New stories of identity:

Alternatives to suspension and exclusion from school

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ABSTRACT

School suspension and exclusion practices are currently under the spotlight. Many schools go to great lengths before employing these disciplinary options. However even in the midst of practices of care for young people, very little attention is paid to the discursive conditions in which exclusion and suspension arise. In this thesis I theorise and research an alternative response to suspension and exclusion. I engage in post-structuralist discursive analysis to propose that young peoples' actions, including unacceptable behaviours, are not so much evidence of a personality to be fixed, managed or disciplined, as they are the effect of prevailing discourses about how young people ought to act. Calling on narrative therapy practice I then propose that young people's discursively shaped identity stories and reputations can be re-authored within communities of care. Such re-authoring produces a range of changes including in a young person's actions at school.

In this study I use case examples from two New Zealand schools to demonstrate how prevailing discourses shape the language and responses of participants at times which may lead to suspension or exclusion from school being considered. I explore how the development of alternative identity stories and reputations for young people can lead to significant changes in young peoples' actions and those of their teachers at school. To achieve this I analyse interview transcripts and school records concerning a situation which led to a suspension. I highlight the presence and effect of prevailing discourses (discursive analysis), and the way participants' words intend a desired effect (performative language) and draw on familiar stories to enhance desired effect (intertextuality). In this thesis I offer a critique of rationalist interpretations of young peoples' actions, and explore alternative

discursive and narrative models of interpreting and responding to young peoples' actions.

My research findings highlight: the effectiveness of discursive awareness and re-authoring as a response to young people at times of suspension and exclusion being considered; the need for on-going support for emerging alternative reputations; the need for cultural safety and awareness in providing a place for Pakeha researchers to work effectively with Māori young people and communities; and the need for discursive and narrative practices to be offered in dialogue with schools' particular ethical purposes. I argue that the practices I research in this thesis offer a way for schools to further reduce the use of suspensions and exclusions at school.

FOREWORD

The Research Team

I have undertaken this study in relationship with many people. Together with the key theorists whom I will introduce in the following chapters, several groups of people have been central in developing the research stories of practice and theory I have recorded here:

My wife, Charmaine: companion, advisor, and supporter, champion of the project.

My supervisors Kathie Crocket and Elmarie Kotzé with whom I have met throughout this study for support, creativity, and editorial excellence: Without their enthusiasm, experience, and guidance this project could scarcely have begun, let alone been completed.

My field-work and reflection partners, Huia and Brent Swann, with whom I met weekly for kitchen-table conversations throughout the field-work years of this study, and beyond, whose passion for kaupapa Māori and skill as therapists shapes much of what emerged: Huia and Brent's voices, care and insight, both referenced and embedded, are throughout this writing.

My doctoral support team Lex McMillan and David Crawley with whom I met fortnightly for morning coffee and collegial support and creativity throughout this study: I have seldom felt alone in this work, due in no small part to close friendship, conversation and encouragement.

The participants in the two schools wherein this study was undertaken, students, staff and community, without whom the content of this thesis would remain theory, and whose hopes for themselves and others are recorded throughout: These relationships and hopes were, and remain, the purpose, pleasure, and sustenance of this work.

Together with my family and community of support: Being so close it can be difficult to recognise, let alone assess, the gift and inspiration of family and close community, past and present, through example, through conversation and through acts of care. Yet it is true to say that this work comes from that family and community.

This writing is a record of many conversations and shared experiences, which have given rise to and shaped my understanding of how to respond with young people at school when their actions have them as candidates for suspension or exclusion. With love and appreciation I acknowledge all who have contributed in small and large ways. Thank you.

Personal Statement

I offer here a brief personal view of what has brought me to an interest in this work. I seemed to spend a lot of time in trouble as a pupil at school, particularly in years 9 and 10; there were often more interesting things going on around me — in class, outside the windows, in my head — than class time offered. Looking back, what might have been helpful was the time and skill to reflect on life, and someone to reflect with: What was important to me and those I cared about, and how might I go about living that? In later years I took up secondary school teaching, and found myself working with young people who also seemed at times to find more interesting things going on around them than the current class. My move from teaching to school guidance counselling was in part a desire to offer the time, the skill, and the relationship within which such young people could reflect on life, and make some choices about preferred ways to enact themselves. My study as a counsellor at Waikato University introduced narrative therapy as a theory and practice for just such reflective spaces, for myself and for the young people with whom I worked.

As I developed what I describe below as post-structuralist and narrative therapy ideas and practices, I could not help but notice that they stood in

contrast to prevailing ways of responding to young people at times of troubling actions in schools. I wondered what difference it would make if a school explored the possibility of ethical intent expressed implicitly in young peoples' unacceptable actions? What difference would it make if schools gathered peers, teachers, and families to support alternative identity stories in keeping with young peoples' ethical desires? Such wondering led to a Masters in Counselling thesis in restorative practices in school (McMenamin, 1999), and to this research project.

I come to this work as the son of parents who were both teachers, and both involved with Māori and Pasifika communities. From them I inherited a love of learning, and an ethic of valuing cultural diversity and social justice. From them I also inherited a Christian faith that centres on care for others. These ethics shape my concern for the welfare of young people caught up in unacceptable actions at school. The values of collaboration, consultation, and naive inquiry on behalf of ethical agency, shape this thesis in ways similar to my practice of counselling with young people in schools. For me, this chosen position connects with my faith stance, in which I hold that God relates to each person as a beloved family member.

This thesis is connected with my own desire for relational connection with peoples' ethical hopes for themselves and others, and with participants' permission, a dogged commitment to developing agency even where it is not easily available. I take up a position of hope that ethical agency is possible for all people. I am not making an assumption about any person; this is not a truth claim. People may well choose to act in harmful ways, but my interest is in ethical agency. And as I demonstrate in this thesis, such a stance is pragmatic: it works. It is also my cherished position in life.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This Project

For twenty years I have been working in schools, together with others, to support young people in making the most of the life that is available to them. This teaching and counselling work has often involved spending time with young people in trouble within the school system. Over the years, the work I have done in restorative practices, within schools and in writing (Adams et al., 2003; Cronin-Lampe & McMenamin, 1998; Drewery, Winslade, & McMenamin, 2002; McMenamin, 1998, 1999), has emphasised creating forums in schools within which to speak differently. I have asked, how can we gather together to speak about harm done in ways that maintain the mana (prestige) of all those involved, while both redressing any harms done, and making it less likely that harm will occur again?

The use of suspension and exclusion in schools has reduced markedly in recent years. New Zealand Ministry of Education statistics (Corrigan, 2012) show that between the years 2000 and 2012 suspension of all students dropped from 7.8 to 4.7 per thousand, and those of Maori students from 19 to 10.5 per thousand. At the same time exclusions from school dropped from 2.7 to 1.8 per thousand for the general population, and 6.3 to 4.1 for the Maori population. Thus, while the trend is clearly towards less use of suspension and exclusion, schools continue to suspend and exclude more Māori learners than any other ethnic group. The same study identifies that male students are more than twice as likely to receive suspension or exclusion as their female counterparts (Corrigan, 2012). In this doctoral project I join with the New Zealand Ministry of Education's (MoE) continuing emphasis on reducing the use of suspensions and exclusions from schools, and in highlighting the apparent

inequality of the application of suspensions and exclusions across school communities.

In this project I have in mind many young people with whom I have worked over the years — Pakeha (NZ European), Māori, Pasifika and others — whose actions at school are such that teachers and others who care about them go to great lengths to try and get them "on the right path". Such actions at school may be described as continual disobedience, violence, bullying, drug use, harassment, and so on. In pastoral responses to these actions, young people may have had their classes adapted, been spoken to, worried about, disciplined, discussed in deans' meetings, sent to see the deputy principal, put before the Board of Trustees Discipline Committee, and when all else fails, they are sometimes, almost always reluctantly, suspended or excluded from school. It is on this last reluctant step that my research project is focused. I ask, How can schools respond to young peoples' unacceptable actions at school in ways that retain young people within the -care and purpose of the school, attend to harm done, and do so without further disrupting teaching and learning for others?

Naming Discursive Influences

In order to offer a response to this question, in Chapter Three I discuss how the actions of young people and their teachers at school are shaped by prevailing ideas of how a person ought to act in these sorts of situations. I name such taken-for-granted norms of behaviour as discourses (see Foucault, 1972), which Burr (2003) describes as "meanings, metaphors, representations, images, stories, statements and so on that in some way together produce a particular version of events" (p. 64). I emphasise that any way of describing an event brings with it the potential for acting in one way rather than another, and for marginalising alternative ways of acting.

In this study I have named two key prevailing discourses in schools as rationalist discourse and current educational discourse. While there are

always many discourses influential in a community's life, in Chapter Three I discuss the ways that rationalist and current educational discourses shape schools' understandings of and responses to young peoples' actions. I suggest that these discourses are particularly implicated in the ongoing response of suspension and exclusion in schools.

Theorists use many different descriptors to name key social and historical influences within Western society at large, and within schools. These include among others, "Enlightenment" (Foucault & Khalfa, 2006; Popkewitz & Brennan, 1998); "Scientific" (Foucault, 1986); "Humanist" (Flaskas, 2002; Davies, 2004); "Rationalist" (Codd & Sullivan, 2005; Harth, 1992); and "Psy-disciplines" (Rose, 1996). While each of these descriptors focuses on particular aspects of discursive history and thought, taken together each shares some understandings of "being human" that have come to be widely influential throughout much of Western thought, and within the institution of school. In this writing I have used the descriptor "rationalist" as an inclusive term with which to speak of these widespread discursive understandings, and of their influence. Where such rationalist discourses have spoken directly into school settings I have used the descriptor "current educational discourse" to draw attention to their presence and effects.

In the following chapters I discuss how, influenced by rationalist thinking, schools can respond to young people at times of troubling actions with a diagnostic approach to discovering what is wrong with a young person, in order to shape how best to make things right. I discuss how, among other pastoral care responses, rationalist thinking has often led to punitive responses in behaviour management in schools. In this thesis I take the stance that punitive responses "have not brought about widespread reductions in misconduct, but are associated with harm to engagement and learning, especially among students from minority cultures" (Corrigan, 2012, p. 20). As Cavanagh et al (2012) note, "such an ideology all too often leads to the segregation of disproportionate numbers of culturally minoritised students

(through temporary suspension or permanent exclusion), and emphasises keeping 'non-problem' students safe from harm by removing 'problem' students" (p. 445). In offering suspension and exclusion as a response to unacceptable behaviour, rationalist discourses assume that the relational climate in the school for other students will be improved and that future offenders will be deterred with the removal of the offenders from school. However, as Winslade and Williams (2012) note, "zero tolerance is actually shown to effectively increase disruptive behaviour and dropout rates and lead to higher rates of misbehaviour among those who are suspended" (p. 5).

In this thesis, I offer an alternative response to unacceptable actions of young people at school. My response is part of a wider movement within New Zealand schools towards a relational understanding of young peoples' actions and identities. This understanding challenges the treatment of individuals as "independent, autonomous agents" (Gergen, 2001, p. 11) in favour of the idea that "we are each constituted by others (who are themselves similarly constituted)" (Gergen, 2001, p. 11/12). This stance has as a chief outcome "a change in the relationship of those engaging in the process" (Gergen, 2001, p. 27).

Such relational responses are offered, for example, through restorative practice initiatives (Drewery & Kecskemeti, 2010; Drewery, Winslade & McMenamin, 2002; Kecskemeti, 2011, 2013; Thorsborne & Vinegrad, 2008), teacher professional development projects such as Te Kotahitanga (Bishop, 2008; Bishop & Berryman, 2010; Bishop et al., 2003), and through Ministry of Education initiatives, such as Positive Behaviour For Learning (PB4L)(Corrigan, 2012), all of which are widespread and influential within New Zealand schools. In following sections I discuss how initiatives such as restorative practices, Te Kotahitanga and PB4L aim to build, maintain, and restore inclusive networks of positive relationships around young people, and are "associated with lower levels of student misconduct, fewer stand-downs and suspensions, reduced ethnic disparities arising from stand-downs and

suspensions, and calmer school environments" (Corrigan, 2012, p. 20). While those initiatives respond to teacher practice and school wide responses, the particular contribution this thesis makes is in the area of responding to young people at times when their troubling actions have them as candidates for suspension or exclusion from school.

Discourse-shaped Identity

In this thesis I focus on how a young person grows up surrounded by messages about how a person ought to live their life well. Such messages come from various communities, family, church, school, friends, and media to name a few. Some of these messages are reinforcing of each other, and some are in contradiction to each other. As young people grow up, their lives include many experiences of being called out to, or hailed (Butler, 1995) by various discursive messages, and they face the possibility, at times the necessity, of choosing how to respond to varying and contradictory messages about how to live life well. A young person's particular history of responses to such multiple, and at times conflicting, discursive hailings are gathered across time into themes or plots as their personal life stories — what I refer to in this doctoral thesis as identity stories (White & Epston, 1990).

As I discuss in Chapter Four, only a small amount of such lived experience is selected for inclusion in a person's identity stories, and thus available to shape their actions (Bateson, 1979). The practices of ethical reflection, developed in this thesis, help to either re-author the meanings of such selected experiences in the light of a person's preferred ethical responses, or to highlight and include relevant, previously unselected experiences. Such reflection on the preferred effects of identity and action makes alternative understandings of self available for inclusion in a person's identity stories, and as therefore potentially influential in shaping future actions.

While I argue that this possibility applies to all people, in this research project I focus particularly on young people at risk of suspension and exclusion.

Given that teachers and other school staff have some influence in the shaping effects of prevailing discourse, along with Davies (2006) I hold that "our responsibility, as educational and social scientists, is to understand, to the extent that is possible, the complex conditions of our mutual formation. We must understand our own contribution to creating and withholding the conditions of possibility of particular lives" (p. 435). As I discuss in Chapter Three, members of their communities taking up of responsibility for how young people are made sense of does not preclude young people taking up their own responsibility for the effects of their discursively shaped actions. Rather, it invites the sorts of conversations wherein young people (and their communities) reflect on the influences that shape their actions, and can take an ethical position on such actions and their effects.

Practices of Reflection Leading to Ethical Agency

In Chapter Four, I propose that when young people act in unacceptable ways they do so either in fidelity to socially constructed ideas of the right way for them to be, or if acting against their best hopes for themselves, their choices and actions are the best they could achieve in those circumstances. I maintain that young people are not likely to have reflected on the taken-for-granted influences that shape their actions, nor on the effects of their actions for themselves and others. Thus in this thesis I focus on researching practices of reflection on behalf of ethical agency. I introduce the central concepts of ethical reflection and ethical agency here, and develop them further in Chapter Four. In Chapter Six through to Chapter Ten I show the effects of such reflection in the life stories of two young people at risk of suspension or exclusion.

In moments where unacceptable actions occur, the influences shaping such a unique and an emergent process are not likely to include invitations to ethical reflection. This is because, as Shotter (2012) writes

> ... in the course of their acting, people must be ready to fit their
> efforts to obtain their goals into the 'requirements' of their
> surroundings, to move this way and that in accordance with the
> changed circumstances they themselves produce as a result of
> each step they take. (p. 6)

That is, each circumstance is unique and responded to uniquely. However, the possibility of ethical reflection can be enhanced through practices that later explore and reflect on prevailing and alternative influences and their effects, preparing young people to get themselves ready for seeing, hearing, experiencing, and valuing what they encounter as they move forward with their lives and thus ultimately, determine the lines of action they resolve on carrying out further (Shotter, 2012).

Thus in this thesis I research theories and practices that develop ethical reflection with young people and their communities in order that all involved are increasingly positioned as experiencing ethical agency — the possibility of making decisions on behalf of notions of good. I note here that in New Zealand school guidance counsellors participating in conversations on behalf of ethical agency have a version of good outlined in their professional codes of ethics, for example the New Zealand Association of Counsellors Code of Ethics (NZAC, 2012). Equally, young people, their peers, schools, families, and communities will each bring their particular understandings of what is good. The practices I outline in this thesis are means to bring these various understandings of good into dialogue, through exploration of the ethical hopes of those involved, in service of ethical agency shaping participants' ongoing encounters.

In this context, the word ethical refers to "the moral principles of a particular individual, group, or tradition [within which] questions are posed about what ends human beings ought to choose to pursue the good life and what moral principles ought to govern those choices" (Besley, 2002, p. 146). Thus

ethical agency is on behalf of whatever good might mean in a given community or situation. My use of the word agency refers to the ways that, although shaped by discourses, a person can be positioned as "yet capable of critical historical reflection, and is able to exercise some choice with respect to the discourses and practices that [they] take up for [their] own use" (Burr, 2003, p. 122). The agency I refer to here is not a characteristic inherent within the person, which is somehow apart from the influences that shape their actions. Rather, agency stems from an awareness and consideration of the prevailing influences that constitute, not only what is desirable, but what is recognisable as an acceptable form of subjectivity for the person at this time and place (Davies, 1991).

This is not to imply that being positioned with ethical agency automatically allows for choice. Within a multiplicity of discursive hailings a young person may struggle to choose between contradictory ethical responses. They may at times act against their own best interests, or their best hopes for themselves, while still acting on behalf of ethical agency. I explore the complexity of such discursive positioning more fully in Chapter Two.

As I demonstrate throughout this thesis, the practices of reflection investigated here open space for ethical agency through a careful process of questions and reflections on questions, in which young people and their communities are invited to consider the discourses that might have shaped their actions, the effects their actions might have had for themselves and for others, and what, if any, their preferred responses might have been.

What I demonstrate are the effects of offering opportunities for people to experience themselves as persons capable of ethical reflection, and to experience themselves as ethical subjects within influential relationships in their lives. Further, I demonstrate how it is helpful for young people to select and include the results of ethical reflection in their personal stories of life. As I discuss in Chapter Four, through the practices of telling and re-telling, such preferred stories of life become socially rich, and thus can be increasingly

compelling in their influence in shaping a young person's sense of identity and future actions.

Schools' Ethical Tension

Just as young people and their communities of care can reflect on their ethical hopes and the actions used to move towards them, so too schools - as one important part of a young person's community of care - can reflect on their ethical hopes and the actions used to move towards them. I am keenly aware that all the schools I have been involved with go to considerable lengths to avoid suspending or excluding young people from school. Cavanagh et al, (2102) highlight that "many schools and teachers ... continually seek out best practice approaches and strategies that enable learning and behavioural success to ensue, and student potential to be realised" (p. 445). This emphasis fits with the overall drive, in New Zealand as internationally, toward inclusion and away from excluding students with behaviour difficulties from regular classrooms and schools (Macfarlane, 2007). That there is tension between schools' strongly held ethic of care for individual students, and a mandate to deliver safe and effective education for all students, is clearly stated by Macfarlane (2007) who writes that "among the many issues confronting education systems around the world, perhaps none is more pervasive, persistent, or pressing than supporting students considered to be at risk of educational and societal failure" (p. 15), while at the same time "unacceptable and disruptive behaviour in schools ranks as one of the most pressing concerns of the teaching profession" (p. 15).

It is important that actions causing harm are responded to in schools — that young people and others are aware of the effects of their actions; that harm done is attended to, relationships are restored, and that positive changes in peoples' actions and their future responses are made more likely. In this thesis I demonstrate how unacceptable actions can be interpreted and responded to in relational ways, through the restoration of things (e.g. stolen or broken property) and relationships harmed, and through the co-authoring of

preferred identities at school and beyond, supporting expressions of ethical agency in actions at school and elsewhere. As such I propose that it is possible to reduce schools' use of suspension and exclusion even further.

Ethical Risks of Suspension and Exclusion

In arguing for alternative responses to young peoples' unacceptable actions, I turn here to discuss how schools' use of suspension and exclusion can risk imposing Western rationalist cultural norms on the school community in a way that may exclude some school community voices, and can risk harm to the young people and families concerned.

Imposed cultural norms.

Given that schooling is compulsory in New Zealand until the age of 16, responding to diversity in cultural and community background and aspiration in schools is complex. In supporting schools to manage this complexity, the New Zealand Ministry of Education (MoE) (2007) offers principles for schools to follow, including paying attention to high expectations for all students, the Treaty of Waitangi, to cultural diversity and inclusion, and to community engagement. Developing these principles, the MoE offers National Education Guidelines (NEGs), which call for respect for the diverse ethnic and cultural heritage of New Zealand people and acknowledgment of the unique place of Māori (MoE, 2004). Further developing the NEGs, National Achievement Guidelines (NAGs) guide schools in identifying students who are at risk of not achieving, developing strategies to meet their needs, and in consultation with the local Māori community, maintaining an ongoing policy of self-review (MoE, 2004).

These guidelines for the management of the diversity of New Zealand education are further supported by MoE initiatives such as Ka Hikitia: Managing for Success (2009), which outlines specific aspirations of Māori communities for education; and the MoE Pasifika Education Plan (2009 a) that aims to increase Pasifika achievement, increase the presence of Pasifika

teachers, and to reduce Pasifika suspension and exclusion rates. Such education and achievement guidelines and plans specifically require schools to bring culturally diverse understandings and interpretations to their responses to young people in schools. I maintain that, even with benign intent, taken-for-granted rationalist understandings that shape responses to young peoples' troubling actions in New Zealand schools routinely fail to achieve such culturally diverse responses. Further, such rationalist understandings may be contrary to those cherished by some members of the school and wider community, and risk a cultural imposition of meaning that was neither agreed to nor mandated.

A risk of harm.

Regardless of a student's community or ethnic background, the statistics that connect separation from school with harmful outcomes such as appearances in the court system (MoE, 2011; Becroft, 2004) and reduced training and employment (Macrae, Maguire, & Milbourne, 2003) are clear. While offending leading to court appearances may well be present in a young person's actions prior to any exclusion from school, offending increases following permanent exclusion (Berridge et. al., 2001). In New Zealand, Principal Youth Court Judge Becroft writes that "while there are no accurate figures, anecdotally, it is thought that up to 80% of offenders in the Youth Court ... are not formally engaged with the education system ... and thus it is absolutely critical that young people are kept at school for as long as possible" (Becroft & Thompson, 2006, p. 4). It is clear that interruption or exclusion from mainstream schooling strongly influences student outcomes. Quantity of instruction, or potential opportunity to learn, affects how well students do at school, and the practices of suspension and exclusion cut short, or interrupt, potential opportunity to learn at school.

Addressing the question of harm through a culturally aware lens, Cavanagh et. al. (2012) highlight (and I discuss in Chapter Five) that "different ethnic or cultural groups will have a different understanding of what constitutes harm,

and a different understanding of what constitutes an effective and acceptable way of repairing the harm. Working through these understandings in an honest, trusting and respectful way will help to establish a culture of care, but it will take a great deal of time and effort" (p. 447).

In summary, the more than doubling of students from Māori and Pasifika communities compared to other cultural groupings within exclusion from school statistics (Cavanagh et. al. 2012; Corrigan, 2012; McFarlane, 2007; NZ MoE, 2011) risks being, at least in part, an example of culturally-based interpretations being unquestioningly applied to the actions of young people of communities from alternative cultural histories, thus privileging the understandings and interests of one community over others. Further, statistics that connect disconnection from school with harmful outcomes such as appearances in the court system (MoE, 2011; Becroft, 2004) are evidence that exclusion from school risks harm to young people. I turn now to a description of this research project in response to these concerns.

The Research Project

In this study I propose that while rationalist-shaped pastoral care works well for many students, those students facing suspension or exclusion can be responded to differently and effectively. While the number of students facing suspension or exclusion in schools is small, their impact in schools is far from small. Although the percentage of students with severe emotional and/or behavioural problems within schools is small, this number can account for a large proportion of the behavioural problems in schools. Such behavioural problems occupy much of a teacher's attention, can disrupt learning opportunities for entire classes, and can at times create an unsafe environment for other students and for teachers (Prochnow, Macfarlane, & Glynn, 2010). For this small but influential group of students, I maintain that the risk to their own well-being, and the risk to the well-being of other students, warrants an alternative approach to bring about a difference to their actions at school and beyond.

