I’m not all about the All Blacks and all about that culture side of New Zealand. But then things like values are strong for me and

family and I suppose that's culture too. So that plays a very important role in my life, the most important. And then coming to school, I like the diversity. And that's very important to me as well. I really like to be around people from all different cultures and walks of life and that."

Wanting to clarify I asked, "You do believe you have a culture though?"

She answered, "I have a culture but I wouldn't say I'm like, Kiwi you know, how these kids are 'I'm a very proud Samoan and that's who I am'. I don't have that. But I have values that are important to me. And I know that I'm like, Pākehā female, but that's probably not the most important thing to me. Like, what I look like and where I'm from isn't as important as the things I value."

What it seemed to me she was saying was that she wasn't defined by her culture the way other people are. She was free to be just Kate, not English Kate, unlike 'Samoan Martha'.

"Well, you sort of started talking about this, you alluded to it in your last answer, but what role do you feel culture plays in the lives of your students?" I enquired.

"A massive role. They have strong values as well, but they also have very strong connections to where they're from, and where their families are from, their whole ancestry. And that guides their life: they go to church, they go to the Cook Island Hall, they go to the Tokelau Hall, whichever hall it is. Their families are massive, because their families go beyond just like my mum and dad and brothers is my family. But their family is their cousins, their cousins' cousins, uncles, whoever, and it's huge. And they bring that into the classroom, but you know, and they bring a lot of that knowledge in for us and each other, but for some of the kids, it's less important and we have to remember that as well. Some of them, don't do all those things and they don't want to do a kapa haka just because they're Māori. So, we teach them about culture, but we don't force it on them. But they might be more like me, they might just have their family values and that's what's important. But, yeah, and dance, music, everything that we do in language is a big one for a lot of them. A handful of our kids don't speak English at home, they speak their native language. You know, Samoan or Tokelauan, whichever it is. So that's pretty important too."

Wanting to make a connection back to her identity I solicited, "So what does being Pākehā mean to you?"

“Not a lot really.” Kate confessed. “Like that’s who I am, and it’s what I look like. It’s not even who I am maybe. It doesn’t mean a lot to me. That’s just I am Pākehā and it’s cool, it’s not like I’m not Pākehā, but I’m not ooh Pākehā, you know.”

“I don’t go to church; I don’t go and sit and do all these cultural things. But I do celebrate Christmas and do those sorts of things that maybe other cultures don’t do. I’ve never really thought about it, maybe, deeply. I guess that’s being Pākehā, that I’ve never thought about it. It’s not that I haven’t thought about who I am and what I like. It’s just that I haven’t considered that being Pākehā is a big part of that. Yeah, maybe that says it’s the dominant culture. And so, you don’t have to because you’re not different. You’re not doing different things that are interesting and you’re just doing what you’ve always done.”

Her response reminded me of something she had said in the first interview. So, I enquired, “The thing that I’m curious about with you since you weren’t born here is that you still identify as Pākehā. What’s that?”

She replied, “I guess it’s just because that’s what you hear. If I’m checking a box, I’m New Zealand European. And I’m checking a box that has the option of other European I’m still New Zealand European, which is interesting. I guess it’s just what I’ve heard. And that’s what I feel I am. And maybe it’s because I don’t have a place that I’m from because I was young when I moved here. And I feel like the place I’m from is [name of hometown], because that’s where I grew up, that’s where I feel at home. But I’m not from there. If I was going to go back in my whakapapa, and look at where I was from, it would be like, my dad is doing it at the moment, the family tree, and it’s fascinating, you know, and it goes way back to it’s still around [city in England]. We haven’t moved, you know, my family is still there. I don’t really know. Yeah, just what I’ve heard.”

To Kate, New Zealand European and Pākehā seemed to be synonymous. Even though she moved to New Zealand from England, there is a familiarity in New Zealand that she takes comfort in and she feels as if she is part of the dominant culture. This country is where she feels at home. Kate is not the only British migrant who feels that way. In their research Higgins & Terruhn (2021) discuss how British immigrants and Pākehā understand each other in a New Zealand context. Although framed as ‘kin-migrants’ (MacKinnon in Higgins & Terruhn, 2020) and ‘intimate others’ (Pearson in Higgins & Terruhn, 2021 p. 3564), there are areas of tension in British migrant and Pākehā relations. Higgins and Terruhn (2021) found that British migrants felt a sense of connection to their Pākehā counterparts, whilst Pākehā

tried to distance themselves from the British. The notion of an ancestral link was a large component in British migrants' connection to Pākehā. Pākehā on the other hand did not share the feelings of connection with British migrants and instead focused on how their identities did not depend on links to Britain. The separation that Pākehā indicated they felt from British migrants may also serve to distance them from their colonial past. Interestingly, Higgins and Terruhn (2021) contend that while both British migrants' and Pākehā strategies were different, they both functioned to manufacture a sense of belonging in a settler colonial context.

Wanting to know more, I continued, "Was there a time that you remember knowing that you were Pākehā or White? Was there like this moment where you were like, Oh, I'm Pākehā, yeah, that person is, whatever. Is there ever a time where you had that realisation at any point? Did you feel like you always kind of knew?"

I could sense a little discomfort creep in as Kate answered this question. "I don't remember having that realisation. I think I'm more of a person that sees people rather ... I don't know. Yeah, and it will be to do with my upbringing, and people I've been around. I remember thinking to myself, the only time that I think that is when I'm here and I'm - all this amazing stuff is happening around me. And I'm like, I know so little, you know? And it's kind of not realising that I look the way I look where I am the way I am. It's realising there's a lot I don't know about that people bring to situations. Yeah, I don't recall ever thinking that. I probably did when I was little and saw someone who looked different to me for the first time."

Kate stopped just short of saying 'I don't see colour, I see people' in her response which is significant. The ideology of colour blindness is common in New Zealand, and she may have been drawing off those stories. Colour blindness seeks to explain racial disparities in society in anything, but racial terms: as class, market forces, cultural differences, or as naturally occurring phenomena (Bonilla-Silva, 2017). In this way of thinking, the act of talking about race is seen as racist and what causes racial disparities to persist. If Kate had admitted to seeing race in this ideology she would risk being labelled as racist. Except that she did very much see race, which is evidenced when she said that the only time she noticed that she thought of herself as being Pākehā was when she was at school, where she was the minority.

Next, I asked "Do you think that being Pākehā influences the way that your students see and interact with you?"

She reminisced, “When I first started here, I remember another Pākehā lady coming into the room, and the students going ‘Who’s that White lady over there?’ You know, like, what’s this White lady doing in our class and that moment I kind of realised that as a teacher here, they don’t necessarily see you as a Pākehā lady. They see you as their teacher. I talked to [another teacher] about it and she was like, yeah, they won’t think of you as that White lady. They think of outsiders who they don’t know like that ... But they don’t necessarily see you as something other than a teacher. And so, your relationship is based off being the teacher.”

She seemed to think that by having a good relationship with her students allowed her to somehow transcend her race. From her earlier answer, we know that being Pākehā doesn’t mean a lot to her, it and it doesn’t define who she is. Because her race doesn’t matter to her, it wouldn’t matter to her students. It makes sense that she would think of herself as just a teacher, not a Pākehā teacher, because being Pākehā is not a defining part of her identity. But from what she described above, race did matter to her students.

I started thinking aloud, “It makes me think of that relationship piece and how big that is. And then, also the stereotypes about...”

Kate started before I could finish, “There’s so many. And when you grow up in a predominantly Pākehā culture, you hear the stereotypes the other way. And then you think, well, that’s probably happening this way too, but I’m just oblivious to it maybe because it doesn’t, it’s not something, I think. But knowing that parents probably do think what does she know? What does she know about Cook Island dancing and they’re right.”

At the end of the interview we talked about what changes could be made to better equip schools to teach about culture. “Even though I don’t think it matters that I’m Pākehā, I do think that getting more Māori and Pasifika teachers in the workforce would be fantastic for our kids. And actually, these kids sit here and say they want to be a teacher. So how can I help them get there because they’d be fantastic teachers... And I don’t know how we can make the education system work for everyone, because I think at the moment it’s not. We kind of go, ‘oh they’re underserved or their underprivileged’ and that’s really not true. They have a lot of rich knowledge that they bring in a lot of that comes from their culture. And if we get them into teaching, they’re going to bring this knowledge to the next generation. I think everyone wants kids to be successful. You know, most people, I hope. And if someone came and spent a day in here, they’d start to realise these kids are not, you know, some of them are underprivileged, but that doesn’t make them not smart and not capable of doing

great stuff. I think it takes like an hour sitting in this classroom for you to go ‘oh, these kids are really cool!’ They have such cool skills yeah, but society has another idea about it. Yeah, I wonder what’s going to happen in the future.”

As the interview came to an end, we were both thoughtful. “This has been a great interview! Sometimes it’s nice to reflect on what you’re actually thinking and to think deeper about things that you just take for granted I guess, on a daily basis.” Kate said.

The sun was still shining as we walked back to the staff lounge to drop off our teacups. We both left each other that day with a lot to ponder.

Chapter Eleven: Pākehā Teachers’ Understandings of Culture

The last set of chapters was about the interviews I conducted with the Pākehā teachers who participated in my study. I now turn to answering the second research question, *How do Pākehā teachers understand culture?* The following chapter is divided into sections that relate to the findings of this research. First is some background information relevant to the exploration of Pākehā identity more generally, and Pākehā teachers more specifically. Then we move to the findings around the lack of clarity both teachers exhibited about their own culture and the ease which they were able to discuss the cultures of ‘Others’. This is followed by a reflection on Pākehā identity. This section ends with a discussion of how the term culture is often used as a proxy for race in New Zealand.

