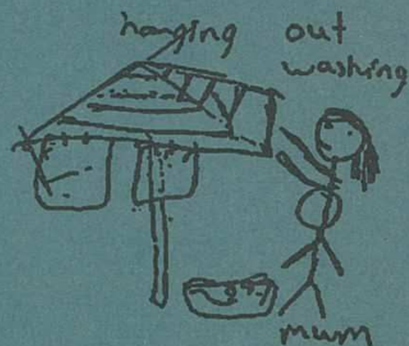
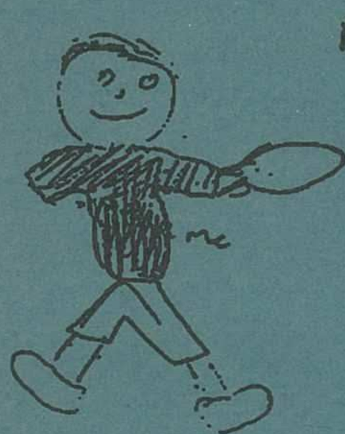
Oral HISTORY in New Zealand

National Oral History Association of New Zealand





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Foreword

This edition of the Oral History in New Zealand pulls together some of the papers presented at the 1999 NOHANZ conference hosted by Te Putahi-a-Toi, the Māori Studies Department of Massey University. The depth of insight conveyed by these authors is reflected in the length of this editorial, which attempts to do justice to the issues raised.

Juanita Ketchel's article discusses the use of oral histories to illuminate the lives of a relatively invisible group, that is, resilient survivors of a violent upbringing. Ketchel describes the impact that a history of silencing may have on the retelling of a traumatic life story. The very process of giving words to long held secrets clarifies, refines, and (most importantly) potentially changes their very meaning. In-depth oral history interviews provide an invaluable opportunity to trace this process of telling and knowing.

Brigitte Bönisch-Brednich raises a related point, that is, the value of group interviews in reclaiming difficult memories. She does so by examining German women immigrants' encounters with the New Zealand tradition of 'ladies, bring a plate'. Many of her interviewees recounted their embarrassment and sense of alienation when they inevitably brought an empty plate to a function. Yet "as the interviewees perceived that it was a collective experience, it turned into a story of awakening self-assurance, of a hidden *rite de passage*". In this sharing process the humorous aspects of the situation came to the fore and were relished. Jill Chrisp's group interviews with mothers raising adolescent sons also illustrate the development of a sense of collective memory.

Heeni Collins focuses not on the extent to which a life story changes within an actual interview, but on the capacity for oral histories to record interviewees' changing and multiple identities. Her oral history project uncovers the lives of 'ngä tangata awarua, people who are of both Maori and Pakeha descent. Collins explains how "awarua can mean either the flowing of two rivers, [or] a corridor of passage. Hence it includes meanings of dual heritage, possible discomfort/alienation of being in-between, and the concept of transition." Her interviews highlight the complexity and diverse experiences encapsulated within this group.

Many of this year's articles illustrate the ethical considerations that evolve from specific research methodologies. Rachael Selby applies the Treaty of Waitangi principles of partnership, protection and participation to her oral history work. She defines life stories as taonga, partnership as mutual mana enhancement, and insider research as a whanau or hapü relationship between interviewer and interviewee. Selby reminds us that ethical considerations often come back to very practical issues. For example, providing one's whanaunga with access to your research results can be costly and should be budgeted for from the project's outset.

Jill Chrisp outlines her use of reflection pauses within oral history interviews, as part of her commitment to, and expression of, feminist action research. Reflection pauses provide the interviewer and participants with sufficient time to assess whether the project continues to meet their needs. Chrisp emphasises the importance of documenting "situation and transition . . . in order to capture the changes that were happening and have these as points of reflection and examination". She invited research participants to keep journals in order to mark such points of change and these written words became part of the collective documentation of this project.

Like Ketchel, Chrisp implicitly advocates the value of multiple interviews, illustrating how they provide ongoing opportunities for participants to document and process their feelings about the interview. Both writers emphasise that it often takes time to absorb the impact of retelling one's life story. This is particularly important when dealing with traumatic or sensitive topics for the interview process can clarify and confuse, can heal and open wounds. Ketchel cites Wendy Rickard's assessment that "oral history offers the possibility of both affirming and destabilising a personal narrative".
history offers the possibility of both affirming and destabilising a personal narrative'.

Ketchel and Lesley Hall both look at the impact of interviews upon us as the interviewers. Ketchel addresses the need for closure for both parties, and suggests interviewers have debriefing or mentoring sessions after emotionally painful interviews. Hall deals more specifically with the ethical issue of confidentiality. This includes considering the impact of hearing sensitive information about a friend whilst interviewing a third person. In Hall's words, "we cannot un-know" such disclosures. Hall notes that many feminist researchers disclose aspects of their own life to establish rapport with their interviewees. She suggests that whilst interviewers might assume these comments will be treated as confidential, it is unlikely that our consent forms state this explicitly.

Overall, Hall's article provides a very useful in-depth analysis of confidentiality — an assurance often given by interviewees but perhaps inadequately understood. She highlights the irony that in-depth oral history interviews may increase our interviewee's vulnerability. The more people open up to us the more they risk exposure should we (inadvertently or not) breach their confidentiality. Hall also makes links between confidentiality and the process of constructing memory from others' recollections. She cites the example of a vivid 'childhood memory' that is, in fact, basely solely on other peoples' accounts of those events. If others' biographies become inextricably meshed with our own, at what point does retelling a story unconsciously breach confidentiality?

Chrisp considers academics' (including her own) use of oral history narratives. She highlights the tension between remaining true to an interviewee's account and using that story to debate one's academic thesis or argument. Chrisp offers useful advice for traversing this 'theory/practice divide', suggesting that "detailed documentation of the standpoint of each woman, and the location of her stories, has been one way of desisting from an appropriation of her experiences to my structures".

Bronwyn Officer closes this issue of the journal with an informative analysis of technical issues surrounding the preservation of sound recordings. She reminds us that oral histories produce aural treasures and that we "are responsible for capturing something far more than just the content of an interview".

Recently the journal editors have asked writers to indicate whether and where their recordings will be archived. The NOHANZ Code of Ethical and Technical Practice encourages interviewers to 'place each recording and accompanying material in an archive to be available for research, subject to any conditions placed on it by the person interviewed'. The tendency for some academic disciplines to encourage erasing tapes (or returning originals to the interviewee) has implications for oral history. An issue that has been raised and discussed at recent conferences is the availability of interviews for research. Perhaps this can be discussed in more depth through the NOHANZ newsletter, or at next year's national conference.

JUDITH BYRNE

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Ngā Tangata Awarua

The joys and pain of being both Māori and Pakeha

HEENI COLLINS

At school my friends thought I was popular, but inside I felt alone. I felt almost too young to be feeling such a surging pride in being Mäori. I wondered if I appeared to be a rich Pakeha girl to my Mäori friends, and a 'snob' in my Pakeha friends' eyes because I didn't want to spend much time with them. I could never have explained to them why this was so. They assumed I was just 'one of them' ... I felt desperate. I couldn't talk to Mum because she wouldn't know what I meant, I couldn't talk to Dad because he had rejected what was Mäori in his life.... My friends were in either one group or the other, and at 13 I didn't have enough independence ... to seek professional help .... The only sanctuary I had was to go up North occasionally and stay with some ... friends ... but the respite was too short .... My parents didn't know what had happened to their perfect, A-grade, student and daughter.'[1]

These words describe some of the pain and confusion of being of both Mäori and Pakeha descent–like many of us coming from the Pakeha side, this Hawke's Bay writer felt drawn to te tahä Mäori, but with such different experiences and understandings that fitting in was hard for her. Straddling both worlds is not always a comfortable position, especially if neither foot is firmly placed.

Those of us of both Mäori and Pakeha descent–ngä tangata awarua–are not a small group. In the 1996 census, over 170,000 people identified their ethnic group as Mäori and European, nearly five per cent of the total Aotearoa/New Zealand population. Another 50,000 who say they have Mäori ancestry but do not (currently) list Mäori as their ethnic group have the potential to boost this figure even higher.

The project

During the 1980s I had been a journalist on daily newspapers–covering (among other things) Mäori issues for the *Daily News* in New Plymouth, the *New Zealand Herald* in Auckland, and then the *Evening Post* in Wellington. Like many other women, getting married and having children (two) for me meant giving up full-time work–though I continued to write free lance.

I was aware that I had Ngatï Raukawa and Te Arawa ancestors back several generations but my upbringing, most of my friends and my husband were all Pakeha. The community where I was settling–Brooklyn, Wellington–too, was mainly Pakeha middle class. My Mäori involvement had been largely through work. But those long hours as a Mäori affairs reporter, of sitting in whare nui, listening and talking to Mäori people–hearing the passionate airing of grievances, and identifying with the strongly communal, spiritual, holistic and environmental values of Mäori–had a profound effect on me.

I found that world fascinating and exciting, and sought opportunities to be with Mäori and bring ngä mea Mäori to the Pakeha world in which I was living–encouraging waiata and te reo at my children's crèche and pre-school, arranging for them to have trips to the marae, and becoming involved with my own hapü of Ngatï Kiköpiri at Ohau, and the Cook whänau of Otaki. As my personal involvement deepened, the question arose–with only 'one-sixteenth' Mäori ancestry (to put it in Pakeha terms), did I have a right to identify myself personally and publicly as Mäori, or to expect others to accept me as Mäori?

I felt ignorant and inadequate as Mäori and yet strongly drawn in that direction. Coming across the term 'tragic mulatto' in a book by the African-American writer Alice Walker, I felt a sense of recognition. Did others, too, feel similarly torn

Heeni Collins is a free lance writer of non-fiction, mostly on Māori topics. She lives with her two children in Brooklyn, Wellington. Currently Heeni is compiling an updated and lively account of the life of Te Rauparaha in association with Ngāti Toa, Ngāti Raukawa and Te Pataka (the Porirua Museum of Arts and Culture).

and insecure? Wanting to find out for myself, and believing that many others would also be interested, in 1994 I embarked on the project with the above title (Ngä Tangata Awarua–see note below re terminology).

I felt considerable trepidation about doing so. My fear was due to the personal nature of the topic, awareness of the complexities and sensitivities of working with people and issues which span two cultures, and also due to the implications it might have for my own life.

Aspects of the topic

The project aims to incorporate life histories with analysis, research and historical material to produce a book on the broad topic of ngä tangata awarua, being of both Mäori and Pakeha descent. Historical material relates to the history of Mäori/ Pakeha intermarriage, attitudes to intermarriage and the offspring, and how we have been counted statistically both in the past and now.

After some initial research on the historical and statistical aspects, I began recording life histories. Aware that research in te ao Mäori necessitates

a kanohi-ki-te-kanohi (face-to-face) approach, particularly on such a sensitive subject, I identified and contacted interviewees individually–largely through

personal networks, including Te Wananga o Raukawa (the Mäori university at Otaki), a bi-sexual women's group, Canterbury University Mäori Club contacts, and my own Cook whänau. I approached Jacquie Baxter after attending a reading of her poetry.

Between October 1995 and August 1998 I recorded interviews (up to three with each person) with thirteen people, all of whom have a Mäori and a Pakeha parent. Ages ranged from 20 to 71 but were predominantly 30 to 45; there were six men and seven women, five were affiliated to Ngatï Raukawa but other iwi connections were Tainui, Taranaki, Ngatï Kuri and Te Rarawa.

Feeling guided by the wairua, or a spiritual path, I found thirteen wonderful people willing to be interviewed–all articulate and inspiring, though most had painful as well as joyful stories to tell. Some are well-known, particularly in the Mäori community. The full list is: Paparangi Reid, Charles Te Ahu karamu

Royal and his twin brother Greg, Rawiri Hindle, Hinemoana Baker, Jacquie Baxter and her grand-daughter Jessica Baxter, Bruce Stewart, Kamiria Mullen, Piripi Walker, Perena Quinlivan, Kiri Scott and Marama Steele. With support from the staff of the Oral History Centre at the Alexander Turnbull Library in Wellington and an Australian Sesquicentennial Gift Trust Award in Oral History, and permission from the interviewees, I copied and abstracted all the tapes and stored them at the Centre. Access is by interviewee's permission only in most cases.

I also recorded the views of Sir Tipene O'Regan and some Mäori health professionals on the subject, including Jim Moriarty and Waretini Ratana, cultural officer of Te Oranganui Health Authority in Wanganui. These tapes are also with the collection. Another interview I recorded, though it is not with the collection, was with a woman with two Mäori parents, who had been adopted by Pakeha as a baby. The pain of her experiences was particularly moving.

My feeling about the interviews, and the feedback I got from those interviewed, was that the subject deeply affected many people and yet there has been very little opportunity to discuss it, especially in public.

Cultural identity can change

One of the clear themes to emerge from this research project is that cultural self-identity is flexible–it can, and frequently does, change over time. As Mason Durie says in an article about the 10-15-year longitudinal study being undertaken by the Mäori Studies Department at Massey University, 'Throughout the human life cycle, situations, attitudes, values and aspirations change so that Mäori individuals at different stages in life may demonstrate quite different characteristics from those present at other stages.'[2]

For some, a decision to identify personally as Mäori is made young and adhered to, and in some ways this can make for a smoother passage through life–one interviewee decided at the age of 12 that she wanted to be Mäori, though many of her siblings did not. She felt drawn to the Mäori world, chose to attend Queen Victoria School for Mäori Girls, and has been involved with and committed to the Mäori world ever since.

But some make that decision later in life and the transition can be dramatic and passionate. Charles Te Ahukaramu Royal, for example, had often attended hui with his father as a young boy but had identified with his Pakeha peers as a student at St Patricks College, Silverstream. At university he was studying music composition, mainly European, when he felt a need to find an inspiration different from his peers. He became interested in the music of Rangi Dewes, and then ngä möteatea, sung poetry from pre-European times.

What began as an academic interest became a personal transformation:

Initially I wanted to remain in control. My experience of the Mäori world previous to that ... was not very comfortable ... I couldn't speak the reo, didn't know anything about tikanga, didn't know anything about what anybody was talking about and I often emerged embarrassed. So when I finally got to the point where I was stimulating myself to get interested in tahä Mäori I didn't want to plunge too deeply, too quickly because I wanted to remain in control. But as you find out ... it doesn't matter how much you resist the current, you actually fall over the waterfall. What happens ... is that you have this rapturous experience of understanding a deeper side of yourself, this other thing that you haven't really been conscious of. You begin to act out of your own dream, not the dream of another person or society's. It's not to do with selfishness, it's about the spirit.[3]

He says that in the early stage of his transition to a stronger identity as Mäori, he became so passionate that his behaviour was sometimes quite hurtful and embarrassing for those close to him. Later, as he became more secure in this identity, he became more tolerant.

Charles Te Ahukaramu Royal. Photographer Jocelyn Carlin, June 1997

Being both can be hard

Some retain a dual Mäori/ Pakeha cultural identity, but a degree of discomfort or tension can be associated with this. 'If you find yourself continually or frequently in a situation where you're trying to please or placate two parties, two almost conflicting groups, in the end you get sick and tired of it,' says writer and former librarian Jacquie Baxter, of Paekakariki. 'It's the difficulty of either switching from one to the other, or trying to live up to the expectations of one which are not the expectations of another and being always sort of pulled or caught. In the end you get so that all you really want to do is be yourself, and for me the only time I've felt I could really be myself is when I'm writing (or thinking about writing).'[4]

Jacquie Baxter. Photographer Ans Westra

More choice?