In this thesis, I discuss how among the many available discourses of pastoral care, schools' responses to young people at times of troubling actions at school are often shaped by prevailing health, education, and scientific discourses, which describe a young person as an individual, responsible subject. My contribution to practices of pastoral care includes an analysis of unacceptable actions, and thus responsibility, as socially rather than individually constructed. In Chapter Two I discuss how invitations to responsibility can be most effectively made when all involved have ethically reflected on the effects of their actions, in light of the social influences at play. I outline how rationalist discourses, which focus on the individual, can have schools interpreting young peoples' actions as entirely their responsibility, leading to suspension or exclusion as a most likely response at times of troubling and unacceptable actions.

As an alternative, I draw on post-structuralist and narrative therapy theory and practice, together with an emphasis on knowing one's self in relationship with family and community shaped by my co-researchers Huia and Brent Swann's particularly Māori world-view (Swann, 2012; Swann, Swann & Crocket, 2013), to demonstrate how ethical reflection with young people on their experience can lead to a re-authoring of identity as valued persons-in-community (White & Epston, 1990). By this understanding, responsibility for actions is discursively produced, and invitations to responsibility can be taken up by all involved in the discourses which shape unacceptable actions. I propose that it is in understanding the discursive production of identity and relationship in community differently that young people can experience ethical agency — the possibility to choose to act where possible on behalf of what they and their communities perceive as good.

My focus in this study is on both the identity stories of young people at risk of suspension and exclusion, and on the professional practice of those involved with pastoral care and disciplinary practices in schools. In twenty years of school based practice, as a teacher and as a school guidance counsellor, I

have seen how taken-for-granted ideas about pastoral care and discipline shape the actions and responses of young people, teachers and school leaders alike. I have also seen how poststructuralist ideas open space for alternative ways of interpreting actions (see Laws & Davies, 2000, for example) in a way that can make a real difference. A pragmatic understanding, that poststructuralist and narrative therapy practices make a difference, is at the heart of this study. I maintain there is a more effective, if complex analysis of what gives rise to young peoples' actions in schools than rationalist accounts entertain, and it is in that analysis that effective change can be made.

The Research Questions

In light of the above, I set out in this study to examine more closely the rationalist ideas that shape teachers' and young peoples' interpretations and actions, and to research the effects of developing ethical agency and alternative identity stories with young people and their support communities at times of responding to troubling actions at school. The question I initially proposed to address was: what is the effect of peer co-researching, co-writing, and co-publishing of alternative accounts of their actions and intentions for young men designated as "troubling", particularly on their subsequent sense of identity and action? I sought to investigate the effects of these practices on young peoples' self-descriptions, dispositions to learn, attendance at school, and career views. I also sought to notice the particular effects of writing and drawing of preferred stories of identity; the role of peers as witnesses to any change that might occur; the publishing of preferred stories to significant others; and the connecting of emerging preferred stories with relevant inter-generational stories of young peoples' family and/or wider community or culture. As I discuss in Chapter Twelve, in my pursuit of this original research question, my thinking, understandings and practices developed well beyond my original research interests.

In 1992, Reinharz proposed that "learning should occur on three levels in any research project ... that the researcher should learn about herself, about the subject matter under study, and about how to conduct research" (p. 194). I return to this idea in Chapter Twelve as I discuss the implications of my research project. Here I can say that all three of these learning areas developed over the five years of this research project — I have learned about myself, about the subject matter, and about the research project. I introduce these learnings briefly here.

Five years ago, as I began this research project, I knew that the responses of current educational discourse were implicated in the conditions of suspension and exclusion being likely outcomes for some students in schools. But I had only a limited idea of how widespread, and in what diverse ways, current educational discourse was shaped by Western rationalist discourses through ideas from psychology and neo-liberal theory. Nor was I fully aware of the ways that these ideas, being culturally located, routinely exclude responses from other cultural perspectives. Through my co-researchers Huia and Brent Swann's emphasis on a kaupapa Māori analysis, I came to see that I was, at best, only partially aware of the cultural narratives that were everyday knowledge to them, and which shaped in part both school staff and young peoples' responses. In undertaking action research (Carr & Kemmis, 1986), I have moved the emphasis of this research from a monologue on the efficacy of a programme, to a dialogue between the affected persons. In such a dialogue I enquire about the nature and effects of the discourses, the stories, the positionings, and the responses that have shaped the actions leading to suspension and exclusion from school being considered.

Rather than a linear process, this research proved to be a messy business, which changed over time and in different settings. Shaped by my personal hopes, post-structuralist and narrative therapy interests, and influenced by particularly Māori ways of understanding the world, I have remained open to messy changes. The learnings I discuss in Chapter Twelve would not have

emerged had I restrained this work to the original question. And yet it is the original question, and the theories that support it, which have provided the forum for my research and these learnings to take place.

Along with learning about me as a person and as a researcher, about the subject matter under study, and about how to conduct research, it is important to me that my co-researchers and participants benefit from being a part of this project. Thus the shifts the young people in this research have made in identity claims, in school and home reputations, in attendance at school, and in future prospects have all been very encouraging to me. Just as with the young people involved, the young peoples' peers and their communities of care have experienced change also. I discuss these various effects in Chapter Twelve.

While I started out with questions that were familiar to me, seeking to confirm what at some level I already knew from years of school-based practice, in the extended practice of research I have encountered territory that I did not know, and that took me by surprise. As with White (2000), I moved from familiar territory — that which is known — into unfamiliar territory — that which it is possible to know.

Part of a Suite of Responses

My interest in alternative responses to troubling actions of young people at school is part of a wider interest expressed by many practitioners and researchers. Macfarlane (2007) lists some of these expressions as including "restorative conferencing, conflict resolution, anti-bullying programmes, social skills training, anger management courses; DARE, Kia Kaha, and Tu Tangata programmes" (p. 92).

Of particular interest to me are responses based on restorative practices, particularly those described by Drewery and Kecskemeti (2010) and Kecskemeti (2011, 2013), the Te Kotahitanga approach (Bishop et al., 2003, 2007; Bishop & Berryman, 2010) and the PB4L initiatives (MoE, 2011). Like this research project, these draw on ideas and practices from kaupapa Māori

and restorative practice sources. Broadly, Drewery and Kecskemeti argue for utilising restorative practices as the basis of general relationship in classrooms practice rather than simply as a response to wrongdoing, the Te Kotahitanga programme focuses on improved achievement in the classroom through teacher development and cultural awareness, while the PB4L programme offers a variety of responses across the school when conflict of some sort does arise. My own research is allied with the work of these programmes, focusing specifically on when conflict in schools reaches the stage of suspension or exclusion being considered. I describe these programmes here in order to show a familial relationship between the work of this research project and these examples from the very many responses educators and researchers are making to concerns about troubling actions in schools and equitable opportunities for all students.

Restorative practices as the basis of general relationship practice.

The work of Drewery and Kecskemeti (2010) and Kecskemeti (2011, 2013) supports teachers in the classroom to take a collaborative rather than an authoritarian stance. The conversational strategies they offer also include more complex processes such as class meetings. This specifically discursive approach to restorative practices builds on an earlier project by The Restorative Practices Development Team (2004), who investigated the potential of restorative conferences for reducing stand-downs and suspensions. Drewery and Kecskemeti's (2010) aim is to develop teachers' ways of speaking and interacting with students through specific conversational moves and a theoretical framework that focuses on the significance of language use and the central role of discourses in shaping individual identities, relationships ,and organisational culture.

Guided by these ideas, teachers learn to recognise discourses active within classroom relationships and to explore how prevailing discourses might shape interactions through authorising particular teacher and student identities and

enabling and/or disabling particular practices. Such recognition leads to reflection on the discourses of schooling that are accepted as the dominant view in schools and as such significantly shape school culture. Kecskemeti (2013) reports that these ways of interaction provide practical benefits for the classroom including greater teacher sensitivity to the potential effects of negative language use, greater care taken with naming, teachers speaking in ways that validate rather than alienate students, and teachers understanding the influences of the wider social context, all of which can help challenge ideas and practices that undermine respectful interactions. As will be shown, discursive awareness and sensitivity to language use shape and inform this research project.

Te Kotahitanga.

Te Kotahitanga was a MoE-funded, kaupapa Māori research and professional development project that continues to seek to improve the educational achievement of Māori students in public/mainstream secondary school classrooms (Bishop et al., 2003, 2007; Bishop & Berryman, 2010). From a theoretical position of kaupapa Māori research, the research team posits that this will be accomplished:

> When educators create learning contexts within their classroom where power is shared between self-determining individuals within non-dominating relations of interdependence; where culture counts; where learning is interactive, dialogic and spirals; where participants are connected to one another through the establishment of a common vision for what constitutes excellence in educational outcomes. (Bishop et al., 2007, p. 1)

Fundamental to this "culturally responsive pedagogy of relations" (Bishop et al., 2007, p. 1) is teachers' understanding the need to explicitly reject deficit theorising as a means of explaining Māori students' educational achievement

levels, and teachers taking an agentic position in their theorising about their practice.

The Te Kotahitanga project is focused on the pedagogy of classrooms. The focus of my research thesis is on the pastoral responses made to young people outside of the classroom at times of troubling actions at school. However, two important points can be made here: Where the hopes of Te Kotahitanga are realised, the need for schools to consider suspension and exclusion is reduced due to the reduction of conflictual relationships in classrooms, and increased student achievement. Thus students in classrooms where the teacher has been trained through the Te Kotahitanga programme "have strongly affirmed the importance of teacher positioning themselves as being agentic, the development of mutually respectful, caring relationships, the importance of discursive classroom interactions, and were clear as to how this leads to increased Māori student participation and learning" (Bishop et al., 2007, p. 171). A second point is that the values of Te Kotahitanga (a rejection of deficit theorising in favour of relational responses, such that power is shared between self-determining individuals within non-dominating relations of interdependence, and where culture counts) shape and inform the values and hopes of this research project.

PB4L.

A more recent MoE initiative, Positive Behaviour for Learning (PB4L), provides programmes and initiatives for schools, teachers, and parents across the country to promote positive behaviour in children and young people (MoE, 2011). Under this initiative, schools have access to PB4L School-Wide — a whole-school framework for promoting positive behaviour. This initiative sets up a tiered system of support for schools responding to severe behaviour concerns, wherein all schools can access the Behaviour Crisis Response Service, and in more difficult situations, the support of the Intensive Behaviour Service within their local schools. Coupled with these supports, PB4L offers some schools access to kaupapa Māori behaviour

programmes being piloted around the country (MoE, 2011). One such example is Huakina Mai, a comprehensive kaupapa Māori severe behaviour intervention framework research programme that offers school-wide, strength-based behavioural intervention for Māori through professional development, community Māori liaison personnel, provision of appropriate Māori cultural space, and ongoing cultural advice to ensure adherence to Māori cultural protocols (MoE, 2012). PB4L also offers guides to restorative practices (MoE, 2012 b), including culturally responsive approaches with students, teachers and parent communities called Restorative Basics – Pumanawatanga. These guidelines focus on the attitude of all the people at school, and advocate "doing school 'with' students, [and having] right and inclusive relationships across the school" (MoE, 2012 b, p. 3), including relational approaches to build and maintain a healthy staff community.

My Offering To This Wider Conversation

Along with Restorative Practices and Te Kotahitanga which aim to increase achievement through relationship, and PB4L, which offers culturally aware restorative responses if conflict if does arise, my work seeks to offer alternative responses at times when schools are considering suspension and exclusion as a response to unacceptable actions of young people at school. Like Kecskemeti (2011, 2013), I propose a relational, discursive and storied understanding of identity formation and of the sometimes unacceptable actions which flow from a young person's identity stories. The notion here is that it is within networks of relationship, termed "clubs of life" in narrative therapy (White, 1989; White, 2000) that identity is shaped, according to the discourses at play at any given time. To achieve desired changes in the actions that flow from being shaped by particular discourses and identity stories, in this thesis I demonstrate how young people, their peers, families and schools can review their discursively shaped ways of thinking, speaking and acting, in order to re-author the kinds of identities that fit with the ethical desires of all involved.

Identity as Storied

As I describe in more detail in Chapter Two, it is through the shaping effects of prevailing discourses that people give meaning to their experience within their clubs of life, and in doing so achieve a sense of the meanings of their lives unfolding in sequences of events in time — through past, present and future — according to certain plots (White, 2000). The resulting self-stories are not simply accounts of life, but rather they are ways of organising experience and identity that have real effects in the shaping of relationships and actions. However, "although personal narratives are shaping of persons' lives, there is a certain indeterminacy to them — one which emphasises the role of agency of the subject in the constitution of one's life" (White, 1996, p. 176). Thus, through careful reflection on the gaps, inconsistencies and contradictions that are a feature of all stories, and an active editing of self-narratives, I offer that alternative life stories can be co-authored, and enacted with young people and their communities of care.

Qualitative Research

I turn here to a brief description of the school-based research practices of this thesis. As a qualitative researcher, I stress the socially constructed nature of reality. Thus, rather than seeking an objective truth as to why young people become candidates for suspension and exclusion at schools, I emphasise "the value-laden nature of inquiry" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 8) wherein "life continues to unfold in the accounting of it, and the account making is, in that sense, always a new event, a new experience" (Davies & Davies, 2007, p. 1141). This thesis is one such unfolding account.

Action Research

The overall research practice shaping this project is action research. However, as discussed in Chapter Twelve, both participatory action research and

āhuatanga Māori (Māori tradition) came to shape the actions and reflections of the Second School experience, and my subsequent analysis.

Originating in the 1940s with the social-psychology work of Kurt Lewin, action research "is currently receiving resurgent interest especially in the fields of education, social work, international development, healthcare, etc., that is, the 'helping' professions'" (Huang, 2010, p. 95). Within education, action research provides a method for exploring and improving the practices that constitute school organisation, offering "a way of theorising current practice and transforming practice in the light of critical reflection" (Carr & Kemmis, 1986, p. 221) by expanding the community of inquiry and interpretation to include the persons studied. Carr and Kemmis (1986) describe action research as "a form of self-reflective enquiry undertaken by participants in social situations, in order to improve the rationality and justice of their own practices, their understanding of these practices, and the situations in which the practices are carried out" (p. 162). Such research focuses on three areas of interest: The doing of school practices; the understanding of those practices; and the situations within which those practices take place.

To achieve this, action research focuses on particular social practices susceptible of improvement (in this thesis, pastoral responses to unacceptable actions of young people at school), and proceeds through a spiral of cycles of planning, acting, observing and reflecting in which all those involved in the practice being researched take part. In this way action research is a critical and self-critical process aimed at "transforming what we do ... transforming what we think and say ... and transforming the ways we relate to others and to things and circumstances around us" (Kemmis, 2009, p. 463).

In discussing alternative responses for schools at times of considering suspension or exclusion for students whose actions are troubling, the action research I undertake in this thesis takes place in the context of practice, and is shaped by the work and interest of those involved — students, teachers

and families. Following action research ethics I seek to effect change through generating knowledge and empowering stakeholders (Huang, 2010).

In keeping with a central, emancipatory aim, without which, "such research is not true action research, but rather an oxymoron and a cynical cooptation" (Kinsler, 2010, p. 173), in this research project I consult with young people at risk of suspension and exclusion, and their peers and communities, including teachers and families, "as members of knowledge creation efforts that will inform their efforts to take the work forward, thus leaving them stronger" (Huang, 2010, p. 99). However, I note that my consultation with participants has been about participants' life stories rather than about the shape of this research project. As I discuss in Chapter Twelve, a key learning of this research project is that consulting participants about the nature and shape of the research project itself is important alongside research into their life stories and effects.

Bringing a theory.

I came to this research project with a particular understanding that current educational discourse shapes the meaning made of young peoples' actions at school, leading to suspension and exclusion being considered as a response at times of troubling actions. In this thesis I research the effects of bringing a post-structuralist and narrative therapy-shaped understanding to the interpretations of young peoples' actions at school. I employ an action research methodology to explore the effects of this theory.

In keeping with the theory of action research, through bringing a post-structural and narrative therapy frame to the interpretation of peoples' words and actions, I go "beyond participants' perceptions, to hitherto unrecognized aspects of their reasoning, behavior, and environment, [providing] concepts and terminology, in order to name previously unknown mechanisms or processes that are ... implicated in the issue of concern" (Friedman & Rogers,

2009, p. 36). I do this in order to support schools to respond even more effectively to young peoples' unacceptable actions at school.

Technical, practical, and critical action research.

From within the "family of practices" (Huang, 2010, p. 94) of action research, I draw on three particular emphases, technical, practical, and critical action research, to develop my action research practices. As a technical action researcher, I seek to develop pastoral care techniques and practices within schools at times of suspension or exclusion being considered. I focus particularly on my own practice as a school counsellor, and that of my co-researchers, Huia and Brent Swann, during the period of field work and initial analysis, as well as the practices of teachers and other pastoral care workers in school. My aim is to develop the skills and practices of an alternative pastoral response. Practical action research focuses on the effects of the researched practices for those involved. To achieve this, the research team during the action/reflection phase of this project (Huia, Brent and me) met throughout the field work with students, teachers and families to discuss the effects for them of telling their identity stories differently. These meetings further shaped and developed the practices demonstrated and discussed in this thesis, and provided data for the reflections and conclusions herein. Critical action research focuses on the moment-by-moment experience of participants. As critical action researchers, our research team purpose was to explore meaning-making, "the discourses (sayings) that orient and inform it, the things that are done (doings), and the patterns of social relationships between those involved and affected (relatings)" (Kemmis, 2009, p. 471). My analysis chapters explore the results of these action research techniques and practices, including discourses shaping participants' responses.

A Beginning Research Story

In this section I briefly outline how I went about this action research project to investigate the developing of an experience of ethical agency with young

people and their communities, and to co-author alternative and preferred identity stories.

My interest in this research project arose from my desire as a school guidance counsellor for more carefully thought-through responses to young men at risk of suspension and exclusion. I had seen the effects of re-authoring identity stories with young people in my practice as a school guidance counsellor, and in this research project I sought to explore more carefully: What is the effect for young men at risk of suspension or exclusion of peer co-researching, co-writing, and co-publishing alternative identity stories on their subsequent sense of identity and engagement in schooling?

Prior to meeting with the schools I developed a research proposal for the University of Waikato followed by an ethics proposal to the university research ethics committee. In the ethics proposal I outlined how in this research project, I would meet with two young men at risk of suspension or exclusion in two Auckland schools in order to research the effects on their subsequent actions of re-authoring their identity stories. There I discussed ethics of informed consent, confidentiality, potential harm, rights to decline and/or withdraw from the project, subsequent uses of information and dispute procedures.

My preparation prior to approaching any young people or their families included meeting with the schools' Principal (at the First School) and Deputy Principal (at the Second School) and with their school guidance counsellors to discuss the research project and my hoped-for outcomes – that the researched practices would make a positive difference for the young people and their actions at school. With their support I made formal application to the schools' Board of Trustees (See Appendix One). With Board approval, I met with the school dean of Year 10 (at the first school) and guidance counsellor (at The Second School) to discuss which young people might be approached about participating in the project. I subsequently met with the young people.

At each phase of this research project I recorded the conversations I or Huia and Brent had with young people, teachers and families. These recordings were transcribed, and provided data for later analysis (See for example, Chapters Seven, Eight and Ten). As well as these transcripts I kept notes of the meetings held with the various participants, counselling notes from conversations with the young people, and various documents (letters and emails) which all added to the data available to make sense of in this project. Access to young peoples' school files was with permission of the young people and their school deans, and provided a back-story of the effects of troubling actions in their school lives (See Chapter Eight where Peter describes these). In the Second School, similar data was collected by Huia Swann as well as my own emails and letters (See for example Chapter Ten).

Initially, I met at the First School with a Year Ten student named Peter (see Chapter Six). My co-researchers during this fieldwork period of the research, Huia and Brent Swann, met with another Year Ten student named Hohepa at the Second School (see Chapter Six). The research in the First School preceded the Second School by several months, which allowed for careful review and development of theory and practice from the First School to the Second School. At the First School I discussed in counselling conversation with Peter the reputation he was currently experiencing at school and its effects for him and others. Together we explored his life experience for the presence of alternative reputations. To do this we discussed actions Peter had taken at school and elsewhere, which had both he and others thinking and speaking differently about him. Together we mapped the effects of those other reputations in his life, and on others. As he reflected on the various descriptions of him that emerged in that process, Peter preferred those ways of speaking about him. We wondered together what difference it might make if those preferred reputations were more widely known, enacted and responded to at school. Over several weeks I interviewed Peter as he told and re-told his preferred reputation stories to various audiences, including invited peers, teachers and family, and a gathering of his wider community of

care. Over these weeks Peter took up a preferred sense of self that was supported by those close to him. During these times of telling and re-telling of his preferred identity stories, Peter began to act in keeping with those preferred identity stories.

The experience and learnings from these conversations with Peter and his communities shaped a similar but developed intervention led by Huia and Brent Swann in the Second School. I discuss these developments in detail in later chapters. The initial project followed the outline below. This process developed and altered across the time of the research project, and I discuss these changes, and the learnings from them, in Chapter Twelve.

The Programme Outline

In preparation for meeting with Peter in the First School, I developed a programme outline to guide my actions. Initially, I would meet with a referred young person (Peter) in order to discuss the project, provide information, and negotiate a counselling relationship that might develop into a researched relationship. I would meet with that young person in a counselling relationship for two or three weeks until it was clear that a preferred account was emerging. At that point, I would review the project information with the young person, and ask for consent to take up a researched relationship (See Appendices Two and Three). With consent available, we would discuss inviting peers to act as witnesses of any emerging stories. These invited peers may also be experiencing trouble at school, or they may not. They would be invited on the basis of being supportive of the initial participant's preferred stories, and of wanting to be involved in co-writing their own preferred accounts. I would meet with these invited peers in order to discuss the project, provide information, and ask for consent to be involved.

Having established the participants, we would meet as a group over 10 weeks. The first one to three weeks would focus on an externalising, re-authoring conversation (White & Epston, 1990) with the initial participant,

including peer outsider witness team responses (White, 1995; 2000 d); mutual journaling and/or art recording of the emerging stories, and counsellor notes would form an important part of this phase. During the fourth to sixth group meetings the focus would be on externalising, re-authoring conversations (White & Epston, 1990) with each of the remaining group members, including peer outsider-witness team responses. Again, journaling and art recording, and counsellor note-taking would be important. The seventh to ninth meetings would focus on the recording and re-playing of preferred stories, reflection on those stories, and ongoing editing of emerging stories. The final group meeting would focus on planning for presenting the young peoples' preferred identity stories to an invited supportive audience.

After the group meetings and preparation of preferred life stories, the young people would present their preferred stories to a gathering of invited supporters at a definitional ceremony (Myerhoff, 1986; White, 2000 d; 2007), as an interview, as a drama, as a presentation of art. The members of the invited audience would respond according to outsider witness questions (White, 1995; 2000 d). After the definitional ceremony I would meet with the group of young people to discuss their experience of that meeting, and the overall effects for them of the researched intervention. Each of these steps is discussed in detail below.

Once the study began in the First School, Huia, Brent and I met as a research team to reflect each week on the effects and experience of the First School, and later the Second School. As I discuss in Chapter Twelve, these weekly meetings around Huia and Brent's kitchen table became a significant site of development of my research thinking and practice. During those weekly meetings, a need for changes soon became apparent. Thus, as described in Chapter Six, through an action research model, several adaptations of the programme emerged, leading from what was initially proposed, to what has come to be proposed within this thesis.

Chapter Outline: Thesis Overview

In the chapters that follow, I outline the theoretical and practical basis for this study. I detail the stories of Peter and Hohepa at school, and offer an analysis of how they became candidates for suspension and exclusion. I demonstrate how the alternative responses I research herein made a difference for these young people and their communities. And I discuss a set of working assumptions and practices for schools to consider at times of responding to troubling actions at school. I describe action research (Carr & Kemmis, 1986) as a model for this doctoral study, including an exploration of culturally appropriate research. I discuss how, within action research, it is important that school and community voices shape this study and the meanings made of it. I describe how action research allows for reflection and learning leading to a developing theory.