White Identities of Settlers in New Zealand

The term Pākehā, though prevalent in New Zealand, remains a contested identity. Much of the uneasiness with Pākehā comes from what Pearson and Sissons (1997) call the ‘great New Zealand myth’, the belief that the label is in some way derogatory toward New Zealand Europeans. As the ‘myth’ goes, Pākehā means “White pig” or “White flea” (p.69). It is now widely accepted by scholars that the term is indeed not offensive, and originates from pākehākeha, patupaiarehe, and pakepākehā, which are Māori words referring to humanlike mythical beings with fair skin (Sibley et al., 2011). Even so, the belief that Pākehā is a pejorative persists. In a study of undergraduate students, Jellie (2001) found 29% of respondents thought the term Pākehā was derogatory, while 24% were unsure if was derogatory or not. Some New Zealand Europeans who find the term to be too broad and ambiguous to have any real meaning (Spoonley, 2005; Urry 1990). Still others embrace the term as a way to claim a unique identity as New Zealanders of European origin while signalling what they believe is their relationship with Māori (Spoonley 2005; Gray, et al., 2013).

The term Pākehā began to increase in popularity during the Māori Protest Movements of the 1970’s and 1980’s. As Māori organised to resist colonialism and reclaim tribal lands, language and culture, many New Zealand Europeans were forced to reckon with what these changes meant about them and their identity. As Michael King (1985) recounts in his autobiographical book *Being Pākehā*,

The return and rise of Mana Māori had consequences for Pākehā as well as for Māori. For the first time since the mid-nineteenth century, it led to a widespread Pākehā awareness of Māori values and aspirations as being often separate and different from Pākehā ones. It impelled Pākehā to examine their consciences and their institutions to see if New Zealand was indeed, as Māori alleged, a racist society. (p. 11)

With this growing awareness, Pākehā identity began to evolve and move away from simply meaning ‘non-Māori’ towards a more nuanced, location based and political meaning (Spoonley, 2005). Pākehā expressed that the identification with this label is about being of European heritage but being of New Zealand. Again, King (1999) expresses this when he states, “For me, then, to be Pākehā on the cusp of the twenty-first century is not to be European; it is not to be an alien or a stranger in my own country.” (p. 239). In this way, Pākehā is conceptualized as being a distinctly local New Zealand identity.

Self-identifying as Pākehā has become a statement about one’s interpretations of self and others. By refusing a European label, those who identify as Pākehā may wish to communicate connection and respect for Māori (Gray et al., 2013) Indeed, those who select this label may be trying to create a distinction between themselves and other European New Zealanders who may not share the same beliefs about Māori as they do (Gray et al., 2013; Liu, 2005). Empirical research also suggests there is a connection between self-identifying as Pākehā and views of Māori. In their 2011 study Sibley et al. found that those that who identified as Pākehā held more positive attitudes toward Māori in relation to those who identified as ‘New Zealander’, ‘New Zealand European’, and ‘Kiwi’. In another study (Gray et al., 2013), researchers interviewed people who self-identified as Pākehā and found a belief that claiming the term Pākehā reflected a connection to Māori. When asked if they thought White privilege existed, most participants agreed that it did but were unable to specify how it manifested in their lives. One of the conclusions of the researchers was that using a ‘relational definition’ of identity coupled with an inability to specify the benefits they receive due to White privilege serves to maintain White hegemony. By distancing themselves from other Whites, there is the potential for self-identifying Pākehā to also try to distance themselves from the perception that they receive White privilege.

Sociologist Avril Bell’s research focuses on settler colonialism and Pākehā identity. She understands settlers as being located

...within a particular web of social and geo-political relations. Settlers are at once migrants, colonizers and colonials and their identities are constructed in relation to two primary others, the peoples of the metropolitan homelands of their ancestors and the indigenous peoples of their national homeland. (Bell, 2009 p. 147).

Although settlers may be the dominant group in society, the fact that they were not the original inhabitants of a place causes them to struggle with a sense of ‘ontological unease’ (Bell, 2006). Settlers may easily claim a national identity through the laws of the settler colonial government but have weaker claims of belonging in a country due to the colonizing ways of their ancestors. Thus, the question of authenticity becomes central to how settlers understand their identity.

Colonisation and modernity have created a crisis of identity for settlers that often emerge through an authentic vs. inauthentic binary. Settlers long for a return to a sense of belonging (authentically) to a place, and a return to their essence which has been lost through modernity. In order to regain their authenticity settlers resort to ‘ingesting’ Indigenous authenticity. Through disease, war, and displacement settlers seek to replace the Indigenous population and claim the mantle of authenticity that they crave. In New Zealand this plays out in how certain aspects of Māori culture have been readily claimed as part of the national identity. This works to appropriate Māori traditions and history as an origin story, therefore indigenizing the settlers (Bell, 2014). As Bell (2014) explains, “settler narratives and practices of identity construction have sought to separate the markers of authenticity from indigenous bodies and communities and to make them their own.” (p.47). It is through taking on the authenticity of the Indigenous that settlers can claim to have a sense of belonging to a place.

Bell (2014) contends that being a settler is a relational identity formed in its relationship to Indigenous peoples. Being a settler “invokes a specific location and role within the colonial relationship” (Bell, 2014 p.9). For settlers that relationship is indelibly linked to power. Additionally, being a settler is also linked to a relationship with other settlers, both in their current nation and their nation(s) of origin. Sharing similar legal and cultural influences has led to the emergence of a ‘settler imaginary’, “the set of ideas and values that underpin a peculiarly settler discourse of nationhood, identity and indigenous-settler relations.” (Bell, 2014 p. 11). In Bell’s view, being a settler consists of a set of relational connections to

Indigenous peoples, other settlers, and the legal, cultural, and ontological influences of Europe. She reflects in her writing what it feels like for her to be Pākehā, saying “I have no other home and want no other home. I would like to be ‘at home’ here but not at the continuing expense of Māori, the Indigenous New Zealanders.” (Bell, 1999 p.123).

Pākehā identity, as any other socially constructed identity, continues to shift and grow as more people come to question what it means to be Pākehā. A recent addition to our understanding of Pākehā identity comes from Jones (2020). In her memoir, Jones shared her understanding of growing up Pākehā in New Zealand. Telling stories from her distant to relatively recent past, Jones highlighted the experiences that shaped her understanding of herself as Pākehā. Clear in her retelling was the extent to which Pākehā is a ‘relational definition’ reliant on Māori acting as the ‘Other’ in order to give Pākehā its outline. She came to understand herself better through her interaction with Māori. In the end Jones sees being Pākehā as something that is always changing, always in the process of becoming, thus as an ‘unsettled’ identity. She contends that it is the responsibility of Pākehā to “engage positively and with justice in [their] relationship with Māori.” (p. 228)

The present research adds to our understanding of the identity formation of Pākehā by exploring how they think of themselves. This will add to our understandings of the everyday lived experiences of Pākehā teachers and how their understandings may be operationalized in classrooms. It is to the relevant literature on Pākehā teachers that we turn next.

Pākehā Teachers

There is scant research on Pākehā teachers as whole, and this is particularly acute when it comes to their understandings of culture. As there is so little to review, I will take this opportunity to discuss the available research and relate it my own.

One piece of research looks at how pre-service Pākehā teachers responded to a component of their coursework that asked them to use a Treaty focused lens to respond to the underachievement of Māori students (Bertanees & Thornely, 2004). As lecturers at a New Zealand University’s teacher education programme, the authors surveyed several cohorts of students over a span of 3 years to ascertain students’ understandings of this Treaty based work and the effectiveness of their teaching approaches. Conducted in three phases, the authors adjusted their teaching and course content to help these student teachers move beyond essentializing culture as difference, to being able to critique the institution of

schooling as playing a crucial role in the privileging of Pākehā and the marginalization of Māori in education. In their third iteration of teaching, they found that the strategies they used to give students the language and theoretical underpinnings to understand the colonial structures of schooling led to some of their Pākehā students being able to examine schooling, and their place within it as future teachers, more critically.

The most direct link this has to my research is a brief section on student teachers' ideas on culture. Bertanees & Thornely's (2004) research discussed how student teachers' responses in the second phase of their study tended to appropriate Māori culture, view it as static and located in the past, as well as essentialize 'Māoriness'-viewing it as having a biological basis. Their study does not examine schools, but it does theorize that schools perpetuate a colonial legacy. My research investigates already certified Pākehā teachers in their classrooms, as well as studies the schools role in developing understandings about culture.

There is also a Doctoral thesis by Lang (2013) which examines Effective Pākehā Teachers of Māori Students. The study was conducted as a case study looking at four effective Pākehā primary teachers of Māori children. Her research confirmed that the principles of *Te Kotahitanga* supported these Pākehā teachers to be effective in their work with Māori students, but that in addition to this they also worked consistently with another adult, used culturally responsive touch, expressed love, and thought and acted informed by ideas of social justice.

Lang's research does speak to culture primarily as belonging to Māori students. Whilst there was a focus on Culturally Responsive Pedagogy, there was little critical examination of the ways culture is constructed and understood by the Pākehā teachers who took part in the study, or the schools they were a part of. It is this absence of looking at the wider social factors that construct culture in particular ways that my research addresses.

Autoethnography proved to be a popular genre for looking at Pākehā teachers' experiences. Legge (2013, 2014) has written several articles about her experience as Pākehā teacher educator in the area of Physical Education. Her writing focuses on her 'ventures' into the 'Māori world' as well as her 'quest' for cultural understanding (2013, p. 359). She wrote a series of short stories about her experiences when she brought a cohort of Physical Education student teachers for a stay at a marae in an effort to facilitate a "cultural immersion experience" (2013, p. 356). Her stories highlight the ways in which her Pākehā worldview come into conflict with Māori perspectives during her stays on the marae.