Though we have little choice as to how others perceive us initially, and can face disbelief if our appearance does not match our self-identity, still many of us (perhaps more than some Mäori) do have choice as to whether we identify ourselves as Mäori, and how strongly we do so.

Our skin colour and Pakeha parent often shelter us from the worst effects of racism and discrimination, at least for those interviewed, and many of us grow up mixing easily with Pakeha and experiencing relative success in the Pakeha education system. While most of those interviewed (with two exceptions) had some contact with whänau, hapü and marae while growing up, most (again two exceptions) were also encouraged and supported to achieve in the Pakeha world.

But involvement and investment in the Pakeha world can make it harder to turn, or return, to te ao Mäori. Because it is he mea tauhou, or unfamiliar (and this is true for Mäori who feel alienated from their culture for many reasons, such as urbanisation or adoption) there can be a lot of fear associated with entering, or re-entering that world.

As Waretini Ratana says, 'A lot of it is based on fear of the unknown. And I think that fear is the fear of rejection because you often hear people say 'Oh, you're so pakehafied!', and that's enough to put any young person off who's trying to find their links. It's no fault of theirs that they're pakehafied. But I think once they start on that journey it becomes really quite exciting. They hunger for those things and more often than not they achieve much in quite a short time.'[5]

Other barriers to choosing to be Mäori

For many of us, one of the difficulties in choosing to be Mäori in Aotearoa/New Zealand is that, relative to Pakeha, Mäori are powerless and financially disadvantaged, so being Mäori is seen as the riskier and less financially secure option. This makes it difficult both to make the choice and for others close to us to accept that choice. The spiritual and emotional rewards of choosing to be Mäori need to be recognised and, I suggest, more highly valued.

The transition can also be emotionally traumatic. Kamiria Mullen had distanced herself from her Mäori side because she associated it with childhood sexual abuse. She experienced a period of serious mid-life depression before realizing that she needed to air this issue within her hapü and iwi. Only then could she feel accepted and become deeply involved in that community.[6]

Another interviewee had very little contact with his hapü and iwi while growing up because his mother had distanced herself from her people. After training as a teacher, he planned to visit his hapü, some distance away, alone. But he 'freaked out' as he drove towards it and took several months to regain his personal and professional confidence. Homosexuality and marijuana were also factors in his crisis.[7]

Though not all of those interviewed are fair in appearance, being light-skinned can be a barrier, as disbelief and harassment are experienced in both the Mäori and Pakeha communities. One young woman spoke of her pain at feeling excluded from her Mäori peers at primary school and college for several years because they did not see her as Mäori, and because her experience of being Mäori was different from theirs.[8]

Is any whakapapa enough?

From reading and talking to various leaders in the Mäori world, I understand that being Mäori is not about percentage of blood (any

Kamiria Mullen in 1997

whakapapa is enough to claim our rights as tangata whenua)–it is about spiritual calling, cultural understanding, community involvement and commitment. This needs to be more widely understood. Though this has not been the focus of my research, I understand that non-Mäori, too, can gain acceptance in the Mäori community with sufficient commitment and knowledge of language and culture. As Hauraki Greenland notes, descriptions of Pakeha and Mäori as polar opposites are somewhat artificial,[9] and, I believe, increase tension for those owning a dual heritage.

Diversity of experience

Over the last two decades there has been an emphasis on differentiating Mäori from Pakeha to positively assert our cultural and political strength. Several 'Mäoriness scales' have been developed which seek to describe and provide measures to distinguish Mäori experience and reality from non-Mäori. But Mason Durie broadens the picture when he emphasises the diverse realities of Mäori and takes care to avoid making value-laden judgements about the 'level of Mäoriness'. 'Far from being a homogenous group, Mäori individuals have a variety of cultural characteristics and live in a number of cultural and socio-economic realities. The relevance of so-called traditional values is not the same for all Mäori, nor can it be assumed that all Mäori will wish to define their ethnic identity according to classical constructs. At the same time, they will describe themselves as Mäori and will reject any notion that they are 'less Mäori' than those who conform to a conventional image.'[10]

The study also recognises multiple affiliations. Sometimes ethnicity will be less important than belonging to a school, a sports club or a socio-economic grouping. Similarly, while the people I have interviewed all identify themselves as either primarily Mäori, or both Mäori and Pakeha (or in one case a 'native New Zealander'), their expressions of their Mäoriness and their levels of involvement in the traditional Mäori world vary considerably. One lives overseas and takes his Mäoriness with him into a non-Mäori world,[11]

while others have dedicated their lives to working for and with Mäori, with a consequent commitment to learning te reo and ngä tikanga.

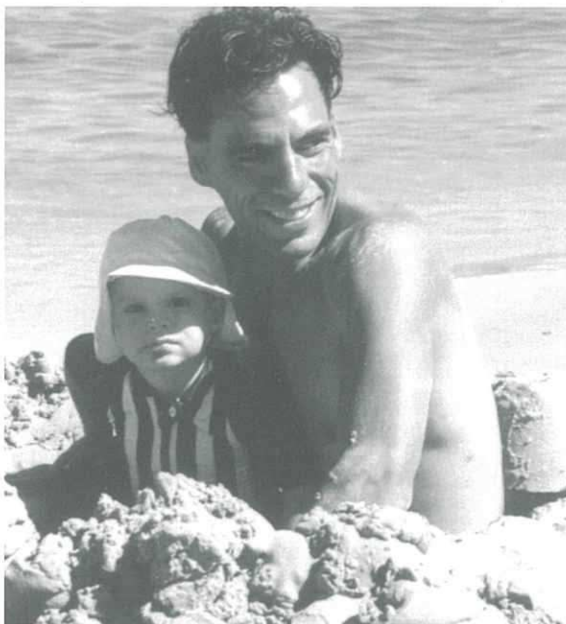
Advantaged/ disadvantaged?

On socio-economic measures as assessed by Pakeha researchers, ngä tangata awarua tend to be better off than those who state their ethnicity as sole Mäori. But in terms of our culture and security in our identity as Mäori, we are often less advantaged and have to struggle to catch up. Sometimes we have to learn to assert our right to access our Mäori culture, in a similar way to the challenges many Mäori face in accessing the predominant Pakeha culture in Aotearoa/New Zealand.

Tensions in reconciling both the Mäori and Pakeha sides of our identities can be exacerbated by ignorance and lack of understanding on both sides, and sometimes a thick skin needs to be developed.

Concluding thoughts

One conclusion of this study is that people who have a Mäori and Pakeha parent cannot be clearly distinguished from any other Mäori. Many of the issues we face are the same, for example, choosing to what extent we get involved with, and adopt the values of, our whänau, hapü and iwi; feeling a conflicting pull between the Mäori and Pakeha worlds; and learning to overcome barriers to asserting ourselves as Mäori in both Pakeha and Mäori settings. But nevertheless there are issues which we commonly share within that group which have not been widely discussed. Many of the stories told to me were deeply personal and have certainly not been published before.



Rawiri Hindle and son Kapua

I believe there is value in highlighting the experience of this group and I pay tribute to the courage and honesty of those people who told me their stories. I pray that I will have the ability to convey those stories sensitively and with sufficient context to satisfy the interviewees and other readers.

Note: The term 'ngä tangata awarua' came to me while researching this subject, and has been accepted by the people I interviewed. Awarua can mean either the flowing of two rivers, a corridor or passage. Hence it includes meanings of dual heritage, possible discomfort/alienation of being in-between, and the concept of transition. While the term half-caste has been commonly used historically, it is distasteful to us for two reasons. Firstly, it suggests we are less than whole; and secondly, it originates in a narrow biological concept of inheritance, whereas, to us, it is more meaningful to speak of having a dual cultural and spiritual heritage.

Endnotes

1. 'Charmaine', from written life story, 13 May 1998, ms copy held by author.
2. Mason Durie, 'Te Hoe Nuku Roa Framework: A Mäori Identity Measure', *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, vol. 104, no. 4, p. 465.
3. Charles Te Ahukaramu Royal, interview, 3 Dec 1997, side 2.
4. Jacquie Baxter, interview, 18 May 1997, side 8.
5. Waretini Ratana, interview, 19 Feb 1998, side 1.
6. Kamiria Mullen, interview, 26 May 1996, sides 2, 3.
7. 'D1', interview, 9 Aug 1997, side 2.
8. 'P1', interview, 4 Aug 1998, side 1.
9. Hauraki Greenland, 'Ethnicity as Ideology: The Critique of Pakeha Society', in P. Spoonley, C. MacPherson, D. Pearson and C. Sedgwick (eds), *Tauiwi: Racism and Ethnicity in New Zealand*, Palmerston North, 1984, p. 89.
10. Durie, p. 464.
11. 'H3', interview, 27 Dec 1997.

Partnership and Protection of Participants

Collecting and using Māori oral histories

RACHAEL SELBY
NGĀTI RAUKAWA,
NGĀTI PARERAUKAWA

This paper was presented at the NOHANZ conference at Massey University in 1999. It describes in brief some of the issues which arose for the writer when she interviewed a group of Mäori women whom she had known as teenagers thirty years before. The multiple positions of the writer are noted, the resulting partnerships discussed, and issues of protection highlighted, as are issues which have arisen when working with Mäori communities, whänau and hapü. The results of the research were presented as an M.Phil thesis in 1996.[1]

As a Maori woman, parent and educator, I have frequently asked questions about why Maori children are failed with such ease by our school system and our post-secondary education system. I have constantly asked how it is possible that our children can spend twelve years of their lives at school and learn so little, given that they spend the best hours of the day at school in the company of trained professionals.

In 1993 I decided to record the stories of five women who had been pupils at Queen Victoria School for Mäori Girls during the late 1950s and early 1960s. They were pupils during an era when there was a shift in policy from educating 'Queen Vic' girls to return to their rural homes to be wives and mothers, to one of encouraging 'brighter girls' to aim for nursing and teaching as careers. The school was an Anglican church school with the stated aim of educating girls to be Christian wives and mothers: tertiary education was seen as filling in the gap between secondary school and marriage, not as a long term career option.

The research project which I undertook from 1994—95 offered me various opportunities, some of which were to:

- ☐ determine why Mäori families sent their daughters to Queen Victoria School;
- ☐ identify what the women felt were the strengths of the school;
- ☐ identify the advantages and disadvantages of going to boarding school;
- ☐ determine the influence the school had on future careers;
- ☐ identify whether Queen Victoria influenced future success in terms of educational achievement.

The primary aim of the research was to find out why some Mäori women had experienced considerable success in tertiary education, while others had 'barely stumbled through' the education system. And included in my question was the influence, if any, 'Queen Vic' had had on our success, for I, too, had been a pupil there from 1961—63.

Partnerships and renewed relationships

During the 1990s, there were a number of Queen Vic old girls working in government agencies and as educators in Wellington whom I had known at school in 1961 and with whom I had become reacquainted. I decided to ask three of them to participate in the research, along with a further two who were working within their own iwi, Te Whänau-a-Apanui, in the Bay of Plenty. I had had little or no contact with four of the five women from the time I left Queen Victoria in 1963 until around 1990 when I worked in Wellington for a six-month period. Over the two or three years of re-acquaintance we had become friends, and in some cases colleagues–as adults, rather than as teenagers–and so new adult relationships had been established.

My role then changed from that of being a friend to the more formal one of researcher. As much as I would have liked to remain solely as school

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friend and adult colleague, it was clear to me that I now had new obligations to these women because of the research. I had to form a partnership with them as research participants. We had much in common: we were all working in the field of education, with varying levels of responsibility. We had all achieved success in terms of tertiary education–one had a Masters degree, and one had a post-graduate diploma from Waikato University. One was lecturing in a College of Education, the second was working in the State Services Commission and the other as Mäori Manager in the Early Childhood Development Unit. They had clearly achieved highly in terms of education, and all had an ongoing interest in pursuing further education. Formal education had become life-long. We had similar levels of education, we were employed in positions which held high levels of responsibility, and we were similar in age. In one respect we were equals, yet in another, my position as researcher created an unequal partnership.

Our interest and involvement in our boarding school ranged from one who had sent her daughter to the school, two who had maintained interest and contact, two who had little contact and I who had had no contact since leaving. It was interesting to note that three of us who had daughters had chosen not to send them to the school.

In my research, there were partnerships formed on various levels, for example, researcher and research institution (Massey University), researcher and participants, researcher and supervision whänau, and researcher and transcribers. Research partnerships involve power-sharing, responsibilities to one another, and mutual mana enhancement–a concept which promotes the idea that each partner should benefit from the partnership, and neither partner should do anything which diminishes the mana of the other. The research partnership and the collection of oral histories from these women challenged me to develop meaningful partnerships without harming our professional or former relationships. One of my key concerns was to ensure the protection of the participants.

Interviews

After contacting each of the women and renewing our relationships, I arranged to interview the first two in the Bay of Plenty in May 1994. I had suggested one to two hours per interview. After driving to Waihau Bay one Friday, I met my first participant, the then principal of Whangaparaoa School, on Saturday morning. I was nervous. I had tested my tape recorder out a dozen times, I was afraid of losing my list of questions, and I was in her staffroom, on her territory. I was the visitor. She made us a cup of tea, and we relaxed and began the interview. It lasted almost two hours, but we covered all the questions and more. In the afternoon, I interviewed the second participant at Te Kaha, again quite nervous and certainly feeling exhausted after the two-hour interview in the morning. Again I was on her territory–the interview took place inside the meeting house and I was keenly aware of the tupuna who were within the house and without. My husband was from there, so I felt safe, but aware that I was the visitor.

A month later I completed three further interviews in Wellington. Again I scheduled two in one day with a good break and a lunch with my husband and supervisor in between so that I could debrief from the first interview before undertaking the second. These took less time as I was more confident and much more familiar with the questions.

I was keenly aware during all the interviews that I was in a powerful position–asking these women to reflect on their own lives, and to divulge their views about whänau matters–something which they may not have been totally comfortable in doing. However, once the tape is running and the researcher is in control of the interview, it is difficult for a participant not to co-operate. It is only on reflection over the following four or five years that I have come to appreciate fully the power that the researcher has with the tape recorder running and one's enthusiasm for one's research a dominant factor in the interview room. I am concerned at how disempowering this may be for the participants who have, in good faith and in a spirit of co-operation, become involved in the researcher's projects. Now I read my participants more carefully and am wary of managing the interview too forcefully. While the researcher needs to be organised and prepared, I am aware that one should also care for and nurture one's interviewees.

Collecting the material—issues of protection

Researchers routinely discuss such issues as familiarity with and confidence with the recording equipment, confidence in oneself and one's skills, and an awareness of the rights of the participants.[3] I felt I was a reasonably skilled interviewer when I started, but listening to my first two interviews made me realise that interviewing one's friends and wearing several hats–those of friend, researcher and interviewer–is a fine juggling act. I had not fully understood the conflicts of interest and roles which were embedded in the research process, or my deep

responsibility and duty to the women who had agreed to participate. Once I had all the material on tape and later on paper, the inequalities in the relationship increased, and my responsibility to protect the women and their stories was greatly magnified.