Having introduced the project, I describe here the focus of each subsequent chapter.

In Chapter Two, I introduce post-structuralism as the epistemological perspective that shapes my interpretation in this study. I discuss the interrelationship of notions of truth, power, and self (Foucault et al., 1988), and trace the ways that the subjectivities that bring young people forward as candidates for suspension and exclusion are a product of certain historical and cultural ways of making meaning of actions. I describe how post-structuralist theory supports people to stand back from what they are experiencing, and the meanings they are making of those experiences, and to reflect on the actions they want to take in keeping with an experience of ethical agency. In this study I demonstrate how such a reflective position enables participants to review the effects of their responses, and to see those responses in terms of the discourses that shape them. This stance supports people in taking ethically agentic stands for actions that are in keeping with their hopes for themselves and others. Thus post-structuralist theory shapes how the data of this research project is made sense of.

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In Chapter Three, I consider the particular place of rationalist discourses in schools, which I refer to as current educational discourse, and I explore something of the history and effects of this discourse. I discuss how rationalist ideas about personhood have been taken up across time by schools as taken-for-granted truths, shaping much of the purpose and pedagogy of schooling. I continue to discuss how a rationalist shaping of an ideal person within a school setting is both expressed in and shaped by particular vocabularies, including those written into the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM)(American Psychiatric Association, 2000), wherein variations from a preferred norm come to be described as disordered or dysfunctional. I discuss how such scientific vocabularies become authoritative and in so being, make alternative descriptions less available. I offer an analysis of how such ideas take on a truth status, and discuss technologies within schools where the authority of such truth claims is maintained.

I reflect on how young peoples' subjectivities are formed within such discursive settings. I discuss how ideas about how things ought to be, and technologies that uphold institutional discursive preferences, shape the subjectivities of the people in communities, such as schools. In this chapter I consider the possibility of choice within discursive positioning, and explore the notion of responsibility for choices made. This chapter highlights the role of discourse in shaping subjectivities and responses at school.

In Chapter Four, I describe the theory and practices of narrative therapy which shape the practices researched herein. I discuss how experience is selected and taken up into community and personal stories, which shape both identity conclusions and actions taken. I detail the maps of narrative practice that shape this study, with a particular focus on explorations on behalf of ethical agency, the taking of a position on the effects of troubling actions, the re-authoring of identity stories, and tellings and re-tellings of preferred identity accounts to supportive community audiences (White & Epston, 1990; White,

1995; White, 2007). Here narrative therapy describes people as knowing themselves through socially constructed stories which can be re-authored with individual and community ethical intent.

In Chapter Five, I explore positions from which a non-Māori researcher can work effectively with Māori young people and families as part of the wider school community. This chapter contributes to a discussion of counsellor and researcher positioning in working with particularly Māori communities.

Having described the theories and practices that shape this study, in Chapter Six I tell the stories of the First and Second Schools where this research took place. I draw attention to adaptations in my thinking and practice that developed as the research progressed through action research cycles.

In Chapter Seven, I offer a discursive analysis of a particular incident that gave rise to Peter becoming a candidate for suspension. I demonstrate the complexity of "discursive hailings" (Butler, 1995, p. 6) that call out to all the participants, and which shape their interpretations of events, and their actions in response.

In Chapters Eight and Nine, I demonstrate how explorations on behalf of ethical agency and co-authoring of alternative identity accounts made a difference for Peter and his reputation at school. In these chapters I outline some of the practices and their effects which I propose as an alternative for schools to consider at times of responding to troubling actions at school.

In Chapter Ten I turn to the Second School and Hohepa's story for a particularly kaupapa Māori-influenced analysis of community meetings. In this chapter I detail Hohepa's change in reputation, and discuss the particularly Māori learnings that developed my understandings of this study.

In Chapter Twelve I gather up the learnings gleaned from this study. I find that, while inviting young people to take up and enact different understandings of their identities is a complex task involving peers, school and community support people, it is a task which can be done. I describe the

practices that contribute to such a goal as paying attention to relationships of belonging, explorations of ethical agency, awareness of prevailing discourses and community and personal stories, re-authoring of preferred identity accounts, restorative practices attending to harm done, community support for preferred identity claims, involvement in making a difference for others, and support for change as a process across time. I turn now to a discussion of the theories that shaped this study.

CHAPTER 2: POST-STRUCTURALIST THEORY

Introduction

In this thesis, I propose that the actions of teachers and young people alike are shaped by often taken-for-granted discourses that inform peoples' identity claims. In writing about such discourses I seek that those involved (including myself) see more clearly the presence and effects of various discursive constructions, and in doing so become more able to make ethical choices about our positionings within prevailing discourses.

That I come to this thesis in such a way demonstrates that I am, myself, shaped by discursive influences, as a person who thinks and writes in these ways. As a researcher, I approach the world with a set of ideas, a framework theory that specifies an approach (epistemology) which I then examine in specific ways (methodology). The research stories I tell are a political process involving distillation and editing of conversations (Speedy, 2008), which gives rise to "accounts couched and framed within specific story telling traditions" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 6). Within a particular academic tradition, my research is an interactive process shaped by my personal history, gender, social class, religion and ethnicity, and by those of the people with whom I have worked in this project. Part of my task is to acknowledge my own intrinsic involvement in the research process and the part this plays in the results that are produced (Shotter & Gergen, 1989), making as clear as possible the discursive shapings inherent in this thesis. To achieve this I outline here the key ideas which underpin this research:

> Specifically the notion that human identity is a social achievement, contingent on time, context, audience, culture, history, memory and personal agency, and that the stories we tell

ourselves and each other in our day-to-day exchanges both constitute and are constitutive of our lives. (Speedy, 2008, p. xiv)

Why Post Structuralism – A Personal Reflection

As I reflect on my choice to draw on post-structuralist theory to make sense of this research project, I begin with the presence of the faculty at Waikato University, and how encountering post-structural ideas fitted well with who I wanted to be as a person. I could say that I took up a post-structuralist stance in this research project because that was the way I was taught, and I was taught well. However, that does not account fully for my enthusiasm for these ideas.

Reflecting on my enthusiasm for post-structural ideas leads to my work as a school guidance counsellor. My experience of current educational discourse is that while rationalist ways of understanding do work for some young people, when they do not work they can easily lead to potentially harmful practices, such as suspension and exclusion. Throughout my work as a school guidance counsellor I saw that often in spite of individual teachers' best intentions, a rationalist pastoral care system creates the likelihood of exclusion for some young people. In response to this, my Masters of Counselling thesis (McMenamin, 1999) focused on restorative responses to troubling actions in schools. I now see that work as an attempt to interrupt rationalist-shaped conversations with post-structuralist-shaped conversations.

However, reflection on my experience as a school guidance counsellor does not account sufficiently for my response to post-structuralist ideas. Further reflection raised the awareness that I have a personal experience of wanting to be known in fuller ways than those available in rationalist descriptions. I recalled feeling, during my early school years and beyond, that I was somehow "more than" the person I was known as, at school and elsewhere. In post-structuralist inquiry I discovered the possibility of richer, inter-personal

descriptions of self which resonated with these earlier hopes in my life, and which still resonate with what I hope for myself and for others. In the light of this reflection, it seemed that I became a school guidance counsellor, at least in part, because of the wondering that, had someone engaged me in richer relational tellings of life and self at that earlier time, my experience of those years and their ongoing effects might have been different, and better. My hope in becoming a guidance counsellor was that in experiencing the richer tellings I now knew were possible through Michael White and David Epston's writings and others (see for example, Denborough, 2008; Epston & White, 1990, Freedman and Combs, 1996; Jenkins, 1990, 2009; Morgan, 2000, White, 2007), the young people I worked with might enjoy more fully their various possibilities in life.

Further reflection on my enthusiasm for post-structuralist ideas brought to mind that my family valued varied ways of speaking about and living life. My parents' experiences of Pasifika and Māori communities, through upbringing and work, shaped an openness and appreciation of difference in our family conversations; an "other-friendliness" pervaded our home. And I find an echo of this familial other-friendliness in post-structuralist thought — that while dominant discourses may suit people positioned by those discourses in ways that work for them, they do not suit everybody, including those positioned in non-agentic ways. Openness to respectful, spacious engagement with others resonates with my own desire to know and be known in "more than" ways.

Lastly, there is something I experience in conversations in which post-structuralist ideas are a guide. A joy enters. In such settings, conversation that is cooperative, energetic, and hopeful emerges and supports people in taking up an energising vision for themselves and others. Having seen the practices that emerge from post-structuralist ideas being effective in many conversations, I have become interested in talking with schools about being intentional in making these ideas and practices more widely available,

especially at times when interpretations of young peoples' actions have them as candidates for suspension or exclusion from school.

Research epistemology

Thus oriented by a post-structuralist analysis of human experience, in this thesis I look at how the stories people tell at schools about themselves, and the stories told about them by others, are shaped by prevailing ideas about how things ought to be. Rather than looking for the truth about any person or institution, I seek to explore the way historical and cultural expectations of the way things ought to be influence the actions taken in schools by teachers and students alike.

Post-Structuralism in Response to Structuralism

The post-structuralist ideas that shape this thesis developed in response to existing structuralist ideas. Within the Enlightenment project, a number of structural theories seeking to explain human existence emphasised that elements of culture must be understood in terms of their relationship to an underlying system or structure. Quoting the famous structuralist Levi-Strauss, Maynard and Rossi (1984) describe these structures as "unobservable and even unconscious relationships underlying actual patterns of human behaviour" (p. 425). Various explanatory theories of underlying structure included Marx's analysis of economic structures (Eagleton & Anderson, 1985), Freud's understanding of the structure of the psyche and the unconscious (Bruns, 1974), and Levi-Strauss' investigations into the underlying patterns of human thought (Kronenfeld & Decker, 1979). Such theories asserted that people are shaped by structures over which they have no control, which can be uncovered using particular methods of investigation. As White (2000) describes them, within psychology such structuralist understandings "recast action as 'behaviour' that is a surface manifestation of certain elements or essences or forces — like needs, personal properties,

characteristics, attributes, impulses, drives, motives, desires, assets, and so on — or disorders of these elements, essences and forces" (p. 15).

Rather than interpreting life as a reproduction of structures and conditions (Rocco, 2004), post-structuralism focuses on language as the site within which meaning is made. In this light, interpretations of any given situation, including schools' interpretations of the actions of the young people within them, rely on historical and social guides as to what that situation means. Thus post-structuralism focuses on an exploration of the effects of historical and social discourses and their construction in language. As Sampson (1993) writes, "there is nothing behind and beyond the construction; the construction is what reality is" (p. 1226). The emphasis here is that any construction of reality is a current hypothesis of what reality is; reality is a flowing and evolving construction.

The understandings expressed here draw on the work of French philosopher and historian Michel Foucault who worked to analyse discursive practices (Foucault, 1972, 1977, 1982, 1984, 1997) in order to show a history of (structuralist) truth claims, how certain ways of thinking have come to be accepted as a dominant explanation of the human condition. As Foucault (1984) wrote:

> It is one of my targets to show people that a lot of things that are part of their landscape — that people are universal — are the result of some very precise historical changes. All my analyses are against the idea of universal necessities in human existence. They show the arbitrariness of institutions and show which space of freedom we can still enjoy and how many changes can still be made. (p. 10)

Rather than explaining a person's experience, Foucault advanced that the explanations used to make sense of experience shape what it is that experience means. Rather than looking for a structural understanding, Foucault highlighted the overlapping, contradictory and conflictual ways

of understanding that have been predominant at any time. In this study I emphasise the ways discourses shape, or constitute, the meanings made of experience: on what can be said, on who can say it, and on the very subjectivities from which disputing parties argue.

A Political Stance

A robust debate between rationalism and post-structuralism emerges from the post-structuralist understanding that "there is no extra-cultural means of ultimately privileging one construction of reality over another" (Gergen, 2001, p. 8). Gergen emphasised the risk when communities extend what is local to the plane of the universal — as if a given understanding was real for all people, indisputably objective. In this critique, post-structuralism disrupts privileging one construction of reality over another, and "re-imagines personhood as constituted in constant dialogue with discursive influences" (Winslade, 2006, p. 503). Such a post-structuralist critique requires a political process, an "identity politics" (Sampson, 1993, p. 1226) in order to respond to attempts to legislate one version of truth over another. From this position, I explore what Foucault (1972) refers to as games of truth, by which prevailing discourses in schools are produced, and which position schools to interpret young people and their actions in particular cultural and historical ways.

Truth, Power and Self

In order to explore the ways people in schools interpret themselves, others, and their actions in particularly cultural and historical ways, I draw here on Foucault's rubric of truth, power and self (Foucault et al, 1988), and the concept of arbitrary truth-understandings (Foucault, 1997). Here the word arbitrary refers to the ongoing presence of contesting alternative ways of understanding life and purpose. By this understanding, current educational discourse is seen as the arbitrary outcome of particular historical and cultural events that could have been otherwise, and which remain in a constant state of flux, having been different in the past, and certain to be different in the

future. From this post-structuralist view, the interpretations of young peoples' actions shaped by current educational discourse are part of an historical and continuous process of "formation and superseding of unstable equilibria" (Hall, 1986, p. 14), offering particular versions of a good person as preferred at this particular time and place.

I turn here to Foucault's (1988) threefold rubric of truth, power and self, and offer an explanation of each in order to make clear how young people and their actions have come to be understood in the ways described by current educational discourse, and how, as a result, unacceptable identities are constructed. As Foucault offers, societies have historical and cultural notions of what is true, they create institutions which uphold such truths, and they attempt to shape members of society in the light of such truths. In this thesis I demonstrate how schools are an institution that shapes teachers and students, their actions and their identities, in the light of particular cultural and historical notions of truth.

Truth.

Foucault writes:

> Each society has its regime of truth, its "general politics" of truth — that is, the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true; the mechanisms and instances that enable one to distinguish true and false statements; the means by which each is sanctioned; the techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisition of truth; the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true. (Foucault, 1986, p. 72-73)

In this thesis I take the position that any society has its regimes of truth — understandings, mechanisms, techniques and procedures which are widely considered to be good and true. I hold that societies create institutions and organisations, such as schools, charged with protecting and promoting what

that society deems to be good and true. As Foucault (1984) writes of institutions:

> In every society the production of discourse is at once controlled, selected, organized and redistributed by a certain number of procedures whose role is to ward off its powers and dangers, to gain mastery over its chance events, to evade its ponderous, formidable materiality. (p. 109)

In this light I hold that society's institutions and organisations attempt to shape the people within their influence according to their understandings of truth, through making available "explicit or tacit regulations and an apparatus" (Foucault, 1982, p. 791) aimed at warding off and evading alternative versions of truth. Institutions do this through systems of ideas and practices which shape the way individual people act, think, and see others and themselves in the world (Popkewitz & Brennan, 1997). Thus I draw on Foucault's understanding of institutions, such as schools, being very sophisticated structures within which "individuals can be integrated, under one condition: that this individuality would be shaped in a new form and submitted to a set of very specific patterns" (Foucault, 1982, p. 783).

Truth as explanation and solution.

Throughout this thesis I hold that schools act with the best interests of their students and communities in mind. In this vein Rose (1996) writes of institutions as taking up truth-stances with benign intent "because they appear to be solutions to the problems and decisions confronting actors in a variety of settings" (p. 56). Schools do so through drawing on "all those multitudinous programs, proposals, and policies that have attempted to shape the conduct of individuals — not just to control, subdue, discipline, normalize, or reform them, but also to make them more intelligent, wise, happy, virtuous, healthy, productive, docile, enterprising, fulfilled, self-esteeming, empowered or whatever" (Rose, 1996, p. 12).

However, as I discuss throughout and Hahs and Colic (2010) note, people "take on ideas that are viewed as positive and these ideas, in turn, contribute to the shaping of their lives" (p. 73). As I discuss further in Chapter Three, in the process of adopting shared problem definitions and vocabularies of explanation, schools take up a particular construction of what will count as knowledge (Rose, 1996). In other words, in taking up particularly useful descriptions of a problem and its solution, schools define and consolidate what will come to count as truth within their field of influence. As I explore below, in doing so "these claims to truth can render other explanations, or ways of being, invalid" (Hahs & Colic, 2010, p. 73). In this light the interpretations of young peoples' actions as shaped by current educational discourse, and as taken up by schools for ethical purposes, can be seen "as a kind of fiction, as something we busily construct around ourselves" (Graham, 2007, p. 21). In Chapter Three I explore the arbitrary nature of current educational discourse, those "prevailing ideas about what counts as facts" (Sampson, 1993, p. 1222). I am interested to see how these facts have been produced within discourses which are themselves neither true nor false (Foucault et al., 1988).

Truth as ethical purpose.

Foucault further offered that the prime material of moral conduct is a "will to truth" (Foucault, 1972, p. 219), that people aim to live a certain kind a life, a beautiful life (Foucault, 1997), which requires intentional choices and the practice of specified activities in a goal-directed manner. A discursively shaped will to truth "aims to secure the purity of an identity deemed to be good and healthy against identities that are defined as the opposite, as evil or sick" (Widder, 2004, p. 419). I hold that people within schools take up versions of truth on behalf of such an aesthetic aim, or an ethical purpose, shaping their actions and themselves "in order to become ethical subjects" (Foucault, 1997, p. xxxiii).

In my work as a school guidance counsellor, and in the field work of this thesis, I explore with young people and their communities the various discourses which work to shape their identities and actions, in order that they be increasingly able to choose on behalf of the good available to them. This exploration is not in order to come to a conclusion about a person's ethical desires, but rather to explore their "ethical becomings, [with] an emphasis on fluidity, transition and moving towards certain modes of existence" (Jenkins, 2009, p. x). Thus Jenkins (2009) goes on to write that we "are constantly constructing a somewhat unstable sense of identity, particularly in the context of flux between our ethical strivings and the restraining influences of dominant cultural interests and power relations" (p. xi). In this thesis I do not regard ethical strivings as an aspect of an individual's character, but rather as "linked to a notion of radical interdependence, in which the ethics of intersubjectivity are in the foreground" (Popke, 2003, p. 303). This stance is particularly emphasised in the kaupapa Māori-shaped discussions of Chapter Ten. Nor do I see ethical strivings as apart from discursive influence. I see that the discourses prevailing in society "have been incorporated into the 'ethical' repertoire of individuals, into the languages that individuals use to speak of themselves and their own conduct, to judge and evaluate their existence, to give their lives meaning, and to act upon themselves" (Rose, 1996, p. 65). Thus I maintain that, although the truth of any given situation is a site of an ideological struggle for meaning, those contending do so on the basis of a purposeful vision albeit a vision shaped by prevailing discourse.

The Interplay of Knowledge and Power.

The second part of Foucault's threefold explanation of the process of identity formation is the nature of power. Foucault (1986) writes:

> We should admit ... that power and knowledge directly imply one another; that there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations. (p. 175)

Thus I understand schools as producers and circulators of discourses that pass for truth and thus hold specific powers, as arbiters of specific knowledges about what constitutes a good person and which "enframe humans as certain kinds of being" (Rose, 1996, p. 27). Here those constituted as knowledgeable, and thus to be listened to, have the power to describe what will pass as acceptable ways of being. Such discursive interpretations deemed as truthful accounts of others' actions are found throughout everyday communications, and expressed, for example, in "policy statements, memos, speeches, documents, conversations, accounts, explanations, versions, anecdotes and stories" (Sampson, 1993, p. 1223). In these forms, and others, institutional knowledge shapes how young people are understood and known: thus power and knowledge are intertwined, "constituting positions of relative privilege and relative disadvantage" (Winslade, 2006, p. 503). In Chapter Three, I explore current educational discourse in order to highlight the taken-for-granted truth claims which lead to the use of suspension and exclusion as a response to unacceptable actions at school.

Self: The Formation of Subjectivity.

The third element of Foucault's rubric: truth, power, and self, describes how the truth claims of institutions produce the actions and identities of the persons within their influence. Shaped by the knowledge and power of prevailing discourses as to what is required to be acceptable in society, conforming behaviour is, in the main, "produced willingly and voluntarily rather than reluctantly and forcibly" (Winslade, 2006, p. 504). That is to say, in order to avoid the consequences of being positioned on the margins of what is normal within a given discursive context, it is necessary for people to submit to the requirements of prevailing discourse. Herein lies the paradox of the agentic self: choosing willingly to submit to prevailing discourse in order to be one's preferred self. As Davies et al. (2001) write:

> If subjection produces a subject and a subject is the
> precondition of agency, the subjection is the account by which

a subject becomes the guarantor of its resistance and opposition. Subordination is thus the precondition for resistance and opposition. We submit in order to become masters of autonomy. (p. 181)

Thus the agency to produce a preferred self relies upon willing subjection to available discourse, if not to prevailing discourse. Given a person's willing subjection to discourse, how is it that knowledge and power produce the self? I continue the third part of this discussion of truth, power and self by focusing on Foucault's (1982) ideas of dividing, classifying, and subjectifying as the means by which subjectivities and selves are shaped and created by truth and power.

Dividing, classifying and subjectifying.

By Foucault's (1982) analysis, the first process of subjectification is the identification and separation of the individual through what he called dividing practices: "The subject is either divided inside himself or divided from others. This process objectivizes him. Examples are the mad and the sane, the sick and the healthy, the criminals and the 'good boys'" (p. 777). Within schools, such practices of division include, for example, streaming of students by educational achievement, special education and behavioural management classes, and centres for the education of students with disorder or disability. Another example of dividing practices in schools is described by Davies (2005) as "the national standardized testing in schools [that] pushes populations towards age-based sameness and a de-grading of groups and individuals whose understandings and practices do not fit well within the standardized conceptions of development" (p. 147).

Classification

By this second process, separated subjects are classified according to "modes of inquiry which try to give themselves the status of sciences" (Foucault, 1982, p. 777) through the development of vocabularies and

explanatory systems which produce persons as "a certain kind of theory" (Rose, 1996, p. 9). Concerning the history of these theories, Foucault (1984) writes, "Through these different practices — psychological, medical, penitential, educational — a certain idea or model of humanity was developed, and now this idea of man has become normative, self-evident, and is supposed to be universal" (p. 14). Thus White (1995) can write that "to be a person of moral worth in our culture [does] not represent some authentic way of living, or some real or genuine expression of human nature but, rather ... a specification or prescription of cultural preferences" (p. 16).

According to Foucault (1986), classification is achieved through the examination, which places individuals "in a field of surveillance, [situating them] in a network of writing, [engaging them] in a whole mass of documents that capture and fix them" (p. 201). In these ways, a person is "made to stand out as 'out of the ordinary', which a description of them in 'scientific' terms, of course, clearly achieves" (Shotter, 2004, p. 25). As I explore in Chapter Three, the particular technology of examination called the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) underpins much of current educational discourse's vocabulary of examination and classification.

The point I emphasise here is that separating and classifying practices "not only mark those bound within those categories but also those who fall outside them" (Graham, 2007, p. 20). Through the processes of testing, evaluating, and reporting according to prevailing truths, schools come to interpret the actions of young people as acceptable, or not acceptable, according to the particular cultural and historical norms of their society. In so doing, some young people are assigned what Goffman (1963) termed spoiled identities, increasing the likelihood that they will be considered as candidates for suspension or exclusion.

Subjectification

Foucault (1997, p. xxxiii) describes the third process of becoming a self as subjectification: "the means by which we can change ourselves in order to

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become ethical subjects". In pursuit of the transformation of the self in keeping with prevailing truth obligations:

> individuals ... effect, by their own means, a certain number of operations on their own bodies, on their own souls, on their own thoughts, on their own conduct ... to transform themselves, modify themselves, and to attain a certain state of perfection, of happiness, of purity, of supernatural power, and so on. (Foucault, 1981, p. 367)

The pursuit of such a discursively shaped ethical self is a central concept in this thesis. As I argue throughout, explorations of ethical agency brought about through reflections on the various discourses shaping action open the possibility for young people and their communities to review and revise those ways of acting that lead to harm to self or others. Later in this chapter I explore how the agency to review the constructing an ethical self relies on an awareness of alternative discourses, within which mastery and submission can make available alternative and preferred ethical selves. As I go on to propose, alternative ethical identities can be found within alternative discursive traditions, and unacceptable subjectivities can be re-storied (White & Epston, 1990) in the light of alternative and preferred understandings. I propose such reflection and re-storying has real effects on the actions of young people in school and everyday life.