Legge's analysis centres on her experience and doesn't connect her experiences to wider social and systemic forces. At one point Legge says "... as a Pākehā, addressing Maori (sic)–Pākehā cultural differences has been like walking a tightrope." (2013 p. 360). She then went on to question why

Smith (1990), who is very protective of her Māori culture, questions why professionals like myself seek to develop culturally sensitive knowledge and skills. Her concern is to wonder if 'our' agenda is one of a power play to bring about change hidden behind the notion of progress, equity or partnership. (2013, p. 360).

Legge appears to take offence at Smith's questioning Pākehā intent in learning more about Māori culture. If Legge had taken the time to research and understand more about Māori perspectives, she would have known that Smith's scepticism was well founded. Legge's analysis is limited to her own experiences and doesn't do the work of trying to understand how her experiences as a Pākehā teacher are constructed by race and colonialism. My research looks at the way larger social forces construct Pākehā teachers' understandings of culture and race.

Also, in the vein of Autoethnography is Corlett' (2020) piece on her experiences as a Pākehā teacher who took the Poutama Pounamu blended learning course. She shares several important things she learned as she developed a critical praxis to support better support Māori in education. She reflects on her learning about honouring the Treaty of Waitangi, confronting Pākehā privilege and deficit theorising, understanding of what it means for Māori to achieve success as Māori, the meaning of ako, and unfinishedness. This piece gives a glimpse into how this course increased her awareness of the social and structural factors uphold inequities in New Zealand schools. Although she does give information about her journey towards an enhanced understanding there is no discussion about what she understands culture to be and how schools helped construct her understanding of culture.

There is yet a third autoethnographic piece about Pākehā teachers, albeit from a different angle. MacDonald et al. (2021) explore Pākehā teachers settler affirmations through the experiences of a Pākehā presenting Māori teacher named Tracey. Through being assumed to be Pākehā Tracey was privy to the way Pākehā act around each other when they think no Māori are around. Tracey's experiences gave the authors a way to analyse the ways Pākehā seek to maintain and when lost, regain a sense of racial comfort. Themes around a belief in

Māori privilege, Pākehā victimhood, the myth of meritocracy, not having the time, an exceptionality of their community, and White innocence served to silence racial discourse as well as affirm White racial solidarity and dominance. The authors noted that focus on individual responsibility for racism rather than a systemic focus hindered meaningful change in schools. My study adds to this research by showing some of the specific mechanisms through which race and culture are constructed in schools.

Yukich (2021) investigates how emotion is reflected in the stance of five Pākehā history teachers. The author interviewed five secondary teachers who chose to teach New Zealand History, because until recently, the teaching of such has not been compulsory. Yukich analysed the teacher responses and found there were areas of practice that these teachers shared, namely: feeling an ethical obligation in their role as history teachers, being emotionally vulnerable and sharing parts of their lives that relate to history and having moving encounters that cause them to reflect on their thinking. Yukich contends that it takes not just intellectual but emotional work to teach difficult histories. Schools are recognized as important factor for the teachers who decided to teach New Zealand history as they provided a web of supportive relationships for teachers to experiment with and negotiate changes in practice. In this work, teachers had an understanding of how being Pākehā privileged them in society but didn't share how they understood culture and race. My study doesn't just focus on one subject area, but the everydayness of the school to investigate how schools construct culture. Additionally, my research looks specifically at how schools enact conception of culture and how this is reflected in teachers' understandings.

Schools Socialization of Teachers

Schools have played a pivotal role in the colonisation of New Zealand. Establishing schools was a priority for missionaries upon their arrival in New Zealand in 1814 because they recognized the power of schools to help them succeed in their aim to 'civilise' Māori (May, 2005). Later, in an attempt to more speedily assimilate/Europeanise Māori, Crown funded schools prohibited the use of te reo Māori (Simon & Smith, 2001). European ways of knowing were centred, while Māori knowledge systems were marginalised. Linda Smith (2021) asserts that "the major agency for imposing this positional superiority over knowledge, language, and culture was colonial education." (p. 73).

Most of the research about schools is directed at understanding how they socialize students. How schools socialize students around class (Connell et al., 1982), gender (Alder et al., 1992;

Feldman & Sears, 1966 ; Thorne, 1993) and race (Byrd, 2015; Sampson & Garrison-Wade, 2011) have all been studied. It is clear that schools play a crucial role in the socialisation processes of students, but role do schools play in the racial socialisation of teachers?

This is a topic of far less scrutiny. Most of the research considered how teachers attitudes toward race and ethnicity impacted their behaviours (Inan-Kaya & Rubie-Davies, 2022; Schofield, 1986; McIntyre, 1997; Peterson et al., 2016), but did not investigate the relationship between the schools and teachers' understandings of culture and race. The overall take of these studies was that teachers came into schools with understandings and attitudes that were predetermined by forces outside of the school such as family, peer, societal, and racial ethnic (i.e., being White) influences and they acted in ways that were congruent with those understandings. Largely absent was the possible impact schools had in socializing teachers to think about and act out culture in particular ways. The study that comes closest to this aim was a two-year qualitative study looking at how professional development in Multicultural Education impacted White teachers' classroom practices (Sleeter, 2012). Teachers who participated in this project came from eighteen different schools and received professional development outside of their school site. While there were some short-term changes in teacher practice (i.e increased use of collaborative learning and creating slightly more parity between the praise teacher gave students of different races), the overall effect of the professional development project was minimal. Teachers maintained their pervious views on race and didn't see it as salient to their teaching practice. Further, they continued to hold colour blind attitudes towards race which erased the distinctiveness of student experience.

None of these studies look at the role schools play in shaping teachers' understandings of culture and race. My research contributes to the literature by examining how schools construct notions of culture and how teachers accept and/or resist these constructions.

Cultural Confusion

Definitions of Culture

Both Mary and Kate used culture in a variety of ways. Culture was a shapeshifter of a word that would change form within the same response. Take Mary's definition of culture:

It's the customs and the traditions that I have been raised in. For me... In the culture of my family, even if there was someone whose parents were exactly the same colour wise or anything, then no doubt it would be completely different. The emphasis that my family placed on you know, going to church every Sunday, learning a musical instrument being a really important thing. Writing a letter to our grandparents, anytime we went there for dinner to say thank you. All of those kinds of things would be really different to some of my friends...And school culture, the ways things are done, the community culture, the way things are done in the community. Rules and regulations to make sure everyone is fitting in together, right? And not sticking out too much.

Mary's use of culture keeps shifting within her response, which makes pinning down her meaning of culture tricky. She starts off talking about the culture, as in the way things are done in her family. Then she moves on to talking about school and community culture. In all of her answers, it is clear that she is relating culture to groups of people, be they families, schools or communities, and the ways that those particular groups do things. Mary's response includes acknowledgement of culture as customs and traditions, but she individualizes it to the workings of her particular family. From her response culture is a unique phenomenon, different in each family. She doesn't talk about how her family was like those around her, but how they were different. She doesn't see culture as means of connection but as a badge of difference. Additionally, she thinks of culture as 'rules and regulations' to keep people from sticking out. It relates to an understanding of culture that is harsh and punitive, one that is focused on compliance and dominance rather than relationships.

Also important in her response is the racialization of culture. Mary notes that 'even if there was someone whose parents were exactly the same colour wise or anything, then no doubt it would be completely different'. She could have said that if there were someone's parents who

were exactly the same culture wise, but she didn't, she said colour wise. The fact that she added piece about skin colour implies that there is a link between race and culture. Race as a category relies in skin colour and phenotype as markers of difference. Culture relies on material and symbolic elements of groups of people that, at least theoretically, do not have skin colour. Culture is the very definition of a social construction. Even though culture doesn't have a colour, it has become racialised and can be stand in for race, without having to explicitly talk about race.

When asked about her definition of culture Kate said this:

I think culture, it's more than just, ethnicity. I think culture is things we value, things we enjoy doing, you know, things that make us unique. And others obviously, the same for others. Yeah, I think the school has a culture, I think the community has a culture, I think that the way we are in ethnicity, is one part of it, and values are one part of it.

Kate's response connects culture to ethnicity. A defining feature of ethnicity is that it is self-selected rather than ascribed by biology and appearance, such as race. Ethnicity is another way of classifying groups of people, that is not race. Indeed, the origin of the term itself was born out of the wish to distance classification from race (Kivisto & Croll, 2012). I wonder if this is what is going on for Kate in her answer as well, by talking about ethnicity, she doesn't have to deal with the realities of race. Talking about ethnicity is a way to shield her from uncomfortable conversations about race.

Much of Kate's answer deals with things that could come down to individual, not cultural differences. Kate goes on to talk about culture being 'things we value, things we enjoy doing...things that make unique'. The way that she discusses culture makes it seem as if culture is about the individual, but culture is a way to talk about groups of people. This isn't to say that there is no room for the individual, but that by talking about individual traits, you miss the meaning of culture. Interestingly, Kate uses 'we' when she talks about culture, which means she is thinking of people who belong to her culture- Pākehā culture. She says that she thinks that it is the same for others, people from different cultures. I bring up this point because DiAngelo (2018) talks about how White people are afforded the privilege of being seen as individuals where people of colour often have to be seen as representatives of their entire group. Kate's answer aligns with what DiAngelo (2018) observed in that she

equates her culture with individualistic traits.

Kate goes on to say that the community has a culture. Here she shifts her focus from the individual to the community. It is hard to know then exactly what she means when she says culture, is it more about the individual or more about the community? And what are the traits that would make up community culture?

She ends by saying that part of culture is values. This is a recognition that culture goes beyond its material aspects, that there are ways worldviews and ways of thinking that make up part of culture. Most of the ways that culture is discussed by schools has to do with material culture, so it is significant that Kate at least in passing mentions symbolic culture.