Shaping the material—partnerships and protections

All the tapes were transcribed and returned to the women. Three were prepared to leave me with the material to use as I wished. One made some alterations and deletions. The fifth was aghast at what she read and proclaimed, 'That's not what I said.' The transcriptions had recorded the entire conversations and seeing the spoken word in written transcripts left her feeling unhappy and uncertain about the material. She was also too busy to make alterations, so I re-worked the material, removing the hesitations and repetitions we use in oral language, to bring the transcript into a written form which, while using her words, sentences and phrases, became a story 'told in her own words'. This is the researcher working the material into a form acceptable to the participant. I felt I was power-sharing in a spirit of partnership, whilst protecting my deadlines and my research.

Issues for the future

There was always an acceptance on my part that the life stories the women shared were taonga, and that my responsibilities to them and the stories in their various forms (tapes, transcripts and in the final report) had to be respected as such. It was incumbent upon me as the researcher to ensure the protection of the stories, and to keep in mind that 'researchers and academics generally have a poor reputation in the Mäori community and are viewed with suspicion at best, contempt in the main'.[4] Mäori communities continue to remind both Mäori researchers and non-Mäori researchers of the obligations which arise from research relationships. In many cases, the relationships and the obligations become lifelong, as one cannot expect to intrude into the lives of individuals, whänau and hapü without then continuing that relationship. Providing access to research results is a minimum requirement, and where there are numerous participants, this can be costly and should be budgeted for early in the project.

In the late 1990s Mäori communities have called for their researchers to be members of their own whänau and hapü so that the obligations and relationships can continue and grow. Those of us who have sharpened our research skills on various communities are now in a position to enable our own hapü and iwi to benefit from the education and training we have received. With the Waitangi Tribunal and government keen to settle Treaty claims with some urgency, Mäori researchers can assist their own iwi and hapü by participating in research which will benefit them. Collecting oral histories is one valuable way of recording whänau and hapü histories, and the best people to do this are those who belong to the storytellers through whänau and hapü relationships. The resulting records then remain with the participants, the storytellers and the recorders of history.

Interviews

The tapes for this project were returned to the women who were interviewed. The results were published in my thesis (in references) and the thesis was also published in spiral bound form by He Pärekereke at the Department of Education, Victoria University of Wellington. It is available for purchase through them.

Endnotes

1. Rachael Selby, 'A Study of the Factors Which Contribute to Success for Mäori Women in Tertiary Education', M.Phil thesis, Massey University, 1996.
2. Royal Commission on Social Policy, *The April Report, Vol 2: Future Directions*, Wellington, 1988.
3. See, for example, Sherna Berger Gluck & Daphne Patai (eds), *Women's Words: The Feminist Practice of Oral History*, New York, 1991.
4. Kathie Irwin, 'Mäori Research Methods and Processes: An Exploration', in *Sites*, no. 28 (Autumn 1994), p. 38.

The Use of Oral Histories in Feminist Action Research

The mother-adolescent son project

JILL CHRISP

In February 1995, a woman sat in a courtroom before a family court judge and beside, but not too close to, her estranged husband. Somewhere, out in another world, was the son they both loved dearly and for whom they could not together decide a future.

This eleven-year-old boy had lived with his mother since he was born and with his father for the first eighteen months of his life. Holidays and weekends in every year since were times for visits with his father. And now this geographically separated family was faced with the decision about the boy's future. The father, although recognising the sound beginning that had been given to his son, felt he could offer this boy what he now needed to continue his life as a young man. The mother although recognising the crucial part the boy's father played in the boy's life was convinced that the richness and diversity of the community that had been built up around, and by, her son was too important to give away.

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The son? The most difficult part for the son was that, as his parents could not agree, he had to make a decision that most children were not faced with until much older. The dilemma for him was not so much where he wished to live, but that he had a choice. It was fortunate that both parents supported him no matter what he decided to do, and that the professionals who worked with him were skilled at their job. Most of the professionals that is. The judge presiding over the family court fell short of demonstrating an 'unprejudiced' judgement. As he summed up at the end of the hearing he stated to both parents, and others listening, that he was concerned that the current generation of boys was being raised by women. He then proceeded with a pointedly sententious homily.

This paper is part of a doctoral work-in-progress which, conceived from this story, is investigating the mother adolescent-son relationship. The key methodology is feminist action research and involves recording the stories 'in transition' of a group of mothers (including the researcher) who are parenting adolescent males. The stories have

been recorded through an initial audiotape of each woman's story, followed by further taped individual interviews and group discussions among the women over a period of five years. Participants have also kept individual journals through this time that have contributed to the documentation of transition in the women's lives. The paper addresses

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some of the complexities of recording the stories of these women including such issues as: the researcher-researched relationship, the adequate documentation of situation and transition and the evaluation of points of achievement — the relationship between conscientisation and new realities.[1]

Researcher-researched relationship

Further to being the principal researcher in this project I am one of the participants. In the research process I too am subject. This has highlighted a number of messy issues around the researcher-researched relationship. I am a participant but I am also more involved in the project. The participants have guided the processes and directions but I have been more immediately and constantly involved in it. As it has with other participants the project has benefited me personally as a mother of an adolescent son. It also has the potential to benefit me professionally with the award of a higher degree. The incongruities of this situation have raised a number of questions, such as:

- Who has the research been for?
- Whose voice has been privileged?
- How has the information been used?
- Who has benefited and will benefit from the research?

These are questions that have become key guiding points as the work has progressed.

I have also needed to be aware of the impact on the research relationships that have arisen from the combining of academy and community agendas. Sociologist Liz Stanley writes,

> *Theory with a capital T [is] one produced by theorists who are supposed experts on the relationship between categories and thus on the 'real meaning' of social experience and behaviour. Here 'academic feminism' becomes the legitimation for a new form of expertise, that of feminist theoreticians over 'mere women'. Whether as an intended or unintended consequence, feminist social scientists working with such assumptions necessarily position themselves as experts over and above other women's experiences.*[2]

The theory/practice divide has indeed been a factor for consideration in this project. For example, after an interview session with one of the participants early in the project, the interviewee expressed a feeling that she hadn't been clever enough, that she hadn't given me enough information to work with.[3] 'I have only told you my story,' she said. This comment concerned me for several reasons. Apart from the indication that she was not recognising the significance of her own story, nor demonstrating any ownership of the project, she was also putting herself in a position of inferiority to the project and to me as researcher. Another wrote in her journal,

> *I was so concerned that maybe I was in the group under false pretences and that I should withdraw. It worries me that I seem to have gained so much (which was completely unexpected but maybe hoped for subconsciously) but where are you with your goal for the project.*[4]

So much for me being a 'participant in my own research'. The comments of these women raised several issues early in the project. They made me realise that it was necessary to discuss the project differently with the women. I realised also that I needed to be attentive to the contextually affected nature of the material that had been gathered in the taped interviews. If the stories told by these participants, for example, were motivated by their desire to produce something worthwhile for the project, what were they choosing to leave out?

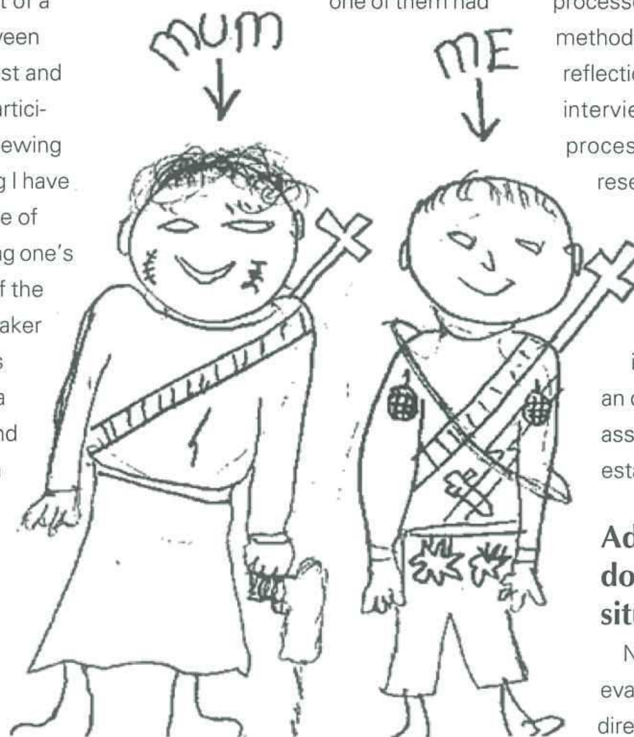
The portrayal given by Clara Greed of her experiences as a feminist surveyor doing research on the position of women in surveying reflects those of my own. She writes, 'I am studying a world of which I am part, with all the emotional involvement and accusations of subjectivity that this creates.'[5] I recognise that this research also raises many issues for the participants, including those that may have been hidden, forgotten or unconscious. Although it has not been mine to perform a counselling, therapeutic or social work role, my accountability for provoking sometimes painful memories cannot be ignored. At times the weight of other women's pain has made mockery of the boundaries that have been prescribed for the relationships. What is my role, for example, when a mother describes the physical abuse of her fifteen-year-old son toward her? When another relates the collective undermining she experiences from her husband and sons? When yet another doubts her ability to parent her son effectively? The Code of Ethics that governs this project includes the clause — 'The researcher should inform participants of available support systems should their involvement raise issues that need to be dealt with. If necessary participants' access to these should be facilitated.' This clause has been applied several times during the project. It is not, however, able to mandate the appropriate level of engagement between the researcher and participant in situations such as those described above.

One of the benefits of combining oral story telling with group interaction, process and reflection is that group members can become mindful of the needs of each other. Perhaps

one role of participant/researcher could be to facilitate effective connections between participants. Near the end of the first year one of the participants talked of the emotional and financial difficulty that she had been experiencing as a single mother during the Christmas period. The group, with several of the women telling similar stories, discussed this further and as a result arranged to link with each other during this particularly difficult time.

Another conflict I have needed to negotiate in my relationships with the participants has been that of a philosophical divergence between my training as a social scientist and my desire to be part of the participant group. That is, the interviewing and effective listening training I have undertaken postulates the use of open-ended questions, keeping one's own issues and agenda out of the interaction, reflecting the speaker and keeping the interviewee's story paramount. I was only a few months into the first round of interviews, however, when the women at a group session asked for more input from me in the discussion. They wanted to know who I was, what my story was and how the issues we were talking about affected me. I realised then that if I had wanted the women to tell me about their lives at a personal level, they deserved in return a willingness from me to share with them information about my personal life and feelings. I realised, too, that if I anticipated that the storytelling process would be enriched by the sharing of similar life experiences, I needed to take the risk of making myself vulnerable in the process.

Theoretician and researcher, Shulamit Reinharz, promotes self-disclosure in feminist research saying that it 'maximises the engagement of the self ... promoting meaningful conversations.' [6] Alternatively social work researchers, Bombyk, Bricker-Jenkins and Wedenoja[7] caution against the potential restriction that interviewer disclosure can have on the interaction. They discuss the importance of 'pace' and 'watching for clues' as a gauge of the readiness and desire of the participants to know the researcher. Recounting an interview research project with rape victims Reinharz describes how the researchers told potential interviewees that one of them had been raped. 'This initiated' she reports 'true dialogue by allowing participants to become co-researchers'.[8] I don't believe it is possible to stipulate appropriate levels of self-disclosure in interview situations. However as a dynamic within the researcher-researched relationship the nature of researcher contribution does require constant reviewing.



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There are numerous dilemmas in the researcher-researched relationship that require critique. Those highlighted by this project include — the power dynamics of the relationships, the insider/outsider position of the researcher, control and ownership of the research, emotional investment in the research and the participants, roles and responsibilities of the researcher (particularly for the raising of issues which may affect the participants), the complications of subjectivity, the impact of context on interactions, the relationships between the participants and the levels of self-disclosure in the interactive processes. Feminist action research methods incorporate the use of reflection pauses during the interviewing and research processes. These pauses provide researcher and participants an opportunity to evaluate the relationship between the project and the needs and rights of those involved. They also provide an opportunity for the group to assess activities and to establish future directions.

Adequate documentation of situation and transition

Necessary to this process of evaluation and reassessment of direction is the effective documentation of situation and transition. At the outset of this project participants realised that merely being involved in the project was motivating change for them. Raising questions in either one-on-one interviews or relating memories and discussing issues as a group has catalysed thought processes among us that have altered the way we respond to our worlds — particularly as women and as mothers to our sons. In order to capture the changes that were happening and have these as points of reflection

and examination, I invited the participants to keep journals — with a request that they be part of the collective documentation of the project. Not all participants found this to be a beneficial method of documenting their processes but entries such as the following were invaluable reflections of the change processes,

Things have certainly moved on since last I wrote. It amazes me — every time I give some thought and attention to this process then go away and leave it for a while (I have found it necessary to do this because it has been so intense and challenging I have found the need to rest for spells, regain my balance and then find I have the energy to move with it again) when I come back I have the huge sense of having shifted that much more forward in my consciousness.[9]

Discussing an action research literacy project with Puerto Rican women in New York City, Rina Benmayor classifies the telling of one's story as an 'active component in the process of transition.' Describing the life history account as 'more than a vehicle for documenting and interpreting the past' she talks of the 'potential of testimony as a research strategy to study affirmative and empowering identities and practices.' [10] The journals have indeed added a rich source of data from which further questions and directions have been developed.

Another tool in the documentation process has been the recording of my own ongoing story as a researcher and as a mother of an adolescent son. Whilst listening to the stories of others' experiences (both in the context of the group sessions and the one-off-interviews) I have also been in an evolving state of parenting. I have found the processes of recording these transitional states intrinsically beneficial as they have offered points of reflection and a review of my actions in the parenting process. The account of my own processes — of my standing back and scrutinising my context, the impacting factors on it and my responses to these factors has contributed to the record of the research processes and data gathered during the project.

In the process of documentation an additional consideration has emerged. Participants have developed and signed consent forms outlining the nature of the contractual arrangements that protect the their ownership and control over their own information. I have been aware, however, as I have used parts of the transcript and journal material that I have taken the experiences of the women and crafted them to my own design. Although the participant group has been involved in highlighting the key themes emerging from the group and individual interviews, I have worked with the material to formulate it into a scholarly structure appropriate for a doctoral thesis. My concern in this process has been to maintain the integrity of the women's voices and experiences while they have been appropriated to my existing schema. The theory underpinning feminist action research methodology informs practices that allow for the integrity of women's accounts to be safeguarded. That is, it is not expected that this research will have produced generalisable outcomes. The women's voices have been allowed to stand alone enhanced by the uniqueness of their contexts. As the silences, the nuances in the voices and the nonverbal language of the interviews have been documented so too have been their contexts. Added information has been gathered around questions such as — Where, when, why did the interview take place? What else was going on? What were the dynamics of the situation? Where were the 'other' subjects of the interviews?

