

Outdoor Education: Opportunities Provided by a Place Based Approach

Dr Mike Brown
School of Education
The University of Waikato

Abstract

This paper calls for educators to consider the role that 'place' has in outdoor education experiences. It is suggested that greater emphasis and acknowledgment be given to 'place(s)' and how they may help students make sense of both their personal and communal identity. The paper is interwoven with a narrative from the author's experiences of working with Pākehā and Māori students on a course that consciously utilised a 'place-based' approach to teaching and learning. The paper challenges the conception that outdoor education requires 'high-impact' adventurous activities, instead suggesting that we seek to develop a modest pedagogy which acknowledges our relationships with place(s) as a way to understand who we are, how we connect to others and how we both give and take meanings from the places in which we live and learn. These issues have potential implications for educators and programme designers.

Key words: Place-based, identity, Pākehā, Māori.

Introduction

When asked, "What's outdoor education?" I have often responded with the rather formulaic response, "It's about helping people to learn about themselves, how they relate to other people and the environment". This is often met with a nod and a story about the person's own experience; "I went to Outward Bound in 1979 and it was an amazing experience"; "We did some of that outdoor team building stuff at work a couple of years ago"; the story of a friend or relative, "My sister's son is into all that camping stuff at school"; or the, "That's what these kids need today, get them out in the bush, that'll straighten them out" response. One gets the impression that, at a popular level at least, participation in an outdoor

programme will be good for a person, help them to work with others, and give them an appreciation for the “great outdoors”. The oft repeated aims of outdoor education; to heighten awareness of and foster respect for self, others, and nature finds its basis in the discussions and resulting publication from the Dartington conference in 1975 which was convened by the United Kingdom Department of Education and Science (Nichol, 2002b). Nichol (2002b, p. 89) suggests that,

these aims were a formulation of what conference delegates already perceived their job to be. However, the aims were not arrived at as the result of empirical analysis and so there is no evidence to suggest, for example, that by “heightening awareness” “respect” would be fostered for any of the three aims. In terms of philosophy Cheesmond (1999:1) has suggested “maybe each strand has a distinct philosophical underpinning; the mountaineer, the group worker, the biologist for example, but they have proved to be uncomfortable bedfellows in achieving something overarching.

I would suggest that at times the rhetoric of the enthusiastic outdoor educator or organisational marketing manager does not necessarily mirror the reality of what outdoor programmes might actually achieve. There is a growing body of literature which questions the underlying philosophical and pedagogical assumptions on which much practice is based (Brookes, 2003a, 2003b; Brown, 2003, 2004; Burrus-Bammel & Bammel, 1990; Haluza-DeLay, 2001; Hovelynck, 2001; Nichol, 2002a, 2002b, 2003; Payne, 2002; Zink, 2004).

Given the historical basis of the three aims of outdoor education and the small but growing number of critiques of some contemporary approaches and practices of outdoor education I suggest that it is timely to consider the recent literature concerning the concept of ‘place’ (Birrell, 2005; Gray, 2005; Martin, 2005; Wattchow, 2001, 2005) and the possibilities that it offers for providing a different lens through which to gain an understanding of “what is outdoor education?” I take as my starting point a challenge proffered by an Australian colleague at a conference in Adelaide some years ago:

If outdoor education professes to teaching anything at all about the land and how we might relate to it, we must be prepared to work hard as a profession to understand what happens when people encounter places, experience them, and try to make sense of these experiences. (Wattchow, 2001, p. 127)

The question therefore is: What is meant by the term ‘place’ and how might taking place (and places) into account alter our understanding of the possibilities of outdoor education and our practice? In this paper I propose that ‘place’ be afforded higher visibility in the discourse of outdoor education in Aotearoa/New Zealand. By making visible the role that ‘place’ and places have in both forming and making sense of personal and communal identity I would hope that outdoor educators will reconsider their practice based on an appreciation of where and who they are educating. By way of example, and to contextualise and ground this discussion, I have interwoven a brief narrative of my own experiences of a place based pedagogy that has impacted on my conceptions of who I am as a Pākehā New Zealander, as well as my practice and theoretical orientation as an outdoor educator.