In this next section I describe four key post-structuralist notions, and their relevance to this research project: discourse, positioning, ethical reflection, and agency.

Identity as Discourse Shaped

Throughout this thesis I draw on the idea that identity is shaped by culturally available discourses (Foucault, 1982; 1984; 1986) that fashion the way people make sense of their experience and communications with others. The

term discourse refers to "a set of meanings, concepts, images, and/or statements that produce a particular version of events" (Burr, 2005, p. 64), which Parker (1992) describes as "sets of systematic assumptions about the way the world should be" (p. 313), and Winslade (2006) as a social practice, "dispersed through a cultural world in linguistic forms, and exerting a dominating effect on what can be thought or spoken" (p. 502). By these understandings, all the subtle interweaving of the many threads — age, class, occupation and gender, to name a few — which go to make up identity, are each constructed through the discourses that are present in culture.

In spite of the profoundly shaping effects of discourse on the meaning of experience, people do not, in the main, notice the presence of discourses, nor their effects, because, as Sinclair and Monk (2005) write, "Dominant discourses are so familiar, they are taken for granted and even recede from view" (p. 340). Given that alternative and often unnoticed discourses can create distinct and incompatible versions of reality (Davies & Harré, 1990) through a narrative therapy-shaped reflection (White & Epston, 1990; White, 2007) on the variety of discourses available in any given situation, alternative identity stories of self can be explored. Such an exploration of alternative ways of meaning-making can lead to responses within which hopes for the good of self and others come to be expressed in more widely acceptable ways. Thus in Chapters Seven, Eight and Ten I demonstrate making sense of the actions of young people and their pastoral carers in schools through inquiry into the discourses which shape the subjectivities of those involved, and through an exploration of their preferred ethical responses to those actions.

Positioning

In describing the shaping effects of discourse, I draw throughout this thesis on the concept of positioning. Positioning theory describes the ways that discourses and in the moment conversations make certain subjectivities available to be taken up or contested. As McLeod (2002) writes, "Our

subjectivity can be understood in terms of how we position ourselves, or we are positioned by others, in relation to these dominant discourses or dominant narratives" (p. 358). In conversation with others, a speaker "makes available a subject position which the other speaker in the normal course of events would take up. A person can be said thus to 'have been positioned by another speaker'" (Davies & Harré, 1990, p. 48).

While all discourses offer subject positions that suggest particular ways of being in and experiencing the world, prevailing discourses, through the interrelationship of truth and power, have more accessibility and influence (Sinclair & Monk, 2005). Thus speakers can position others in a conversation by adopting story lines which incorporate particular cultural stereotypes, to which others are invited to conform. However, those invited may not wish to take up offered positions for all sorts of reasons. Participants may not understand the position offered, or they may prefer to pursue their own storyline offering alternative positions to others involved, or they may recognise the position call, and attempt to resist. Or again, participants may conform to position calls because they feel they have no choice, but feel angry or oppressed or affronted or some combination of these (Davies & Harré, 1990). Thus conversation is a site wherein the politics of meaning-making are played out, where discourses call out to participants, creating "a social scene in which a subject is hailed, the subject turns around, and then accepts [or not] the terms by which he or she is hailed" (Butler, 1995, p. 6). The notion of positioning is important in this thesis, because as I argue throughout, the actions of both young people and others are shaped by the discursively shaped positions offered in the ways they describe themselves and are described by others.

Agency

I turn here to a discussion of agency, in order to explore how people can both be positioned in their own and others' speech and at the same time respond

agentically. Agentic positioning in discourse shapes my work as a researcher, as highlighted by Parker (1992) who writes to researchers:

> It is crucial that we hold to some conception of the *difference* between discourses, and show how contests between different structures of meaning operate as part of the architecture of society ... The ability to step outside a discourse and to label it in a particular way is a function of both the accessing of dominant cultural meanings *and* the marginal (critical) position which the researcher takes. (p. 33) (emphasis in the original)

In my work as researcher and as a counselling practitioner, I seek to explore with people the various discourses which shape their actions in order that responses on behalf of ethical agency become more possible for them.

Laws and Davies (2000) write of a person being simultaneously subjected, and an agentic, speaking subject. As previously discussed, people can experience the ability to go beyond the meanings of the discourses through which they are positioned and subjected, while being dependent upon those very discourses to become "someone who can speak/write meaningfully and convincingly beyond the terms of their subjection" (p. 207). The authors go on to speak of the ways in which people are "at the same time shaped by forces external to us, and yet through that very shaping, gain the possibility of power and of agency" (Laws & Davies, 2000, p. 207). Burr (2003) continues this theme, writing that "although the person, the subject, is constituted by discourse, this subject is yet capable of critical historical reflection, and is able to exercise some choice with respect to the discourses and practices that it takes up for its own use" (p. 122). This stance highlights that a first step towards the agency of personal change is to recognise the discourses and positions that are currently shaping subjectivity. However, as Davies (1991) asserts, such agency:

> is never freedom from discursive constitution of self, but the capacity to recognise that constitution and to resist, subvert

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and change the discourses themselves through which one is being constituted. It is the freedom to recognise multiple readings such that no discursive practice, or positioning within by powerful others, can capture and control one's identity. (p. 51)

For young people and for those responding to them at times of troubling actions at school there are alternative ways of making meaning of people and events. Such alternative discourses compete with each other and can create distinct and incompatible versions of reality (Davies & Harré, 1990). It is through an awareness of prevailing discourses, and through showing how they work to present a particular vision and description of the world, that people are enabled to reflect on and make choices about how they are positioned within those discourses "to actively engage with discourses in a way that is liberating" (Winslade, 2006, p. 341). By this understanding, young people and teachers alike can be both discursively positioned by others, and/or agentically take up positions within the available discourses, and "through the introduction/imposition of new discourses ... take themselves up as the newly appropriate and appropriated subjects of the new social order" (Davies & Bansel, 2007, p. 248).

In this light, I propose that what is not generally visible to people in schools who understand themselves and others in terms of rationalist ideas, is that agency stems not so much from the individual, but from an awareness of the prevailing discourses which proscribe, not only what is desirable, but what is recognisable as an acceptable form of subjectivity (Butler, 1993). Thus one purpose of this thesis is to raise awareness of alternative discursive possibilities which may be found through an exploration of the influences shaping young peoples' actions at different times and places in life. I offer this in order that young people may take up alternative identity claims, and that members of the school community might consider alternative responses to young people at times of troubling actions at school. I turn now to a further

exploration of agency, focusing particularly on the notion of resistance to discursive positioning.

Agentic resistance.

Given that young people and teachers are part of many relationships, within those relationships they will meet often widely varying ways of making sense of the world and others' actions within it. Thus, even within the sphere of prevailing current educational discourse, a multiplicity of local realities co-exist: there are always alternate ways of talking and being available. Given the presence of a number of possible discourses available in any event, each of which may be offering an alternative view, "it follows that the dominant or prevailing discourse, or common sense, is continually subject to contestation and resistance" (Burr, 2003, p. 69). As each participant in a conversation has a history of being in multiple positions and engaged in various forms of discourse, "such a being is not inevitably caught in the subject position that the particular narrative, and the related discursive practices, might seem to dictate" (Davies & Harré, 1990, p. 48). As Winslade (2006) writes, people may refuse too narrow an interpretation of their intentions or actions and seek a sense of being able to regulate one's own life, and a desire to intervene in one's life according to one's intentions (see also White, 2007). This notion draws on the idea of persons as actors in a moral universe, "concerned with negotiating for themselves a credible, and creditable, moral position" (Burr, 2003, p. 135).

In this sense, the function of language is not so much to describe things as they are, but rather for people to "bring off a representation of themselves or the world that has a liberating, legitimating, or otherwise positive effect for them" (Burr, 2003, p. 137). Here the understanding of language is performative (Gergen, 1999; Burr 2003) — language does something for the speaker, something more than simply describing experience. In speaking, the person seeks to shape the understanding of the experience described.

While what Jenkins (2009) refers to as peoples' ethical strivings may be captured or restrained by dominant cultural discourses, or expressed following a "misguided blueprint or recipe" (p. 4) for living and relating to others, nonetheless it is possible to focus on "the discovery, naming and actualisation of [peoples'] own ethics and preferences" (Jenkins, 2009, p. 15). Thus I am concerned throughout this research project with the exploration, naming and clarification of people's ethics, and their practices of ethical behaviour. I propose that it is through the exposition of the effects of prevailing discourse, and the subsequent exploration of preferred ethical intentions, that young people can take up agentic resistance to faulty blueprints which have previously shaped their actions in unacceptable ways.

Summary

I have described post-structuralism as focusing on inherited language as the site within which meaning is made. This focus leads me to an interest in the discursive practices which have led to historical truth claims becoming dominant explanations of the human condition. Shaped by these ideas I explore the discourses at work when young people become positioned as candidates for suspension or exclusion. I have described how a post-structuralist stance supports joining with communities to expose games of truth which render alternative understandings of the human condition invalid, in order to make space for alternative understandings and their effects. As Davies (1989) writes:

> who one is, is always an open question with a shifting answer
> depending upon the positions made available within one's own
> and others' discursive practices, and within those practices,
> the stories through which we make sense of our own and
> others' lives. (p. 229)

Social Constructionism

Within the realm of psychology, the ideas that I have been discussing up to this point have been taken up within psychology (see for example Gergen (1999, 2003) and Burr (2003)) and by dialogic theorists (see for example Shotter (1997, 2004)) to explore "talk, writing and social encounters as sites of struggle and conflict, where power relations are acted out and contested" (Burr, 2003, p. 57). These local sites of identity production through struggle and conflict, as discursive resources are employed, are the focus of my inquiry.

Social constructionists highlight that such sites of contest for identity are found in the everyday conversations and records in which people are described — from playground talk, to school files, to Facebook entries, and so on. In Chapter Seven, I give a detailed account of an exploration of one such site of contest for how Peter is described in the First School.

Social constructionists focus on how people might negotiate the way events are described, explained or interpreted. In these ongoing sites of contest for identity, people "actively construct accounts to try and build defensible identities or to have their version of events legitimated or endorsed by others in the interaction" (Burr, 2003, p. 57). In this light, like post-structuralism, social constructionist theorists emphasise how the meaning of experience is created (Gergen, 1999; Shotter & Gergen, 1989). In order to explore the ways taken-for-granted descriptions of experience in schools shape the subjectivities of those described, I draw here on Gergen (1999, pp. 48 - 50) who proposed four assumptions which inform social constructionist thought: That the terms by which the world and people are understood are neither required nor demanded by what there is: "There are unlimited descriptions and explanations possible for an event ... we are not locked into these conventions of understanding" (p. 48); that language gains its meaning from the ways it is used within relationships: "Thus what we take to be true is not a product of an individual mind, rather the agreements, negotiations,

affirmations of coordination between persons" (p. 48); that the language used to describe, explain or otherwise represent reality, fashions our futures. Traditions such as self, truth, morality, education, depend "on a continuous process of generating meaning together" (p. 49). Thus if we long for change, we must "confront the challenge of generating ... new ways of talking and writing that simultaneously challenge existing traditions of understanding, and offer new possibilities for action" (p. 49); and that reflection on our forms of understanding is vital to our future well-being: social constructionism is interested in questioning premises, suspending the obvious and listening to alternative framings of reality, "leading to the kind of dialogue that might lead to common ground" (p. 50).

In light of these descriptions of post-structuralist and social constructionist thought, in this thesis I research and describe the effects of proposing alternative descriptions and explanations for young peoples' actions at school; I demonstrate how agreements can be sought with school pastoral participants that alternatives are possible, and lead to new possibilities for action; and I explore the effects of suspending taken-for-granted meaning-making in favour of dialogue and inclusion of alternative responses.

Social Constructionist Research

As a social constructionist researcher I ask how the meaning made of young peoples' actions at school is constructed, and how social interaction is negotiated in school spaces (Vickers, 2007). According to social constructionist research, all meaning-making, including research such as this thesis, is constructed according to the theoretical perspective one employs (Kaufmann, 2011). Whatever is produced by way of research is always socially constructed, for, as with schools' interpretations of young peoples' actions, the meanings I draw on arise in and out of interactive human community (Crotty, 1998), and are specific to particular times and places (Lock & Strong, 2010). As Burr (2003) emphasises, "All knowledge is derived from looking at the world from some perspective or other, and is in the service

of some interests and not others ... none is THE truth" (p. 6) (emphasis in the original). As Gergen (2001) asserts, research shaped by these ideas carries "an enormous emancipatory potential, granting us a capacity to step outside the taken-for-granted and to break loose from the sometimes strangulating grip of the commonplace" (p. 10).

In this thesis my interest is in how young people and school staff can take up this emancipatory potential to make sense of each other in ways which support preferred identities — in ways which fit with their hopes for themselves and the wider community. By making explicit how young people come to be understood in particular ways, I seek to demonstrate how to make meaning of young people in ways which make preferred outcomes more likely. If, as this theory proposes, the way people act is closely shaped by the ways they are described, speaking about people differently increases the possibility that they will act differently, in keeping with new and preferred descriptions. As Drewery (2005) writes:

> Once we understand how different forms of subjective experience are produced, it seems to me that we have a responsibility to move forward to thinking about what forms of subjectivity would be preferred, and how different ways of speaking produce more and less preferred subjectivities. (p. 306)

This is the heart of this research project — that there are always different ways to make meaning of people and what they do, and that the subjectivities which result from the ways people are made meaning of can be re-negotiated, in order that new and preferred ways of acting, in keeping with preferred identity, can be made available.

Through an emphasis on language as a site of identity construction, social constructionism replaces the self-contained, unitary individual with a fragmented and changing, socially produced phenomenon who comes into existence and is maintained in social life. Thus Burr (2003) can write of identity as "constantly in flux, constantly changing depending on who the

person is with, in what circumstances and to what purpose" (p. 54). As Speedy (2008) emphasises, these ideas produce "identity as a verb, not a noun" (p. 42). It is in the possibility that identity is open to change that young people and school staff can work together to co-author preferred identity accounts at times of troubling actions at school.

I turn now to an exploration of how current educational discourse shapes schools' responses to young people at times of unacceptable actions at school.

CHAPTER 3: CURRENT EDUCATIONAL DISCOURSE AND AVAILABLE ALTERNATIVES

Introduction

Before moving to available alternatives, in the following sections I explore current educational discourse through a brief history of the rationalist thought which, I assert, underpins much of current educational discourse; through an exploration of the means by which schools and people within them are shaped by these taken-for-granted ideas; and through a consideration of the ethical stances schools take up in response to current educational discourse and MoE requirements. My aim is to demonstrate how and with what effects rationalist discourses interpret young people and their actions. Through making the discursively shaped effects of interpretations of young people and their actions transparent, I propose that it is not only possible to interpret young peoples' actions differently, it is in keeping with schools' own ethical desires to do so.

I continue to consider taken-for-granted interpretations of young peoples' actions as drawing on particular cultural and historical roots. Following Rose (1996), I ask "Where, how, and by whom are aspects of the human being rendered problematic, according to what systems of judgment and in relation to what concerns?" (p. 25). My purpose is to demonstrate that interpretations of young peoples' actions at school that lead to suspension and exclusion are not so much true, as they are the result of people taking up such particular historical and cultural understandings (Foucault, 1997). I enquire as to "whether children who come to be described in these ways could be better served by alternative ways of viewing difference" (Graham, 2007, p. 23).

School Diversity

As institutions, schools are diverse — both between schools and within. As Ball (1997) eloquently describes, schools are complex, contradictory, organisations, "assembled over time to form a bricolage of memories,

commitments, routines, bright ideas and policy effects" (p. 317). Ball (1997) goes on to note that like other institutions, schools are a site of "the interweaving of certain historic and more immediate (and sometimes future, possible) discourses" (p. 317). While there are many and competing versions of what school is for, and how best to achieve that, Usher and Edwards (1994) describe current educational discourse as widely influenced by discourses which are "founded on the human and social sciences" (pp. 46-47). These discursive assumptions about the way the world should be routinely shape the way young peoples' actions are interpreted, and increase the chances of suspension and exclusion being considered at times of unacceptable actions at school.

Rationalist Assumptions

Western, rationalist understandings are particularly influential in shaping much of the aims, ideals, and exemplars in New Zealand mainstream schools, through an emphasis on self-possession, self-containment, and self-actualisation (Gergen, 1999; White, 1995). This has been highlighted in New Zealand by Codd and Sullivan (2005) who write of "the promotion of an extreme form of selfish individualism in Aotearoa New Zealand since 1984" (p. 71), within which "the moral and ontological primacy of individuals has been emphasised rather than the socio-historical collectivity of which they are a part" (p. 72). This emphasis on individualism is reflected in the language of the Prime Minister's Science Advisory Committee, writing, "In general, most of the risky and impulsive behaviours of adolescence reflect incomplete maturation of self-control and judgement (Gluckman, 2011, p. 2). Such individualising perspectives are seen in a focus on individual curriculum assessment in schools, in individuals being held accountable for their actions apart from the social discursive influences which contribute to their actions, and in the tendency for schools to respond to the individual young person rather than through a process of peer, family and community response.

School institutions draw on these emphases, in keeping with a goal of forming young people for their good and the good of the wider community. In this light, suspension or exclusion is an ethical action taken by a school, often under duress, in protection of, and hopes for, the advancement of its students and community. As I shall argue in detail, my concern is with how the ways young peoples' actions are interpreted affects the subjectivity, and hence the actions, of the person described. I argue that, where the actions of young people are understood according to rationalist interpretations of disorder or disability (for example, continual disobedience, oppositionally defiant behaviour, disruptive behaviour and so on), disordered subjectivities are conferred on young people as truth-tellings rather than simply one possible way of making meaning of what has occurred. I argue that, with benign intent, such rationalist interpretations routinely invoke responses of either remediation (pastoral care, alternative education) or removal (putting outside the classroom, stand downs, suspensions, and exclusion).

Thus in this thesis I propose that the use of suspension and exclusion in New Zealand schools as a response to unacceptable actions at school is as much a result of the rationalist interpretive frame through which young peoples' actions are made sense of, as it is due to the actions of the young people themselves. As I discuss below, unacceptable actions must be responded to. However, I propose and demonstrate that alternative interpretations of young peoples' actions can lead to different, more effective, and, I maintain, ethically desirable responses being made available to schools.

Key Questions to Ask of Current Educational Discourse

Given an analysis of suspension and exclusion from school as, at least in part, an outcome of interpretations made in the light of socially and historically shaped current educational discourse, I ask: What are the "truths" which shape current educational discourse, and how do they come to have truth status? How does that truth status function within the institution of school as

"an authoritative knower of young people" (Harwood, 2006, p. 7)? How is it that young people take up good or troubled subjectivities within the school institution? How are young people "able, obliged, to recognise themselves in these subjectivities" (Foucault et al., 1988, p. 4)?

In this section I explore the question: What are the "truths" that shape current educational discourse, and how do they come to have truth status? I begin my response by offering an account of how, among the many discursive influences in schools, rationalist versions of truth have come to be influential within current educational discourse.

What Are The "Truths" That Shape Current Educational Discourse?

I draw here on a contesting understanding of truth, standing with Foucault's (1986) aim of "detaching the power of truth from the forms of hegemony, social, economic, and cultural, within which it operates at the present time" (Foucault, 1986, p. 75). By this understanding, what is taken to be true within schools, as elsewhere, can be described as the currently accepted way of making meaning of a given event in this place and time. Within current educational discourse, the understandings of rationalist science provide much of the language, and the authority, for what passes as "true", and particularly so in the interpretation of the actions of young people which have them as candidates for suspension and exclusion.

A brief history.

Within Western cultural history (see for example Foucault, 1972; Jenkins, 1990; Peters, 2005; Popkewitz & Brennan, 1997; White, 2007) the systematic ordering of knowledge about human life which resulted from the Western Enlightenment has led to a belief that such systematic knowledge can direct social action and guarantee the future betterment of individuals and of society (Fish, 1999). In pursuit of the good of the individual, and the good of the community at large, the self-governing individual, the self-regulated learner

was sought through systems of identification and division (Harwood, 2006; Popkewitz, 2001). Desiring to know the world through observation, scientific disciplinary regimes — education, medicine, psychology and so on — generated languages of description and explanation (Flaskas, 2002). These languages served, and continue to serve, to classify selves as healthy or unhealthy, intelligent or unintelligent, normal or abnormal, generating an "enormous interlocking arrangement of assumptions, equipments, writings and so on, in effect, an entire tradition or way of life" (Gergen, 1999, p. 57). In service of "a knowledge cloaked in benevolence" (Popkewitz, 2001, p. 336), and "a sovereignty of the good" (Graham, 2007, p. 203), moral institutions were developed — institutions such as prisons, factories, hospitals and schools — charged with the disciplinary power of "disseminating knowledge as truth", with the virtuous aim to "render unruly bodies productive" (Foucault, 1984, p. 58).

Over the course of the twentieth century, rationalist languages of description and explanation generated by the sciences have increasingly come to shape the ways in which various social authorities, including schools, understand people and their actions (Rose, 1996). The Enlightenment claim to certainty and precision through truths that are universal is a legacy which continues to shape both Western society and current educational discourse within it (Usher & Edwards, 1994). However, where it is perceived as a neutral source of truth, rationalist discourse obscures its historical formation within the cultural practices, interpretive traditions, networks of beliefs, and above all language of the communities from which it arises. This obscurity leads to "a consistent failure to examine science as a social practice and as a historical and cultural product" (Usher & Edwards, 1994, p. 36). In this thesis I attempt one such examination in order to make alternative interpretations of young peoples' actions available to schools in their pursuit of the good of the young person and the community.

Trusting in science-based authority, teachers and others take up rationalist descriptions of order and disorder to interpret what they are seeing, and as a guide to act in helpful ways. However, rationalist discourses which constitute and prefer young people as active meaning-making subjects, with knowledge about self, equally constitute inactive learners, and those without knowledge about self. Such young people may be seen as disordered (Harwood, 2006) and as subjects for normalising and regulatory practices (Graham, 2007). I maintain it is the creation of such categories of disordered identity which makes the use of suspension and exclusion from school more likely for young people so described. As such, rationalist discourses do not so much exist in some "neutral, transcendental realm of 'science' but [are] very much part of the day-to-day practices of governmentality and social control" (Usher & Edwards, 1994, p. 50).

Neo-liberal discourse.

Within the broad context of rationalist discourse, current educational discourse, and within that educational research, is shaped by ideas from neo-liberalism. Olssen and Peters (2005) describe neo-liberalism as a politically imposed discourse which "constitutes the hegemonic discourse of western nation states" (p 314). In a similar vein, Fitzsimmons (2000) writes of neo-liberal discourse as "not just one discourse among many; it has become a 'master discourse'" which "effectively silences all other voices" (p. 14).

In the area of research, this widespread and influential discourse supports a reinvigorated interest in scientifically based research, what Lather (2006) refers to as "a 'repositivization' ... at work in neo-liberal times" (p. 783). Such neo-liberal discourse focuses on efficiency, effectiveness, standards, outcomes, and impact. Research shaped by these ideas claims to ensure the highest validity, and provide the best evidence for what works in schools (see St.Pierre & Roulston, 2006). In this context, government funding for university research has been tied to outcomes of a specified, narrow, quantifiable kind,

which in turn has been accompanied by reductions in and competition over funding.