The impact the locality of the interview subjects can have on an interview was demonstrated on several occasions. For example I met with one of the participants at her house for an interview. During the course of the interview she often glanced at the wall behind me. A while into the interview I too looked at the focus of her attention and on the wall was a photograph of her son. I realised that although he was not in the room with us, he was 'present' as she referred to him in her accounting of their relationship. I was left wondering what, if anything, was silenced in her by his presence. On another occasion a mother had her ill son home from school. Throughout the interview he called to her with various requests. This constant calling impacted upon the flow of our conversation. It also raised issues that she chose to report about in her interview that were more immediate than had she been reflecting on past stories. Listening to the audiotape the growing sense of frustration in her voice and commentary was evident. So too was the influence of her son's proximity on her as at times she lowered her voice to a near whisper.

The documentation of context not only offers further clarification to the interview but it also articulates the individual standpoints of the interviewees. Political and social theorist, Nancy Hartsock, describes the concept of standpoint as that which 'posits a duality of levels of reality, of which the deeper level or essence both includes and explains the surface, or appearance.'[11] Although the women in the project have gathered around an identity, that of 'mother of adolescent son/s',

they also reveal multiple realities in their experience of mothering these sons. Each has presented her own truth, her own observations of the worlds she inhabits, her own ideas of how she is perceived within those worlds and her own concept of the choices she has within them. I have found that detailed documentation of the standpoint of each woman, and the location of her stories, has been one way of desisting from an appropriation of her experiences to my structures. In this way also the research data has been able to include a critique of the differences of the participants, their experiences and the relationships between these differences.

Evaluation of points of achievement

The research data in a project such as this that combines oral history with feminist action research also outlines the change processes of the participants. Feminist action research, as described by theorists such as Benmayor (1991)[12], Reinharz (1992)[13] and British social researcher Gill Callagahan (1998)[14], generates benefits for the participants that are qualitatively different from the linear, outcome-focused paradigm of other research models. Action research processes operate in helical, circular patterns enabling the participant researcher/s to assess and analyse an issue, formulate strategies for change, test those strategies and again assess and analyse the reworked situation. Evaluation points are integral to this approach as they provide ongoing opportunities to audit the processes and outcomes of the project. Participants do not have to depend on the 'end' of the project to benefit from it. By being involved in the project they are gaining knowledge from shared information and experiences — in the case of this project about the experience of being a mother raising adolescent son/s. As these mothers have shared experiences and strategies with each other, the stories have become collective stories. The stories have contributed to a collective consciousness with which the group has developed and consolidated collective strategies. Individual members of the group have used the strategies to inform their own activities and choices. When next the women have met, or as they have written in their journals they have described their 'new' experiences and these have contributed to the development of further strategies. One participant described her progress with this entry in her journal:

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> *I remember that at our first meeting I expressed the need to have a voice and that I hoped that you would be a voice for women who are sole parents so that the issues we experience because of our situation may be known and understood by society.... Since that time my attitude has changed quite markedly. This has come about largely through the face to face interviews we have had and through the great deal of thought I have given to all that has arisen in my mind...and as a consequence I no longer feel so strongly that I wish you to be my voice because I have gained confidence that I already have a voice — my own!*[15]

Her own learning and increased confidence is evident. Following interviews with her have incorporated time for reflection on the effect of her increased confidence to her relationships with her sons, one of whom would physically and emotionally threaten her. Now nearly three years later, she reports that her relationship with both sons is one of healthy challenge and mutual respect.

Another participant wrote when she returned her edited transcript,

> *It's been a useful process — re-reading the transcript a year later has been a very good benchmark and aid to reflection. I'm so much happier and clearer and I think less hard on myself than I was a year ago. Doing the tape forced me to attempt to articulate, clarify and then resolve some painful things.*[16]

Reinharz claims that 'changing the researcher is not a common intention in feminist research [but] it is a common consequence.' [17] My experience with this project has been one of change for me as a mother, as a researcher and as a member of a researched community. The evaluation points have been essential moments to reflect on these changes and to formulate further personal and methodological practices.

Summary

The combination of oral history and feminist action research in this project has contributed to an evolving and organic development of theory and practice. As the stories have been told, retold and become part of a collective memory, individual mothers have reported increasingly positive feelings of self-image. They have also reported an enhanced ability to parent their adolescent sons. Several have tested strategies for change in their work places — primary and secondary school, community group and the public library. As a group the mothers have developed, tested and evaluated practices for parenting adolescent males. Some of their stories, theories and practices have been disseminated into public domains and, perhaps, several young men will have benefited by the positive preparation given to them by their mothers.

Endnotes

[1] Sections of this paper have been previously published in the NZARN Conference Papers - *Action Research for Social and Educational Change*, 1997

[2] Liz Stanley, *Feminist Praxis: Research Theory and Epistemology in Feminist Sociology*, London, 1990, p.24

[3] This expression of feelings as if she hadn't contributed enough was reflected by a number of the participants as they listened to their tapes and read their transcripts.

[4] Participant Journal, December 1996

[5] Clara Greed, "The Professional and the Personal" in Liz Stanley, *Feminist Praxis: Research Theory and Epistemology in Feminist Sociology*, London, 1990, p.145

[6] Shulamit Reinharz, *Feminist Methods in Social Research*, New York, 1992, p. 34

[7] Mary Bombyk, Mary Bricker-Jenkins and Marilyn Wedenoja, "Reclaiming our Profession Through Feminist Research: Some Methodological Issues in the Feminist Practice Project" in Shulamit Reinharz, *Feminist Methods in Social Research*, New York, 1992, p. 33

[8] Shulamit Reinharz, *Feminist Methods in Social Research*, New York, 1992, p. 32

[9] Participant Journal, December 1996

[10] Rita Benmayor, "Action Research and Empowerment" in Sherna Berger Gluck and Daphne Patai (eds), *Women's Words: The Feminist Practice of Oral History*, New York and London, 1991, p. 164

[11] Nancy CM Hartsock, "The Feminist Standpoint: Developing the Ground for a Specifically Feminist Historical Materialism" in Sandra Harding (ed) *Feminism and Methodology*, New York, 1987, p. 160

[12] Rita Benmayor, "Action Research and Empowerment" in Sherna Berger Gluck and Daphne Patai (eds), *Women's Words: The Feminist Practice of Oral History*, New York and London, 1991

[13] Shulamit Reinharz, *Feminist Methods in Social Research*, New York, 1992

[14] Gill Callaghan, "The Interaction of Gender, Class and Place in Women's Experience: A Discussion Based in Focus Group Research", *Sociological Research Online*, vol. 3, no. 3 (1998)

[15] Participant Journal, October 1996

[16] Participant (10) response when reviewing transcript, December 1998

[17] Shulamit Reinharz, *Feminist Methods in Social Research*, New York, 1992, p. 194

'Getting Free'

Oral histories of violence, resilience and recovery

JUANITA KETCHEL

The 'Getting Free' Oral History Project is a research study commissioned by The Women's Gallery Inc.[1] It was initiated in 1996 as a result of an observation made by one of The Women's Gallery's founding members, Marian Evans, while researching an aspect of family violence. She noticed that while there is significant material examining acute results of violence, scant attention has been given to its longer term effects, how people heal from these effects, and why some people appear more resilient than others.

Oral history was chosen as a methodology because it recognises the importance of individual experience. It also recognises that apparently insignificant events may be of great importance in unexpected ways.

A series of independent oral history studies combine to make up the larger 'Getting Free' Oral History Project to address issues of prolonged physical, sexual, cultural and emotional violation experienced in childhood and adolescence. The Otago-based 'Getting Free' Oral History Study is part of this larger project.

Otago-based 'Getting Free' oral history study

For the Otago-based 'Getting Free' Oral History Study (hereafter referred to as the 'Getting Free' study) I am interviewing self-selected participants, who have heard about the project in two ways: word of mouth, or a pamphlet which was circulated in suitable locations.

This article discusses the processes of the 'Getting Free' study. These involve a fine balance between emotional empathy and clarity about the general issues. To illustrate these processes and our attempts to maintain a necessary balance, I include some of my personal responses and explore some questions that have arisen as I have proceeded with the study.

Participants are women and men, 30 years of age and over, identifying as resilient who, during childhood or adolescence, experienced prolonged violation which caused compounding difficulties, and who have found ways of resolving these difficulties. They come from a wide cross-section of the community. They include Pakeha and Māori women and men. Some are parents, and step-parents; some have chosen not to parent. They span the educational spectrum from limited formal schooling to those with advanced tertiary qualifications. What they have in common is the experience of a violated childhood and their resolve to heal from, and make sense of, their wounds.

The interviews are recorded with each participant on audio tape over a period of months.

The feminist context

A study commissioned by an organisation with a feminist theoretical basis raises the question of the inclusion of men. Women are the predominant casualties of domestic violence in New Zealand.[2] Sexual violence against women and children is committed almost exclusively by men.[3] To minimise violence we need to understand how and why it is created in the first place, and the effects which cause it to be perpetuated.

The men participating in the 'Getting Free' Study experienced prolonged physical and other forms of violence in their childhood. In adulthood they have previously engaged in self-damaging behaviour. Some male participants have been the perpetrators of violence against either or both genders, and some have not.

Through the oral histories of the men who have been subjected to prolonged violence, the study explores the strategies they have developed to separate themselves from the controlling force of violence. It becomes possible to see not only how they employ self-

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restraint, but also how they have gained a healthy psychological independence from any impetus to use such behaviour.

'Would I count?': the self-referred participant

During preliminary interviews the rights and responsibilities of the researcher and participant are explained, and key topics for discussion in a tape recorded interview outlined. These encompass the mundane and the eventful, the painful, the enjoyable, the open and the silenced aspects of the stages of childhood, adolescence, early and current adulthood. The participant has to be prepared to discuss violations experienced, protection and comfort, chosen surrogates, self abuse and abuse of others, intuition, cultural concerns, spirituality, sexuality, health and illness, difficulties and advantages experienced in the process of healing, and what forgiveness represents.

'I think I'm resilient, but I was on a course of anti-depressants last year. Would I count?' This was the question put to me by a prospective interviewee following a brief account of her major life events involving severe childhood abuse, extraordinary determination and relative success in adulthood. By the assessment of any reasonable person she would be regarded as resilient.

'Truth' and some effects of silencing

Both interviewer and interviewee tend to approach the preliminary interview with caution. I speak from my own experience as interviewer, and prospective applicants who became participants have identified that process, some recording their comments on tape.

In my experience, a person subjected to prolonged violation, where imposed silence is one of the compounding difficulties, seldom discloses that information without first agonising over it, acknowledging it for themselves, and in the process accepting it as a reality. People who have lived with imposed silence, compelled either by threats or to protect others, know what it is like to listen out for the listeners, who are often transcendents of similar experience. They are alert to the empathic listener, and equally to those who have a hidden agenda.

What effects does this history of silencing have on the reliability of the stories? How has it affected the ways in which the stories are told? Can their reliability be properly gauged, and if not, does this invalidate oral history as a form of research for this sort of material? Writing in a similar context, David W. Jones suggests that 'it is wrong to forget the fact that people do have agency, they may have their own strong agendas for being interviewed. It may be that people have specific points, grievances that they want to get across'.[4]

If an interviewee recounts a series of experiences and responses to them which have apparent inconsistencies, does this negate the use of the narrative as part of the research? That would be a hasty conclusion to draw. A participant who, for example, has been educated to conceal the truth of certain events, may in the course of the interview give accounts which appear to have irregularities, creating the impression of being untruthful. Accounts which may be perceived as inaccurate within the framework of other research disciplines, possibly rendering the information inadmissible at that point, may reveal through an expanded narrative what might otherwise be missed. For the researcher who recognises concealment as having a beneficial foundation and has a different understanding of it, oral history provides room for these issues to be explored further with the participant.

Most of the participants have come to the 'Getting Free' study stating clear reasons for wishing to be involved, and showing similar clarity in their recollection of past experience and related thoughts and feelings. The decision to record their story can be identified as being three-fold: to encapsulate their story, within a safe context; to frame what, at times, has been a fragmented life and is now considered secure, for their own benefit and for the benefit of others; and to place in the public domain (this includes recordings with restricted access) experiences which were previously silenced, thereby regaining control of their own story.

Identity and narrative

A person who lives with imposed silence is disempowered by an alien narrative which gives more volume to the voice and control of others. This can, for some people, become a place of comfort and safety, because it is felt to be less threatening to the violator, and the assumed narrative, reinforced with the duration of time, can appear to present an identity which is more solidly defined than the repressed one, and is therefore insurmountable.

Imposed silence is reliant on the violated person's complicity and when this is acknowledged the process of disengaging is able to begin. When the person hears the sound of their own stifled roar beneath the silence, and questions who the real beneficiaries are, and at what cost to the violated, self responsibility and reclamation of the rightful narrative become a clear option. It is a characteristic of the

resilient person that she or he acknowledges the legacy of past experience and how it serves to inform and enhance their life.

'Oral history', writes Wendy Rickard 'offers the possibility of both affirming and destabilising a personal narrative. Part of its value lies in its subversive potential'.[5] The effect of personal stories breaking through the silence has greater impact, and offers a more likely tool for healthy social change, than silence ever had.

Interviewing

Is it possible to avoid tugging at scars when discussing previously silenced material with interviewees? Drawing on painful memory can unexpectedly expose unresolved issues, ones which at an earlier stage in life may have been obscured by more serious concerns. With the healing of critical effects, a space is cleared for peripheral ones to surface.

Most of the participants have at some stage attended therapy or counselling sessions in their resolve to confront and sift through the debris of a violated childhood. Some continue to use the service of counselling or therapy as a constructive and creative framework within which to reassemble thoughts, feelings and residual effects. For these people, therapy is perhaps a kind of insurance against the stealth of some of the oblique effects previously experienced.

... and the interviewer

When I conducted my first recorded interview for this study, I remembered some advice given by the tutor at the Oral History Recording Workshop I had attended. Judith Fyfe had cautioned against using the tape recorder 'on/off' switch as a way of attempting to construct eloquent interviews–unless there is an emergency, it is not a good practice to develop.

I have accepted and held to that advice, sometimes against impulse, and have found it to be most helpful for a number of reasons–I might otherwise today still be recording 'one last take' on Side 1 of Tape 1 of Interview No.1.

The person interviewed will expect more commonly to feel the balance of control weighted in favour of the researcher who operates the recording equipment and, even if passively, directs the interview. The status is levelled considerably when, from the beginning, there is an agreement the tape recorder will not be turned off once the interview has started. There will be times when the interviewer and/or the interviewee feels hopelessly inarticulate, and this can be acknowledged on tape when desired.

If the interviewee requires a break, if there is an unexpected interruption or emergency, or if the interviewee no longer wishes to participate, it will be stated before the tape recorder is turned off. There will be no precedent set for tampering with tape recordings.

The use of open ended questions without time constraints allows participants a comfortable pace at which to tell their story.

An arrangement, typically following discussion, is made in the final recording for the participant to document comments or feelings about the 'Getting Free' interview process. The interviewee has been provided with tape and abstract copies throughout, and this stage allows the opportunity for additional comment or rebuttal of any previous description, opinion or statement.

I have noticed in some cases, when interviews are nearing completion, participants have stalled. I was puzzled by this shift. It was not something I had previously encountered with the people whose capacity for clear and open discussion I had experienced as a feature. It seems necessary, then, to develop some way of ending the process that acknowledges the significance of what has occurred and also values its closure.

'[Our lives] are fluid, ever changing entities in which the present and the past and the individual narrator and their culture are in a perpetual state of interplay', writes Vieda Skultans.[6] We face our own strengths, fears and vulnerabilities if we are to understand ourselves and those around us. There is not much room to move while wearing restrictive armour.