Both Mary and Kate used culture to mean many things. From family to community to school, the way that they talked about culture kept shifting. This made it difficult to understand what they meant. What exactly do people mean when they say culture? Are we even operating from a shared definition of the term? Is culture a useful term to use in categorizing groups of people if we aren't sure what it means? It is this lack of clarity that makes the term culture hard to pin down.

Lacking in their answers was recognition of the wider societal implications of culture. Later in the interviews we discussed being Pākehā, but that didn't come up in their initial answers. There was also no discussion of power or privilege that being part of the dominant culture affords people. Their individualization of culture disconnected them from seeing themselves as part of larger Pākehā culture. It may be that this part of their socialization as part of a White, Eurocentric society that privileges individualism. They simply may not be able to see themselves as part of a larger group of people. It may also be a defence mechanism to disassociate themselves from being part of a group that they may view as problematic. I discussed earlier research by Gray et al. (2013) that people who identify as Pākehā tend to do so at least partly to distinguish themselves from other Whites (i.e. NZ European and New Zealander) that they believe don't share their same views on Māori.

Mary's response frames culture as difference rather than commonality. Her understanding of culture had a lot to do with difference- the way her family was different from others, even other Pākehā families. Her understanding of culture positioned her individual family as her unit of reference, not her larger community. Her family was different from everyone else's, and everyone else's family as different from hers. What we didn't hear was the way her family shared elements of culture with others.

Kate's answer focused on the 'we', presumably, of other Pākehā. She did this when she talked about, 'things we value, things we like, what makes us unique'. Unique- what makes us special, what makes us unlike others, what makes us different. Culture, rather than being a representative of sameness, was a measure of difference.

Seeing Their Own Culture

As members of the dominant culture, could Mary and Kate see their own culture? I asked them if they thought they have culture, and here are their responses:

Mary: Yeah, I do [have culture]. (She goes silent, so I ask how she experiences her culture). My own culture and traditions and things, I would experience oh, I don't know. I'd be more immersed in it if I went back home to my mom's house because it's more traditional there... My family traditions would be more English traditions you know being raised in an Anglican family and probably very English but with the weird little bastardized New Zealandisms in there.

Mary said that she had culture, but she struggled in naming exactly what that culture was. Frankenberg's (1993) analysis of White women's identities relates to what Mary is saying. Frankenberg (1993) found that the White women she interviewed frequently thought of themselves as not having culture. This is because like race privilege, cultural privilege becomes normalised and invisible to those who inhabit it. Unlike the women in Frankenberg's research, Mary does say that she has culture. Indeed, with New Zealand's focus on culture, it wouldn't be socially acceptable to say one doesn't have culture. The current discourse on culture in New Zealand is that everyone has culture. The fact that she struggles when it comes to naming what aspects of her culture are suggests that there is a disconnect between having received the message from society that everyone has culture and being able to discern what constitutes Pākehā culture.

Frankenberg calls the inability for the White women she interviewed to discuss what makes up their culture 'thin description'. Mary displays this same 'thin description' in her answer. Mary says that she has English traditions but doesn't describe what those are. Perhaps she assumed that being part of the dominant culture, that everybody knows what those traditions are. By its very nature, White identity is formed in relation to 'Others' (i.e. not Māori, not Samoan) and without it's non-White referent, is difficult to define on its own. In other words, it's hard to know what being White is if there isn't someone who is not White to compare it

to. She may be struggling to talk about her White identity because she is talking about it all on its own, without something to compare it to. This changes later in the conversation as I will discuss in a following section.

Kate: I have a culture, but I wouldn't say I'm like, Kiwi you know, how these kids are 'I'm a very proud Samoan and that's who I am'. I don't have that ethnicity culture. But I have values that are important to me. And I know that I'm like, Pākehā female, but that's probably not the most important thing to me. Like, what I look like and where I'm from isn't as important as the things I value.

In this answer Kate deployed the term 'Kiwi' as a stand-in for her cultural identity, which is an interesting discursive move. She moves away from her specific cultural identity (Pākehā or English) and moves to 'Kiwi' which amalgamates cultures. The switch to 'Kiwi' allows her to steer clear of a nationalistic version of identity, one that is linked to an unsavoury history of colonisation. In using the term Kiwi, she is able to keep the things that make New Zealand distinctive from other settler colonies, whilst not acknowledging what went in to making New Zealand a nation.

Kate goes on to say she doesn't have 'that ethnicity culture', which of course she does, even if she can't see it. What her answer displays is that she doesn't recognize herself as having ethnicity. In her case, being White allows her to be part of the dominant culture, which then allows her to see herself as not possessing culture. She does however see her students as having 'ethnicity culture'.

When it comes to herself, Kate doesn't find what she looks like (her race) or where she is from as important, unlike the students at her school. Culture and race don't appear to be defining feature for her. We see in Kate's answer just as we did in Mary's a 'thin description' of her culture. She agrees that she has culture, but she doesn't really outline what that culture is. Even more strongly than in Mary's answer we see how Kate equates culture to race, ethnicity, and nationality.

Kate ends by saying that what is more important to her than her culture or where she is from is what she values. Perhaps to her values exist outside of culture rather than being shaped by it. She doesn't see that what she values comes from a distinct cultural perspective, a White European perspective. Much of what gets normalised works to hide perspectives rooted in

culture.

Neither Mary nor Kate were able to clearly discern what their culture was. Both used discursive strategies that individualized culture as something that had to do with how things were in their own families or as individual traits. There was no recognition of them being part of a larger cultural group. The ways that both of them talked about culture worked to present an air of possessing cultural knowledge without ever having to name in a meaningful way what their culture is.

The Role of Culture in Their Lives

As a way to explore more about their understanding of culture, and particularly how it related to them I asked what role culture played in their lives.

Mary: I mean, a big role because it's not just my culture that I'm dealing with and interacting with and learning about, it's so many different cultures. And to be honest at this school it's not as many cultures as what I've previously been exposed to. And if I think about my children, I don't think they've got anyone in their friendship groups for example that has got the same background as them whereas if they would have stayed in England. But yeah, it's continual learning and things. Even reading a book the other day, one of our kids although they they're not fluent in Tamil, they speak and listen to Tamil at home so they were able to say "Oh, no, I know what it means you don't have to look it up".

Mary's response quickly moves away from her own culture, and the role that it plays in her life to the culture of others. It's like she is saying that culture plays a big role in her life, just not her own culture. This obscures the dominance of White culture at the school. Because White culture is everywhere it doesn't stick out to her like the culture of others does.

She makes a point to discuss how diverse her children's friendship group is. This may have to do with proving that she has a real investment in diversity. She may also be trying to point out how she thinks New Zealand is more culturally inclusive than England. Her statement plays into the myth of 'happy diversity' commonly displayed by institutions, including her own school (remember the White and brown hand, and the White girl and brown boy on the mural on their field). In this kind of mythologized diversity, there are happy smiling faces, people of different races getting along, and simply being near each other creates positive changes in (White people's) attitudes. It's the belief that if we all just got to know each other better, then there would be no more racism. This kind of diversity exists in the imaginary but doesn't translate into the messy reality of power differentials, structural racism, and White

hegemony. Even so the myth of happy diversity still has great pull because it feels good to see these images and associate oneself with the fantasy. Ahmed (2007) argues that this conception of diversity is rampant in institutions for the very reason that it doesn't bring about any actual change.

In the last part of her response Mary suggests that having students of different cultures is an asset, since this student was able to contribute to the class by translating a word from Tamil. In this example however, it is her and the class that benefit from this student's knowledge. I wonder what the student got out of the exchange, and how it must feel to have a group of people reading a book about your culture. Perhaps it felt good for the student to be able to show their knowledge. I discussed previously how reading this particular book worked to solidify notions of White supremacy. In this context, even with the student volunteering information, the practice is extractive. The student gives the information and is not met with curiosity but judgement of how their culture is inferior to Pākehā culture.

Kate: I don't really know. I think culture as in like where you're from less of a role to me since I'm from England, born in England. I have family in England but I see myself as a New Zealander, but I don't see myself as like 'True Blooded Kiwi' because I'm not. But I don't know, I'm not all about the All Blacks and all about that culture side of New Zealand but then things like values are strong for me, and family and I suppose that's culture too. So that plays a very important role in my life, the most important. And then coming to school. I like the diversity. And that's very important to me as well. I really like to be around people from all different cultures and walks of life.

Kate doesn't see culture, her culture at least, playing a big part in her life. This invisibilises the role that being part of dominant culture has on her. Even though in some ways she may not identify with New Zealand culture, she feels enough belonging here to consider herself a New Zealander. This is in line with research conducted by Higgins & Terruhn (2021), that found British immigrant to New Zealand often felt a sense of belonging and kinship with Pākehā based on their shared British ancestry. This sense of racial sameness is a key factor in British migrants feeling at home, and amongst kin in New Zealand (Higgins & Terruhn 2021). She does change her position slightly when she recognizes that her values are also a reflection of

her culture. Again, it is her values rather than any of the visible or material aspects that stand in for culture. Kate ends by saying how important it is for her to be around people of different cultures. She says how she likes the diversity. One of the hallmarks of Whiteness is the ability to choose to be around people of your own race (McIntosh, 1995), but the inverse of this is also true. In this case Kate has chosen to work in a school with Māori and Pacific students. It speaks of her privilege to have the ability to choose to work in a place with people from different cultures.

Cultural Clarity

Although Kate and Mary had a hard time describing their own culture, they did not have the same difficulty discussing the culture of others. They both understood Māori and Pacific cultures primarily through their material elements: language, song, dance, and clothing.

Kate: In primary school we learnt to speak very basic te reo Māori. We could choose to do kapa haka or not, I mean, it wasn't forced on us, but we would sing Māori songs, you know, see performances... And college, it's less compulsory. So like, there wasn't, you didn't have to learn to te reo Māori, but we still had marae stays. And, you know, it still was very important to the school. And so it was always performances, speeches, always in te reo Māori.