In reflecting on the effects of neo-liberal discourse on current educational discourse, Davies and Bansel (2007) highlight that the discourse and practices of neo-liberalism, including government policies for education and training, have been at work on and in schools in capitalist societies "in a remarkably concerted fashion" (p. 247) since at least the 1980s, reconstituting public institutions such as schools as part of the market, wherein education is represented "as an input–output system which can be reduced to an economic production function" (Olssen & Peters, 2001, p 324). By this analysis, "schools and universities have arguably been reconfigured to produce ... highly individualized, responsibilized subjects", (Davies & Bansel, 2007, p. 248), what Olssen and Peters (2001) describe as "economically self-interested Subjects" (p. 314).

Bowers (1997) noted that these taken-for-granted cultural patterns have effects for what becomes important in schools and universities. For example, there is the promotion of versions of knowledge which legitimate technical progress and individual centeredness, on behalf of "technological and economic competitiveness" (p. ix). Within this discourse, "knowledge which is not associated with the modern individualistic and technologically oriented culture of change [is] viewed as low-status" and thus "largely excluded from the nation's classrooms" (Bowers, 1997, p. 1).

Further focusing on social and environmental impacts, Bowers (1997) describes neo-liberal discourse as "a culture of denial" (p. vii), wherein the effects of consumer lifestyles on the future viability of natural systems, the limited power of science to reverse global environmental trends, the need for modern people to learn from other cultures, and the risks to future generations of current Western lifestyles, are obscured and denied. On behalf of an eco-justice pedagogy, Bowers (2001) emphasises that schools "should avoid the sense of certainty that comes with the reification of Western ideas

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and values" (p. 23), in favour of interaction with local communities and their "organic memories" (p. 30) which "encompass the narratives, ceremonies, customs and practices of moral reciprocity, everyday patterns reinforced through face-to-face relationships" (p. 24), in order "to make implicit cultural patterns explicit" (p. 30).

Within neo-liberal discourse, traditions are seen as irrelevant and as inhibiting progress. Under such discursive influence, "the loss of cultural diversity in approaches to community self-sufficiency thus becomes framed as irrelevant and a hindrance to attaining benefits of the modern lifestyle" (Bowers, 2001, p. 36). Writing of the metaphors which shape much educational reform as including individual freedom, empowerment, and critical reflection, Bowers (2001) highlights how such metaphors frame the purpose of education in terms of emancipating the individual from all forms of communal authority and responsibility. "Generally unrecognized is how [such] educational metaphors reflect an idealized image of individualism that fits more the needs of a market-dominated culture than the view of community held by Gandhi, Wendell Berry and the Luddites" (p. 20), and I add, of Maori and Pasifika communities in New Zealand and beyond. As Olssen and Peters (2001) write, neo-liberalism "denies the capacity of local traditions, institutions and cultural values to mediate, negotiate, reinterpret and transmute the dominant model of globalization and the emergent form of knowledge capitalism on which it is based" (p. 330). Continuing this theme in a later paper focused on the effects of neo-liberal discourse in New Zealand, Peters (2011) describes neo-liberalism as "reflecting "the lack of any social or collective dimension in explaining behavior, [wherein] different cultural (e.g. Maori) and gender values are covertly screened out" (p. 91). Peters goes on to assert that such discourse has "served to subjugate and mask the histories and 'voices' of Others who have been consigned to the forgotten margins – women, ethnic minorities, indigenous peoples, and so on" (p. 92). In such a discursive environment, Fitzsimmons (2000) asserts that "those with the appropriate cultural capital are reinforced with success, while the rest are not" (p. 11).

While it is beyond the scope of this study to explore the curricular implications of neo-liberal individualism and consumerism, the assessment of young people's unacceptable actions as evidence of their individual selves, and the school-based responses which under-value peer-, family- and community-based responses are discursive effects which impact this study. My intention, therefore, is to contribute to "an understanding of how to regenerate the sense of local responsibility and mutual support that has been undermined by national and international market forces" (Bowers, 2001, p. 11).

Shaped, categorised and measured by the individualist truth-stances of rationalist and neo-liberal discourses, young people and others may come to believe that who they are is of their own making, that their success or otherwise reflects some truth about themselves. This positioning effect obscures the cultural discursive influence in young peoples' identities, and in the actions taken in the light of those identities. My concern is that the hegemony of what is identified as valuable and necessary within dominant discourse leaves unquestioned the taken-for-granted individualist interpretations which underpin them. I maintain that the actions, such as suspension and exclusion, which can flow from such discursively shaped interpretations, obscure and under-value otherwise available community-based responses.

As discussed in Chapter Two, and according to Foucault (1986), truth can be seen as "the ensemble of rules according to which the true and the false are separated and specific effects of power attached to the true" (p. 74). In order to explore the effects of cultural discursive influence in young peoples' identities and actions, it is necessary to detach "the power of truth from the forms of hegemony, social, economic, and cultural, within which it operates at the present time" (Foucault, 1986, p. 75). One way to achieve this is to name and explore the effects of prevailing and alternative discourses. Because there are always many and contradictory discursive practices that each

person could engage in (Davies and Harré, 1990), it is helpful to name and explore the effects of prevailing and alternative discourses:

> such that we might learn to recognise the personal and social implications of each discursive practice in which we are caught up-either as speakers or as hearers. This allows the possibility of refusal of any particular discourse or one's positioning within it, the possibility of choices between discourses, or the bringing to bear of one set of discursive practices on another to modify them and the positions being made available within them. (Davies, 1990, p. 346)

Thus while Olssen and Peters (2005) can describe neo-liberalism as "the hegemonic discourse of western nation states" (p 314), and Fitzsimmons (2000) as the "master discourse" (p. 14), alternative discourses, though much restrained, are always available for reflection and ethical consideration. One such example in researching children and youth is described by Davies (2005) as a:

> strong movement away from individualized, developmental approaches [moving] toward a focus on sociocultural contexts, on institutional contexts, and on discursive frameworks as they inform what children know and do, and as they inform what researchers know and do when they ask questions about, interact with and write about children and young people. Related to this change is a questioning of the dominant discourses that value and instill competitive individualism in students and in its place a valuing of social and interactive skills, of a capacity. (p. 146)

In this research project I draw on this alternative discourse, in order to understand the actions of young people at school in terms of sociocultural contexts, institutional contexts, and discursive frameworks. I propose that such alternative interpretations, particularly those interpretations offered by

peers, family, and community, offer real alternatives to schools in responding to troubling actions at school. With Fitzsimmons (2000) I see that the educational community has "a role to play in bringing alternative discourses to neo-liberalism to the fore, and in analyzing some of the flaws in its marketised and scientistic accounts of education" (p. 14).

Rationalist shaping of the ideal person.

Under the influence of socio-historical understandings, and within the diverse hopes and purposes of the institution of school, some taken-for-granted understandings as to the nature of an ideal student have come to predominate in current educational discourse. Within a "discourse of individualism" (Burr, 2003, p. 106), Popkewitz and Brennan (1988) describe a good student as one who is teachable, secular, conforming to approved learning styles, reflective on their thoughts and actions, taking pleasure in being educated, and desiring to be self-disciplined. Drawing on similar understandings, Rose (1996) describes the ideal modern person (and thus desired student) as "coherent, bounded, individualized, intentional, the locus of thought, action, and belief, the origin of its own actions, the beneficiary of a unique biography" (p. 3). I suggest it against such norms that disordered subjectivity is assigned to some young people.

How Do These Socio-Cultural Understandings Take On a Truth Status?

With the authority of science (Harwood, 2006; Usher & Edwards, 1994), and of good intent (Popkewitz, 2001; Graham, 2007), current educational discourse takes on a status of truth, a taken-for-granted reality, through constant repetition. Just as any single usage does not achieve truth status, but "relies on the existence of the discourse pattern in order to make sense" (Winslade, 2005, p. 354), so the truth-claims within current educational discourse, "after long use [seem] firm, canonical, and obligatory to a people,

and thus an illusion of which one has forgotten that it is an illusion" (Gergen, 1999, p. 13); a metaphor which has taken up the status of a fact (White, 1997). As Harwood and Rasmussen (2004) write, "It is when discourses habitually become so familiar that there is no longer any pause for reflection [that] they are able to appear truthful and comfortable" (p. 305). Given the at times harmful effects of current educational discourse's pastoral responses, it is the pervasive and taken-for-granted nature of current educational discourse which I seek to unsettle in this thesis, in order that alternative interpretations are able to be considered.

Diagnosis within current educational discourse.

Shaped by the sustained and combined reiterations of rationalist discourses, current educational discourse interprets young peoples' actions in terms of what is normal, categorising educational endeavour according to norms such as developmental age, and stage theory (Graham & Slee, 2008). Drawing on available norms to guide pastoral responses to young peoples' actions, teachers interpret the 'truth' about young peoples' acts of living. Thus a teacher describing a young person as having "behaviour problems", draws on a potential diagnosis for whatever action is being described (Harwood, 2006). As Graham (2006) writes, "It is hard to describe or conceptualize children's classroom mis/behavior in a way that does not invoke these dangerous categorizing discourses" (p. 20).

Finding a language for interpretation: The DSM.

Within current educational discourse, teachers are inadvertently provided with an expert vocabulary for diagnosis by the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) (American Psychiatric Association, 2013), an internationally recognised text for the diagnosis and treatment of mental illness, which both "validates psychiatry as a science [and] allows for the authority of truth telling" (Harwood, 2006, p. 67). While the Introduction section of the DSM 4 makes plain that, for the authors, the DSM is "meant to

be employed by individuals with appropriate clinical training and experience in diagnosis" (American Psychiatric Association, 2000, p. xxiii), and that "a clinician who is unfamiliar with the nuances of an individual's cultural frame of reference may incorrectly judge as psychopathology those variations in behaviour, belief or experience that are particular to the individual's culture" (American Psychiatric Association, 2000, p. xxiv), still the line between trained clinician usage of the vocabulary of the DSM and more general usage, as for example within schools, has become blurred over time. Harwood (2006) writes, "So pervasive are the discourses of psychiatric disorder that it is difficult to imagine how behaviour problems can be conceived without its influence, even if it is only to repudiate the possibility of a diagnosis" (p. 19).

While the categories of DSM may be useful for describing and understanding a young person's actions, my point here is that historical and cultural values implicit within such descriptions are seldom apparent in their usage. In their study of cultural values implicit in DSM diagnoses, Leising, Rogers and Ostner (2009) maintain that in describing any disorder, "prescriptions about desirable behaviours must nevertheless be present ... at least implicitly [which] refer to how a person *should be*, rather than to how a person *is*" (p. 231)(emphasis in the original). The authors note that such implicit values of how a person ought to be are found throughout the diagnostic criteria of the DSM.

I detail the values described by Leising, Rogers and Ostner (2009) at length here, in order to demonstrate the complex norms against which young people can be measured. I argue that to fail in measuring up to such norms is to risk being interpreted as at least inadequate, and perhaps disordered. These values and expectations of an ideal personhood, drawn from the DSM, include that young people ought to be:

> self-reliant and independent; self-confident, but in a realistic manner; have a stable, positive and realistic self-image; be self-confident and autonomous; get along with others; be confident

and relaxed in social situations; be flexible and adaptable; consider themselves equal to others; be accountable and act responsibly; tolerate uncertainty and imperfection; have courage and trust in yourself; focus on what really matters; be conventional; be sexually modest; express oneself clearly; adhere to cultural norms; have ordinary experiences and realistic fantasies; have self-control; be able to control impulses and emotions; display anger only when appropriate, and with moderate intensity; connect with others emotionally and treat them fairly; display consistent and authentic emotions; display appropriate emotional involvement; treat others fairly, with empathy and respect; and assess relationships with others realistically. (p. 232)

Where a young person does not conduct themselves in keeping with these norms, teachers may work to have them become so, for their good and the good of the wider community. Where such efforts fail in their goal, the young person may be told the "truth" about themselves (Harwood, 2004) — interpreted/diagnosed as either incapable (dysfunctional), or unwilling (behaviour disordered) (Peters, 2005). In either situation, the subjectivity/truth-telling offered to the young person ("X is dysfunctional", "Y is disordered") has real consequences upon them, "constructing deficit individual subjectivities, forming and confirming inferior self-identities" (Graham, 2007, p. 85).

Having discussed current educational discourse's truth status, I turn now to a second question: How does that truth status function within the institution of school as an authoritative knower of young people (Harwood, 2006)?

How Do Schools Become Authoritative Knowers of Young People?

Teachers and others in schools draw on current educational discourse to interpret school events in pursuit of an ethical goal of best-practice education. However, where it invokes diagnostic criteria, the seemingly innocuous use of language deriving from Western rationalist discourse in schools can be problematic. Graham (2007) writes, "Teachers who describe a young person's behaviour as hyperactive, distractible, or impulsive set a different ship in motion than do teachers who describe a child as having difficulty in 'learning how to learn'" (p. 101). In drawing on rationalist vocabulary within current educational discourse, teachers take up "a proxy for expert knowledge ... that links knowledge of disorder to the student" (Harwood, 2006, p. 94), further promoting taken-for-granted descriptions of what is and is not normal. Through the unquestioned use of culturally shaped language, teachers risk becoming what Gergen (1999) calls "unwitting cultural imperialists" (p. 17).

School as clinic.

By this analysis, in drawing on the vocabularies of Western medicine and psychology to make sense of young peoples' actions, the school becomes part of a "larger-than-life clinic" (Harwood, 2006, p. 144) that, with benign intent, responds to young peoples' troubling actions at school with "discursive practices that link health and knowledge" (Harwood, 2010, p. 441). Such interpretations, having gained authority through an association with science, and through reiteration, are passed on as truth-tellings to young people and their families, assigning to some young people a disabled or disordered subjectivity, and increasing the likelihood of practices of remediation and/or removal being invoked for the good of the individual and the community.

Community as clinic.

The larger-than-life clinic referred to here is much wider than the institution of the school itself. The vocabularies of diagnosis circulate throughout New Zealand (and wider) communities, and among peer groups and media of all ages (Harwood, 2006), including well-intentioned family members, friends, relatives, neighbours, work colleagues and professionals (Tomm et al., 1992). When a young person is spoken of as being disordered, these words can come from a number of people, some associated with institutions such as schools, and others not. They may be in line at the supermarket, in the family, or be peers or friends, "commiserating, gossiping, philosophising, exchanging advice" (Ochs & Capps, 2001, p. 8). In drawing on this seemingly innocuous, everyday language to describe young peoples' behaviour, people, including teachers and peers, assign identity characteristics that, in conjunction with those "specific and technical discourses" (Slee, 1995, p. 168), create subjectivities regarded as disordered. As Foucault (1972) puts it, such truth games "systematically form the objects of which they speak" (p. 49). As I have argued, it is the assignment of such disordered subjectivities which increases the risk for some young people of becoming candidates for suspension and exclusion from school.

Thus, according to the analysis used in this thesis, historical and cultural truths, valued and authorised through science, altruism, and reiteration within current educational discourse, become authoritative knowers of young people through the technologies of diagnosis, recognition, and division: the separation of young people into remediation and/or exclusion for their good and the good of others. As Graham (2007) writes, such benign intentions speak into existence "an irregular, ungoverned object — the 'behaviourally disordered' child,   resulting in referrals to behaviour management programmes ... school counsellors or guidance officers, alternative site placement, paediatricians, psychologists, and/or psychiatrists" (p. 4).

Authoritative knowing in case files: Entextualisation.

The process of interpretation/diagnosis takes place in many everyday school interactions where people are involved in telling the truth to the young people (Harwood, 2006) and others. Such iterations of truth from experts, school, family, and peers take many forms, from the casual classroom or playground interactions, to entextualisation (Graham, 2007) in formal school reports, school discipline records, Board of Trustees reports, counsellor notes, psychologist and Resource Teacher of Learning and Behaviour (RTLB) reports, and so on. Referring to the texts of reports, Graham (2007) writes:

> Entextualization results in the representation of the child through a case file which objectifies the child and their alleged actions in clinical terms, [where] no longer does this statement function as an incident report, it has become an indictment of character and conduct. (p. 14)

Here the case file is "no longer a monument for future memory, but a document for future use" (Foucault, 1977, p. 191); the young person's identity becomes constituted according to the language and implicit cultural values of the statements recorded. The authority of those speaking, the reiteration of what is said, and the benign intent to help, all make the conclusions recorded in documents and other tellings particularly difficult to refuse (Graham, 2007; McCarthy, 2001). I present and analyse a specific example of this process of entextualisation in Chapter Seven.

Having discussed how schools become authoritative knowers of young people, I turn now to the third of the key questions presented above: How is it that young people take up subjectivities within the school institution? How are young people "able, obliged, to recognise themselves in these subjectivities" (Foucault et al., 1988, p. 4)?

Taking Up Subjectivities: Technologies of the Self

Being told truth-statements about who they are creates for a young person an available subjectivity, to be taken up or contested. Being sent to the school guidance counsellor or the Principal's office also serves as a telling, and as possibly as a reinforcement of the "truth" that a young person is a "problem" (Harwood, 2006). Over time, young people (and others) can come to believe what dominant language about their identity presents as "truths about their character, nature, purposes, [producing] a totalising effect on their lives" (White, 1995, p. 22). It is thus through carrying culturally approved languages of description and explanation into their daily lives that young people (and others) "participate in [their] own subjugation" (Gergen, 1999, p. 39).

In this way, subjectivities are powerfully offered to young people within discourses, whose authority is variously strengthened by scientific language, by peer language, through reiteration over time, and by the authoritative positioning and benign intent of the speakers. Thus young people take up the language of such subjectivities, and are "able, obliged, to recognise themselves in these subjectivities" (Foucault et al., 1988, p. 4).

Subjectivity in flux.

However, in the presence of the powerful shaping effects of prevailing discourse, I also emphasise that young peoples' identities, and the actions that flow from them, are fluid, and open to being shaped and re-shaped by the language of encounters they experience. Through reflective conversations that explore the possibility of ethical agency and preferred reputation, young people and their communities can co-construct alternative identities which shape their actions differently. Drawing on Deleuze, Jenkins (2009) writes of lives continually shaped by a multitude of "flows of becoming" (p. xi), constructing a somewhat unstable sense of identity in the flux "between our ethical strivings and the restraining influences of dominant cultural interests and power relations" (Jenkins, 2009, p. xi). In each

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encounter of language and social interaction, the self "is constantly in flux, constantly changing depending on who the person is with, in what circumstances and to what purpose" (Burr, 2003, p. 54).

Alternate discourses available.

Rationalist discourses are not the only discourses available to shape young people in schools. Alternative subjectivities can be shaped by a variety of competing discourses, and these can be co-researched with young people, their peers, teachers and families. Rather than understanding a young person as disordered, or as choosing to make wrong choices, I offer that young people and others act out of a sense of who they are seen to be within the setting within which they act — responding to what kind of interaction this is, and this in the light of their hopes for themselves and others.

I pause here to reiterate what was theorised in Chapter Two, that alternative subjectivities can be based on several key ideas: Firstly, although actions taken by young people may be unacceptable in schools and elsewhere, I propose it is most often the case that such actions spring from purposeful intentions on the part of the young person. That is, according to their lights, the young person acts in what they see as the best possible way in this situation, according to the discourses shaping their experience and interpretation of the situation. Before attempting to address the unacceptable ways that such hopes were enacted, it is most helpful to research with young people the influences shaping their actions, in order to invoke the possibility of ethical agency — that young people may exercise choice on behalf of notions of good. Secondly, where a young person is interpreted and responded to as disordered, they are more likely to enact that version of themselves. Rather than drawing on rationalist discourses to make sense of young peoples' actions, it is useful to research with the young person the very many other descriptions of them that are both available and "true". Having available alternative descriptions of self offers wider opportunities for a young person to enact themselves differently in keeping with preferred self-stories. And thirdly,

identity is a social process. In inviting young people to act differently in school it is important to join with them, and to support others in joining with them, in researching and enacting preferred identities within their communities of care. It is these audiences, these communities of support, which enrich and encourage the development of alternative identities in young people and the preferred actions which flow from those alternative identities.

I turn now to the important concept of choice. I ask: To what extent can young people be said to choose their actions, and to what extent can young people be held appropriately responsible for their actions?

Choosing to make wrong choices.

In this section I explore how current educational discourse understands young people as responsible for the choices they make. I propose that an alternative understanding of young peoples' actions, as discursively and relationally shaped, offers a possibility to create forums within which young people and their communities can explore actions taken and their effects in the light of preferred identity stories. It is in the light of such exploration that I propose invitations to responsibility (Jenkins, 1990) can be made.

I have described above how the "hand-me-down vocabulary available in culture" (Gergen, 1999, p. 20) legitimises deficit ways of describing young people, "establishing a causal link between exclusion and the recalcitrant, unreasoned child who 'chooses' to make the wrong choices" (Graham, 2007, p. 597). As Peters (2005) writes, "This notion of the self that is free to choose is not simply an abstract cultural notion; it is embodied in a whole series of practices throughout our society" (p. 393). Given a persuasive rationalist discourse which constructs young people as autonomous individuals who are imbued with a faculty of choice, actions seen as unacceptable within schools are routinely understood as a result of the young person's choice, and subsequently as their responsibility. As McNamee and Gergen (1999) write, "It is to individuals that blame and credit are largely assigned, and to whom we

apply devices of correction and restoration ... a capacity for internal deliberation and control of one's actions [is seen in many respects] as the essence of being human" (p. 6).

Responsibility for choice.

From a post-structuralist point of view, the practices of power that inform and produce dominant ways of understanding and being for young people, including their unacceptable actions, have a cultural history. Dominant discourses are not invented by individual young people who may be unaware of the nature of the power relations in which they are participating. Individual young people are not responsible for the origins of these practices. Thus the discourses which shape the identities and actions within, for example, churches or sports clubs were not produced by the people influenced by them. However, given an opportunity to explore the effects of their actions on themselves and others in the light of the discourses shaping those actions, the ongoing capacity for both complicity and resistance in all power relations enables young people to examine and challenge the nature of their participation with such discursive practices (Jenkins, 2009). Thus I propose that choice, and hence responsibility, is an expression of the complex interplay between discursive shaping of peoples' selves and actions, and the (also discursively shaped) ethical desires of those people for their and others' lives. Before holding young people responsible for their choices, I propose that schools ask: Was the young person aware of the discourses shaping their actions and of alternative discursive possibilities and their implications — that is, did they have choice available; and, were they positioned with the agency to enact choice within available alternative discourses? I turn here to a discussion of these important questions.

Being aware of discursive possibility.

People are seldom aware of the discursive shaping of their actions, nor aware of the breadth of available alternative discourses. By this analysis, subjectivity

is a largely taken-for-granted process, which may require deliberate intervention in the form of ethical reflection to be made apparent. Given the ubiquitous, and often unseen nature of discursive influence, a practice of exposing the presence of taken for granted dominant cultural interests and their effects on actions taken is necessary to allow for the possibility of ethical reflection and agentic choice. The practices of exploring the taken-for-granted and questioning the self-evident which I describe in Chapter Seven are an example of this. The contribution this thesis offers is a demonstration of conversations between counsellor, student, peers, teachers and family, in a variety of settings and across time, which help young people:

> to recognise the personal and social implications of each discursive practice in which [they] are caught up — either as speakers or as hearers. [This] allows the possibility of refusal of any particular discourse or one's positioning within it, the possibility of choices between discourses. (Davies, 1990, p. 347)

In the reflective conversations variously with counsellor, peers, and family and community members that I propose, young people have "the possibility of making decisions about their own lives, by taking up positions that carry status as moral actors in and producers of the conditions of their lives ... they participate in the creation of the narratives of their lives" (Drewery, 2005, p. 320). In such reflective conversations, change is possible through opening up marginalised and repressed discourses, making them available as alternatives from which they may fashion alternative identities (Burr, 2003). A first step towards responsibility, then, is to recognise the discourses that are currently shaping each moment's subjectivities, and what alternatives may be available. As I demonstrate in Chapter Seven, the presence of alternative discourses can be researched through an exploration of what a person is hoping for in the actions they take, asking, "What functions a person's talk might have for them, what is

at stake for them in the interaction, what purposes they are trying to achieve, and what discursive devices they employ to bring about the desired effects?" (Burr 2003, p. 127) Thus, within the power of any dominant discourse or "truth game" (Foucault, 1972), descriptions can be modified, difference is possible. As already discussed, whose re-descriptions prevail is an example of power however, as Foucault (1981, p. 95) writes, "Where there is power, there is resistance and yet this resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power".