This paper provides a starting point in what will hopefully be an ongoing dialogue concerning the development of a pedagogy that is conscious of who the learners are and where they are learning in contrast to a generalised approach that is decontextualised and treats the self, others and environment as on the one hand applying to all and on the other, as applying to none. In using the term “decontextualised activity based” I am referring to programmes that are:

- predominantly activity focused and where activities are conducted largely irrespective of the seasonal, geographical or environmental variations or implications;
- not purposefully based in a locale that has meaning for the participants historically or culturally. It is a new or novel place and for the purposes of the programme it is largely irrelevant if it is conducted in locale A, B, or C;
- the activities are generic or novel activities chosen for their applicability to foster personal or group goals;
- there is little opportunity to reconnect with the ‘place’ and significant others in ongoing life experiences post course completion. Little thought is given to the ongoing life trajectories of the participants.

Wattchow’s (2006) critique of the Victorian Ministry of Education’s (1989) Outdoor Education statement illustrates how a generalised account of outdoor education with a focus on personal development, pays little or no serious attention to the places in which it is conducted.

The 1989 curriculum statement expresses values for personal development in “aquatic, bushland...alpine” settings, but provides no guidance or recommendations that relate to local knowledge, contexts or practices. In other words, there is little recognition in this influential statement about outdoor education that local, social and environmental contexts require attention, study or even prior experience by the teacher, for the curriculum to be enacted effectively. A river and a mountain or one river and another, for example, are assumed to be arenas that provide precisely the same pedagogic potential, and there is minimal guidance about how teaching and learning might be influenced by differences in the ‘naturalness’ of particular settings. There is no sense here that outdoor educators should approach the outdoors with the kind of localising questions proposed by Wendell Berry (1987): “What is here? What will nature permit us to do here? What will nature help us to do here?” (p. 146). (Wattchow, 2006, pp. 48-49)

I do not deny that following participation in a programme of an extended duration students may develop an attachment to the locale as a special ‘place’, however due to the ‘otherness’ of the location and the uniqueness of the activities undertaken the opportunity to reconnect with ‘place’ is limited or fragmented. The programmes’ distance from the participant’s home location, the dispersion of course participants, whose only commonality may have been this shared experience, coupled with the technical skills required to undertake many of the activities are factors which combine to potentially confine such experiences to memory and render attempts to reconnect difficult.

Note: Throughout the paper I have used a number of Māori expressions which are in common usage in Aotearoa/New Zealand. I am mindful that international readers may not be familiar with many of these phrases and have provided a glossary at the end of the paper. I acknowledge the shortcomings of the use of a glossary which can only partially represent the meaning of words or phrases which are derived from a rich cultural history.

The Impetus

In the late 90’s and for the first few years of this decade I studied and worked in Australia, firstly in Brisbane and then in the Gippsland region of Victoria (about 100km east of Melbourne). I had arrived in Brisbane on a yacht intending to avoid the cyclone season and turned a six month brief stop-over into what appeared to be permanent move. Whilst I was

employed and had established a home something did not quite feel right. It was difficult to define this sense of unease as I had lived overseas before for extended periods. In a somewhat serendipitous conversation with a colleague I was asked if I had read a book by a New Zealand author entitled “Ngā Uruora: The Groves of Life” (Park, 1995). Park’s book examines the intersection between history and ecology, with a particular focus on the effects of colonisation and the ensuing ecological devastation wrought on New Zealand’s lowland areas. I vividly remember the following phrase, “a sense of place is a fundamental human need” (Park, 1995, p. 320). These words resonated and struck a chord with me. In more recent times Wendell Berry’s statement (cited in Wattchow, 2001, p. 127), “If you don’t know where you are, you don’t know who you are” has further reinforced my desire to connect with the places that both have and give meaning; meaning for who I am. Obviously throughout my time in Australia I knew where I was geographically. Having made the voyage to Australia I knew I could navigate, so the question was not one of spatial location but of belonging – this was not my place.

Aoraki Bound

In 2005 I returned to New Zealand and an instructing role at Outward Bound. In March 2006 Outward Bound and Ngāi Tahu conducted a pilot programme “Aoraki Bound”. Aoraki Bound was conceived as “a partnership between the two organisations providing an innovative adaptation of the personal development programmes run by Outward Bound, but set in a Ngāi Tahu cultural context” (Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu, 2007).

The objectives of the programme from a Ngāi Tahu perspective, were to:

- Revitalise and strengthen Ngāi Tahu culture
- Develop our people to their fullest potential
- Foster a strong sense of identity, affiliation, responsibility and manaakitanga
- Help create leaders in whānau, hapū and Iwi affairs
- Increase exposure to te reo, tikanga, karakia, waiata, whakatauki and mahinga kai
- Provide an opportunity for all New Zealanders to gain an understanding of Ngāi Tahu culture
- Build stronger partnerships with government and community agencies and business.