Mary: I remember having the outfit and doing a performance. And there were a few songs that we would sing at assembly every week. Some of the same ones that the kids do here, which is quite funny... My teacher in year 8, who played the guitar, she taught us a lot more about Māori culture, but not really about tikanga Māori or anything. I didn't learn any of that. We knew not to sit on tables. We knew not to pat someone on the head. But nothing more than that really understanding anything much more than that. And might get 'Tūtira Mai' but not much. Wouldn't get any whole phrases really in Māori in the classroom.

Both Mary and Kate's early learning about culture stressed the material aspects of Māori culture. Neither of them expressed that they delved into the symbolic aspects of Māori culture

and looked at the underlying worldviews and values that produced the elements of Māori culture that they participated in.

When it came to how they viewed their students' culture their views differed based on the make up of the school. Kate worked at a school that was almost entirely Māori and Pacific and she had this to say about the role of culture in students lives:

Kate: A massive role. Yeah. Because they are, not they have strong values as well, but they also have very strong connections to where they're from, and where their families from, their whole ancestry. And that guides their life: they go to church, they go to the Cook Island Hall, they go to the Tokelau Hall, whichever hall it is. Their families are massive because their families go beyond just like my mom and dad and brothers is my family. But their family is their cousins, the cousins cousins, uncles, whoever, and it's huge, and they bring that into the classroom, but you k now, and they bring a lot of that knowledge in for us and each other, but for some of the kids, it's less important and we have to remember that as well. Some of them, don't do all those things and they don't want to do a kapa haka just because their Māori and you know what I mean. So, we teach them about culture, but we don't force it on them. But they might be more like me, they might just have their family values and that's what's important. But, yeah, and dance, music, everything that we do in language is a big one for a lot of them. A handful of our kids don't speak English at home, they speak their native language. You know, Samoan or Tokelau , whichever it is. So that's pretty important too.

For Kate, it was easy to see the culture of her students because it was different from her own. In this response she uses herself as the standard that she measures her students' cultures against. She discusses students' symbolic culture in this answer, such as their conceptions of family, but she does this through the lens of difference.

This is not really surprising because it is the way that culture is talked about in society. Attention is placed on the ways that other cultures differ from the invisible standard of

Pākehā culture. The Ministry of Education classifies culture in the same ways. In *Ka Hikitia*, the Māori education strategy, culture is framed in the same way with a focus on the material aspects of culture.

Mary, who works at a school with a large Pākehā student body focused on role of culture for her Pākehā students. She responds:

I think a big role, but I'm not sure that many of them, I don't know that many or all of them will actually understand so much about it. Unless they were thinking about cultural traditions and things within their family. And I've got a couple of kids who really struggle with the fact that we learn te reo in the classroom. And they, they really don't want to participate. And you see them really shutting down whenever we say anything in te reo Māori or you know, like this morning when we had (te reo teacher), come in for a lesson, so she's doing some lessons for a number of weeks. You know they just shutting down looking down, not wanting to take part. It makes me wonder what the culture is at their house or what discussions are had? Regarding if it's just them or if it's a family thing...

She expressed that she doesn't think most of them understand the role culture played in their lives. It was easy for her to point this out for them, even though she wasn't able to explain the role her culture played in her own life. By talking about students' reactions to learning te reo she discursively positions te reo Māori at odds with Pākehā culture. She can't talk about Pākehā culture without also including an 'Other'.

Scholars have talked about how Whiteness is a relative identity that relies on juxtaposing itself with an 'Other' in order to define and recentre itself. Mohanty (1988) relates Whiteness to patriarchy and colonialism in saying "it is only in so far as 'Woman/Women' and 'the East' are defined as Others, or as peripheral, that (western) Man/Humanism can represent him/itself as the centre. It is not the centre that determines the periphery, but the periphery that, in its boundedness, determines the centre." (p. 81). By bounding the 'Other', Whiteness seeks to find its own limits.

But by looking outside itself for definition, Whiteness is found lacking in its own substance. What exactly is it to be White? If an identity is created only in opposition to another, what

exactly does that identity contain? Self-definition by negation (White in Mills, 1997 p. 43) creates a hollow identity. Such an ‘empty alterity’ (MacLean in Gray et al., 2013) does not allow for the self-recognition of culture and race, rather depends on seeing the difference in ‘Others’ (Dyer, 1988; Frankenberg, 1993; Roediger, 1998). Mary’s response also distanced her from other Pākehā who did not share the same values as her. The students in her class that didn’t want to learn te reo were positioned as not like her. In this way she was able to further define herself through the difference with other Pākehā. It’s like she was saying, *those are not my kind of White people, those are a different/other/bad kind of white people.*

Both Mary and Kate used ‘Others’ to delineate the limits of their Whiteness, be it the cultural learning they did in their own schooling or the students they were currently teaching. Unable to see their culture on their own they had to depend on others to highlight it for them. Even so, what they expressed about their culture lacked substance and self-understanding.

Reflections on Pākehā Identity

There is something to be learned about Pākehā identity through what Mary and Kate shared. I asked them what being Pākehā meant to them, and what follows are their answers:

Kate: Not a lot really. That’s who I am and it’s what I look like. It’s not even who I am maybe. It doesn’t mean a lot to me. That’s just, I am Pākehā and it’s cool, I’m not like I’m not Pākehā but I’m not *ooh Pākehā*, you know. I don’t have... I don’t go to church, I don’t go and do all these cultural things. But I do celebrate Christmas and do those sorts of things that maybe other cultures don’t do. So I’ve never really thought about it deeply. I guess that’s being Pākehā, that I’ve never thought about it. It’s not that I haven’t thought about who I am and what I like. It’s just that I haven’t considered that being Pākehā is a big part of that. Yeah, maybe that says it’s the dominant culture and so you don’t have to because you’re not different. You’re not doing different things that are interesting and you’re just doing what you’ve always done.

Kate’s answer tells us a few things. First, that she doesn’t see herself as being cultural. Her culture is not central to how she defines herself, but it is important when it comes to defining other people, people who ‘do cultural things’. She’s not ‘different’ or ‘interesting’, she’s just

doing what she's always done. In doing this she discursively places herself outside of culture which normalises her cultural position and marginalizes those with culture. This is how the periphery defines the center'(Mohanty, 1988).

Next, Kate's answer highlights the tension that Whites feel about identifying with Whiteness. In her answer it was evident that she wanted to acknowledge she was White without aligning herself with White supremacist ideology. It is common for White people to try to create a distinction between themselves and the other 'bad' Whites whose beliefs about race/culture are not in line with their own. There is an inherent self-consciousness in claiming a White identity, *I'm White but I'm not that kind of White*. Frankenberg (1993) noted how her White women participants sought to discursively distance themselves from other Whites who held racist beliefs. There was a similar finding in New Zealand, whereby labelling themselves as Pākehā, Whites attempted to set themselves apart from other Whites who they believed did not share the same positive beliefs about Māori (Gray et al., 2013). This separation between 'good Whites' and 'bad Whites' relies on the principles of individualism to maintain distance from and to culpability for racism in society.

By the end of her answer Kate has come to the realization that being part of the dominant culture has shielded her from thinking of her culture. In her response Whiteness has taken many forms, from 'no culture', to 'normal culture', to 'bad culture' (Frankenberg, 1993). It is the slipperiness of Whiteness that make it a difficult concept to contend with, even in the space of a single answer.

Mary: But it's a funny thing being a Pākehā because here in this country, that doesn't belong to you, although I really feel like I belong to New Zealand... I belong here, but it doesn't belong to me. But then maybe that's through the different kind of thinking and understandings that I've come to as well because I know lots of people who are Pākehā who would say, yeah, of course, this is my country. It belongs to me. But it's, I don't know...

Mary's answer reflects the in between space that Mary seems to inhabit. She is grappling with the legacy of being the descendant of settlers who displaced Māori from the whenua. Her knowledge of the history of her kin seems to have dispossessed her from her own sense of belonging. Bell (2009), using Morris's analogy, refers to as Pākehā being 'human hinges',

swinging back and forth, both 'here' and 'there'. This idea of 'here' and 'there' got me thinking about how two, often seemingly disparate things, can be true at the same time. Mary's words hold the complexity of her uneasiness and longing.

I present two poems that can lend insight into Mary's position.

The Skeleton of the Great Moa in the Canterbury Museum, Christchurch

The skeleton of the great moa on iron crutches
Broods over no great waste; a private swamp
Was where this tree grew feathers once, that hatches
Its dusty clutch, and guards them from the damp.

Interesting failure to adapt on islands,
Taller but not more fallen than I, who come
Bone to his bone, peculiarly New Zealand's.
The eyes of children flicker round this tomb

Under the skylights, wonder at the huge egg
Found in a thousand pieces, pieced together
But with less patience than the bones that dug
In time deep shelter against ocean weather:

Not I. some child born in a marvellous year,
Will learn the trick of standing upright here.

(Curnow, 1997, p.220)

The settler colonial anxiety blues

We are the ones who made this country
Discovered you,
And claimed this land
We burnt its forests
For days on end
To break this land
This untamed savage land
To break it in
And break it down

And now we have the blues
Settler colonial anxiety blues
Māori people are rising up
Going places that were once just for us

We took your land
To punish you
We took more land
For our farms
We took more land
For our roads and townships

We took more land
For the railway line
We took more land
and more land
and more land
we took your bodies
To use and discard
We took Your babies
For you don't deserve them
We took Your women

To possess
And Your men to humiliate
For our needs are more important
Than yours

And now we have the blues
Settler colonial anxiety blues
Māori people are rising up
Having their say
On what we have done

We made laws to justify our desires
To defeat you
To break you in and
Break you down
We offered you
The crumbs from our tables
To work for us
To fight for us
That was the deal
For you to live with us
Under us
For us

And now we have the blues
The settler colonial anxiety blues
Māori people are rising up
Moving us aside
From our seats of power
Where do we go?
What do we do?
Who are we?
Why have you rejected us?