There have been times during the process of interviewing 'Getting Free' participants and abstracting the tape recorded interviews when I have been reminded of how it feels to be ambushed by the effects of past experiences. Appreciating the importance of debriefing or mentoring for researchers working with sensitive issues of trauma and emotional pain has been a necessary and worthwhile learning curve for my organisation.

In conclusion

Working in a marginal area of oral history, which draws on taboo and trauma-laden discourses, and has an overlap with medical history discourses, in some ways places the procedure and its requirements into a different category from other oral histories.

While my role is not that of a therapist, there are ways in which some participants claim therapeutic benefit from the interview process.

The act of entrusting material, which for some interviewees has in the past been done very selectively or in a limited way, requires of the interviewer an element of witnessing.

The people who have shared their

very personal stories of pain, sorrow, grief, delight, discovery, shame, fear, revelation, contentment and hope, have done so generously, in manner and in time offered for numerous recording appointments. Each person at some stage during the interview process, either on tape or off, has expressed at least momentary doubt and concern about the possible value to future researchers of the account of their experiences.

The impact of a life which you might think could not be more familiar than their own reflected back, takes time to absorb. They, and I, discover again that the path to healing and resolution is not a linear one.

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The Community Trust of Otago
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New Zealand Federation of University Women (Inc) Otago Branch

Endnotes

1. The Women's Gallery Inc, registered in 1980, is a feminist organisation, with an objective to present to the wider community, previously unrecorded or inaccessible material through the medium of visual arts and literature. Current projects include a documentary about Irihäpeti Ramsden: 'Something for my grandchildren to hold', whose experience and philosophy illustrate many of the issues involved in the 'Getting Free' Oral History Study.
2. Domestic violence is the fifth leading cause of death from injury for New Zealand women. Jo Elridge, *'Opening Pandora's Box: The Health Sectors Response to Family Violence'*, Family Violence Advisory Committee Te Rangi Whiriwhiri Tükinotanga a Whänau, Auckland, 1997.
3. In a census of New Zealand prison inmates carried out on 14 November 1991, the number incarcerated for Rape: Female 0; Male 322. The number incarcerated for Unlawful Sexual Connection: Female 1; Male 200. B. Braybrook and P. Southey, 'Census of Prison Inmates 1991'.
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Confidentially Speaking

Ethics in an interview situation

LESLEY HALL

Shush, please don't tell anyone! In this paper I am examining some of the potential difficulties involved in promising confidentiality to people interviewed in the process of what Morrison calls 'oral research'.[1] For those of you who conduct oral history interviews for the specific purpose of archiving this may only be an issue if the narrators place restrictions on the recorded material. There are no easy answers to the issues raised here, some may prefer they not be raised at all, but it is my contention that difficult issues need to be addressed if oral historians and academic researchers are to behave ethically towards those we interview.

Areas of research interest are often a result of our own experiences and background and this is certainly true in my case. My first job on leaving school in the United Kingdom necessitated my signing the Official Secrets Act, which, as the name suggests, discussed the treatment of 'secret' information. Later in New Zealand I worked as a support person for women who had been raped, and as a telephone counsellor for rape and sexual abuse survivors. Confidentiality was essential in these circumstances. My PhD research is based on interviews with ex-members of the New Zealand Communist Party and a confidentiality clause was part of the research contracts. Currently, I co-teach with Alison Laurie a women's auto/biography course at Victoria University of Wellington with an oral history interview component.

At Victoria University any research which involves contact with people has to be approved by the Human Ethics Committee. In completing ethics forms students and researchers have to state which code of practice they will use; most codes contain references to confidentiality. The Sociological Association of Australia and New Zealand for example states:

1) researchers should protect privacy where appropriate by adequately disguising personal identities in written and oral reports of the research...
2) researchers should not reveal information received in the course of research where assurance of confidentiality has been promised.
3) researchers should inform research participants and funding agencies of any limits of confidentiality.

NOHANZ's own Code of Ethical and Technical Practice states that the interviewer should treat every interview as a confidential conversation, the contents of which may be made available only as determined by written agreement with the interviewee.

But why is it felt necessary to offer confidentiality in the first place? Protection of the interviewee is one reason to include such a clause, but is it not also for the benefit of the interviewers in order to encourage the interviewee to reveal more detailed information than they might otherwise?

A number of researchers in recent years have discussed the need to avoid exploitation of interviewees, but what does this mean in relation to the issue of confidentiality? Is it possible that this offer is difficult to guarantee in a country as small as New Zealand, and that this may lead to exploitation simply because the anonymity of those we interview cannot be completely protected? If people are informed, as the New Zealand Social Anthropologists' guidelines advise, that confidentiality may accidentally be breached on occasion, will they still agree to be interviewed. And if this possibility is not raised is not that unethical?

Initially I have raised eight issues which in my view require further examination:

Avoidance of social harm

Many codes of practice, including that of NOHANZ, discuss how

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researchers should guard against social injury or 'avoid social harm'. Although the intent of these statements may be very honourable can anyone know what social injury may result from our research in the future? Patai thinks not.[2] She argues that, if taken seriously, even the minimal directive to do no harm 'would paralyse researchers, for we are unable to gauge, let alone control, the potential consequences of our procedures and the research products in which they result'.

Such difficulties were brought home to me when as a new Sociology student I was told about Wallis's research about the Church of Scientology. In 1984 Wallis was named as a potential witness in a legal battle between the Church of Scientology and another author who had provided Wallis with information. As the result of a Californian court order he was instructed to release this material which he had received in confidence. According to Giddens, the information was of little significance, but had it been then presumably he would have had to make a choice between breaking a confidence or breaking the law.[3]

One of the people interviewed for my PhD research was in no doubt as to whether the information entrusted to me on tape would be safe in my keeping. He had no qualms in telling me that should the S.I.S. bring pressure to bear on me, he was in no doubt that I would hand over the material collected from him in confidence. I assured him I would not, but on reflection maybe he was right. Can anyone be that certain? Historically there are many examples of people who have betrayed others when their lives or those of their families were placed in jeopardy.

The point here is that in some countries confidentiality is not protected in law. Perhaps, as Kelly et al argue, we need to take more seriously the potential for harm for those who assist us with our research.[4] It is possible that participation may be more of an intrusion, an imposition, an irritation, and/or a responsibility than a benefit for those assisting us in our research projects. Possibly the authors have a point when they argue that the fact that in-depth ethnographic methods reduce distance may mean that the potential for harm increases.[5]

Disguising personal identities

How easy is it in New Zealand, with a population of just over three million, to disguise the identities of those involved in our research? How easy is it when one is working with marginalised or specialised groups? I have read books and theses where I have (I think) been able to identify individuals despite the use of pseudonyms. Through putting two and two together and a process of elimination I have been able to work out at least who some of the participants are, or at least which sections refer to them. One way to avoid this is to change more and more information so that not only the name but also other features are altered in order to make identification more difficult if not impossible. Does this blur the line between fact (at least as represented by the interviewee) and fiction? And if it does, how does this affect the quality or credibility of the research findings?

Of course, not everyone wants to remain anonymous, some are adamant that their name should appear. But if some people are identified and some not, surely the anonymous ones become easier to name?

At a recent conference which I attended, several presenters played recorded interviews. Most were not named, probably for reasons of confidentiality, but I was able to identify at least one of the voices. This leads to point number three, problems of definition.

Problems of definition

What does the term 'confidentiality' mean to you? Does it mean that you tell no-one else at all, just your partner, colleagues, only people you 'trust' not to spread the story further? We all have different boundaries yet assume, often wrongly, that others share our understanding of terms. It has also been suggested by some researchers that participants may assume confidentiality even though no such promise may have been made.[6]

If a research contract has been signed, however, do interviewees fully understand the implications of the agreement they have signed? Some time ago, again at a conference, a speaker played excerpts of recorded interviews. One of the interviewees was present in the audience and because I was feeling uncomfortable, I glanced over at her to gauge her response. She looked ill at ease. After the session I asked the speaker whether he had asked permission to play the recordings. His response was that the interviewees had signed the release which allowed for public broadcast of the interview. But did the interviewees understand what this entailed? Would they expect that it would include broadcast to over 50 of their peers and in their presence? Had they known of the use to which the recorded material would be put, would they have signed away their right to confidentiality? Was the consent given informed consent? And if the speaker intended to play excerpts, would it not have been courteous as well as ethical to seek the approval of his interview subjects first?

The role of memory

What about the incorporation of other people's lives into our own? When does someone else's memory become your own? Let me give you an example to illustrate. When I was three years old, just before my sister was born, I apparently threatened, in front of my mother, to run across the road. This example of my stubbornness/ bravado/ challenge to my mother's authority has been repeated to me so many times over the years that when I tell the story I use the same body language as my mother, but the incident is not part of my consciousness. In my mind I have a picture of the footpath, the traffic, the road, and a heavily pregnant mother, but it is a totally constructed memory. I have no personal recollection of it whatsoever.

If, as Tonkin argues, 'we make memory'[7] in this way is it not possible that with the passage of time, other people's biographies become incorporated into our own so that eventually we may forget how we came by that knowledge? Confidentiality clauses may over time be forgotten. This is especially likely to happen if you interview friends or family members, or if interviewees become friends through the research process.

Problems of association

New Zealand is a small country in which, to someone like me who originates from a country with a population twenty times greater, everyone seems to know everyone else, or nearly everyone. When I was a rape/sexual abuse telephone counsellor I talked on occasion to people whose voices I recognised (and perhaps vice versa). Occasionally, in my work I mark interviews where I recognise the voice of the person interviewed, who sometimes has chosen to use a pseudonym. What difference does this make?

On one occasion a student's interview subject asked to re-record her interview once she realised that she knew one of the markers. For her how and what she talked about was influenced by knowledge of who the listeners might be. What this example illustrates is that anonymity and confidentiality may make people more open than they would otherwise be, and consequently they may reveal more than they normally would. As Gluck and Patai have noted, people who use oral narratives in social history and other disciplines have learned that 'identifying one's sources may drastically restrict the type of material with which a researcher is likely to be entrusted'.[8]

Breaking trust

Definitions of confidentiality generally include some reference to trust, for example, keeping secret entrusted information. Raising the issue of confidentiality may have a variety of effects on potential interview subjects, causing some, once rapport is established, to disclose more than they normally would. Alternatively, some may reveal less as the suggestion of confidentiality may lead them to think they have something to hide and should be more circumspect. Having been entrusted with people's innermost thoughts, do we have a duty to protect their privacy and to what extent? Is it true that research participants need to be protected from people like us?

Storage of tapes

In some academic disciplines tapes are destroyed once the research is completed, regardless of the wishes of those interviewed. This is an anathema to oral historians, knowing what valuable information may be lost to future researchers. In other disciplines, and in many archives, they are stored as per the wishes of the interviewee who may impose restrictions on who may listen to the tapes and when. How secure is such storage? If restrictions are placed on material, what guarantee is there that they will be adhered to in the future? What if there are changes in staff, new systems in place, or even new owners. Only recently a large number of personal cheques were sent to the dump accidentally, and a painting by Colin McCahon, a gift, was sold by Victoria University despite the apparent wishes of the donor. What if an oral history archive is sold into private hands in the future? Can confidentiality necessarily be maintained in such circumstances? There are difficult decisions facing archivists in accepting and holding sensitive data.

Potential for conflict

Kidder and Judd argue that obligation to truth is higher than obligation to protect anonymity;[9] for others anonymity leads to difficulties. Most historians and political scientists for example have been trained to value verifiability above all else. What should a researcher do if they think that confidential information is important for the historical record? How does one resolve the contradiction between honouring the wishes of those interviewed against the 'accuracy' of events?

Michael King, in his research on Te Puea Herangi, dealt with this by seeking verification from other informants less unwilling to be identified, or he gave information without citing the source.[10] But this is problematic. What if only a few people know, or only one other person? Probing for clarification of issues may in some circumstances unwittingly lead to breaching confidentiality.

Accountability

According to Liz Stanley, 'good research should account for its own production'. She has written at length about the need for researchers to write an 'intellectual biography', as this is 'the major way in which the power differential between researcher and researched can begin to be broken down'.[11] However, there is potential for conflict between accountability and confidentiality. If the research is confidential, to whom is the researcher accountable? How can research be open to scrutiny if only the interviewer and interviewee know what happened? Perhaps as Deem and Brehony argue 'accountability is best regarded as something which is to be worked towards rather than fully achieved'.[12]

Does the end justify the means?

Are there circumstances in which a breach of confidentiality is warranted? What if, in the process of an interview, one learns that the interviewee abuses her child or is contemplating suicide? However much we value anonymity and confidentiality, are there occasions where we might break our own rules and are such breaches justified? I don't pretend to have any answers–these are ethical, maybe moral issues. My aim is to show that confidentiality clauses are not without their problems.

Implications for the interviewer

There have been a number of researchers who have discussed the stress involved in the research process.[13] So far I have focused on the possible problems for interviewees with confidentiality, but what about the interviewer? What if you are told information about someone you know? Even if you do not break the confidence you cannot un-know what you now know, so what are the implications for your future relationship with that person? What if the information is distressing for you? It is to be hoped that we all endeavour not to leave our interviewees in distress, but what about us? How do you debrief yourself if you have promised confidentiality?

And finally, how confidential is what you have said to the interviewee? In order to minimise the power differential between interviewer and interviewee, many feminist researchers have discussed the necessity for self disclosure, although perhaps only when requested, as not all interviewees want the democratisation that feminist researchers aim for.[14] Revealing personal information is problematic for the interviewer too. As Reinharz argues, 'Researchers who self disclose are reformulating the researcher's role in a way that maximises engagement of the self but also increases the researcher's vulnerability to criticism, both for what is revealed and for the very act of disclosure'.[15]

The problem identified here is that it is not only the interviewee who may reflect later on what she said, the interviewer too may regret revealing too much. Is it reasonable to expect the interviewee also to keep information confidential, and if so what mechanism should be employed to accomplish this?

Conclusion

For some oral historians, confidentiality clauses may seem to contradict the purpose of oral history. However, interviewees may be reticent about revealing information for a variety of reasons, yet still feel that it should be part of the historical record at some time in the future. It is for this reason that some place restrictions on their interviews. Assurances of confidentiality and safe archiving of material may mean that those we interview throw caution to the wind and disclose more than they would in normal circumstances. The aim of ensuring that no harm shall come to research participants necessitates acknowledging that there is a potential conflict between obtaining as much information as possible and keeping certain, often sensitive details, confidential. Our responsibility to those who help us with our research may be at odds with our pursuit of the 'truth', even if we acknowledge that there may be many versions.

Endnotes

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13. See, for example, Gluck and Patai, *Women's Words*; Maynard and Purvis, *Researching Women's Lives ...*, and Shulamit Reinharz, *Feminist Methods in Social Research*, Oxford, 1992.
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Being German in Wellington
Female perspectives

BRIGITTE BÖNISCH-BREDNICH

The contents of the following article should be seen in the context of a four-year project entitled 'German Immigrants in New Zealand (1936-1996)', to be published in Germany in 2000. It is based on intensive fieldwork, including interviews with 102 people which constitute the main source of data[1], together with a great deal of participant observation. Because the hypotheses and actual work have been undertaken from the perspective of cultural anthropology, the project aims to investigate questions about mental mapping, the immigration process and self-reflecting views on the process of constructing new identities as a result of emigration. The wide time frame has been chosen to enable a comparative analysis of different immigration groups—their motivations for emigrating, the reasons for choosing New Zealand as their destination, and their changing views on the experience of migration.