The course was open to Ngāi Tahu, Māori from other iwi and non-Māori participants. Perhaps one of the most significant aspects of this programme was the fact that it was not conducted solely at Outward Bound's base at Anakiwa. The first eight days were conducted in the Marlborough Sounds and the following twelve days were spent on a journey from Marlborough to Aoraki (Mt. Cook).

Whilst on the journey component of the course students were given the opportunity to engage in traditional food gathering practices, learn from their elders matters relating to custom and protocol, visit sites of cultural and historical significance, and integrate components of a traditional Outward Bound course (for example, solo, half marathon, hiking). The course was facilitated by three Outward Bound staff (2 instructors and a programme co-ordinator), one Ngāi Tahu facilitator who stayed on the course continually, and invited Ngāi Tahu elders and members of local hapū and whānau in areas visited.

In 2007 I also had the opportunity to act as the programme co-ordinator on two further courses. It is not my intention to evaluate the programme, nor to discuss how it has evolved and been refined. The focus is on how this programme incorporated a place-based pedagogy that I would suggest offers an alternative perspective to “decontextualised activity based” models of outdoor education. I will now turn attention to the concept of ‘place’ and its association with identity.

Place

Relph (1976) argues that in terms of the practical everyday knowledge that we use to organise our experiences of the world there is little doubt that we need to know and differentiate between the various places we work, recreate and rest.

But in itself this practical knowing of places, although essential to our existence, is quite superficial and is based mainly on the explicit functions that places have for us. That the significance of place in human experience goes far deeper than this is apparent in the actions of individuals and groups protecting *their* places against outside forces of destruction, or is known to anyone who has experienced homesickness and nostalgia for particular places. (Relph, 1976, p. 1)

It has been suggested (Park, 1995; Wattchow, 2006) that our experiences of places are fundamental and inseparable from our lived experiences of

the world. Place, writes Wattchow (2001) refers to the “overlapping realms (personal, communal, historical, environmental) – where the experience of place resides in coincidences of these realms.... A deeper understanding of individual, cultural and natural phenomena are all integral to finding one’s place” (p. 132). According to Relph (1976) the concept of place is not restricted to a location, rather it is the integration of elements of nature and culture that form a unique ensemble which distinguishes a particular place from all other places. Each place is unique but is also interconnected with other places through meanings invested in them by the beliefs of the people who inhabit them. As Relph (1976) states, “A place is not just the ‘where’ of something; it is the location plus everything that occupies that location seen as an integrated and meaningful phenomenon” (p. 3). The reciprocity, ongoing meaning making and interaction between people and the places we inhabit are indicators of the inherently experiential nature of place (Wattchow, 2006).

Sense of place and identity

It is not my intention to enter into a debate on contemporary identity theory, for as Rattansi and Phoenix (2005) have pointed out there is considerable theoretical disagreement concerning the very concept of identity from different social science disciplinary areas along with diverse research strategies deemed to be the most appropriate to its investigation – if identity is indeed open to empirical investigation. For a good contemporary overview of the various positions I would recommend the following: *Identity: An International Journal of Theory and Research* (2005) 5(2). What is clear is that identity formation does not occur in a social or cultural vacuum (Weigert & Gecas, 2005), nor does it occur in an isolated space devoid of the meanings ascribed to, and taken from, lived experiences of the individual or broader social groups’ interaction with their locale. While identity is constructed and reconstructed through interaction; the physical, social, and cultural contexts and discourses enable and constrain the possibilities for identity formation. As Berzonsky reminds us, we cannot “whimsically construct or make up anything we desire” (2005, p. 128). What place literature draws our attention to is the importance of the lived experience of place for individual and collective identity.

As discussed above, places are not simply locations or abstract concepts, rather they are sites of lived experience and meaning which signify the appropriateness (or otherwise) of ongoing activities. As such they “are important sources of individual and communal identity, and are often

centres of human existence to which people have deep emotional and psychological ties” (Relph, 1976, p. 141). Thus it is argued that places function as a source of security and identity at both an individual and collective level (Nicol & Higgins, 1998; Relph, 1976).