We need you to make us feel good
We need you so we can be powerful
We need you to give us our identity
Without you what will we do
Who will we be?

And now we have the blues
The settler colonial anxiety blues
Māori people are rising up
Forcing us to examine the past
To see ourselves in the harsh
Light of colonialism
You misconstrue our good intentions
as racism and hatred
Can't you remember the times
We saved you from yourselves?
Your tribalism and savagery?

We came to civilise
Not to oppress
We came to save
Not to condemn
We came to develop
Not to destroy

But now we are blue
Anxious and unsettled
Our world is changing hands
And we cling to a past
That we denied you
The soothing pillow of a dying colonialism.
The rising of the first peoples
The people of this land
They sing

They haka
They protest
Their self-determination
Coming Into being

And now we are blue

(Smith, 2019)

The first poem comes from a visit to the museum the author Allan Curnow took as a child where he viewed the skeleton of the now extinct Moa. In the poem, Curnow, a settler in New Zealand, compares himself to the native Moa and is insistent that he will not suffer the same fate. It seems as though, through sheer force of will, he will be able to do what the Moa did not. It is a poem suffused with a distinctly settler worldview.

The poem is fitting given what Mary has just described about being Pākehā. Whilst being Pākehā is a ‘peculiarly’ New Zealand identity, it doesn’t seem to allow for stable footing, or to use Curnow’s turn of phrase, ‘standing upright’. And the more one learns about the violent and duplicitous ways Pākehā colonised New Zealand, the less stable their footing becomes. For Pākehā the ‘trick of standing upright here’ has to do with how they can reconcile the past (the history not the mythology) with who they believe themselves to be. They must learn to balance the ‘here’ and ‘there’ of their identity. It is this unsteady and uncomfortable process that Mary finds herself.

The second poem is written by Linda Tuhiwai Smith which she shared at a conference I attended in 2019. In this poem a wāhine Māori, writes from the perspective of being a settler in New Zealand. Through this poem she speaks forthrightly about what being a settler in New Zealand has meant, and the predicament that Pākehā find themselves in, with a case of ‘the settler colonial anxiety blues’. This poem highlights the problematic dispositions and discomfort that Pākehā may feel in relation to Māori asserting their rights. Although it is told from a settler point of view, the perspective in this poem comes from a Māori worldview.

This poem summarizes the Pākehā plight of belonging when it says ‘Where do we go? What do we do? Who are we?’ This is what Mary is talking about when she opines about belonging in New Zealand, but it not belonging to her. How can she claim something that was taken unjustly, and where does that leave her? The poem also deftly points out Pākehā need Māori

to shore up their sense of themselves, their very identity. It is through the historical and contemporary processes of colonisation that Pākehā like Mary must negotiate their identities and work through ‘the blues’.

Together, these poems present a distinctive way to analyse Mary’s experience of being Pākehā. In what ways can she, the descendant of settlers, learn to stand upright? How is her sense of belonging tied to feeling like New Zealand belongs to her? What beliefs must she counter to be free of the settler colonial anxiety blues? I don’t have the answers but believe that these questions can prompt important discussion about Pākehā identity.

Mary and Kate’s answers provide some perspective on Pākehā identity. Both teacher’s responses highlight different strategies that go into creating a Pākehā identity. Whether it was Kate’s realization that she never had to consider herself as cultural because she didn’t think of her as different, or Mary attempting to reconcile her need for belonging to a country with a settler colonial past, both strategies are instructive in understanding how Pākehā construct identity.

Culture as a Proxy for Race

In the teachers’ responses culture operated with multiple, often unclear meanings. Culture was conflated with ethnicity, race, and nationality. Family culture, school culture, and community culture were all mentioned, expanding even more the way this term is used in the teachers’ general lexicon. With all of this confusion about what culture is, what does culture mean? How can we be sure that when we say culture, we are operating from a shared understanding? From this standpoint, it can be difficult to understand what is meant by the way culture is used in everyday language.

Ultimately, the way culture was used in the teachers’ language was to mark difference from the unstated Pākehā norm. Although both Mary and Kate agreed that they had culture, neither was able to clearly articulate what their culture was. Their culture was so taken for granted that it was hard for them to see. It was, however, easy for them to see the culture of others. Culture discursively functions to create a distinction between those who have easily identifiable culture and those that do not. As such the term culture operates to construct a group of people as ‘Other’.

Race was one of the many meanings culture had for the teachers. In talking about her culture Mary comments “...even if there was someone whose parents were exactly the same colour

wise or anything, then no doubt it would be completely different”. The fact that she was talking about skin colour denotes that for her culture has a racialised meaning.

When I asked Kate if she remembers a time that she realized she was Pākehā and she said, “I think I’m more of a person that sees people rather...I don’t know”. The saying goes, *I see people rather than colour*, but Kate didn’t finish her sentence. Even so, the meaning is there. It is part of a script that she has been given by society, a mantra that she and others can recite in times when they move out of their window of tolerance. But if that was true, if she were ‘colour blind’, then there would be no need to bring up this script. If you truly see people and not colour why bring it up in the first place? And why exactly would seeing colour be wrong? This answer functions as part of the agreement Whites have ‘to see the world wrongly’, to be part of the ‘consensual hallucination’ which underpins the Racial and Settler Contracts (Mills, 1997). Unless there is a physical reason that her eyes cannot detect pigment, then she very much can see skin colour. It is the failure of her to recognize it that is the issue, not the fact that people have different colour skin. This saying is all about race and skin colour so even in evoking it, one is conceding to the existence of race.

Moreton-Robinson (2015) theorizes that:

We compel culture to function discursively as a category of analysis in the process of differentiation, while the exogenous disciplinary knowledges that have been produced about us operationalize ‘race’ as the marker of our difference, even when defining Indigenous ‘cultures’ (p. xv).

Her words provide an accurate description of what is going on with Mary and Kate. Although they are saying the word ‘culture’ to describe difference, the meaning of that difference is racialised.

Racism is a powerful sorting mechanism which affords those who are identified as White cultural and institutional privilege, whilst working to disadvantage non-Whites (DiAngelo, 2012). If we see race not as biological imperative but as a social construction meant to designate privilege to those who inhabit White identities, the ways that culture can be racialized starts to make sense. In New Zealand, culture and race inhabit a similar space in that culture is used as a means for designating those with privilege and those without. Although culture retains a meaning that is separate from race, the ways in which culture functions is similar to that of race. There are significant disparities between Pākehā and

Māori/ Pacific peoples in the social outcomes of education (Education Counts, 2021), wealth (Stats NZ, 2016), home ownership (Stats NZ, 2020), incarceration (Department of Corrections, 2022), levels of childhood poverty (Stats NZ, 2022), and health (Ministry of Health, 2019; Ryan et al., 2019). These persistent gaps are neither logical or inevitable, that is unless you believe that deficiency resides within Māori and Pacific peoples or their cultures. Said differently, these gaps don't make sense unless you use racist logic to justify them. Using this logic Māori and Pacific are to blame for their difference and Pākehā are not implicated in working for change. However, if we see racism a system that acts as a powerful privilege sorting mechanism that enforces power relations established under settler colonialism then the focus shifts from individuals to systems. Rather than seeking to blame 'Others' and wash their hands of the situation, this analysis implicates Pākehā as both part of the problem and part of the solution. It asks Pākehā to no longer accept the how the inequitable treatment of Māori and Pacific Peoples has been normalised and take action to change it.

From what Mary and Kate had shared it was clear to me that the only clear meaning culture had was that of difference. Difference from what they considered normal, different from themselves. To have culture was essentially to not be Pākehā. Although culture continued to have a different if overlapping meanings with race, it largely functioned in the same way race did. And difference didn't mean just different, it meant less than. The entire settler colonial project in New Zealand was predicated on the Settler Contract, on some people being more human than others. Culture was just the latest manifestation in how Whiteness marks this difference. Culture acted as a way to divvy up social and material resources, with those who most closely met the Pākehā standards being granted the most privilege. The 'lesser' culture of others is consciously or subconsciously justifying their lot in life, to make it seem this difference in outcomes is 'natural'. Why else would there be such disparities between Pākehā and Māori/Pacific groups. Such deficit thinking erases the historical events and current institutional structures that produce these long standing and gaps. I am reminded of the title of Bonilla-Silva's (2017) *Racism Without Racists*, to riff from this title if I were to write a book about New Zealand it would be *Racism Without Race*.

In conclusion, this chapter presented Mary and Kate's views on culture. Culture was a word that was deployed in different ways and held a variety of meanings for them, making it difficult to ascertain a precise definition. Although both teachers expressed understanding that they have culture, they struggled in explaining what it is that makes up their culture and the role it played in their lives. Conversely, they had an easier time talking about the culture of others, specifically that Māori and Pacific people. For the most part Mary and Kate located culture in the material rather than symbolic elements of culture. For both Mary and Kate their Pākehā identity was a site of tension as they both negotiated aspects of belonging. Finally, I suggest that the term culture is used discursively to mark difference from the unstated Pākehā norm. Culture has become racialised in New Zealand and works in much the same way race does, affording privilege to those who align themselves with White identities.

Chapter Twelve: Conclusion

Did you ever wonder how it is we imagine the world in the way we do? How it is we imagine ourselves, if not through stories. (King, 2003 p. 95)

In this thesis I have explored the question, *How do schools construct culture?* I have looked at this through the Ministry, Schools, Classrooms, and teachers. What has been revealed through this research is that there is no common understanding of what culture means, and that the meanings that have been ascribed to culture have been largely racialised. Whilst there has been discussion about the vagueness of the term culture (Biernacki et al., 1999), which I also found, this research underscores the racialised meanings schools, teachers, and students give to culture as belonging to the non-White ‘Other’. The use of the term culture is a means to signify difference without evoking race, therefore maintaining the appearance of being colour-blind and meritocratic.