Positioning revisited.

I turn now to the second of the enquiries suggested above: Was the young person positioned with the agency to enact choice within available alternative discourses?

Within the reflective conversations I propose herein, young people may well take up responsibility for actions taken, and desire to act differently. However, just as with identity, I propose that the capacity to act is relationally and discursively shaped. Those people and discourses influential in a young person's life must support and assist preferred actions for them to become viable alternatives in young peoples' lives. Following Foucault's analysis, Sampson (1993) argues that "power involves the manner by which persons are given a location and a subjectivity as actors within discourse" (p. 1223), through the mutual acts of recognition through which subjects accord each other the status of viable subjecthood (Davies, 2006). In this light, personhood is a status conferred upon one by others, as much as it is an agentic taking up of a preferred discursive position. As Shotter (2004) notes, "If others do not take one's expressions of self seriously, if they do not respond to your utterances and other expressions as you intend, then you are being denied your opportunity to be a person" (p. 7). Thus, when a young person acts, their activity cannot be accounted as wholly their own, "for a person's acts are inevitably 'shaped' *in part* by the acts of the others around

them, and also *in part* by their reactions to their overall surroundings (both social and physical)" (Shotter, 2012, p. 10) (emphasis in the original).

According to this stance, agency becomes a negotiated and nuanced interplay between the ethical preferences, hopes and desires of an individual, and the ethical preferences, hopes and desires of the communities which are audience to the individual's actions and desires. Importantly, this stance stresses a focus, not on individual rights to determine preferences regardless of others' needs and desires, but rather a relationally negotiated way forward which hears the ethical desires of all involved.

I draw here on what McNamee and Gergen (1999) describe as "relational responsibility" (p. 27). Rather than assigning responsibility based on notions of individual choice, relational responsibility is found in schools where the institutional ethics of safe and effective education for all are brought into conversation with the hopes and desires of an individual young person, their family and community, within an exploration of discursive shaping and positioning. That is, both the young person and the school and family participants are supported within their community to review their actions and take up ethical agency.

Without such opportunities for exploration of discursive shaping and ethical agency, young people are constrained:

> to speak as the dominant discourse permits, which means either to speak as one has been constructed by that discourse, or to speak through its gaze, perspective, and standpoint. It is not to have one's own voice but rather to be restricted to the voice that is given. (Sampson, 1993, p. 1227)

This is equally true whether the young person speaks, for example, in the voice of the school or another local community. Ethical agency lies in the awareness of discursive positioning and the possibility of choice within such positioning.

In creating forums within which the discursive blueprints of unacceptable actions and their effects can be co-researched, and within which alternative accounts of a young person's own ethical desires for life can be described, I propose schools can offer an opportunity for young people and their families to have the participatory voice within which relational agency can be found. It is from such an agentic position that I propose young people can be invited to take up responsibility for the actions they take, and move in directions in keeping with ethical intent. I return to this important area of choice and responsibility in Chapter Four where I discuss invitations to take up responsibility as a practice of narrative therapy, and again in Chapter Twelve as I discuss relational agency from the particularly Maori perspective of tino rangatiratanga.

Explorations of Ethical Intent

Becoming.

I have argued that young people and others are in an ongoing process of becoming (Jenkins, 2009), and that such becoming is shaped by prevailing discourses. In a Deleuzian post-structuralist sense, becoming is to be "other than what we have been, rather than ... becoming more true to who we are" (Winslade, 2009, p. 343), while at the same time becoming is shaped by identity stories of previous experience. In the light of such influences, and moment by moment, young people form hopes for themselves and others and, where possible, act in keeping with those — thus ethical intent. As I discuss in Chapter Seven, a person's ongoing experiences shape their personal identity stories, which in turn influences their hopes at any given moment. Thus each action is a unique, of-this-moment action while at the same time each action is taken in relation to the experiences of previous times when such action has been invoked by similar circumstances. In this light, rather than being fixed identities, young people are constantly becoming (Jackson, 2002) in keeping with their discursively shaped and storied values

and ethics, and this becoming is expressed in ways that are culturally available to them, "according to intentions that they embrace in pursuit of what they give value to in life" (White, 2007, p. 103).

Drawing on Deleuze, Jenkins (2009) writes:

> We are continually invested in a multitude of flows of becoming which involve experiences and activities, some of which are complicit with and reproduce dominant cultural interests, and some of which are resistant and produce creative and alternative interests. Specific identity conclusions are continually reached in the course of these ongoing investments. However, these are only brief stable moments within ongoing flows of becoming; they are fluid and changeable and are constantly negotiated and revised. We are not restricted to or fixed in any particular state of identity or being. (p. 11)

What they are reaching for.

The conversations about young peoples' hopes for themselves and others that I demonstrate in this thesis show the ways that young peoples' lives and actions are "shaped by specific intentions that [they] actively and wilfully engage and embrace in their acts of living" (White 2007, p. 51). An exploration of such ethical intent allows young people "to determine what certain events might say about what is important to them" (White, 2007, p. 53). In the context of young peoples' unacceptable actions, these explorations allow hopes which may have been implicit in their actions to be made explicit. An emphasis on young peoples' ethical intent avoids under-estimating young peoples' capacities for respectful and ethical behaviour (Jenkins, 2009), and invites an exploration of identities and actions congruent with their preferred ways of being — a reaching for and taking up of new

identity claims (White, 2007). As I demonstrate in Chapter Nine, drawing on the practices of narrative therapy it is possible to:

> respond to such identity claims in ways that are honouring of these, in ways that contribute to possibilities for people to more richly describe them, and to participate in the identification and creation of forums in which these claims might be performed. We can then consult these people about what they consider to be the consequences, to their lives and relationships, of the performance of these claims, and encourage them to evaluate these consequences. (White & Gower, 2000, p. 111)

Through richly exploring what is important to young people, their families, peers, workplace and school environments, spiritualities, and so on, new (though perhaps new only to school) and preferred identity conclusions can become described and available. These practices make it possible for young people to:

> separate their sense of identity from problem-saturated or deficit-centred accounts of who they are, and this has provided a basis for them to join with others in the rich description of alternative accounts of their lives, of their relationships, and of their identities. (White, 2000 a, p. 4)

Shame.

Where new and preferred identity accounts produce an experience of contradiction and dissonance with identity accounts associated with trouble at school, this may invite an experience of shame. Such shame can be enabling, signifying integrity and promoting ethical ways forward, "opening up possibilities for tolerance, and respect of difference, through practices which entail 'reaching out towards the world of the other'" (Jenkins, 2009, p. xiii). Such an enabling experience of shame offers the possibility of reparation, "an inner transformative process, involving repair of damaged and fragmented

internal worlds [and] the repair of the social relationships fractured by offending behaviour" (Froggett et al., 2007, p. 105).

However, such a transformative experience of contradiction, dissonance and shame is not readily entered into. In accommodating such a radical awareness of the effects of their ways of living on others, a young person's sense of who they are is placed in jeopardy. As Jackson (2002) writes, "In reality, [pondering their own worldview] is usually a result of enforced displacement … rather than a product of philosophical choice or idle curiosity" (p. 257). It is here that school systems of pastoral care can play an important role. In inviting young people to engage in reflective explorations of discursive shaping and ethical preference as outlined herein, schools offer young people an opportunity to engage in potentially helpful processes to which they might otherwise not have access.

A mutual invitation to counsellors.

Given that engaging mindfully with identity's "intersubjective bricolage" (Jackson, 2002) can be an unsettling, even jeopardising undertaking, the context within which the invitation is offered is important. A focus on the relationship between young people and school counsellors working together to forge selves is advanced by Jenkins' (2009) writing: "It is our own ethical becomings which inevitably promote the cessation of violence and the development of respectful ways of relating by our clients" (Jenkins, 2009, p. x). Here, the way we conduct ourselves as counsellors, and as researchers in relationship with young people, is fore-grounded. The invitation is for counsellors and other school staff, as much as for young people, to be alert to the ethical strivings that inform their/our work, and to be alert to the effects on themselves/ourselves and on others of the cultural expressions that they/we take up. In service of such a transparency and awareness of the politics of power, White (2000) advances an ethical principle that "requires us to situate our opinions, motives and actions in context of our ethnicity, class, gender, race, sexual preferences, purposes, commitments and so on" (White, Hoyt, &

Combs, 2000, p. 150). In Chapters Five and Twelve, I extend this point through a discussion of my positioning in the light of New Zealand's bi-cultural imperative.

Identity as a social process: Shared ethical intent.

As discussed above, and in the light of the social construction of identity, a young person's ethical hopes and intentions are held in tension with the ethical hopes and purposes of the communities of which they are a part. This tension calls for what Dworkin (2011) describes as "a solution to simultaneous equations" (p. 3), writing:

> We must try to find a solution that respects both the reigning principles of equal concern and personal responsibility, and we must try to do this in a way that compromises neither principle but rather finds attractive conceptions of each that fully satisfy both. (Dworkin, 2011, p. 3)

An implication of this for schools is the intentional involvement of family and peers, counsellors and school staff with young people in explorations of discursive influence and ethical preferences. By this understanding, the migration of identities (White, 1997) from those shaped by misguided blueprints to identities shaped by ethical agency is a social one.

The connection of a young person's emerging stories of ethical preference with those of their communities, locates individual narratives in a wider and social context, within networks of family, community, peer and professional relations (Froggett et al., 2007). In this way, "it is not the imprimatur of individual identity that gives a story value, but the imprimatur of a community" (Jackson, 2002, p. 62). This project of shared identity development is advanced by Denborough (2008) who invites those working to care for young people and others to link young peoples' preferred stories with those of others of similar experience. Such a linking involves conceiving of the young person's ethical desires as representing a larger social issue — their actions on behalf of justice, peace and so on. In this way, in their emerging

alternative identities, the young person joins in a collective endeavour in order to address, in some local way, the social issues of which their ethical intentions are a part. Thus the efforts of a young person to make a difference are not confined to the counselling room, but are immersed in the communities of which they are a part. As an example of such practice, the stories of the young people in this project were shaped in part by their reading of, and responding in kind, to poetry by a group of young people in South Africa. I discuss the effects and importance of this shared identity project in Chapter Twelve.

Summary

I have discussed how rationalist discourses implicit within current educational discourse understand each person as "the cause of their own 'disordered behaviour' through a faulty constitution of themselves as selves" (Laws & Davies, 2000, p. 220). I have discussed how within current educational discourse, teachers are "shaped to read and interpret behaviours" (Laws & Davies, 2000, p. 220) in keeping with rationalist understandings of individual responsibility. I have proposed that people often remain unaware of their own agency in such constructions (Shotter 2012) due to the taken-for-granted nature of dominant discourses. In this light, when a young person acts, their actions cannot be accounted as wholly their own, "for each individual's acts are partly shaped by their acting in response to the acts of the others around them" (Shotter, 2004, pp. 12–13). Thus the concept of relational responsibility, within forums of conversation, is almost opposite to the rationalised individual responsibility espoused within current educational discourse, which requires each individual "to accept responsibility for self but to shed any responsibility for others — except to participate in acts of surveillance and control" (Davies et al., 2005, p. 436). I have proposed that understanding young people in the light of relational responsibility can create an opportunity to bring together the ethical desires of both the institution and the young person and their family and communities. Thus I propose that the

subjectivities through which young people are known at school can become the outcome of carefully nuanced negotiation, in the context of relational responsibility. In Chapters Eight, Nine and Ten I theorise and demonstrate how this might be achieved.

Having discussed a history of rationalist thought within current educational discourse and its effects on the subjectivities of persons in schools, and available alternatives, I turn now to an exploration of narrative therapy, and its place both in the shaping of this research intervention and in the lives of the research participants.

CHAPTER 4: NARRATIVE THERAPY

In this research project I demonstrate how co-authoring alternative identity stories has effects on the everyday actions of young people at school. These ideas and practices are drawn from narrative therapy (Denborough, 2008; Epston, 1989; 1999; Freedman & Combs, 1996; Monk et al, 1997; Morgan, 2000; Parry & Doan, 1994; White, 1986, 1989, 1995, 1997, 2000, 2002, 2007; White & Epston, 1990). In developing what has come to be known as narrative therapy, David Epston and Michael White drew on and developed the ideas of theorists from varying disciplines. These included Bateson's ideas that mapping events through time allows for "news of difference" to be noticed (Bateson, 1979; White, 1986); Bruner's outlining of how, in the mapping of events through time, meaning is gathered into stories or narratives (Bruner, 1986; White & Epston, 1990); and Foucault's (1972) ideas that discourses, taken-for-granted ways of understanding and doing things, constrain peoples' storying of their lives to standardising norms (White & Epston, 1990).

In the light of these ideas, Epston and White offered that the lives and the relationships of persons are shaped by the socially negotiated knowledges and stories which give meaning to their experiences, and by the practices of self and relationship endorsed by these knowledges and stories. White and Epston (1990) theorised that exploring and exposing discursive constraints leads to the possibility of people agentically re-authoring their own preferred accounts of life, in relationship with the communities of which they are a part.

Narrative Therapy as Post-Structuralist

Narrative therapy looks beyond the "rationalist understandings of human nature [that] are pervasive in contemporary western culture" (White 2000, p. 15). While rationalist understandings recast action as "a surface manifestation of ... needs, personal properties, characteristics, attributes, impulses, drives, motives, desires, assets, and so on — or disorders of these elements,

essences and forces (White 2000, p. 15), post-structuralist narrative therapy sees peoples' actions as emerging in the context of co-negotiated, storied selves. In stepping away from rationalist diagnoses and certainties, narrative therapy allows for people to be consulted about how their own knowledges can be applied to the concerns of their lives (White, 2000). In this way narrative therapists:

> privilege the voices of the people consulting them in the attribution of meaning to selected events of their lives, of the interpretation of the links between these events and the valued themes of their lives, in their deductions about what this reflects in terms of what is important to them, and in their conclusions about what this suggests about their own and each other's identities. (White, 2007, p. 82)

Such re-authoring of life stories does not take place outside of discursive shaping. Rather, the ability to have voice in one's own story rests in the awareness of competing discourses, and in the possibility of ethical choice within the available discursive positions (Davies, 1990). This emphasis has people as "participants in the conversations that produce the meanings of their lives" (Drewery, 2005, p. 315), and who, as such, "are participants in the production of their selves (or we might also say, in the formation of their identities)" (Drewery 2005, p. 315).

Storied Lives

In pursuit of a person's preferred accounts of life and self, narrative therapists seeks to inquire:

> Into what is happening, into how things are becoming other than what they were, or into the potential for things to become other than what they are. It is to engage in the rich description of the knowledges and skills of living expressed in this, and in the exploration of the possibilities, limitations and possible dangers

associated with how things are, and with how they are becoming other than how they were. (White & McLean, 1995, p. 112)

Thus narrative therapy can be seen as the careful review of problem-saturated identity accounts and their effects, and a re-authoring of preferred identity narratives (Morgan, 2000; White, 1989, 1997, 2007; White & Epston, 1990).

Stories as events across time, according to a theme.

Narrative therapists see people as "homo narrans" (Myerhoff, 1992), as making sense of life and self, according to socially negotiated stories. Thus Randall & McKim (2008, p. 8) can write, "we are inveterately interpretive beings — narrative is the medium of our existence". In storying lives, people are provided with socially available frames which make it possible for people to interpret their experience (White, Bubezner, West, & Boughner, 1995). As White (2000) explains, "It is through [such frames] that people make sense of the events of their lives, [linking them together] in sequences that unfold through time according to specific themes" (p. 10). Thus, following Bruner (1986), narrative therapists hold that people make sense of their lives by linking their experience of the events and encounters of life, over time, according to plots or themes — the storying of experience (White & Epston, 1990).

Non random selection of storied experience.

When people tell life stories, it is not simply a matter of their saying, "This is how I prefer things to be!" In the stories that give direction to lives, the culture 'speaks itself' (Rosenwald & Ochburg, 1982). Within an ever-shifting discursive environment, people soak up "entire strategies for composing and editing the stories of our lives" (Randall & McKim, 2008, p. 51). Thus, in their project of storying life experience, people draw on "community repertoires of codes, genres, lexicons, and grammars" (Ochs & Capps, 1996, p. 28), and do so in accordance with models of intelligibility specific to the culture, not only

for the contents of what is said, but also in the form of what is said. As Gergen (1999) writes, "We use these forms unwittingly; they create the means by which we interpret our lives" (p. 128). Thus in schools young people and teachers alike draw on the available discursive repertoire to make stories of themselves and each other.

Narrative therapy theorists offer that, from the broad, somewhat random stream of experienced life events, "there is a non-random selective process which causes certain of the random components to 'survive' longer than the others" (Bateson, 1979, p. 147). From amongst all the random occurrences of life, prevailing discourses shape the selection and interpretation of experience to form the basis of self-stories. Within such a selection process "we prune, from our experience, those events that do not fit with the dominant evolving stories that we and others have about us" (White & Epston, 1990, p. 11); and again, "those events that cannot be 'patterned' are not selected for survival" (White & Epston, 1990, p. 2). Thus stories which comply with cultural patterns (the currently persuasive discourses) are generally recognised as sensible. By contrast, stories that fail to conform to the models are more or less alarming. In this light "not only acceptable behaviour but also acceptable accounts of behavior are thus socialized" (Rosenwald, 1982, p. 265).

Stories have real effects.

Within narrative therapy, identity is understood to be socially constructed; the way people are spoken of in the various arenas of life constitutes their identity, wherein "any renegotiation of the stories of people's lives is also a renegotiation of identity" (White, 2007, p. 82). Thus life stories, the selection and interpretation of experience, have real effects (White & Epston, 1990) as it is within these self-stories that identity and subsequent action resides. The more a story is told, be it one of spoiled identity (Goffman, 1963), or of preferred identity (White, 1995), such a story "encapsulates and expands upon the previous telling" (White & Epston, 1990, p. 13), shaping how people attend to and feel about events (Och and Capps, 1996), and shaping how

people act in life (White and Epston, 1990). Thus narrative and self are inseparable: "we come to know ourselves as we use narrative to apprehend experiences and navigate relationships with others" (Och & Capps, 1996, p. 20).

Dominant stories, alternative stories.

The dominant stories about what it means to be a person of moral worth in prevailing discourse emphasises "self-possession, self-containment, self-actualisation, and so on ... often referred to as 'individuality'" (White, Bubezner, West, & Boughner, 1995, p. 16). As described, the presence of dominant accounts of what it means to be a person worthy of regard, "preserve[s] the status quo [and] can estrange and muffle alternative perspectives" (Och & Capps, 1996, p. 33). Thus the stories of life that people live by are made up of and constrained by dominant or prevailing discourses, the taken-for-granted ways of speaking, meaning-making and acting, available in communities.

However, as White and Epston (1990) write, "There are always feelings and lived experience not fully encompassed by the dominant story" (p. 11). Thus, while a central part of the work of a narrative therapist is to explore with people the presence and effects of taken-for-granted ways of speaking, meaning-making and acting (Freedman & Combs, 1996; Monk et al., 1997; White & Epston, 1990), equally central to their work is the exploration of alternative ways of speaking, making meaning and acting that may be available. While it is accepted that a person can only make use of the discourses that are available to them in understanding self (Davies, 1991), it is also the case that no person's story is so self-consistent that counter-examples to a dominating problem story cannot be explored (White, 1995). The co-researching of counter-stories, of alternative descriptions of peoples' actions and intentions, opens more widely the possibility of agency — for a person's more active participation in the ways they go on with and make meaning of their own life (Adams-Westcott, Dafforn, & Sterne, 1993; Davies,

1990; Davies & Gannon, 2006; Davies & Harré, 1990; Drewery, 2005; White, 2007). In this thesis, it is in the context of such ever-present alternative stories that young peoples' identity claims, and the actions that flow from them, can be explored and re-authored.

Contesting dominant discourse.

Through accessing passed over stories and memories, or alternative accounts of remembered experience, narrative therapists aim to co-author with people alternatives to dominant interpretations that seek to define them, and to open possibilities for people to step into alternative accounts of themselves — to be thus constituted differently. In this way, narrative therapy has a political purpose, contesting together with people the questions of who they are seen to be, and how they prefer to describe themselves (Winslade, 2005).

The role of the therapist.

In this light, narrative therapists have a clear aim to support people in making sense of their experience in ways which fit with their hopes for themselves and others. As Monk and Gerhart (2003) write, "In exposing the taken-for-granted 'truths' that dictate how to live and behave, narrative therapists aim to liberate people from society's marginalizing practices that determine what is acceptable and unacceptable" (p. 20). Narrative therapists achieve this through a process of critical reading and unravelling of "loaded terms and tensions between terms, that construct how we read our place in culture, and in our families, and in our relationships, and how we think about who we are and what it might be possible for us to be" (Parker, 1999, p. 7).

Power relations.

Such a co-authoring position, leading as it does to a re-authoring of identity, places a strong ethical imperative on the counsellor not to impose meaning on those involved. I quote here, at length, from a conversation between Raheim, Carey, Waldegrave, Tamasese, Tuhaka, Fox, Franklin, White and

Denborough (2003), recorded as "An Invitation to Narrative Practitioners to Address Privilege and Dominance." I do so in order to focus on the practices of power and the ethical calls implicit in a re-authoring project, and to recall that power rests with those versions of reality that come to be accepted as accurate accounts of experience (Foucault, 1986). Beginning with highlighting that "relations of power and privilege not only shape individual lives but also institutional practices, economic structures, legal systems, professional knowledges, indeed all realms of life", Raheim et. al. (2003), go on to state that:

> The relations and practices of power that influence our lives are often invisible to us ... Unless we routinely examine the operations of power and our place within these operations, we fail to notice how we are liable to inadvertently impose our expectations, our cultural ways, our ways of thinking, on the people with whom we work. These impositions tend to diminish those who consult us, and they are destructive to the good work that we wish to accomplish. (p. 3)

Such an awareness of the responsibilities inherent in a project of re-authoring lives has narrative therapists seeking to squarely face the moral and ethical responsibilities in the work of counselling (White, Hoyt, & Combs, 2000), in order to notice "the contribution I might be making, wittingly or unwittingly, in the reproduction of power relations that could drift towards relations of domination" (White & McLean, 1995, p. 108).

This stance is in keeping with narrative therapist's focus on "resisting expert-knowledge interpretations of life, and has to do with bringing to the centre the meanings of the people who consult us, and the contexts in which those meanings are generated, regenerated and revisioned" (White & McLean, 1995, p. 127). This stance is also an important part of counsellors' ethical codes (New Zealand Association of Counsellors, 2012). Thus it is not a matter of whether the therapist brings politics into therapy; it is a matter of

whether they are prepared to acknowledge the power/knowledge relations of local culture that are being reproduced in the therapeutic context (White & McLean, 1995) in order to break from a potentially colonising theorising of other people's lives.

Having discussed some key aspects of narrative ethics, I turn now to the specific practices of narrative therapy that have shaped this doctoral project. I will discuss each practice, and the conversation maps (White, 2007) that guide those practices.

Maps of Narrative Practice

In narrative therapy, the metaphor of maps (White, 2007) has been used to speak of patterns of inquiry which support conversations exploring alternative stories of life and identity. White (2002) highlights that such maps are not prescriptive in their purpose, writing:

> Although I hesitate to present such maps out of a concern that they may become prescriptive of practice, I take consolation in the fact that maps do not specify the destination of our therapeutic conversations, or the routes taken by them, and that they can be helpful in opening up, to intentional investigation, neglected territories of peoples' lives. (p. 57)

Thus such therapeutic conversations are not ordered, in the sense of knowing this is where you must go ahead of what a person may be saying. Rather, while a map is not the territory (Bateson, 1979), such guidelines can lead people into alternative conversational territories of life, within which alternative accounts of self can be explored.