I conducted individual and family interviews with Germans who belong to different groups and periods of immigration, not only attempting to get an equal number of interviews from the six decades of immigration since the 1930s, but also parity in societal and gender-specific selection. Choices of subject milieus were surprisingly rich. Wellington, for example, has an interesting variety of German speaking groups. The Goethe Society, the Literary Society and the German and the Austrian Club are well known, but there are two toddlers groups, a walking group, a group of Hessians who brew a special form of cider, an Austrian/German men's choir, and people who have special networks for ordering food supplies or for organising informal meetings such as birthday or farewell parties. There was a salient difference between those who maintain close contact within the various German organisations and informal groups, and those who are not interested or who simply do not meet other Germans in their everyday life.

Periodisation

I started the process of analysis with one special group of women living in greater Wellington, especially in the Hutt Valley, and it is this group with which this paper is concerned. First, however, I will give an overview of how reasons for emigrating have changed over the last 60 years. During the 1930s, emigration from Germany was forced by the racist and political impact of fascism. As Ann Beaglehole has pointed out in *A Small Price to Pay* (1988), there was quite often no choice about where to go, therefore emigrants took the first opportunity available, and usually went to New Zealand without knowing anything about the country. Some, however, were attracted by the Labour government and the vision of being able to take part in an egalitarian society. In the years following the war, while New Zealand did not allow German immigration from Germany, it did initiate a programme to take limited numbers of Displaced Persons, and through that scheme, small numbers of immigrants with a German background arrived.

In the 1950s, as a result of the loss of productive workers in the Second World War, some special programmes were initiated by the New Zealand government to attract young people, especially women, from middle and northern Europe. Although resentment against the former German enemy was rife, a

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This article is a version of a paper given at the Stout Research Centre at the Victoria University of Wellington.

reasonable number of young Germans–often discontented with the re-militarisation of their homeland or the seeming lack of a better future–entered into what appeared to them to be the adventure of New Zealand life. In the 1960s, numbers of mostly young, skilled or unskilled immigrants came, attracted by reports about New Zealand as an economically successful country with the promise of jobs and the possibility of owning a house and land. Such things were unattainable for young Germans at that time.

During the 1970s there was a gap in immigration; few Germans went to New Zealand, and those who did had mostly not planned to do so. Germany was now wealthy, New Zealand was less so than before. As it had ceased to be an 'economic wonderland', economics-driven emigration was no longer a prime reason for leaving Germany. In the 1980s, a new set of 'push' factors arose in Germany: an increasing awareness of ecological problems in Europe, a feeling that Germany was overcrowded, and political problems over such things as military bases, nuclear power, and nuclear weapons. Many people–disappointed by politics and feeling unsure in their surroundings–started looking for alternatives. New Zealand, for a short time the international focus of anti-nuclear protest, seemed attractive, and at the same time was looking for skilled people in various areas–for example, in the computer industry. Therefore New Zealand received a noticeable influx of people who either changed country but not jobs, or of people who decided to change their lifestyle and start a new living by becoming ecological farmers or something equally 'alternative'.

Over the last ten years, immigration has often been heavily influenced by the individual's wish to realise a special lifestyle: the push factor was no longer focussed on worrying about the world, but was instead related to the search for a country where there could be found a surrounding which allowed self-realisation. Very often, however, emigration was caused by tourism: a number of Germans have fallen in love with New Zealand on holiday and wished to stay, and so have applied for permanent residence. Over and above such causes, there are some timeless reasons for emigrating which are often highlighted by women immigrants, for example, love, and coincidence. This could be the result of marrying a New Zealander, or following a partner because he has decided to emigrate, or both partners in a relationship making the decision to emigrate.

All of the above reasons for emigrating apply to both women and men, but there are some gender-specific factors in emigration, especially with regard to different styles of living as an immigrant–and of talking about being an immigrant.

The 'Knitting Group'

Despite systematic analysis of the full variety of topics from individual interviews not being completed, I obtained important and leading impressions by joining the Friday night meetings of a group of German women. The chance to do an interview with a pre-existing group was a good opportunity to widen the interviewing horizon, which is generally concentrated on meeting single persons. One gets a feeling for those experiences which are common or collective, as well as those which are specifically individual, and can often deduce immediately, while listening to a story or even a short comment, whether or not the audience shares that experience collectively.

The interviews were conducted with a group of women in the Hutt Valley. They have a kind of semi-institutionalised organisation which is flourishing, and they feel that their form of loose but effective organisation is very traditionally 'womanly'. They have an address list, they meet every Friday night at the place of a member, and each one 'brings a plate' and some kind of needlework. But they were not able to tell me the name of the group–they were amused by the question and were unable initially to provide an answer. Some of them just said they used terms like 'I go knitting'. Others suggested that if anything they would be called simply the 'Knitting Group' (although three liked the name 'Hot Needles' when it was suggested!). Some defined the group by means of using their partner's comments: 'Are you going to your ladies?', or a reference by a non-German partner to the 'German Mafia'. They are all aware they have a reputation as a perhaps slightly eccentric and certainly old-fashioned knitting circle. They are anything but old-fashioned, and by keeping their association on an invitation-only basis, they have avoided becoming over-crowded.

The group offers members the opportunity to speak German and to be amongst German women–a common national background and an exclusively female one. Some have close friendships, others meet only this once a week. The atmosphere is very relaxed, very open-minded, not organised and sometimes very noisy. Anything of interest can be discussed. Topics range from children, (mis)behaviour of men, and holidays, through visitors from overseas, sex, and Hutt Valley gossip, to everything imaginable about being an immigrant. There are at the moment fourteen members, the gatherings having between five

The German Women's Group gathering on Friday night, January 1997. Brigitte Bönisch-Brednich, 1997

and ten participants.

The women are between 29 and 55 years old and the time they have lived in New Zealand ranges from six months to 30 years. They all live in more or less defined relationships. Three have German and three have 'kiwi' partners, while a further three have partners with a English or Scottish background; one has a Swiss partner and one has a partner of American/Canadian background. Some of them have children, some do not. They happily agreed to include me in their Friday night discussions and to respond to my questions, but very often there was no need for me to pose specific questions: immigration and all subjects connected with it is so much part of their lives that it is also an integral part of what they talk about at their gatherings.

Topics surrounding immigration and living as an immigrant in New Zealand include the experience of being different, mishaps linked to having to manage a foreign language, problems of behavioural expectations, what it means to be 'German', being homesick (which often coincides with new arrivals), visitors from overseas, relationships with friends and family in Germany, and most of all, the subject of food. Talking about food, or about organising and preparing food, is one of the most important topics in immigrant conversation–particularly among women.

The Interviews

I will now present a flavour of my interviews, beginning with topics I introduced during a knitting-circle evening. I therefore concentrate on emigration stories, on feeling homesick, on mishaps and misunderstandings, and on changes of personality caused by the emigration experience.

Sabine's story, or love and coincidence[2]

BBB: Why did you come to New Zealand?

SABINE: My husband wanted to buy a dining table, and so he met me.

BBB: Would you mind adding one more sentence to that?

SABINE: There is a newspaper named Trade and Exchange, and my husband at that time was looking for additional furniture. And just in that edition I had an ad in which I was asking for a pen friend ...

Half a year later I was here for a three weeks holiday, and another three months later we were married in Germany. Four weeks later my personal belongings were packed up and on their way to down-under.

BBB: That sounds amazing. And what gave you the idea to look for a penfriend in New Zealand?

SABINE: At that time I suffered from a broken relationship and didn't want a man too close to me ... And after I was here on holiday and had seen the kiwi way of living, and my husband is a typical kiwi, I knew that he wouldn't feel comfortable in Germany. And we had to make the decision where to live. And in the beginning I didn't know anyone, not even my neighbours. I got terribly homesick. Half a year later I returned to Germany because of the 70th birthday of my father. I didn't know where to live. But in the end I returned to New Zealand. And the first thing I got after my arrival was a puppy to bring up. Half a year later I got a job and now I don't want to live anywhere else.

Ingrid, or tourism and self realisation

INGRID: My story started like this. I was travelling the world for three years, and at the end I came to New Zealand. I was travelling alone. And this country simply fascinated me. The space, the people, no nuclear power stations, no environmental pollution. It was 1988. Then I went back to Germany, with the aim of saving money and of returning as soon as possible. In Germany I met my partner, but I told him immediately, I will definitely want to go to New Zealand, and if he was not interested in joining me there, I wouldn't be interested in a closer relationship. New Zealand was much more important than a relationship with a man having no connection to New Zealand. [But in the event he did join her in emigrating.]

Edith, or when the partner decides to go

EDITH: When we arrived 30 years ago, it was terrible. It was like going ten years back in time. And I got terribly homesick, I felt so alone. Oh, I cried and cried all the time. We arrived without anything. We had five pounds of money. Andy went to a bank and got a loan of about £100. And then he went to an auction and bought furniture. And when I saw that stuff, then I cried even more. Oh no, the furniture looked as if it had been brought in with Captain Cook. ... For the first thirteen years there was no better country than Germany. But when I went back and I saw how it really was, my feelings changed. We wouldn't have been able to afford a house and garden like here. Our standard of living is much higher, and the weather, and the country. And suddenly I thought, I will never again live in Germany. Sometimes I wished I could have gone earlier, but we didn't have the money ... I went back eight years ago to have a really German Christmas. This special atmosphere is not possible in New Zealand ... Christmas in Germany is very special.

Sina, or tourism and fate

BBB: And did you come as a tourist as well?

SINA: Yes, with two children and my partner.

BBB: And did you know that you would like to stay here?

SINA: We didn't even know that we would come to New Zealand. We simply started in Germany. ... We were something like rebels, we wanted to do everything differently, just had the idea of going somewhere else. One week before we set off I realized I was pregnant again. But we left for America, went to Hawaii, to Samoa. And in Samoa we decided to go to New Zealand. Originally we wanted to go to Australia ... but the airfares to New Zealand were much cheaper than to Australia. Therefore we said, 'Okay let's go to New Zealand first.' It is hardly possible to believe this special kind of coincidence. It was fate, and the fact of me being pregnant caused us to stay here. I was just fed up with travelling around. And New Zealand was beautiful and I said, 'Okay, let's stay and give birth to the baby. And then let's see.'

Taking your time

SINA [about being homesick]: Suddenly after five years, it went 'click' and I got new friends and suddenly I had new surroundings.

INGE: Five years, that was the same for me.

SINA: You know the language, the people.

BETTINA: Yes and you are able to joke. Everything is very serious when you are not good enough in a foreign language. Thirty per cent of life is missing.

Misunderstandings and mishaps

BETTINA: I remember well my feeling irritated on hearing, 'How are you?' and the other said 'Fine, how are you?' 'Fine.' And that was that. And I always thought, 'There has to be somebody who wants to know more.' It took me quite a long time to accept that it just means 'Hallo.'

EDITH: When I met the first New Zealander, I met them in supermarket. And I went first through the check-out and Brill came after me. And then she said, 'See you later.' And she lived just two doors down the street. And I rushed home, fixed the house, made everything tidy. And then I waited the whole day. And then I thought, well these are nice friends aren't they! And another situation was ...

BETTINA [interrupting her]: Bring a Plate.

EDITH: ... and I brought my best china plate, without anything on it. ...

INGE: Yes, I thought, maybe they don't have enough plates and I have to be helpful.

New possibilities, new power

SINA: From the financial aspect, it is much more difficult here. But you have nature and all the possibilities you have here; that really counts.

INGRID: That's fabulous. Women who are about 40 years old they start learning a new job, it's fascinating.

SINA: And I started wind-surfing. I am quite sure, I never would have done it in Germany. There is no possibility.

INGE: I have a life in New Zealand, it is unbelievable. ... From early childhood I had wanted to emigrate. At the age of three I invited myself to friends in the Black Forest. And I was born near Hamburg. ... In Germany. I always got my wings clipped. Here in New Zealand in the first years I suffered from anxiety, fear and terror but I really lived ... I went sailing with other women and we were sailing in the national championships. I have tried things out, new worlds opened for me. ... I did crazy things, I did climbing and abseiling and canoeing. And with ease, just for the sake of doing it. Yes, I ride a motorbike. When I was 43 or 42 I sat on my sofa at home and thought why is nobody coming to pick me up. And then I thought, Are you naughty? How long do you expect to be sitting here and waiting? Until you are 80 years old? Get your driver's licence for motorbikes and that's it. ... In New Zealand I lived every month without knowing whether I would have the money for the next month. But the things I did, I wouldn't have been able to do in Germany. In Germany I would have had a safe life as a civil servant ... Until the end of my life ... I suffered from loneliness but I had a lot of fun as well.

SINA: I think, because you were so much alone here, you reached your own limits. And then you suddenly realized, hey, I am able to do it. And that gives you so much power, you know. I am a completely different person than I would ever have been in Germany. Much more energetic.

INGE: Me too. I came alone to New Zealand in 1985.

INGRID: I started travelling alone as well. And that makes you powerful, when you go alone, have to have your own experiences.

INGE: Ever since I was a child, I wanted to see the other side of the earth. My father always talked about the antipodes. And I wondered all the time what it might be to be a person with turned-in feet. I just wanted to know, what the other side of the world is about. ... Here is the country which enables me to grow spiritually. Which enables me to learn about myself and to realize my strength.

Feeling at home spiritually

INGE: After nine months travelling in Australia I came to New Zealand. And when I was sitting in the coach from Auckland to Tauranga, I saw all those green hills with these white points, and knew that I was at home. And that was it. And I never lost the feeling, here is my place to stay.

GESINE: I agree with you so much. When I arrived I took a walk through Newtown and I was not able to talk English when I arrived ... And I thought, I am at home. Here I have to stay. And I didn't understand why I wasn't able to understand the language, why people didn't understand me.

BETTINA: It is funny so many people mention that these special kind of challenges are so enriching. These first few years when you get shaken so much. Sometimes I thought I feel so divided. On the one hand I knew it is what I wanted, but on the other hand there was so much I couldn't agree with.

INGE: I didn't make an intellectual decision to stay here. It just happened to me. It wasn't really a decision. Now I am here.

SINA: I pretend that we had to come to this country because our daughter wanted to be born here. She is a real kiwi. I think in her last life she was an Maori Warrior or something like that.

Sexuality

INGE: Sexuality is still a taboo topic in New Zealand. When I was a teacher at a girl's school I was not allowed to talk about sex in my lessons. I said '*We are in the age of Aids and if I can't even say the word 'condom' in my lesson then we have to do some booming and zapping with all the parents here, to get some beams and 'beam us up Scotty' into the real world, please. And get some information and check out whether they really want their daughters going into relationships at an early age without any protection. Is that what we all want?*' Oh, it was terrible. '*Oh*', they said, '*We can't discuss it*', hush hush under the table. They never understand, that I don't like to keep my mouth shut. And then I said to my pupils '*Well, just to let you know, in my lessons we don't talk about sex. Please keep that in mind and remember your parents.*'

Fascism and every-day life

BBB: I have the impression that topics like fascism and Germany are still very much alive here.