The role of place, as a source of identity, is overlooked or only acknowledged tangentially in outdoor education text books (the notable exception being, “Outdoor and Experiential Learning: Views from the Top”, 2005). Wattchow (2005) suggests that in discussing our relationship to ‘place’ we need to move beyond the simplistic descriptor that outdoor education is about learning relationships in, about or for the environment/nature. He has suggested that, “An Outdoor Education in *experiencing* relationships *in place* is better, as it signals the fundamental importance of experiencing and the crucial contribution of place in identity formation and sustenance” (Wattchow, 2005, p. 14).

I would suggest that one’s sense of belonging and connection with the land, one’s sense of place, from both a Māori and non-Māori perspective is an issue that is central to being a New Zealander. If, as mentioned earlier, “a sense of place is a fundamental human need” (Park, 1995, p. 320), then we could do well to understand our own and others values in relation to land and it’s meanings for our identity. Therefore as outdoor educators to treat the outdoors as merely a venue or medium does ourselves, our students, and future generations an injustice (Brown, 2005).

Aoraki Bound: A place-based pedagogy

Integral to the development of Aoraki Bound was the ‘journey’ or hīkoi phase of the programme. For 12 days participants made their way through, and spent time in the land for which Ngāi Tahu are mana whenua and which is recognised as forming the iwi’s rohe. This programme was developed by both partners and was a departure from traditional Outward Bound courses which are based in the Marlborough Sounds. So it is fortuitous and serendipitous that a place-based pedagogy was instigated given one partner’s historical emphasis on conducting programmes at its’ established base. It was Ngāi Tahu’s - and Māoridom’s broader - recognition of the role of place in identity that provided the stimulus for a programme that situated students in “their place”. This contextualisation proved to be a significant turning point in the course for some participants. For example one student commented, “Anakiwa was okay, but the course really started for me when we got to the coast.” Wally Penetito, a Māori educator and

researcher, has stated that Māori and other indigenous peoples have a “well rehearsed traditional and historically affinity to place based education practices” (2004, p. 18).

I am not going to discuss in detail the journey section of the programme other than to provide an example of how a place-based pedagogy was enacted. Part of the journey was spent with the people from the hapū of Ngāti Waewae whose pā is on the banks of the Arahura River. Central to Ngāi Tahu mana is the taonga of pounamu and students spent a considerable part of the programme becoming familiar with and immersed in the protocols, myths, and rituals associated with pounamu. During this time the students spent time with the Mason whānau discussing the cultural and economic significance of Pounamu; the myths and legends related to its creation, the way that these have become ritualised, and formed the protocols related to activities involving pounamu; its geological formation and geographical distribution; its use as a tool and decorative adornment; its role in wider Māori society and the ongoing importance for Ngāi Tahu and Māori in contemporary society. Students were presented with a piece of pounamu to carry with them through the remainder of the journey to both symbolise their connection to this taonga and their tūpuna and to directly experience the effort required to carry such a treasure. This was not a small ornamental item but a solid piece of pounamu placed in its own kete which was carried with pride - and a fair level of exertion - by all members of the group. Students also had the opportunity for a multi-day walk up the Styx River to Whakarewa (Lake Browning) and then back down the Arahura track. From Whakarewa they had the opportunity to look out to the east of the main divide and survey the terrain that earlier Ngāi Tahu pounamu trail walkers would have taken. On descending the Arahura they were also able to see the point where the Waitaiki stream deposits pounamu into the Arahura River.

The opportunity to literally walk in the footsteps of their ancestors on sections of a traditional pounamu trail, to hear waiata sung at the junction of the Arahura and Waitaiki rivers, and to perform haka and karakia at Whakarewa and other significant places was a profound example of experiential learning ‘in-place’. This was not “cultural performance” divorced from its source but an embodied example of place, place both giving meaning to events and being inscribed with meaning through the actions of the participants. The connection with this place came through dwelling in, sensing, relating, and acting. Place was not an abstraction, but

a lived reality of individual and collective experiences. Māori cosmology and the links of whakapapa ‘ground’ actions of the present in the past and the past in the present in a way that blurs the distinctions which modern western society seems so intent on emphasising.

Part of the Pounamu talk incorporated the creation story of Poutini and Pounamu. With Maika Mason’s permission I have included a short extract.