Even in trying to be culturally inclusive, New Zealand education still works as a colonial holdover. Education in this country is built on the bones of colonialism and no amount of ‘inclusion’ will meaningfully change that. Change must come through the deconstruction of epistemic models of education that rely on the privileging of White /Eurocentric worldview (Thomsen et al., 2021). Whiteness and settler colonialism interact to maintain a system of education that reproduce the settler/Indigenous power relations in this country. There is no inclusion, only abolition and reformation. This is what Audre Lorde (2003) meant when she so brilliantly told us, “The master’s tools will never dismantle the master’s house.” (p.27).

So often in schools we rely on only addressing material culture without serious consideration of what lies underneath the surface. Without the symbolic aspects of culture, the material aspects don’t make sense. By not attempting to understanding the complex reasons non-dominant cultures do what they do, Eurocentric epistemologies remain privileged and maintain their superior status. All cultures make sense if you do the work of trying to understand them. Not understanding the symbolic aspects of culture in addition to notions of cultural superiority pave the way for cultural appropriation. Shallow interpretations of culture lead to check-the-box activities, reification of cultural difference, and the use of culture as entertainment and edification for Whites. The only remedy for this is to take understanding symbolic culture seriously. Once you understand the symbolic culture, material culture not

only make sense but takes on meaning. That is the kind of cultural education we should be aiming for in schools.

If I were to give advice to schools, it would be that how you enact culture has an impact on what teachers and students think about culture. Equally important as the material aspects of culture (holidays, clothing, dance) are the symbolic. It is understanding the symbolic aspects of culture that give the material aspects meaning. One way to go about this is by schools critically reflecting on how through colonisation settler notions of education and knowledge have become normalised. One step schools can take is raising their awareness of the history of New Zealand, the construction of Whiteness as a racial identity, and the critical differences in te Tiriti vs. the Treaty and what that means in the context of schools. In addition to this schools should normalise te ao Māori and tikanga and situate it as central to the everyday functioning of the school, not an add on. Naepi et al. (2017) call for a shift to ‘pluralversities’ to disrupt the mono-epistemic space of the university. In conversation with this point I believe that a similar tactic must be implemented at the primary school level, making multiple epistemologies standard in the classroom. Language Weeks and Cultural Days are not enough. Go beyond mere ‘inclusion’ and aim for structural transformation.

If I were to give advice to Pākehā teachers it would be to heed Butler’s (1995) wisdom that, ‘All that you touch, you change. All that you change, changes you.’ (p.3). How are you changing the world of the students that you work with? How are you allowing them to change you? Students will follow your lead. Yes, learn about other cultures but also realize that you have your own. You may not be able to see right now, but that is because you are not meant to. You may have never had to look critically at your position before, but that stops now. Look for the ways you are privileged and understand how that came to be. The racial hierarchy that persists in this society is not inevitable or natural, but a result of centuries of violence and dehumanization. Use your positioning to push for change, starting in your own classroom. Think about your content, pedagogical strategies and behaviour management and evaluate the cultural worldview they reinforce. Make te ao Māori and tikanga an integral part of what and how you teach. Add depth to your teaching about culture by not only addressing the material but also the symbolic aspects. Challenge what you take for granted and “recentre on the Pacific, the place of collective inhabitation so that our thinking and research might become a unique expression of this place” (Barber & Naepi,

2020 p. 701). Don't let yourself or your students operate from the perspective of White superiority by assuming that the way Pākehā do things is the best, give context and equal credence to differing cultural worldviews. Both of the teachers who I interviewed expressed an uneasiness about their place in New Zealand and felt unsure of how they belonged, and I suspect that they are not alone. Rather than aiming for a sense of belonging, shift your thinking to that of your responsibility. As a Pākehā teacher and a Treaty partner, what is your responsibility to your students and community at large? How can you teach and act in ways that fulfil your responsibilities to tangata whenua? Are you preparing to be a good ancestor? How will your descendants remember you? Learn about Pākehā from history who lived in partnership with Māori and share their stories.

I claim that what I have found is accurate and contributes to existing research in the areas of culturally responsive education, settler colonial education, Pākehā identity, Whiteness, culture, the Hidden Curriculum, and the Settler Contract. I do claim that my positioning as a Black American gives me perspective as to the ways Whiteness in education operates. In the end this work is “a collection of truths. It isn't the whole truth. It isn't the only truth. It's just one collection of thoughts that are true.” (Butler, 2000).

Stories of Hope

Stories are everywhere. There are stories written all over our schools, scrawled on the walls, embedded in our policies, and enacted in different ways in our classrooms. All we have to do is listen for them, and we will hear their familiar refrain. In this thesis, I have tried to not keep research disparate from story, rather it was my intention to bring them back into conversation with each other. Although this research does point out colonialism and racism, it does so as a hopeful act, not as a reason to despair. Through naming and recognizing reality we are able to make changes and improve. Dixon and Rousseau Anderson (2016) point out how Black spirituals and CRT both share the same tension between struggle and hope. It is important to be able to name reality without falling victim to it. Indeed, I suggest that struggle and hope are not opposites, as Western thinking may frame them, but essential parts of a whole which compliment each other. Therefore, struggle and hope exist not in opposition, but in relation to one another.

This connection exists not only within stories but between them. Stories don't exist in isolation; they are part of what Clint Smith (2021) calls the ‘ecosystem of ideas and stories’:

We know that symbols and iconography and names are not just symbols, they are reflective of the stories that people tell. Stories shape the narratives that communities carry, those narratives shape public policy, public policy shapes the material conditions of people's lives. Which is not to say that taking down a 60 ft. statue of Robert E. Lee is going to erase the racial wealth gap, but it is to say that all of these things are part of an ecosystem of ideas and stories that help shape how we understand what has happened to certain communities and how we understand what needs to happen for those communities in order to move forward. (3:39)

What I have done in this thesis is to make the links in this ecosystem more apparent so that we can see where these stories have come from and where they are leading us.

Stories are inherently powerful. They are the medium through which our assumptions, values and beliefs are implicitly coded. Stories don't end once we have finished telling them, they may live on in the minds of others, mingle with other stories, and tint our reality. My hope is that the stories I have shared allow you see things a bit differently, to unsettle your notions of what schools are, and inspire you to dream/remember what schools could be.

But with storytelling comes responsibility. King (2003) reminds us that "...once a story is told, it cannot be called back. Once it is told it loose in the world. So, you have to be careful with the stories you tell. And you have to watch out for the stories that you are told." (p. 10). It is this kind of reverence for the power of stories with which I have approached this work. I have been thoughtful about both my own place and that of the participants. I have tried to represent the complex humanness of all the people who participated in this research without releasing them of their agency and their own responsibility.

I wish to pass this reverence for storytelling on to you. Yunkaporta posits that "In Eastern philosophies they say with our thoughts we make the world. But I would say no, it's with our words we make the world. We need to start paying attention to our language and start building ways of talking that are reflecting our complex realities." (Malcolm, 2019, 27:42) . If we want to change our world, we need to start telling different stories. We need to understand ourselves and others in more expansive and nuanced ways. We need to tell stories that challenge what we take for granted, stories that reflect the complex realities of people who

have been racialised, stories that reflect ways of being that put us ‘in our place’, and in relationship to one another and the world. What we need is a radical re-storying of our world. You, as much as I have the power to do that.

In these pages I have used storytelling to inform and analyse, but I have also used it as a means of reclamation and resistance. Reclamation of the Black American tradition of storytelling that connects me to the ways of those who have come before. My ancestors used stories to entertain, connect, teach, communicate, plan, hope, and dream. With their help, I have done the same here. But more than in its form, this thesis is meant to be an act of resistance. I have endeavoured to use storytelling to ‘endarken’ (Dillard, 2000) our understanding of how culture was produced and reproduced at these two schools, but also to ‘endarken’ the epistemology of the academy. It was a conscious choice to not conform to the typical thesis structure to challenge epistemological racism and what is considered legitimate scholarship. Black and Indigenous folks have been theorizing in our own ways all along, though that has not always been recognized. It was important that I do my thesis in my own way to stay true to myself, to legitimate storytelling as scholarship, and to honour the often-overlooked theory of BIPOC. It’s a lot of work for one thesis, and perhaps it is just a beginning, but it is a beginning that matters, just as our stories matter.

Counter stories allow us to more accurately see the world because they can subvert the dominant gaze. It is the perspective taken in these stories that call into question the assumed rightness of the dominant narrative. This is what Mills (2000) meant when he called on us to “make the familiar strange”. That makes me but one in a long line of sociologists, though the first to think of myself as such. Our stories can be used as smelling salts to interrupt the ‘consensual hallucination’ which forms the basis for the delusion of White supremacy. It takes away Whites permission to “see the world wrongly” (Mills, 1997 p. 18) and challenges colonial myths steeped in racism. Stories can be used to break the dignity of people, but stories can also be used to repair that broken dignity. That is the power of our stories.

These stories, though critical, can also offer hope. They can help us story our way to a more equitable and just reality. One where Whites begin the process of truth and reconciliation and become responsible for their history and their own healing. A reality where we mourn our losses together. A reality where ‘Whiteness’, as a designation of superior status and entitlement to greater humanity is no longer tenable, and they’re brought back into relationship with all people. We end, just as we began, with stories. These final stories show us a way forward, together.

Something That Feels More Like Freedom

This is a story told by Bryan Stevenson a Black American lawyer, civil rights activist, author, and founder of the National Memorial for Peace and Justice -a space dedicated to honouring the victims of lynching in America.