EDITH (about her arrival 30 years ago): At that time, yes. When I started working, I realised for the first time there were people who didn't like Germans. And one special woman was from South Africa. I was in charge of an emigration hostel. We had to provide supplies for new arrivals. I was responsible for twelve girls. At every mealtime I assigned them to the work, which they had to do. And there was this woman and she refused to accept my advice. Because I was younger than her. I was 24, and she was about 45, and she didn't accept my advice. And one evening I said: *'Trixie, I would like you to do so-and-so.'* And she replied: *'Where do you think we are? Do you think you are the Führer and this is a concentration camp here?'* Then I made her redundant.

INGE: When I got my first class in school here, I was greeted by one pupil 'Heil Hitler'. But that didn't have a real meaning. He was about 14 years of age and you know how they are. And later on he asked me: *'Mrs. Junge, did you meet Mr. Hitler?'* And then I answered, '*What do you reckon how old am I?*' And he said: '*25 about.*' And I was 37 then. And I asked him, *'Do you know when Hitler was doing his stuff in Germany?'*. He said: '*World War II*'. And I said: '*Good, do you know what time that was? 1900, 1800, 500 BC?*' (And he answered) *'Not long ago wasn't it?'* I said, '*Oh, it finished 1945, now if I am 25 years old, could I have met him?*'

Female perspectives on migration

The women I interviewed arrived in New Zealand over a period of 40 years. One would think that attitudes towards migration and the process of change would have altered considerably during this period, but the problems stayed the same for my subject group of women. Differences with regard to how women cope with the problems caused by immigration do not relate so much to the arrival time as to their personal situation. It makes a big difference, for example, whether they stay at home, or whether they start working soon after their arrival.

The difference is even more obvious between those who came on their own and those who had family to care for. If women arrived on their own–and they began to do this from the 1950s onwards–they tended to have more self-confidence, having taken the huge decision to emigrate by themselves. The process of adjustment is more difficult if they just gave in because their partner wanted to go to a new country, or they emigrated because they fell in love with a 'kiwi'. Therefore the problem of suffering homesickness is very much one of 'housewives' having lost their personal and emotional support network, feeling lonely in their new home without having much contact with the new outside world, and feeling embarrassed about talking inadequately in a foreign language.

The subject of 'misunderstandings' is a particularly female one. Immigrant men tend to complain, for example, about colleagues or

craftsmen being unreliable, not calling back or not meeting agreements. Women, on the other hand, have a tendency to connect personal well-being and cultural misunderstandings in a way that leads to feelings of discomfort. The classical example of 'ladies a plate' (later, 'bring a plate') shows how much a non-understanding of the new culture creates a mnemotechnical vignette which conflates a feeling of embarrassment, an impression of failure and the sensation of being an outsider. By telling this story in the interview, 'bring a plate' took on a new meaning: as the interviewees perceived that it was a collective experience, it turned into a story of awakening self-assurance, of a hidden *rite de passage*, and in the process the humorous aspects of the situation were revelled in. As Julie Parks has analysed, 'bring a plate' is as complex a situation of ritual as immigrant women have to go through.[3]

Women who arrived in New Zealand during the last twenty years developed new patterns of explaining immigration. They did not come to New Zealand for work or related purposes, but because they just happened to arrive during a trip around the world, or because they had taken a holiday in New Zealand and/or Australia. Their explanations regarding why they stayed and what they gained out of this step are quite different from the stories of immigrant men. The interviews quoted above indicate that there is a tendency among women immigrants to depict the decision as a product of fate: it just happened, it felt right, it was their destiny to arrive and stay in New Zealand. Such 'explanations' take away responsibility to a certain degree, underpinning the fundamental decision with a 'supernatural' dimension which goes beyond the realms of self-constructing biography. The same women who used fate as a factor for explaining emigration explained that they gained through emigration more self-confidence and power, and the feeling of a new life with unknown personal possibilities for self-development.

A surprise during analysis of the interviews was a discernible difference between how women and men dealt with the problem of having to face the history of fascism in Germany all the time. Being asked about their standpoint on the Nazi experience, whether they feel ashamed about the German past and so forth, is an every-day experience of German immigrants. Because there is no straight way in Germany to deal with that problem, most people feel helpless in developing and explaining their own standpoint, and want to create a distance between themselves and what happened in the past.

In New Zealand German men tend to enter into long description and argumentation when asked about fascism during the interview, whereas the women tend to talk about taking control in specific situations. They defend themselves when they feel misjudged, and present complete stories as to how they have dealt with the problem of Nazism when tackled about it by New Zealanders. In such circumstances, the close connection between personal feeling and the situation of being an immigrant is clearly turned into an advantage–one which enables women to react to their new human environment and not just to suffer and delay resolution of their internal conflicts to a later date.

Generally, there was a difference between male and female interpretations of the emigration experience which became obvious as I transcribed and analysed the interviews. There are distinct ways of telling their own story–presenting small events which led to the next step of adjustment, and marking significant milestones in that process. This is a matter for elaboration in a later piece, but I can confirm that the contents of the stories are quite different between men and women. If it were necessary to sum this up succinctly, one would say that when constructing their immigrant biography, men tell about the problems and the success of their careers, while women relate how it *felt* to be away from Germany and to be in New Zealand.

Endnotes

1. The interviews were recorded on 70 cassettes and are mainly in German. They were conducted in three ways: with families, couples and single persons. All interviews were transcribed (amounting to approximately 3500 pages) and then a system of 23 subject headings was constructed (for example, homesickness, language problems, misunderstandings, arrivals). The interviews (plus copies) are currently held by the author as data for her book, and so are not yet available to researchers.
2. The interviews are translated from German. Parts which were originally in English are in italics.
3. Julie Park (ed), *Ladies a Plate: Changes and Continuity in the Lives of New Zealand Women*, Auckland, 1991.

Preserving Our Aural History

Sound preservation at the National Library of New Zealand Te Puna Mātauranga o Aotearoa

BRONWYN OFFICER

Sound in the form of oral history interviews, music, soundscapes and recorded events has the power to tap into our sense of place, time and belonging. A new context is created every time a recording is made. This is formulated by the content, the time and place of the recording, the rapport between the people involved and the technology used. Sound preservation has to take this context into consideration to preserve the 'integrity' of a recording as well as selecting the most appropriate technology for its long term survival.

Definitions

Preservation is a word used to describe all activities associated with prolonging the life of collection materials or the information content, including those taken to repair or treat damaged materials as well as those taken to prevent or reduce damage to materials.

Conservation describes activities involving the treatment of individual items–these activities are often labour intensive. Conservation is just one part of a total preservation programme.

Restoration, on the other hand, is a conservation treatment restoring an item to its 'original condition'. It is not usually practiced in library and archive preservation since it often destroys or masks essential historic information associated with the object such as age or authenticity. For instance, some recordings in the library have been copied from wax cylinders and you can hear the regular swishing of the stylus. To get rid of this would be to destroy the 'integrity' of the recording.

Physical or chemical damage

Before I talk about preservation in a little more detail I should mention some of the characteristics of sound media. Most sound materials are made up of polymers, or plastics as they are commonly known, and other constituents. They are inherently unstable and are often described as having 'inherent vice'. This is because the very qualities that make sound recordings useable (such as flexibility and malleability) can also make them susceptible to physical or chemical damage due to their make up. Magnetic tape is a composite material with a base, and magnetic particles suspended within a binder–a bit like a fruit jelly, the fruit being the magnetic particles and the jelly being the binder. Damage is caused when the different layers change at different rates according to mechanical, or environmental stress. This can cause stretching, shrinkage, deformation, delamination, and chemical deterioration. Tapes are also vulnerable to contaminants such as dust and mould which also cause damage. Magnetic tape prefers a clean, stable environment, preferably with a low temperature and a low relative humidity, but more important is the stability of the environment. It is the fluctuations in temperature and relative humidity that do the most damage.

Sound preservation at the National Library

Preservation refers to the processes of retarding deterioration, minimising risk or harm, or stabilising vulnerable material. At the National Library these processes focus on shelving, storage, environmental monitoring and control, staff and user education, disaster management, conservation planning and treatments.

Conservation treatments for sound cover anything that is 'done' to an item, including repairs, cleaning, copying or reformatting. At the Library an annual Conservation Plan is worked out with the curators. This prioritises collection items for

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treatment. The priorities are not only based on the physical condition of an item but are worked out according to its intrinsic value or cultural significance. Items for access become part of the plan as they are required. Individual item sound conservation can include any cleaning, repairing, and rehousing that is required. Once the preparation of an item is complete a typical treatment path would be to load the item in real time into a digital workstation while an analogue open reel or 'preservation' copy is made, along with a cassette access copy. A CD-R (recordable CD) digital copy is made later from the file on the workstation. The file is then deleted. This is because sound files are large and take up a lot of disk space and also because once a CD-R has been made it is unnecessary and unadvisable, for confidentiality reasons, to have multiple copies around. Because of uncertainties related to present digital formats, both in terms of stability of the carriers and the future availability of replay equipment, it is recommended by the International Association of Sound and Audiovisual Archives (IASA) that in addition to the creation of digital copies, analogue copies be made on quarter inch polyester tape of proven archival quality.[1] All treatment work is documented and put on the Conserv database on Tapuhi. It is important to note that 'preservation' copies are unprocessed copies. Restoration is not carried out on these copies for ethical reasons because it may remove or mask evidence of the technical history of the medium or in fact interfere with the sound signal itself. Processing also has the potential to introduce new sounds into the copy. It is also extremely labour intensive and doesn't fit easily into the workflows allocated for preservation. The removal of unwanted noise may be desirable for the commercial release of a recording (as long as this fact is fully documented in the release notes), however, and with software such as NoNoise it is possible to declick and dekrackle a recording.

Digital technology

Digital technology allows far greater degrees and types of manipulation than ever before. It is possible to substitute material ranging from a single element within a word, to an entire sentence from elsewhere in the recording in order to produce a more 'listenable' rendition of damaged material. Remembering the 'integrity' of a recording, this should never be carried out on original or preservation material and should always be fully documented on access copies. While analogue preservation copies are still made as standard practice, it seems likely that the long term survival and accessibility of historic recordings will depend on a strategy of migration of digital data. Digital media can offer the opportunity to copy a recording repeatedly without degradation and to monitor precisely the condition of an individual recording by measuring its error rate. On the down side, the high data density of digital media makes them sensitive to physical damage or failure through chemical breakdown, and the effect of error correction may hide the damage done until it is too late to recover the signal. When they fail, they fail catastrophically and there is no recognition of any sound signal. The sound signal on analogue tape can still be recognisable when damaged, as you know when you get it wrapped around the capstan of your tape recorder. It may be rough but you can still hear it. This is not the case with damaged digital tape.

Data Reduction

The quantity of digital data required to represent sound stretches the limitations of existing data storage and transmission systems. Data reduction is applied to a digital signal to reduce the quantity of information used to encode the sound so that it can be stored or broadcast more efficiently. This may be carried out using algorithms that use principles of human perception to minimise the perceptible effects of the the reduction of the data stream. This perceptual coding requires that some information is lost from the original signal. Superfluous data is 'thrown away' and is not recovered by decoding.

Data reduction is not used for sound preservation because parts of the primary information will be irretrievably lost. Recordings that will later become part of an archive should also not be recorded on any equipment where data reduction is used because of the loss of primary information and the complexities that multiple copying of data reduced signals presents to the conservator. The current IASA journal contains an article on the use of MiniDisc (which uses perceptual coding) for acquisition.[2]

Format obsolescence

With the current proliferation of digital formats we have the problem of format obsolescence and incompatibilities. There is no getting away from the fact that sound recordings are machine-dependent. Already at the Library we have encountered problems with analogue as well as digital formats. It is very difficult to track down (excuse the pun) older audio formats and we are faced with the possibility of keeping a museum of working equipment in order to have access to the collections. This will only increase in the digital domain.

What can you do?

What can you, the creators of the oral histories do to help us, the curators and conservators? You can continue to make high quality recordings on professional audio equipment that records the sound signal in a linear (non compressed) format. This includes the analogue professional walkman, or a digital portable DAT recorder. Portable dictaphones are not suitable for high quality capture. You can continue to prepare thoroughly for your interviews in terms of your research and establishing a relationship with the interviewee. Your recording equipment should be well maintained and tested before each interview. Remember that you want to create the best possible context for the interview and for the future survival of the recording. You are responsible for capturing something far more than just the content of an interview. Then ... you can leave the rest up to us, the conservators and curators of our 'aural' history.

Endnotes

1. IASA Technical Committee. The Safeguarding of the Audio Heritage: Ethics, Principles and Preservation Strategy (Standards, Recommended Practices and Strategies, IASA-TC 03), 1997

2. Schüller, Dietrich. "Minidisc for field recording. Applying archiving principles to data gathering". IASA journal no. 14 (1999), pp. 35-40.

Book Reviews

Talking Together: A guide to community oral history projects, Lesley Jenkins

Oral History Australian Association - Queensland Inc, 1999, 63 pp, paperback.

Reviewed by Helen Frizzell, Presbyterian Support Services Otago

My first thoughts, when I flicked thought this guide, were that I wish it had been available when I entered the field of community oral history. A more thorough read through confirmed my initial reaction.

When it comes to 'how to do' an oral history project there are numerous quality publications available. However there is a dearth of material available on the practical aspects of undertaking *community* oral history projects which, while about oral history, have their own special requirements.

Talking Together has been published by the Oral History Australian Association (OHAA) - Queensland Inc, to meet the needs of people embarking on community oral history projects. The central theme of the book is planning in community contexts. Through the personal experiences of numerous project participants, including author, Lesley Jenkins, project worker on 'The Italians in Lismore' project, we gain insight into how they have 'managed the pleasures, frustrations and processes involved in their work' (p. 1).

'Community' is a concept that is frequently ill defined. I was heartened that this guide begins with an interesting and useful discussion about definitions of this area–what is a community oral history project and what forms a community itself. Also addressed is the nature of the relationship participants have with the community they are investigating, for example, the advantages and disadvantages of being an insider or outsider. The importance of encouraging wide participation and the value of community oral history projects are also highlighted. Preliminaries to planning–developing ideas, gathering information, attracting community interest and the mechanics of meetings and group processes–are covered in chapter two.

The nuts & bolts of planning–that is, project objective and scope, job descriptions, research, administration, documentation and copyright, training, informant selection, interviewing, questionnaires, dealing with the recorded material and resources–are thoroughly covered in chapter three. The points made are further illustrated by samples of forms, volunteer job descriptions, questionnaires and transcripts used by a variety of projects. Interviews with project workers, both insider and outsiders, which feature throughout this guide, provide an added dimension. Perhaps the structure of the chapters could have been better thought out. I felt this chapter, at 34 pages, was a too long and could have been broken up. Also, I thought the slotting of resources at the end of the chapter (p. 44) a little odd given that this, in my experience, is one of the first areas to be considered when planning any project.