To our Ngāi Tahu people, the great mountains of Te Wai Pounamu inspire not only fear and respect but also love and affection for the atua embodied in them. To us they are the physical presence of these beloved atua. When we look at them we hear in our minds the treasured stories handed down through the many generations of our people who have kept our fires burning on those lands. From our homes at Arahura we look at four such mountains that remind us of the long standing rituals of these ancient lands.... To the east, emerging with the first glimmer of the light of a new day, stand Tamaahua, Tūhua and Tumuaki. These are the mountains associated with the stories of creation of our taonga – pounamu, a treasure of great spiritual and economic value to our people, Ngāti Waewae, the hapū given the calling Poutini Ngāi Tahu. We take our name from the taniwha Poutini who first brought Waitaiki, the mother of pounamu, to our lands and waters. Our relationship to this guardian taniwha is an essential part of the identity, mauri and mana of our West Coast people. (Mason, 2000, p. 120)

This introduction to the story of Poutini and Pounamu illustrates the relationship between people and place and the implications and lived-reality of this relationship. As Relph (1976) argues, this relationship “is indeed a very powerful one in which each reinforces the identity of the other, and in which the landscape is very much an expression of community held beliefs and values and of interpersonal involvements” (p. 34).

On being Pākehā

In a Ngāi Tahu cultural context I am the “other” and I am conscious that I can only speak from the position as a Pākehā male. In no way can I, nor would I wish to, claim expert knowledge in matters relating to Kaupapa Māori. As Ritchie (1992, p. 51) states, “In the Maori world I am an outsider, a visitor, and always will be. All my experience does not, and cannot, alter that fact”. Therefore these vignettes are based on my reflections of my experiences in place, they serve to illustrate specific understandings rather than to “prove” specific findings.

To be an instructor on the pilot programme and to co-ordinate a further two programmes has given me the opportunity to return to the Arahura region on a number of occasions. Being included in, and at times leading aspects of the programme, has provided me with rich experiences on which to reflect. Who am I as a Pākehā New Zealander? What does it mean to be Pākehā? What is the appropriate pedagogy in a bi-cultural situation when from the outset one is in a privileged position as an instructor? What would kaupapa Māori indicate would be the ‘best practice’ pedagogically? Why does land/place hold such a special place for these participants and what can I learn, or have I learnt, about the role of place-based pedagogy in outdoor education from this course?

As indicated earlier I will discuss briefly, by way of example, how this place-based approach has impacted on my understandings of my Pākehā identity and my role as an outdoor educator and researcher. In line with the general thrust of the paper, place-based pedagogy is not about an abstract space, nor therefore should a discussion on identity focus on an ‘abstracted’ sense of identity which is not grounded in experience.

Perhaps the most widely read and influential writer on Pākehā identity was the late Michael King, an historian who sought to understand the place of non-Māori in Aotearoa from the mid 1980’s until his death in 2004. As a Pākehā who wrote widely on issues of relevance to Māori and non-Māori King was intimately aware of issues of connection and belonging and the desire to ‘be placed’ in this land. King (1999) suggests that the term Pākehā “simply denotes people and influences that derive from Europe but which are no longer ‘European’. Pākehā is an indigenous expression to describe New Zealand people and expressions of culture that are not Maori” (p. 10). However as Morgans (2004) has pointed out this definition is problematic in that on the one hand Pākehā are defined in racial terms, from Europe (predominantly British), and on the other in terms of a relationship to Māori; as New Zealand people who are not Māori. Morgans offers an alternate view in which the definition is based on a relationship to Māori, thereby being inclusive of those other than ‘white’ descendents of British immigrants. Pākehā are therefore defined in their relationship to Māori, as espoused in the Treaty of Waitangi, rather than on their race or ethnicity. It is this latter view that I adopt in this paper.

Participation in Aoraki Bound impacted on me in a number of ways. It

exposed me to aspects of Ngāi Tahu culture of which I had no knowledge, of historical and contemporary issues that have determined and continue to shape the opportunities for the iwi, for whānau, and for individuals. I was inspired by the inclusive nature of my interactions with all whom I encountered during these programmes and the passion and immense pride of the young Ngāi Tahu leaders who have a vision for their iwi and the world which they can create and leave for their children and future generations. I was also challenged to think about my role and the cultural heritage that I embody and convey through my background, education and assumptions. The traditional instructor-student relationship was up-ended at times and this juggling of roles brought periods of uncertainty and humility as the teacher-learner relationship was reversed. My knowledge of Te Reo and awareness of Kaupapa Māori has increased immensely and along with it, a commitment to continue to learn and engage in issues that advance educational opportunities for Māori and non-Māori alike. For example, the exploration of a place-based pedagogy is a direct result of my experiences combined with wider reading and research on effective pedagogical approaches for the benefit of *all* students. As Penetito (2004) has pointed out, advocating for place-based educational practices, which are already a well rehearsed and historical reality for many indigenous peoples including Māori, is educationally and culturally beneficial for all students.