We have this exhibit in our museum we have these jars of soil that we put on shelves, they're from lynching sites. A middle-aged Black woman went to one of these sites and she was nervous when she got there because it was in a remote location, it was down a dirt road, and when she got to the location a pickup truck drives by, a big White guy stares at her, slows down stares at her, turns around and stares at her some more. She is terrified. Then the man parks the truck, gets out, and walks over to her. She decides she's not going to tell him what she was doing. She said she was just going to say that she was getting dirt for her garden.

The man walks up to her and says, 'what are you doing?' She told me later, she said Mr. Stevenson something got a hold of me and I said, 'I'm digging up soil because this is where a Black man was lynched in 1937 and I'm going to honor his life.' It was just me and this guy, but something got a hold of me. When she said that the man just stood there. Then the man said 'does that paper there talk about the lynching? She gave the man the paper. He said can I read it? She said yes. He started reading the paper while she started digging.

He put the paper down and he stunned her by saying 'excuse me ma'am would it be alright if I helped you?' She said yes and he got down on his knees and she gave him the implement to start digging the soil and he said 'No, no, no, I'll just use my hands, and this guy just starts throwing his hands in the soil and it blew her away. She said, I had a tear running my face. I just didn't expect it. They had gotten near the top and she noticed that the man had slowed down.

She looked over at him and she could see his face was red. She could see his shoulders

were shaking and that a tear was running down his face. She stopped and put her hand on his shoulder and said, ‘are you alright?’. And that’s when the man said ‘No, I’m not alright. I’m so worried that it was my grandfather that participated in this lynching.’

And she said that they both sat there on this roadside weeping about the history, about the pain, about the suffering. She

said well I’m going back to Montgomery to put this in the Legacy Museum at EJI. He said, would it be alright if I just followed you?

I watched both of these people come in. I don’t say that because I think that beautiful things like that always happen when you do the truth telling, but until we do the hard work, until we do the truth telling, we deny ourself the beauty of justice. That’s what I want to say to even the angriest White people. The angriest and most bitter people when it comes to race and justice, I want them to understand that there is something that feels more like freedom, more like equality, more like justice waiting for all of us, but to get there you have to have the courage to actually address the things that we are dealing with.

(Stewart, 2022 38:54)

For the Commonwealth

This is a poem written by Dr. Karol Mila, a poet, scholar and activist of Tongan/Samoan/Pākehā descent. Using a play on the colonial notion of ‘the Commonwealth’, Mila encourages accountability, action, and reconciliation for the good of us all.

For the Commonwealth

We gather here
and feel the weight of the world
on our shoulders.
It does not feel like
we’ve inherited
commonwealth.

But rather
common problems.

If we are to heed the words of poets
Ben Okri said yesterday,
“We have entered the garden
of nightmares and wonders
the giants have woken
and they are stirring
we need to be roused
from the beauty
of our sleep.”

Indeed, we’ve entered this
strange garden
in this city,
epicentre of epitaph,
epitome of empire.

The stones in the squares
remind us
that we all died for this.
The war memorials murmur
numbers not names.

We bring our dead with us
and they are already here.

Not just the ones marked by marble.
But our ancestors,
the original inhabitants
of the lands ‘discovered’.
Who lie in the unmarked graves
and unmentioned massacres,
in battles unspoken of
in untaught wars

We carry them like stones
in our bodies.

They too contribute
towards this commonwealth.
They gave more
than they should have.

Commonwealth.

We come with twinned sides
of the same story.
Either trauma or gain.

Both of it pain.
Two sides
of the same coin,
heads or tails,
the head is the same
on most of our money.

The commonwealth.
Some days
it does not feel like riches,
Although we gather
to speak
of fairer futures.

Truth be told,
It is the fear of future
that we most have in common.

I did not come to sing a siren song
on the sinking ship of empire,
I come to sing of sinking islands
in the South Pacific,
on the blue continent
where I come from.

What is at stake,
Is the very land we stand on.
The earth itself rejects us.
It reneges its responsibilities.
It has retreated
back into the deep.

And if the ocean could speak
in that choked overheated throat
gagged with plastic bags
in the way she once spoke to us
and we could listen,
she would say,
too much salt on her tongue,
she would say

rising with a surety
that we have never seen before,
she would say,
ENOUGH!

If ever we needed
to wake from our sleep
and hear the call of the commonwealth,
It is now.

The islands of Oceania – Kiribati, Tuvalu, Samoa, Tonga, Fiji, Vanuatu,

We are the canaries
in the coal mines of climate change.
Singing and ringing the unruly bells.
Beating the big drums.

And yet,
drowned
out.

So here we gather,
the call of the commonwealth,
but it is the uncommon wealth
that may save us all.

For when we are all thinking the same,
No one is really thinking.
The uncommon wealth
of multi-world-views.

Almost completely silenced,
schooled out of us,
in lost languages
that were beaten
out of the mouths of children.

There. It is there,
There lie the answers
evolving in cultures that hold a
wealth of knowledge,
intergenerational meditations
on what it means to be alive,
what it means to survive
in a certain set of conditions
specific parameters of earth and sea and sky.

Each of us,
holding a long-gestated
piece of the puzzle,
of how to be human and thrive.

It is a precious peopled offering.

It is here, in the ruins of our histories,
in what is left of us, in what we have fought for,
Ka whawhai tonu matou ake ake ake,
alongside our ongoing innovation
there lies the most precious offerings
to the commonwealth.

It is the heart of who we are,
how we see the world to be

our richest offering.
Let us share.

My people have always known,
that we are all relatives,
common ancestors,
the same stardust,
in all of our bones,
the rocks, the trees, the leaves
all of these,
our relatives, all of us,
part of the family of things.

One ancestral word at a time,
we are salvaging what has been savaged.
These backward ways
of being in the world
that may take us forward.

That wake us up
to all that we are dependent upon.
That open our eyes
as the giants sleep.

Science seems to take such a long time
to catch up
Richard Dawkins the evolutionary biologist can confirm,
that the lettuce is our distant cousin.

But the stories we live by
have not changed.

If we were truly to reorient
to life as relatives,
commonwealth
would mean more
than what we might cling to
in the face of a dangerous
and uncertain future.

Let us not
use the word commonwealth
to try and insulate fate
with the soft fur of fine feathered friends.

No,
let us spread our wings
to a much wider vision than that.

It may be the end of the world as we know it
but let us not fear

the remaking of another one.

To the young people I say,
there may be no jobs
but there is plenty of work to be done.

So let us harness our collective wisdoms:
diverse, different and divergent.

Let us create an atmosphere
of kindness and love
for even the air we breathe,
freshwater, trees, people, ocean.

Let us create a dream house,
a great place to raise a family.

For therein lies the fate
of an extraordinary family of relatives.

Where what we have in common
Is all of us.

(Mila, 2018)

The Power of Forgiveness

This is an excerpt of a longer conversation Dr Joanna Kidman had with kaumātua Tom Roa from her recently published book, *Fragments from a Contested Past* (Kidman et al., 2022). Tom's tupuna were "...slaughtered by settler militias during the Waikato War. The people there had gone there for sanctuary after being assured by Crown forces that they would be safe there. They weren't. The militia set fire to a church where women, children and the elderly were massacred." (Kidman, Personal Communication, 2021). This is the context from which their conversation is set.

JOANNA These stories serves so many purposes. They're about the past but they're also about the future. A different kind of future for those who come after us...

TOM I've had feedback from people who've said that they are so glad to know the stories. They're so glad it's been expressed because it gives them a voice. They can retell this. 'I've got words now'. That's what they say to me. "I've got words." That's also part of what I'm trying to achieve.

JOANNA Yes, in telling other we give them voice. In a way too I wonder if it gives Pākehā a way of forming a different kind of relationship with their forebears

who were there or who settled here afterwards. It allows them to enter into these stories, and it won't be easy for some. People will feel shame or guilt, but it allows them to reconnect with their forebears who did things they might feel ashamed about. But in the end, it gives their ancestors back to them. I think these stories are very powerful.

TOM The power of stories is immeasurable. Some Pākehā have broken down when they hear them. They say that they know their tupuna was part of the invading forces. So when I give them a hug, they feel that forgiveness. I make the point that I do forgive. But I want them to be very clear that its not for them to feel better. It's for me to give forgiveness and have mana over this. I don't surrender my mana to you. I share that mana with you. Its not to make you feel better, its to share the mana. And they've said to me, 'That's a very strange way of looking at things.' *[Tom and Joanna laugh]*

JOANNA But it means everyone walks away with their head held high, ay?

TOM Yes. It's very important that everyone's mana is intact. It's important because if we continue to harbour these traumas – if it stays with us, then we can't get anything done.

(pp. 145-146)

These writings speak of hope, not the foolish, over-sugared, forgetful kind- but hope that comes with the courage to reckon with the past, mourn it together, and move forward in relationship. May we be roused from our sleep and seek the Commonwealth that has alluded us. These stories provide us with a template for how to deal with difficult histories: the discomfort, the horror, the resilience, the humanity, the power, and ultimately the healing that is possible when we face the truth. This research is part of a tapestry of work aligned for the purpose of truth telling. We cannot change what we will not face.

This work has been a love letter to my Black and Indigenous kin. May we remember the greatness of our ways, and dream together for a better future.

To my White /Pākehā collaborators I leave you with this, *are you ready to heal?* (ALOK in Baldoni & Heath, 2022; Menakem, 2021) Are you ready to face what you have done to yourselves as well as the violence you have perpetrated against Black and Indigenous people? Can you love us enough to experience discomfort (Gordon, 2020)? Listen to our stories, don't just hear them, imbibe them so deeply that they become a part of you, too. Take back your

ancestors, process what they could not, and dream up a different world for your descendants (and ours). Let's begin radically re-storying our world together.

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