Talking Together emphasizes the importance of acknowledging the completion of a project through a celebration such as a 'handing over of the tapes' ceremony or publication launch. Returning recorded material to the community and involving the community in that process is, I think, a valuable aspect of community oral history projects. It acknowledges community ownership of material, ensures wider understanding of this kind of work and enhances opportunities for future funding. Examples of community projects using oral history tapes are cited throughout the guide. The final chapter briefly illustrates ways of using oral history material through two examples–in museums and schools. While these examples involve institutional settings and their links to communities, perhaps a future edition could also feature, in greater depth, examples of community projects undertaking their own presentations.

Talking Together concludes with a select bibliography and, primarily for Australian readers, a useful list of resources alongside information about OHAA branches, ethical and fee guidelines, and Professional Historians Associations.

This publication is well written, well illustrated with interesting cartoons, photos, etc and robustly designed. It is easy to follow and has a good index with useful cross-references. It would have been helpful to know more about the author–the only credentials given are that she has worked on 'The Italians in Lismore' project. Overall, however, this is an excellent publication, a complement to oral history handbooks and definitely a must for anybody embarking on a community oral history project.

Oral History in Southeast Asia: Theory and Method, P. Lim Pui Huen, James H. Morrison and Kwa Chong Guan (Eds)

Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore, 1998, hardback

Reviewed by Lesley Hall, Victoria University of Wellington

Is the practice of oral history universal? Do oral historians throughout the world encounter similar problems or are some specific to particular cultures? This book is based predominantly on an Oral History Workshop held in Singapore in 1990. It attempts to 'address the gap in the literature by focusing on oral concepts and methodologies and the unique problems of their application in the Southeast Asian context" (p. viii). The contributors are mostly from Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand although one of the editors is a Canadian historian. I personally have limited knowledge of Asian cultures and found it extremely interesting to compare and contrast my own experience of recording oral histories with the contributors here.

The book is divided into three parts. Part One deals with theories of oral history or research and attempts to deal with what it is and why one would or should use such a method. Part Two, the method section, discusses the various ways that practitioners have used oral methods and some of the problems encountered along the way. Part Three is a directory of oral history institutions in Southeast Asia.

Some of the issues identified are not exclusive to Southeast Asia and could readily be compared with oral history research with some ethnic groups in Aotearoa/New Zealand. For example, Hong Lysa discusses how the cultural expectation that one should defer to age and especially to authority can lead to feelings of intimidation on the part of the interviewer, and loss of control. Problems of age, language, ethnicity, gender and class are discussed by a number of contributors in relation to oral history interviews, as well as the need to match interviewers and interviewees as closely as possible.

P. Lim Pui Huen discusses how Asian tradition places greater emphasis on society than on the individual, so much so that biography and autobiography is apt to be seen as 'an indulgence of the ego'. Similarly, in Aotearoa/New Zealand Linda Tuhïwai Smith argues that 'the individual 'I' for Mäori can make sense only within a landscape of whakapapa (genealogies) and whenua (land/placenta) relationships, and to invoke it in a different landscape is to transform its meanings.[1]

However, differences are clear too. Apart from not emphasising the self, commenting on another person's actions and making judgements on others is also socially discouraged in most Asian cultures. Lim How Seng discusses how during oral history interviews important confidential information is often discussed privately, but not on tape, in case it would either hurt or embarrass people, or expose others to possible legal action.

Nirmala Puru Shotam discusses the reasons why she and her co-researcher did not demand privacy and silence prior to taping an interview. In the context of the culture and community of Singaporean Indians she says such requests would have raised questions as to what she really wanted to know, and what it was that people had to hide.

Compared with my experience it seems that oral history interviews in Southeast Asia may be more formal than most of us are used to in Aotearoa/New Zealand, and that the interviewer expects to control the agenda. They're also longer. In a discussion of the problems of time constraint on the quality of interviews Seng tells us how anything longer than four hours is 'too taxing', after three hours both interviewers and interviewees begin to feel tired! It appears that in Singapore many interviews are conducted in sound studios to ensure good sound quality. One wonders however about the quality of the content of the interviews in such circumstances.

Although in the Southeast Asian region much of the impetus for oral history has come from state-funded archives rather than academics or researchers, this is not without its problems. State involvement has meant that oral history has been used mainly to interview elite groups such as politicians or community leaders. Interviews with 'ordinary people' is something the state sees as potentially threatening to the generally accepted view of history. However, several contributors suggest that for historical reasons, those in elite groups were often reluctant to be interviewed or were guarded in their responses because of the suspicion that the oral history archives, a government agency, could use taped information for their own purposes.

This book is well written, often thought-provoking and challenging of orthodoxy such as historians' 'sanctification' of the written record. It attempts to explain what oral history is, why it is such a useful method, and discusses the various ways that it may be carried out in the context of multicultural societies in which the collective rather than the individual is the focus. However, the sexist language grated as did the implication that 'the truth' is

knowable and verifiable. In these postmodern times, at least in the West, there is wider acceptance perhaps of the existence of multiple versions of the truth.

I recommend this book, it expands our knowledge of the diversity of those involved in oral history. It also presents a number of arguments for why we should continue to record people's stories. One I found most compelling was that repeated by James H. Morrison. He says that in many pre-literate African societies which have a rich oral tradition, the expression is used that when an elder dies a library is lost. (p. 130) Oral history is an attempt to try to prevent such loss.

Endnote

1 Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonising Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*, Dunedin, 1999, p. 99.

The Oral History Reader, Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson, (Eds)

London, Routledge, 1998, 479 pp, paperback

Reviewed by Megan Hutching, Historical Branch, Department of Internal Affairs

Rather than review this collection of articles about oral history in the traditional sense, I have decided to try and give readers some idea of what this significant publication contains.

The *Reader* is divided into five parts: Critical developments; Interviewing; Advocacy and empowerment; Interpreting memories, and Making histories–all self-explanatory. Each section has a brief introduction which discusses each article to follow, places it in context and summarises its argument.

There are 39 articles or extracts from longer pieces–all of which, with two exceptions, have appeared in print before–and the editors have tried to ensure that oral historians from a range of countries and cultures are represented. However, as all the articles, with one exception, were originally published in English, this has led to some gaps, in particular, as the editors note, pieces from Europe and Latin America.

The *Reader* is intended as a text for undergraduate and postgraduate students, and as a resource for oral history practitioners. (p. x) It will fulfil both purposes admirably. There is much in here that oral historians in this country, whether they are paid or voluntary, community or institutionally based, working on their own or in a team, will find both useful and thought-provoking. It is particularly useful to have such a wide collection of pieces gathered together, as many of us do not have easy access to oral history journals and monographs.

Perks and Thomson looked for pieces which were written in a lively and engaging style, and which were grounded in the authors' own oral history practice. Another preference was for 'writings which situate critical reflection on practice within the relevant historiographical literature, and which therefore introduce readers to the concerns and approaches of other oral historians.' (p. xii)

This collection reminds us that oral history is more than just getting people's memories down on tape in a good quality recording. Oral history is also to do with issues of cultural difference, power dynamics, memory, silences, empowerment, the value to individuals of remembering their life, the effect of being interviewed, bearing witness, the importance of the way in which stories are told, and the motives of the interviewer. Some of the issues raised in this collection will seem very familiar; others will encourage us to think more about the way in which we practice oral history. This is surely the mark of a useful book.

Long Journey for Sevenpence: Assisted Immigration to New Zealand from the United Kingdom, 1947–1975, Megan Hutching

Victoria University Press, 1999, 208 pp, paperback

Reviewed by Jacqui Foley

This book by Megan Hutching is an oral history documenting the New Zealand government's policy of assisted immigration from Britain to New Zealand from 1947—1975. It tells the stories of some of the 77,000 people who were part of the scheme. The book uses material from fifteen recorded interviews as well as written responses to questionnaires which the author sent to 288 people. The questions for interviews and the questionnaire are contained in appendices 3 and 4 at the back of the book.

In the introduction, Hutching explains her reasons for undertaking the project. She thought it worthwhile to explore whether emigration from Britain to New Zealand was as easy as commonly thought. The assumption was that the two countries were culturally similar and on that basis British immigrants should have no difficulty adjusting to life in New Zealand. *Long Journey for Sevenpence* tells us that the process was not quite so straightforward.

The first section of the book consists of seven short biographies based on recorded interviews. These set the scene for the rest of the book and the themes discussed are picked up and expanded upon in later chapters. Topics covered include the decision to emigrate and reasons for leaving. the process of application for the assisted passage, the journey and arrival in New Zealand, first impressions, work, settlement and homesickness. While developing what is discussed in the biographies, the individual chapters also give in-depth historical background to the scheme, government thinking behind it, and the emphasis on selection. People were chosen with regard to their health, occupation, marital status and age. In return for their passage immigrants were bonded for two years to a job under the direction of the Department of Labour.

Throughout the book, interview material and written commentary are supplemented by tables of statistics, and numerous photographs beautifully illustrate what is being talked about, along with examples of newspaper advertisements and official documents. Each chapter is accompanied by extensive notes of source material.

Emigration is an experience which carries with it a myriad of different facets. The decision to leave one's homeland may be difficult and painful, while the prospect of a new life and new opportunities can be both exciting and daunting. Whatever is involved, emigration is an enormous decision. Hutching points out that assisted immigration for this period has hardly been studied before; this is surprising given the large numbers of people involved and the impact which immigration must have had on their lives and on New Zealand history in general. The book is important in filling that gap, and it is significant that this part of New Zealand history has been documented through the medium of oral history. By recording the personal detail and emotional experience through the spoken word, the book has a vibrancy and accessibility which might not otherwise have been captured. Questions such as, 'What knowledge did you have of New Zealand?', 'How did you feel about leaving?', 'How did people react to your accent?' and 'Where is home for you now?', address very basic issues, giving the reader an insight into what immigrants were coping with. Using evidence from the questionnaire and the interview material, the author was able to identify themes and gain a general understanding of what emigration from Britain to New Zealand was like. Some conclusions she drew are borne out by findings in written histories, such as the reasons for leaving Britain being largely economic and the length of time homesickness lasted. These references are listed in the bibliography.

Personally, I think it would have been more representative of British immigrants to have included in the short biographies, interviewees from other parts of Britain besides England, given the cultural diversity within Britain. This would have added an extra dimension to the biographies.

Long Journey for Sevenpence is an important book. It is an historical record and a detailed reference. Because the medium used is oral history, the book is able to convey to the reader a very real understanding of immigrants' experiences, and it would be particularly valuable for descendants of immigrants. The book does, as the author hoped, 'bring the process of migration to life.'

Jacqui Foley is a freelance oral historian, whose most recent project was interviews with emigrants from Northern Ireland to New Zealand.

Studying New Zealand History: A guide to sources, G. A. Wood

University of Otago Press, 1999. 154 pp. $29.95. paperback.

Reviewed by Megan Hutching, Historical Branch, Department of Internal Affairs

This work, the author states, 'seeks not to examine all the various dimensions of studying New Zealand, but to provide a guide to the sources of studying.' (p. 2) He achieves this admirably.

The book has ten chapters, covering various topics such as electronic databases, libraries, reference works, official documents and records and finding Mäori information. (The latter chapter is written by Kirsten Stewart.) There is good cross-referencing between the sections and the index is very detailed.

The Oral History Centre at the Alexander Turnbull Library is mentioned. Wood briefly recounts the background to the establishment of the Centre, gives an outline of the priorities of the collection and its strengths in terms of subject matter. He also gives the contact details for NOHANZ and mentions the (now out-of-date) *Directory*.

His advice to beginning researchers is very sound and contains some useful hints. For example, when writing about the *Appendices to the Journals of the House of Representatives (AJHRs)*, he notes what sorts of information is contained in them, explains how they are organised, and offers the following useful note so that a researcher can easily find them in a library catalogue: 'They are usually referred to in the plural, although each individual volume is entitled *Appendix...* and so catalogued.' (p. 77)

Generally the information given is up-to-date, although in the very useful Appendix A 'Writing and Publication' which covers guides to writing and to style, the most recent guide to oral history noted was published in 1991.

This is an excellent small book. It is not visually appealing, but the information is comprehensive and sound, and will be of enormous use not only for beginners, but also for those who are more experienced.

NOHANZ ORIGINS

The National Oral History Association of New Zealand (NOHANZ) was established as result of the first national oral history seminar organised in April 1986 by the Centre for Continuing Education of the Victoria University of Wellington and the New Zealand Oral History Archive, a professional organisation based in the National Library that worked on major oral history projects.

Objectives

- To promote the practice and methods of oral history.
- To promote standards in oral history interviewing techniques, and in recording and preservation methods.
- To act as a resource of information and to advise on practical and technical problems involved in making oral history recordings.
- To act as a coordinator of oral history activities throughout New Zealand.
- To produce an annual oral history journal and regular newsletters.
- To promote regular oral history meetings, talks, seminars, workshops and demonstrations.
- To encourage the establishment of NOHANZ branches throughout New Zealand.
- To compile a directory of oral history holdings to improve access to collections held in libraries archives and museums.

Code of ethical and technical practice

This Code exists to promote ethical, professional and technical standards in the collection, preservation and use of sound and video oral history material.

Archives, sponsors and organisers of oral history projects have the following responsibilities:

- to inform interviewers and people interviewed of the importance of this Code for the successful creation and use of oral history material;
- to select interviewers on the basis of professional competence and interviewing skill, endeavouring to assign appropriate interviewers to people interviewed;
- to see that records of the creation and processing of each interview are kept;
- to ensure that each interview is properly indexed and catalogued;
- to ensure that preservation conditions for recordings and accompanying material are of the highest possible standard;
- to ensure that placement of and access to recordings and accompanying material comply with a signed or recorded agreement with the person interviewed;
- to ensure that people interviewed are informed of issues such as copyright, ownership, privacy legislation, and how the interview and accompanying material may be used;
- to make the existence of available interviews known through public information channels;
- to guard against possible social injury to, or exploitation of people interviewed.

Interviewers have the following responsibilities:

- to inform the person interviewed of the purposes and procedures of oral history in general and of the particular project in which they are involved;
- to inform the person interviewed of issues such as copyright, ownership, privacy legislation, and how the material and accompanying material may be used;
- to develop sufficient skills and knowledge in interviewing and equipment operation, e.g. through reading and training, to ensure a result of the highest possible standard;
- to use equipment that will produce recordings of the highest possible standard;
- to encourage informative dialogue based on thorough research;
- to conduct interviews with integrity;
- to conduct interviews with an awareness of cultural or individual sensibilities;
- to treat every interview as a confidential conversation, the contents of which are available only as determined by written or recorded agreement with the person interviewed;
- to place each recording and all accompanying material in an archive to be available for research, subject to any conditions placed on it by the person interviewed;
- to inform the person interviewed of where the material will be held;
- to respect all agreements made with the person interviewed.

National Oral History Association of New Zealand

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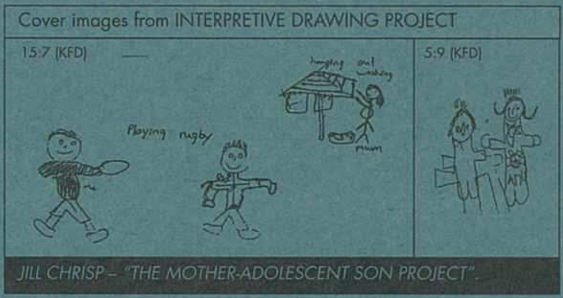
NOHANZ



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