The Maps of Narrative Practice That Shape This Research Project

As in any co-authored project, narrative therapy moves back and forth through phases of co-research, co-authoring, and co-publishing. Co-research aims to review the current situation, offering an opportunity for young people to take a stand either on behalf of the effects of what is happening now, or for something else. In taking a stand, co-research can support young people to explore the ethics, hopes, values, and dreams implicit in their actions and in any desire that things might be different. Co-authoring works to develop an account of a young person in keeping with the stands they reach for, and in keeping with any desires that things be different. Such desires have a history that may yet to be told, and they have a future to be explored. Thus an alternative story of preferred identity can be developed in the light of the desired. Co-publishing takes alternative identity stories and, through telling and re-telling in different settings, both develops the stories through others' additions, and supports the stories through the audience of significant figures from the young person's communities.

A journey through this broad process of co-research, co-authoring, and co-publishing is supported by various maps of narrative practice. Here, maps act as guides to areas of inquiry and interest, helping develop and display preferred accounts of life. Much has been written about these maps of narrative practice (see for example, Winslade & Monk, 1999; Morgan, 2000; White & Epston, 1990; Freedman & Combs, 1996; Monk et al., 1997; White, 2007), and I turn here to those maps of narrative practice which underpin this research project: Rites of passage; Statement of Position Map 1; Absent but implicit explorations; Re-authoring identity stories; Re-Membering significant people; Tellings and re-tellings including letters and other documents, outsider witness practices and definitional ceremonies.

Rites of passage.

One central metaphor I draw on in this work with young people is variously described as migration of identity (White, 2005) and rite of passage (White, 2000 b; Epston & White, 1995). Both metaphors invoke an image of a migration from one reputation to another, from one way of doing life to another. Epston and White (1995) describe a rite of passage as:

> a separation from familiar roles, an entry into an unknown liminal space where the taken for granted ways of doing things is suspended, and a reintegration where people relocate themselves in a different position with new roles, responsibilities and freedoms — this accompanied by claims and declarations that a transition has successfully been negotiated, which is then legitimated by communal acknowledgement. (p. 349)

Journeys of identity change can be difficult, and may involve times of return to previous identities, or other setbacks. The map which guides a rite of passage conversation provides young people and others with a general guide through the territories that lie ahead, offering a basis for predicting the experiences that are to be had and the preparations that might be made ahead of departure (White, 2000 b). In a migration of identity/rite of passage metaphor, rather than as regress, times of setback are seen as an expected part of the in-between phase. Such times of turning back can be seen as the outcome of "gaps in the preparations made for sustaining one through the rigours of the liminal phase" (White 2000 b, p. 29), inviting a reconsideration of how one might move towards the preferred.

As I demonstrate in Chapter Ten, a Rite of Passage map appeared in an image of two islands separated by sea, with a boat journeying between. In discussion with the young people involved, the first island, from which the boat had left, was described as that which was being left behind — the no

longer desired reputations and their effects. The second island, towards which the young people/boat was journeying, was described as that which was desired — new reputations and their effects. The in-between space, in which the boat was journeying, was described as those forces and resources which (a) were supportive of the journey towards the second island; and (b) might impede progress or even blow the boat backwards.

My co-researchers, Huia and Brent, and I drew on this map of narrative practice to enable a regular review of young peoples' hopes and of their progress across time. Where setbacks occurred (as described in Chapter Ten), these were discussed in the light of the two islands, and preferred goals and directions. As seen in Chapters Six and Seven, both groups of young people were clear about wanting to reach a second island, and what that might mean for them.

Statement of Position Map 1: Externalising the Problem

Externalising conversations.

An emphasis on helping people to separate from problem saturated descriptions of their lives (White & Epston, 1990) gives rise to an important theme of narrative therapy — externalising conversations, wherein people are able to experience "an identity that is separate to the problem; the problem becomes the problem, not the person" (White, 1997, p. 9). In externalising conversations, the problem is named and spoken about as an entity separate to the person. In this way the problem ceases to represent the "truth" about people's identities, allowing for alternative options for life to become visible and accessible. Thus, in externalising conversations, people have options "to redefine or revise their relationships with the problems of their lives, and to so break their lives from these highly negative identity conclusions ... opening space for yet other conversations that contribute to the generation of alternative stories of people's lives, and to the renegotiation of identity conclusions" (White, 2002, p. 33).

Statement of position map 1.

Within an externalising conversation, the Statement of Position Map 1 (White, 1997) guides ways of speaking which help separate people from the problems which beset them, through speaking of the problem as external to the person. In the Statement of Position Map 1, the problem is seen as separate to the person, and the problem's view of the person is understood as "either biased, or jaundiced, rendering it oblivious to the histories and genealogies of the families and communities ... authorizing only single story accounts of young people" (Lindemann, 2001, p. 3). Guided by a Statement of Position Map 1, narrative therapists explore the tactics and strategies of power employed by the voices of the problem, "dispossessing these conclusions of a truth status, and provid[ing] an opportunity for them to be unravelled" (White, 2007, p. 44). Thus, for the young people in this study, their lives were described as beset by the effects of an increasingly unwelcome Reputation.

In the process of unravelling negative identity conclusions reached under the influence of the problem, the history of the discursive power relations that people have been subject to, and that have shaped negative conclusions about their life and identity becomes evident (White, 2007). Young people are invited to take a position on the problem and its effects, based on their own hopes and purposes for life, and wonder about how they would prefer things to be in their relationships with each other, and about what those preferences reflect about their values and beliefs (White, 2000 a). As discussed above, the separation of young peoples' identity from the identity of the problem does not reduce responsibility to address the problems that they are encountering. Rather, taking an ethical position on the effects of the problem makes it more possible for young people and others to assume responsibility for the on-going relationship they take up with the problem and its effects (White, 2007).

In offering a guide to externalising conversations, the Statement of Position Map 1 outlines four areas of inquiry, within which a problem experienced by a

young person is: Named in ways that fit with their experience of it, providing an experience-near definition of the problem (White, 2007), and enabling the problem to be spoken of as external to the young person; The effects of this problem in the life of the young person and others are closely explored across a range of situations and times, thus "Mapping the effects of the problem" (White, 2007, p 43); The young person is invited to evaluate the effects of the problem (White, 2007), and to take up a position about the problem and its effects — how does all this fit with the person they prefer to be? The conversation goes on to explore why it is that the young person has taken up that position, and what that suggests about their commitments and purposes in life. White (2007) refers to this as "Justifying the evaluation" (p 48).

In Chapter Eight I describe Statement of Position Map 1 shapes a conversation in which Peter reflects on the effects of his actions and takes a stand on those effects.

Absent but implicit map.

The Absent but Implicit Map of narrative practice directs therapists to listen, not only to the original expression of a person's experience of a problem, but to what is implied by that expression. The therapist takes a stance that every expression a person gives to their experience is in relation to other experiences that are not being named, or are not evident but there by implication. This listening for alternative accounts implicit within problem accounts is referred to as a "double listening" (White, 2003, p. 30), and has the potential to open up a wide field of possibilities for exploration. Expressions of distress, pain, concern or upset become seen as actions taken in regard to the problem (Carey, Walther, & Russell, 2009), and the therapist focuses on what hopes or values may be implicit in such expressions and protests. Thus, for example, anger or protest may be seen as evidence of something that the person values, something that has either been threatened or damaged in some way, or is absent when they wish it was present. The absent but implicit metaphor invites therapists to wonder with

people how their expressions give testimony to what they value (White 2000 c). These inquires make available alternative understandings of people's expressions which invoke notions like "conscious purpose and intention, considered choice, cherished beliefs, personal values" (White, 2000 a, p. 16), potentially leading to discussion and rich description of a person's hopes, dreams and anticipations (White, 2000). Absent but implicit conversations are not so much about the problem besetting a person, as about double listening for what the person cares about, and how that is expressed in their responses to whatever is problematic for them. Through listening within problem accounts of life, and inviting alternative and preferred ones, the emphasis is on what it is that the person holds precious, and what that might say about their preferred identity.

The process of an absent but implicit conversation can be looked at as scaffolding (White, 2007) through several areas of inquiry: Similar to the Statement of Position Map 1, an absent but implicit conversation begins with a full description of what is problematic, and its effects in a person's life. This is followed with an exploration of the ideas or beliefs (discourses) that support the problem, and the effects of those ideas or beliefs in the person's life. The conversation continues, looking at and naming what it is the person is doing in response to what is troublesome in their lives, and researching skills or know-how that are expressed in those actions. Leading on from the naming of those actions, the conversation wonders about the intentions, hopes, and desires which may be implicit in the actions taken, and what this may say about what is of importance to the person. Leading on from declarations of what is important to the person, the conversation explores any dreams and desires which may be in keeping with what is of importance, and wonders about any principles or standards of life which may guide what is being talked about, what it is that they are committed to in life. The conversation concludes with a discussion of the social and relational history of what is absent but implicit, an exploration of who stands with the person in their hopes and commitments and a developing account of the absent but implicit hopes and

commitments over time (see Carey, Walther, & Russell, 2009; Morgan, 2000; White, 2007; White & Epston, 1990).

As Carey, Walther and Russell (2009) write:

> The understanding that no one is completely passive in the face of the circumstances that impact on them, that they are always responding to what is being done and are active in that response, provides us with a frame through which we can always find pathways to stories of personal agency by which people can direct their lives. (p. 330)

Re-authoring map.

In keeping with an understanding that identity is storied, another central theme of narrative therapy is Re-Authoring or Re-Storying Conversations (White & Epston, 1990; Morgan, 2000, White, 2007). As White (2007) writes, "Effective therapy is about engaging people in the re-authoring of the compelling plights of their lives, in ways that arouse curiosity about human possibility, and in ways that invoke the play of imagination" (White, 2007, p. 75–76). When, through externalising conversation and inquiry into implicit ethical intent, aspects of lived experience that are not in keeping with a problem story are unearthed, persons can be invited to ascribe meaning to these alternative understandings through plotting them into an alternative story or narrative (White & Epston, 1990). Thus it is "those aspects of experience that stand outside dominant stories and the sub-stories, that really provide a point of entry for re-authoring work" (White, Bubezner, West, & Boughner, 1995, p. 28). Re-authored stories of a person's actions and intentions can be referred to as preferred stories, in as much as they more closely reflect the person and their communities' ethical hopes and intentions (Drewery, 2005; Monk et al., 1997; Morgan, 2000; Parry & Doan, 1994; Rosenwald & Ochburg, 1982; Sinclair & Monk, 2005; White, 2007; White & Epston, 1990; Winslade, 2005). Such co-researched, preferred identity

stories can be described as a thick descriptions (Geertz, 2003), which come from the interpretation of the people whose lives are being described, and carry the meanings of their own communities.

As already described, though life is rich in lived experience, those aspects of experience that are out of phase with the dominant stories of life are less likely to be included in accounts of life. Yet as White (2007) writes, "These out-of-phase experiences can be potentially significant, and in favourable circumstances they can [provide] a point of entry for the development of alternative storylines of people's lives" (White, 2007, p. 219). In a re-authouring conversation, an exploration of out-of-phase experiences of a person's life takes place in two "landscapes". White (1995) describes these as landscapes of action, which pay attention to a person's experiences of life, linked through time, according to specific themes; and landscapes of consciousness or meaning, which explore the meanings people and those near to them make about those events, "the interpretations that are made through reflection on those events that are unfolding through the landscapes of action" (p. 13).

In re-authoring conversations, the therapist takes an editorial role, whose job is to provide space for the client (the major author) to cut, paste, and rearrange the emerging stories such that they suit him/her and their communities better (Epston, 1989; Freedman & Combs, 1996; Monk et al., 1997; Russell & Carey, 2004; White, 1995, 2007).

Maps for communities of support: Publishing preferred stories.

According to the theories shaping this thesis, a person's sense of identity is a public and social achievement, shaped by cultural and historical discourses and dependent upon social processes that are acknowledging of preferred identity claims (White, 2000 d). Preferred claims which are a reaching for an alternative way of being require a "witnessed acknowledgement or ceremony in order to be more firmly captured" (Riessman & Speedy, 2006, p. 105). In

keeping with this, practices of narrative therapy invite people to tell and retell their emerging, preferred stories to communities that care for and support them, in order that they can stand as witnesses to preferred identity claims.

The necessity and power of community witnessing of preferred accounts is attested to by Weingarten (2000) who writes, "I saw voice not as an individual achievement of self-knowledge but, rather, a possibility that depends on the willingness of the listeners that make up the person's community" (p. 392). Here, the authenticity of an emerging self-story is "a public and social achievement in which a person's preferred identity claims are acknowledged" (White, 2001, p. 34). In narrative therapy the community witnessing of preferred accounts is often referred to as telling and re-telling (White, 2007). In this research, support persons for telling and retelling of preferred identity accounts have included peers, teachers, and family and community members, chosen by the young people at the centre of the inquiry.

There are a number of ways that an audience can be invoked to support the telling and re-telling of preferred identity accounts. I give an account here of Re-Membering practices, Outsider Witnessing and Definitional Ceremonies that shaped the tellings and re-tellings of this doctoral project.

Re-membering map: Consulting an absent audience.

Audiences to emerging alternative stories can be evoked in a conversation without the audience being present, by interviewing the young person in the place of significant people as if they were present. In such Re-Membering conversations, the point of view of important others can be explored and taken into a preferred account of life (Russell & Carey, 2004; White 1997, 2007). This offers an opportunity for young people to both revise their identity stories, and be supported in new identity claims.

A Re-Membering Map of narrative practice offers a guide to this therapeutic conversation, following two sets of inquiry, being firstly, an exploration of what a significant figure contributed to the young person's life and a reviewing of

the young person's identity through the eyes of this figure. This leads to a rich description of the ways this relationship shaped who the young person is and what their life is about; and secondly, a recounting of what the young person contributed to the life of this significant figure — how the connection with the young person shaped this significant person's sense of who they were, and what their life was about, including how this might have touched them.

In re-membering conversations, the young person is affirmed in their preferred identity claims, and sees how their actions have made a difference in the lives of significant others. In this way, even people who are absent in distance and time can contribute to the thickening of a preferred identity.

Outsider witnessing and definitional ceremony: Consulting a present audience.

When significant people are available to be spoken with, supportive audiences to emerging alternative stories can be invited to participate in tellings and re-tellings of preferred stories. Reflecting teams (Andersen, 1992; Griffith & Griffith, 1992), outsider witnessing, (Morgan, 2000; White, 2007) and definitional ceremonies (Myerhoff, 1986; White, 1995, 1997; White & Epston, 1990) are all ways of bringing together an audience to witness new claims being made by a young person about their intentions and hopes in life. Such audiences listen to preferred identity stories with "generous listening" (Bacigalupe, 2002), and are invited to respond in ways that connect the telling of these new stories with their own lives, in a way which supports and enriches the young person's preferred stories.

For narrative therapists, such audience forums are sites of publishing new, preferred stories (Andersen, 1991; Bruner, 1986; Freedman & Combs, 1996; Myerhoff, 1986; Speedy, 2008; White, 2007). In tellings and re-tellings, outsider witness teams and definitional ceremony participants bring a range of perspectives, making available support and enrichment to the new stories being

told; acknowledging and witnessing these new accounts; and drawing these accounts into those of the community (Andersen, 1992; Cole et al., 2001; Freedman & Combs, 1996; Gilligan, 1993; Janowsky, Dickerson, & Zimmerman, 1995; Madigan & Epston, 1995; McCarthy & Byrne, 1995; Monk & Gerhart, 2003; Selekman, 1995; Swim, 1995; White, 1997).

Outsider witnessing.

In service of extending young peoples' preferred identity stories, an Outsider Witnessing Map guides a conversation between a person and their supportive audience through three areas of inquiry: A telling, in which the young person recounts their preferred identity claims; a re-telling, in which the audience responds, following four categories of response; a final re-telling, in which the young person responds by taking up those aspects of the audiences' response which fit with, and extend, their preferred identity story.

Outsider witness conversations may be held with different numbers of people. Where, for example, with small groups of peers, there are few people present, I refer to these as outsider witness conversations (White, 2007). Where there are larger numbers of people present I draw on Myerhoff (1986) and White (1995), using the term definitional ceremony in order to highlight the focus on community identity stories. In either situation, having listened carefully to a young person's preferred identity claims, the audience is invited to respond to four categories of inquiry, being: (1) What struck a chord with you? As you listen to these stories which expressions most capture your imagination? (2) What image or metaphor does that invoke for you about what is important to this person? (3) How does that connect with your own life experience? (4) Where are you now as a result of having participated in this conversation? How are you changed in hearing and responding? How might you acknowledge the effects of being in this conversation? (White, 2007)

Outsider witnessing is influential both for the young person making preferred identity claims, and for the audience. For the teller of the story, it "will have

thickened their original descriptions" (Riessman & Speedy, 2006, p. 106). For the audience, it "will have taken the participants to places they had not anticipated journeying towards" (Riessman & Speedy, 2006, p. 106). All present have the opportunity to move into territories of life and identity in which they could never have predicted they would find themselves (White, 2000 d).

Walther and Fox (2012) speak of teachers as making particularly good outsider witnesses for young people's preferred identity claims. This is because teachers may be able to respond to the young person outside the therapeutic context, during the everyday world of school life, in ways that are supportive of this preferred identity. Walther and Fox (2012) go on to write that teachers:

> may be a means of spreading the news of this alternative identity more widely within the school community. The more widely this account is spread, the more it can contribute to shaping the young person's life and to giving a sense of authenticity to their preferred identity claims. (p. 10)

In this context, young people and their communities are able to "experience their lives as joined around shared and precious themes in ways that significantly thicken their preferred identity claims (White, 2007).

Cultural difference for participants of definitional ceremonies.

What stands out for the listeners at a definitional ceremony — the images they draw on to make sense of what they hear, the connections with their own life experiences and the ongoing effects of hearing the stories told — is shaped by cultural positioning, and by participants' understanding of who they are, and what they are here for. While the responses of a caring teacher are perhaps shaped by the cultural discourses of current educational discourse, the responses of a kaumatua (elder) to a young Māori man in a definitional ceremony may be shaped by cultural experiences of personhood-in-relationship-across-time. As I discuss in Chapter Twelve, it is very important

as a facilitator of definitional ceremony conversations that I, and others involved, be as alert as possible to discursive meaning-making different to my own, lest my particular culturally shaped understandings of definitional ceremonies have me hurrying past what may be important to the hopes of the people who have gathered.

Therapeutic documents.

Narrative therapy's focus on the publishing of preferred identity stories to significant others includes the co-authoring of documents such as certificates of achievement, letters and biographies, and reviews of progress. As seen throughout this research project (see for example, Chapter Nine), documents can be sent to participants, and various interested parties, in order to tell and re-tell preferred accounts, and to recruit responses and support (Freedman & Combs, 1996; White & Epston, 1989; White, 2007).

Part of the effectiveness of therapeutic documents lies in the careful negotiation of their purpose and use. Initially, a young person is introduced to the idea and potential value of a therapeutic document, and if they have some enthusiasm for this, a discussion is held as to the type of document, be it "a standard letter, a charter, a statement of position, a letter of reference, a document of identity, etc" (White, 1995, p. 210). Negotiation continues with discussion as to delivery and safe keeping of documents, and as to who might read them. Further negotiation includes when and how a document might be referred to or consulted. At later meetings, a review of any predictions made in the documents can be evaluated. With these careful negotiations, such documents "can make a profound contribution to the therapeutic endeavour" (White, 1995, p. 213).

Therapeutic documents often place a heavy emphasis on a verbatim account of peoples' developments (White, Bubezner, West, & Boughner, 1995), acting as "a parallel process to actual conversation, contributing to thickening of alternative stories and providing reflections that can be referred to at any

time" (Morgan, 2000, p. 110). That therapeutic documents are valuable to people is highlighted by White and Epston's informal clinical research that "a good therapeutic document is worth 4.5 sessions of good therapy" (White, 1995, p. 200; see also Freeman, Epston & Lobovits, 1997). I discuss the use of therapeutic documents in this study more fully in Chapter Nine.

A Narrative Process

Having described the maps of narrative practice that have shaped this research project, I turn here to a description of how an exploration of preferred identity accounts might be shaped within narrative therapy. Guided by maps of practice as described above, a process of narrative therapy through co-research, co-authoring and co-publishing might include: Building trust in a relationship and exploring the problem(s) that bring a person to counselling; developing an externalising conversation that deconstructs the problem story and locates it in the world of discourse; mapping the discursive positions that the person is invited into by the problem story, and their effects; identifying the person's efforts to resist being positioned in this way, and researching any ethical intent implicit in such actions; inquiring into the person's preferences for the kind of re-positioning that would make a difference; developing an account of such position changes that is located in personal history, in a community of membership and also in alternative discourses/knowledges that can serve to sustain the positioning shift in the face of the continued assertion of dominant discourses; and publishing this preferred account within a community of support including where appropriate taking initiatives that make a difference for others. (Denborough, 2008; White & Epston, 1990; White, 1997; Winslade, 2005).

Thus guided by conversational maps, in this research project I seek to explore young peoples' ethical hopes for life, in order to co-research new meanings for everyday events and for past experience. In the process, young people are invited, in the company of their peers and other support persons, to challenge the dominant discourses that seek to position them in ways they do not prefer, and to exercise ethical agency as much as that is available to them. I

demonstrate how alternative accounts of what a young person is reaching for can be supported and developed through the publishing of such accounts to supportive audiences (White & Epston, 1990).

In these ways, the theories and practices of narrative therapy offer to young people, schools and communities a means by which alternative understandings of young peoples' actions can be explored. Such explorations make possible a range of alternative identity conclusions and a range of alternative future responses. In this light, narrative practices offer a practical expression of the post-structuralist and social constructionist ideas I have described above. Having discussed the theoretical and counselling approaches shaping this thesis, I turn here to a discussion of how a non- Māori researcher might undertake research with Māori young people and families within the broader school population.

CHAPTER 5: CULTURALLY APPROPRIATE RESEARCH

The Treaty of Waitangi

In order to discuss culturally appropriate research with Māori persons within mainstream school communities in New Zealand, it is necessary to consider the place of the Treaty of Waitangi as a founding document. Within New Zealand, the Treaty of Waitangi sets the scene for relationships between indigenous Māori and the descendants of settler populations. The first Europeans arrived in New Zealand in the late 1700s, and in 1840 the Treaty of Waitangi was signed by representatives of Queen Victoria and over 500 Māori leaders. While the intentions of the Treaty remain open to discussion, it allowed for the establishment of British government in New Zealand (Walker, Eketone, & Gibbs, 2006) and the promise of a mutually beneficial relationship between Māori and the Crown (Durie, 2003). While never lost, and always practised in some quarters, over the following 130 years Māori knowledge, culture and practices were often eroded and discouraged. However, since World War Two, "kaupapa Māori, or Māori philosophies and ways of doing, re-emerged as a strong and legitimate project and began to influence education, politics and research" (Walker et al., 2006, p. 332). It is in the presence of this "strong and legitimate influence" that this research project takes place.

For Māori, asserting Treaty rights has been, and remains, central and continuous since the signing of the Treaty. Yet, despite a widespread re-emergence of kaupapa Māori, for the New Zealand government "it was not until 1975, with the passage of the Treaty of Waitangi Act and the establishment of the Waitangi Tribunal, that a palpable Treaty conscience could be detected" (Durie, 2003, p. 2). Passed in 1975, the Treaty of Waitangi Act was the first legislation in modern times to recognise the Treaty, and

arguably remains the most important. This Act established the Waitangi Tribunal, giving it the power to investigate whether legislation, or actions of the Executive, contravenes the principles of the Treaty (Barrett & Connolly-Stone, 1998).

Treaty principles.