To caress the pounamu pendant which was gifted to me at the close of the course is to remember and to recall the sights, sounds, smells, and feelings that have helped to shape my perceptions of what it means to be Pākehā. To hear and feel the emotion of the Tahu Potiki (Ngāi Tahu Haka) at Whakarewa, to be given permission and to be guided by members of Māwhera in the search for Pounamu on the Arahura is to immerse oneself in both the physical and cultural dimensions of the land. To be Pākehā in the twenty first century, should be a commitment to be open to, and to be influenced by, Māori. As King (1991, p. 19) suggests, “One essential ingredient of Pākehā-ness, as far as I am concerned, is contact with and being affected by Māori things: Māori concepts, Māori values, Māori language and Māori relationships”.

Participation in Aoraki Bound at a number of levels has not led me to “discover” who I am as a Pākehā rather it is part of a process of constructing a sense of who I am and envisioning a future for outdoor education in Aotearoa which takes into account where we are educating

and with whom we are learning. Identity achievement is, in the words of Berzonsky, “making a sincere commitment to trying to actualize these hypothetical possibilities” (2005, p. 134). The learning from Aoraki Bound has been enriched by further studies in Te Reo, conversations with Ngāi Tahu friends and revisiting places of significance on this journey. Just as conversations with friends cannot take place devoid of a social context, establishing a relationship with the land cannot fully occur without being ‘placed’ in a particular locale. Intellectual knowledge of topographical data or geological features is no substitute for embodied experiences of place.

In an early collection of essays, on understandings of being Pākehā, Scott stated that “Pākehā New Zealanders are strange hybrids, precariously suspended as we are in our tiny islands over the edge of the world, our English mind-set still at variance with the wild Pacific we were born to” (1991, p. 171). Perhaps this is true for the author, and those who were not able to conceive of Aotearoa as home, but it is a sentiment that does not ring true for me. I have no other home, no other tūrangawaewae (King, 1999). By understanding my origins and my standing in this land and my relationship with the tangata whenua I can begin to understand my place. As Ritchie suggests “we will not easily achieve an authentic bicultural society unless everyone who wants to be involved does go through their own personal process of growth in understanding, and finds their own personal credo too” (1992, p. 10). I would concur with Dann’s (1991, pp. 59-60) sentiment that becoming Pākehā is,

thinking about who you are, how you got to be here, who was affected in the process, and where and how we go from here. Loving implies commitment. If you love this place, these islands in the South Pacific that are your home, then you have to make the commitment to knowing and caring about the land and the people. *All* the land and *all* the people. It is a difficult but rewarding process.

Avoiding Generalisations

I am conscious of Seddon’s (2001) warning of the danger of using the term ‘sense of place’ as a “form of appropriation and cultural hegemony... We must always ask of the phrase; ‘whose sense of place?’ and even more critical, ‘Whose place?’ ” (p. 21). Experiences of place(s); me experiencing ‘your place(s)’ and you experiencing ‘my place(s)’ would seem to be a sensible starting point for dialogue rather than basing actions and decisions on assumptions and generalisations. For some Ngāi Tahu,

the mountains and rivers of Te Waipounamu will have a different sense of place to the sense of place that I will ever have and a different sense of place to other Ngāi Tahu. I say *some* Ngāi Tahu, because I am cautious about broad generalisations in regards to issues of belonging and identity based purely on race or ethnicity. I would suggest that the urban based Auckland Ngāi Tahu person who has never been to Te Waipounamu may well have different experiences to those who have grown up in the shadow of the alps and who have been involved in the cultural life and practices of the community/pā/marae.

We also need to be conscious not to essentialise nor romanticise indigenous attitudes to the land and create a polarity of positions; indigenous good/non-indigenous bad (Zink, 2007). King (1999) argues that the former stereotypes that many of us held about our respective cultures, Pākehā as exploiters of natural resources and Māori as guardians, are no longer valid. He suggests “that allegiances to protect the integrity of our land and our sea and the species who cohabit them with us often have to work across cultural frontiers” (p. 236). Places and their particular significance may not be understood by different cultural groups but that is not to say that only certain cultural groupings can truly know a place. We may not have the same understandings, but that is different to saying that there is no understanding.

Places are not an abstract ‘other’, or a nice idea, places are not words on a page nor are they a picture postcard image of ‘nature in harmony’. For all peoples places are sites of meaning; of conflict, of despair and hope.

Concluding thoughts, not a conclusion

My journey and experiences with Aoraki Bound, have put me in touch with the symbols that resonate with and emanate from Ngāi Tahu, the Tangata Whenua of Te Waipounamu. These symbols may express more universal beliefs and motifs but they are indigenous and localised in idiom. These idioms, the myths and stories, and the experiences I have shared with my Ngāi Tahu friends have impacted on my understandings of being Pākehā. My view of the land, of life cycles/stages and the influence of those who have walked the river valleys on which we tread, the role of tikanga (custom) in social life, the rituals associated with collecting pounamu have impacted on how I view New Zealand society and the injustices that have been historically wrought and continue to be perpetuated. As King states “My brush with all these things doesn’t make

me Māori. But they are an essential part of the experience that makes me Pākehā – experiences I could not have had access to in any other part of the world” (King, 1991, p. 19).

In regards to this journey and my desire to articulate my experiences – *at the beginning I did not know what I did not know*. But I do know now, and although this knowledge is only partial and incomplete, I can no longer act in ways that I did – to do so is to dishonour or undermine my relationship with the land, my friends, and those who have shared something of their world with me. I am, as are other Pākehā, in “the process of establishing a relationship with the land on which we live, and with the wider environment that surrounds us. We have moved from the belief that the land belongs to us to the feeling that we belong to the land” (King, 1991 p. 21). If we belong to the land what is it that it requires of us? As an outdoor educator and researcher one of my responses is to try and articulate how place could be repositioned within the discourse of outdoor education in Aotearoa/New Zealand and to develop an outdoor education pedagogy which recognises that we belong to the land.

An authentic outdoor education for Aotearoa/New Zealand in the 21st century may be one that seeks to understand the historical and cultural antecedents that have coalesced into the predominantly adventure based, “high impact” and “novel” activity based approaches to education in the outdoors. In understanding and critiquing our Anglo-Celtic and northern European “individual as project for improvement” approach and land as resource to be “used” we may be able to enact a more modest pedagogy which acknowledges bicultural and multicultural imperatives which are inclusive of other world views and connect us with the land and our place in the landscape of Aotearoa/New Zealand. It is a pedagogy that realises the centrality of place in identity formation at both an individual and collective level. The individual (or group) is not a “clean slate” that can be developed in a “decontextualised-space” and “dispatched” into other “placeless places” which have little or no meaning. One implication of embracing a place-based pedagogy is that we will need to review the role of the outdoor instructor/educator. Wattchow (2006, p. 253) suggests that in a place based model, “Part of the work of the outdoor educator then is to craft, through programme design, a responsive negotiation between participants and place.” Practice which is place-based and which seeks to guide learners towards identification with their significant places, and therefore questions of who they are, may not only save us from a life of

placelessness, but may go some way towards reviving and sustaining our places (Wattchow, 2005).

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Glossary of terms (Moorfield, 2005; Ryan, 1994)

haka	fierce rhythmical dance
hapū	sub-tribe, clan
hīkoi	step out, march, walk
iwi	tribe, bone, race, people, nation, strength
karakia	prayer-chant, incantation
kaupapa	Māori ideology, strategy, theme
kete	basket, bag
mahinga kia	cultivation of food
mana	integrity, charisma, prestige, authority, control, power, influence, status
manaakitanga	hospitality, kindness
mana whenua	territorial rights, power from the land - power associated with possession and occupation of tribal land
marae	meeting area for whanau or iwi, focal point of settlement, courtyard, focal point of settlement
mauri	life principle, special character
pā	village, stockaded village
pākehā	non-Māori, European, Caucasian
pounamu	greenstone, jade
rohe	margin, territory
tangata whenua	local people
taniwha	water monster, powerful person, ogre
taonga	treasure, property
te reo	the language
Te Waipounamu	South Island
tikanga	correct procedure, custom, lore, method
tūpuna	ancestor, grandparent
tūrangawaewae	domicile, home, home turf, place where one has rights of residence

waiata	song, chant
whakapapa	genealogy, cultural identity, family tree
whakatauki	proverb, saying
whānau	extended family
whenua	ground, country

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