As Durie (2003) writes, "The Treaty of Waitangi is about a relationship between Māori and the Crown", a relationship which focuses on the "high level principles of good faith, honour, mutual benefits, trust and reasonableness" (Durie, 2003, pp. 16–17). As the Treaty of Waitangi Act did not define them, the principles of the Treaty continue to evolve according to the context of the issue at hand, as developed by the courts and by the Waitangi Tribunal. Barrett and Connolly-Stone (1998) offer a list of the most basic Treaty principles so far developed, including the overriding principle of the notion of reciprocity — the exchange of the right to govern for the right of Māori to retain rangatiratanga (sovereignty) and control over their lands, possessions, affairs and things important to them. From this overarching principle several other principles are derived: That the Treaty established a partnership, and the Treaty partners are under a duty to act reasonably and in good faith with one another. The needs of both cultures must be respected, and compromises may be needed in some cases; That the Treaty guaranteed to Māori, full authority, status and prestige with regard to their possessions and interests. The Treaty guaranteed not only that possessions would be protected, but also the "mana to control them in accordance with their own customs and having regard to their own cultural preferences" (Barrett & Connolly-Stone, 1998, p. 6). That the Crown must make informed decisions by having regard to the Treaty when exercising its discretions and powers. While good faith does not always require consultation, it is an obvious way of demonstrating its existence; and That the Crown has a duty to take positive action to protect the rights of Māori, including rangatiratanga over taonga (things valued) (Barrett & Connolly-Stone, 1998).

In Chapter One I have discussed the place of these principles in the ethical positions taken up by schools when considering suspension and exclusion as a response to young peoples' unacceptable actions. I discussed how, where suspension and exclusion result from the imposition of particular cultural interpretations, and in doing so produce three times the use of suspension and exclusion for Māori students, such actions risk unethical effects — risks of harm, and lack of informed choice/autonomy for school communities, and may contravene the principles of the Treaty. Here I consider the place of the principles of the Treaty in my position as a researcher, involving Māori communities and participants, within the general populations of New Zealand schools.

Ethical guides.

A number of ethical codes offer guides to Treaty-informed research:

In section 3.2 of the Health Research Council guidelines for researchers on health involving Māori (Health Research Council, 2010), the guidelines state that Māori retain control (tino rangatiratanga) over Māori resources, including people; and that Māori have a right to a fair share of society's benefits. For health research, these guidelines recognise that iwi and hapü (tribes and sub-tribes) have an authority over their peoples' involvement in research, and an equitable share of the benefits of any Crown expenditure (Tolich, 2002).

In schools, the principles of the Treaty are expressed through the Education Act (New Zealand Government, 1989), which requires school boards to take all reasonable steps to discover and consider the views and concerns of communities living in the geographical area served by the school. School charters must recognise the importance of Māori culture, and instruction must be provided in Te Reo and tikanga for those pupils whose parents request it (New Zealand Government, 1989).

Relevant to the area of counselling, the New Zealand Royal Commission on Social Policy (1988) links the three principles of partnership, participation and

protection to the Treaty principles. Following this, the New Zealand Association of Counsellors (NZAC) Code of Ethics states clearly that the Code needs to be read in conjunction with the Treaty of Waitangi. Counsellors are required to seek to be informed about the meaning and implications of the Treaty of Waitangi for their work, and to understand the principles of protection, participation and partnership with Māori (NZAC, 2012). New members of NZAC are required to demonstrate an acceptable minimum degree of bicultural knowledge and practice, and have "an ongoing relationship with a cultural advisor/consultant/supervisor from the rohe (area of practice)" (McGill, 2009, p. 13). In further support of Treaty principles, "counsellors who are members of NZAC commit to work within the framework of a set of objects and a code of ethics that challenge social injustice and frame counselling practice as actions taken in the support of clients' purposes" (Crocket, 2010, p. 4).

These guidelines and ethical codes shape my own ongoing research practice. In the light of these guidelines and codes, I seek to ensure Māori speak into aspects of this research, and to take "all reasonable steps" to discover and consider the views and concerns of Māori communities affected by this research, to challenge injustice, and to develop a degree of bicultural knowledge and practice in the context of an ongoing relationship with a cultural advisor/consultant/supervisor from the rohe (area of practice). One significant outcome of this research project, as discussed in Chapter Twelve, is my increased awareness of such guidelines and codes, and a commitment to incorporate them more fully in shaping subsequent research practice.

The term "Pakeha Researcher".

As a New Zealander of European (Irish/English) descent, I am a descendant/member of one party of the signatories to the Treaty. While the titles of New Zealander and Kiwi are available to me to describe my status in New Zealand, I use the term "Pakeha", as one which "may be more comfortably taken up by persons interested in addressing the social justice

issues which come from a reading of the Treaty of Waitangi which sees it as legitimising settlement and safeguarding indigenous traditions, practices and rights" (Crocket, 2010, pp. 3–4). In doing so, I align myself with the research positions invited by the guidelines and ethical codes above. In light of these guides and ethics, I take up the place of Pakeha researcher, and explore here the metaphor of cultural safety as a place from which to conduct research which includes Māori young people and communities within the general school population.

Kaupapa Māori research.

This research project is not kaupapa Māori research, because such research is, by most definitions, by Māori for Māori. Māori language is central to kaupapa Māori projects, as Smith and Reid (2000) affirm:

> Māori knowledge validates the Māori worldview and is owned and controlled by Māori through Te Reo Māori. Te Reo Māori is the only language that can access, conceptualise and internalise in spiritual terms this body of knowledge. From this, we take it that Māori language and kaupapa Māori knowledge are inextricably bound. One is the means to the other. (p. 3)

However, this research project is shaped and influenced by kaupapa Māori research and writing, and through close conversation with my co-researchers Huia and Brent Swann.

In response to a general understanding that Māori interests have not been well served by Pakeha researchers (Tolich, 2002), the kaupapa Māori movement critiques the hegemony of research and methodologies shaped by dominant Western discourses about the other (Walker et al., 2006). Such critique deconstructs Western research, where knowledge regarding indigenous peoples is "collected, classified and then represented in various ways back to the West, and then, through the eyes of the West, back to those who have been colonized" (Smith, 1999, pp. 1–2). Such critiques posit

dominant social science theories, models and practices as largely formulated in the cultural context of Western Europe and white North America, and as simply one cultural way of describing events. A critique is needed because "when these descriptions are imposed on families of subjugated cultures, where understandings of behaviour and healing are quite different, the opposite of healing often occurs. This is because their places of belonging — their cultures — are displaced in the process" (Tamasese & Waldegrave, 1996, p. 52).

In kaupapa Māori research, Māori are no longer positioned as the other, but rather hold a central position in the construction of the world and its meanings. This position contrasts with much Western research, and "contributes to the notion of kaupapa Māori as counter-hegemonic in that the fundamental base of tino rangatiratanga is that of Māori control over things Māori" (Pihama, Cram, & Walker, 2002, p. 36). Thus, used as critical theory, "Kaupapa Māori research critiques dominant, racist, and westernized hegemonies, and advocates for Māori to become more self-determining" (Walker et al., 2006, p. 333).

It is worth noting here that kaupapa Maori research is as diverse as Māori communities themselves are. As Webber (2009) asserts, being Māori is a collective but heterogeneous identity, one that is enduring but ever in a state of flux. Webber (2009) goes on to write, "Therefore, useful research should recognise the diversity of the Māori experience, refuting the tendency within NZ society (including within institutions) to refer to Māori as if they constitute a homogenous group" (p. 2). Writing of the multiple identities Maori researchers may experience, Webber and Kukutai (2011, p. 5) draw on a spatial metaphor to describe, "that Māori researcher identities are neither standardized, nor fragmented. Rather, the "space between" is a site where researchers can and do work creatively with, and within, the tensions created by multiple researcher identities"

Non-indigenous researchers.

Within kaupapa Māori research, an important requirement is that the researcher is Māori — someone who is competent in things Māori, has some knowledge of te reo, and has the ability to conduct high-quality research with Māori. Researchers who are Māori are seen as more likely to bring a deeper and more comprehensive view "because of their positions as insiders" (Walker et al., 2006, p. 335). Thus Tolich (2002) quotes Jahnke and Taiapa, in answering their own question of who should do the research as unequivocally saying, "Māori themselves should be involved in the design, delivery, management and monitoring of the research process" (Tolich, 2002, p. 172).

In further developing a kaupapa Māori research conversation, Webber (2009, p. 3) makes the point that "there is an urgent need for further cross-cultural and cross-disciplinary dialogue where multiple ways of knowing and being are emphasised". As discussed above and from a Treaty perspective, Pakeha researchers have obligations as Treaty partners to share their knowledge and skills in ways that benefit both Māori and Pakeha. Some theorists argue that Pakeha can participate in kaupapa Māori research, provided they do not define, control, or dictate the research. The analyses offered by Smith, G. (2000), Smith, L. (2000), Bishop (1998) and Denzin (2009), call into relief the ambiguity of the role played by non-indigenous researchers, such as me, within kaupapa Māori-shaped research. According to these theorists, while it might be that a Pakeha can be involved in kaupapa Māori research, he or she would need to "have ways of self-positioning as Pakeha" (Smith, L., 2000, p. 227). Linda Smith goes on to write that "Pakeha who have a genuine desire to support the cause of Māori ought to be included because they can be useful allies and colleagues in research" (Smith, L., 2000, p. 227), further stating that kaupapa Māori research aims to "include all those researchers who are attempting to work with Māori and on topics of importance to Māori" (Smith, L., 2000, p. 232). In support of this stance, Denzin (2009) maintains

that "non-indigenous interpretive scholars should be part of [such a] project" (Denzin, 2009, p. 176), positioned as an "allied other" (Denzin, 2009, p. 181). Linda Smith describes such collaborative research as a "hybrid practice", which "weaves in and out of Māori cultural beliefs and values, Western ways of knowing, Māori histories and experiences under colonialism, Western forms of education, Māori aspirations and socio-economic needs, and Western economics and global politics" (Smith, L., 1999, p. 191).

What position then for Pakeha researchers?

From his role as deputy chair of a university ethics committee, Tolich (2002) observes that university lecturers and institutional ethics committees seem to mandate that "Pakeha researchers do not have the cultural sensitivity to conduct cross-cultural research", thus contributing to Pakeha researchers avoiding cross-cultural research. Tolich goes on to highlight that such an exclusion of Māori interests from research by Pakeha researchers "does not promote Treaty of Waitangi responsibilities, neither promoting partnership in research, nor giving Māori the right to benefit from a fair share in what is ultimately state-funded (tertiary) research" (Tolich, 2002, p. 167). Thus while tertiary and health ethics committees' guidelines and research methods text books focus on Māori-centred research paradigms, "little is mentioned about how to research Māori who appear in the general population" (Tolich, 2002, p. 171).

Cultural Safety as a Standing Place for Cross-Cultural Research With Māori Students in the General Populations of Schools

Given that as a non-Māori I cannot undertake kaupapa Māori research directly, rather I look to kaupapa Māori research to inform this study. Following Tolich (2002), and quoting Crocket (2010), "I came to understand that Pakeha counsellors can best work across cultures when they stand in, as

I name it, the postcolonial moment of Treaty honouring, and that this moment is closely entwined with the concept of Cultural Safety" (p. 6). I draw here on Crocket's proposed two forms of praxis that might inform a Pakeha counsellor, or in my case, researcher, who seeks to achieve such a postcolonial purpose: "These are named as critical discursive praxis and critical Pakeha praxis" (Crocket, 2010, p. 6). As described in Chapter Two, the post-structural stance taken throughout this thesis supports the critical discursive praxis suggested by Crocket. I turn here to the notion of cultural safety to provide a platform for what Crocket describes as critical Pakeha praxis.

Cultural safety.

Cultural safety is a concept developed uniquely within nursing in New Zealand, with the purpose of teaching nursing students to recognise and understand the dynamics of cultural, personal, and professional power, and how these shape nursing and health care relationships (Richardson & Carryer, 2005). Inspired by the principles of protection, participation and partnership derived from the Treaty of Waitangi (Woods, 2010), the construct of cultural safety was originally made a requirement for nursing and midwifery education courses by the Nursing Council of New Zealand in 1992. The standards which were developed were known as "Kawa Whakaruruhau", which translates as "cultural safety" (Papps & Ramsden, 1996), and was defined as "the effective nursing of a person/family from another culture, by a nurse who has undertaken a process of reflection on their own cultural identity, and recognises the impact of the nurses' culture on their own nursing practice" (Papps & Ramsden, 1996, p. 491).

The need for cultural safety is made clear by the Nursing Council of New Zealand who write:

> Being a member of a culture surrounds each person with a
> set of activities, values and experiences which are

considered to be real and normal. People evaluate and define members of other cultural groups according to their own norms. When one group far outnumbers another, or has the power to impose its own norms and values upon another, a state of serious imbalance occurs which threatens the identity, security and the ease of other cultural groups, thus creating a state of disease. (Papps & Ramsden, 1996, p. 493)

Just as for this thesis, where an exploration of prevailing discourse and ethical intent offers alternative responses to schools, "it is through the examination of discourses of power that nursing students are able to develop insight into the nature of power in health care interactions" (Richardson & Carryer, 2005, p. 203).

Implications of cultural safety for research practice.

The notion of cultural safety as a guide to ethical research practice is taken up by Tolich (2002). Tolich paraphrases the Nursing Council of New Zealand's Guidelines for Cultural Safety, replacing the word "nurse" with the word "researcher", in order to highlight that:

> In both nursing and research, cultural safety can be conceived as a two-way relationship: [Cultural safety is] the effective nursing [research] of a person/family from another culture by a nurse [researcher] who has undertaken a process of reflection on their own cultural identity and recognises the impact of the nurse's [researcher's] culture on nursing practice [research methods]. (Tolich, 2002, p. 175)

Here researchers are invited to: Examine their own realities and the attitudes they bring to each new person they encounter in their research encounter; evaluate the impact that historical, political and social processes have in terms of the research topic; and demonstrate flexibility in their relationships with people who are different from themselves (Tolich, 2002). To these ideas

Papps and Ramsden (1996) add not blaming "the victims of historical and social processes for their current plight" (p. 493).

Within a cultural safety metaphor, researchers are encouraged to practise from a starting position of accepting their/our/my cultural ignorance, or limited awareness, rather than competency. Such a position requires researchers to abandon any idea that they are ever fully able to comprehend their research participants' cultural lives. Rather, they are encouraged to reflect carefully and honestly appraise "the impact of their own cultural attitudes, history and life experiences on their [research partners'] intrinsic rights and legitimacy in maintaining their own cultural practices" (Woods, 2010, p. 716). Such a research position of informed naivety can be described as "in paradox — a true liminal position that is, at its essence, about contradiction" (Warren & Hytten, 2004, p. 330). From this position, a culturally safe researcher must balance the need for action with the necessity of consistent and thoughtful self-reflection; take on the role of an active, engaged listener; and engage in dialogue by listening and more consciously attempting to understand the surrounding messages. Such a liminal position is "always beginning from a humble position of inquiry before making assertions" (Warren & Hytten 2004, p. 332).

In my experience of variously taking up such a collaborative, hybrid stance, as I describe and discuss in Chapter Twelve, "there is an inevitable and disturbing moment ... a moment of recognition — perhaps unconscious — that some things may be out of one's grasp. It is a fleeting, slippery glimpse of (the possibility of) an 'unknowable'" (Jones, 2001, p. 283). This positioning of some knowledge as unknowable sits uneasily with and contradicts the implicit pedagogical ideal of Western educational discourse wherein a sense of the possibility of knowing everything is the goal (Jones, 2001). As I discuss in Chapter Twelve, for Māori, some knowledge is to be shared freely, some by invitation and some not at all.

From a position guided by cultural safety, the skill for researchers does not lie in knowing the customs of particular cultures. Rather, cultural safety places an obligation on the researcher to be in relationship, and to provide care within the framework of recognising and respecting the difference of each person. Further, it is not the researcher who determines the issue of safety. It is for those with whom the research is conducted to decide whether they feel safe with the research that has been undertaken (Papps & Ramsden, 1996), thus emphasising the place of ongoing consultation and care.

Culturally Safe Research

In support of culturally safe research, I draw on four key orientations described by Bishop (2008): "Where power is shared, where culture counts, where learning is interactive and dialogic, and where connectedness is fundamental to relations" (p. 445).

Power is shared.

As a researcher, the authority to participate in how the research stories are told is shared with participants. Here I understand power in terms of agency – the right and ability to participate in, and tell one's own story in one's own ways (Adams-Westcott, Dafforn, & Sterne, 1993; Davies, 1990; Davies & Haré, 1990; Drewery, 2005). In this light, I see power as shared in research when those spoken and written about have a voice in what it is that is researched, and how they are represented in that research. In discussing what seems important to research, Graham Smith (2000) notes that what is troubling to the dominant cultural researching group about those studied is not what necessarily troubles that community. Where the researcher is of a different cultural group to their co-participants in the research (as is the case in elements of this research project) Graham Smith (2000) suggests a power sharing model, where cultural community assistance is sought by the researcher, in order that a research enterprise can be developed in a way meaningful for those involved. As

Sampson (1993) writes, "If I can listen now to *you* speak, perhaps I can join with you in changing your circumstances" (p. 156) (emphasis in the original).

The practices of narrative therapy demonstrated in this study require reflexive checking with participant members, a constant backward and forward confirmation between me and the young people and their communities as their preferred stories emerge. Such reflexive checking with young people, and others involved, develops an experience-near (White, 1997) representation of the lived experience of the young people and their communities, in which their own voices are privileged (Drewery, 2005; Schwandt, 2000). In this research I use community consultation, participant interviews, kaupapa Māori informed co-researchers and advisors, and an emphasis on reflexive practice, in seeking to claim efforts towards power being shared. I discuss in Chapter Twelve how my practices developed over the course of this research project, and how I continue to develop such practices of power sharing in research.

Culture counts (Bishop et al., 2007).

Cultures approach life, and make meaning of experience, in widely different ways. I approach this research project shaped by an at times varying awareness of myself as culturally situated, as politically and ethically positioned, as gendered and so on. In keeping with a post-structuralist stance, my research project, and the meanings I make of it, is filtered through lenses of language, gender, social class, race, and ethnicity (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Such filtering of purpose and meaning-making is equally true of the participants and co-researchers of this project. As discussed in Chapter Twelve, conversations with Huia and Brent as co-researchers during field work and early analysis have led me to an increased awareness of mana whenua and mana tangata (literally, authority over land and inherited status; the right of participants to describe their own circumstances) in relation to the young people participants, their communities, and to us as researchers. This growing awareness has highlighted, for example, the presence and histories of the land within which this research is conducted, and within which participants have their identity stories.

In order that culture counts, I seek to remain open to alternative meaning-making of experience, to put aside my taken-for-granted explanations, in order to make space for young people and their communities' culturally preferred and experience-near accounts (White, 2007).

Interactive learning.

Culturally safe research seeks to avoid an imposition of meaning. Rather than seek grand narratives, such research privileges local, small-scale theories fitted to specific problems and specific situations (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Because local theories are expressed in experience-near (White, 2007) language, they enable novel forms of expressing lived experience, in which "persons are called into agentive subject positions in conversational interactions" (Drewery, 2005, p. 307). In the dialogues which shape this research project, the voices of the young people and other participants are expressed in their own voices, in ways appropriate to them.

To effectively represent the various alternative accounts of the actions and ethics of the young people in this project (and their communities), it is necessary to explore what really matters to the people to whose lives I am (briefly) apprenticed, to navigate and research these (and other) competing versions of truth with ethical mindfulness, and then tell my research stories accordingly (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Riessman & Speedy, 2006). Thus, I seek to engage the communities involved in dialogue about the directions and practices of this and future research (Bishop, 2005; Tucker, 2006). I discuss the extent to which this has been a growing awareness and commitment in this research project in Chapter Twelve.

Connectedness is fundamental.

In this qualitative, action-research project, I stress the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied, and the situational constraints, such as current educational discourse, that shape inquiry — the local and the broader taken-for-granted ways of

making meaning (Denzin & Lincoln 2005). Here I highlight the connectedness between me as researcher, and the community of persons I join in this research project.

In the context of therapy, Epston (1999) offers guidance to such a project of connectedness:

> Rather than thinking of myself as possessing some 'expert knowledge' that I might apply to those consulting me, I made seeking out fellow-feeling as my primary concern ... this has led, and continually leads, to practices to discover a 'knowing' in such a fashion that all parties to it could make good use of it. (p. 141)

Such a respectful, ethical stance of putting aside expert knowledge and seeking out fellow feeling is described by Schwandt (2000) as "an ethic of closeness, of care, of proximity, or of relatedness, which holds that morality must be theorised from an experiential basis, specifically in the experience of an I-thou relationship ... the willingness to be touched by another's life" (p. 204).

Again, from the field of therapeutic conversation, O'Connor and Macfarlane (2002) make clear that such openness produces great benefits for those involved. These benefits include tika or justice, wherein cultures listen to each other, and hear each other's voices; pono, wherein the integrity of traditional as well as contemporary knowledge is affirmed; and aroha, whose central core offers acceptance and compassion. In the light of these guidelines for culturally safe practice, in this research I seek to share how this project is represented with those involved, and to be alert to varying cultural understandings through dialogue with fellow-participants.

In my desire to research culturally appropriate alternative responses to the use of suspension and exclusion at times of troubling actions at school, I prepared a ten week programme of intervention, and asked two schools to suggest young people who might currently be candidates for suspension or exclusion. From the developing stance of critical Pakeha praxis (Crocket, 2012), I turn now to

the stories of the two schools within which these research practices were conducted.

CHAPTER 6: CONDUCTING FIELD WORK IN TWO AUCKLAND SCHOOLS

In Chapter One I discussed how, through a process of research and ethical proposals, information sharing and permission seeking, I carefully established a research relationship with two young men at risk of suspension or exclusion in two Auckland schools. In each school I conducted field work where, through recorded conversations, transcripts, emails, letters and notes, I gathered the data which I analyse in later chapters. In this chapter I describe the process I followed in each school, and the adaptations to the research project which emerged.

The First School

The First School that was part of this study is a 1200 pupil, multicultural, years 9 – 13 state-funded high school. Having negotiated permission with the Board of Trustees (See Chapter One and Appendix One), I approached the deans at the First School and asked for the name of the year 10 male student most likely to be a candidate for suspension or expulsion in the near future. The deans readily supplied the name of one boy – Peter.

Peter is a 14-year-old Pakeha boy who lives in a caring relationship with his father. At the time we met, Peter's school reputation was such that, though still attending school, he was excluded from all classes for "continual disobedience" as the school considered whether to re-assign Peter to a whole new set of classes, or to transfer him to an alternative education centre. Peter was described to me by the dean as a "likeable rogue", a seemingly irrepressible young man whose presence, noise, movement, actions, and attitude in classes often made teaching very difficult for his teachers and learning difficult for his peers. As I record in Chapters Seven, Eight and Nine, in our conversations

about the effects of that school-based reputation, Peter expressed awareness that the situation was difficult for others, and for him also; and he preferred that things be different for him. Peter had previously been talked to, given detentions, kept daily record books of behaviour, been stood down, and removed from classes — all to no apparent effect on Peter's reputation at school, nor on his actions.

A peer joins at the beginning: Action research adaptation 1.

As my research project developed throughout this study, I made various adaptations to the original plan. I made these adaptations in consultation with Huia and Brent Swann at the weekly research team discussions held during this field work stage of the project. I describe these adaptations here to show the process of action and reflection within this action research project.

Having gained permission and a suggested candidate from the school, I arranged to meet with Peter in order to discuss whether he would like to be a part of the research project. However, on the day we arranged to meet, Peter truanted from school. Trying again, the following week I succeeded in meeting with Peter. Peter brought a close friend, Tama, to the meeting. I was momentarily discomforted by the arrival of Peter's peer, as my plan was to meet with Peter for two to three weeks before considering peer involvement. However, knowing that I would soon hope to include supportive peers, and believing that Peter would be more likely to talk with me with his friend present, I adapted the plan in two ways at that point: to interview both young people about the research project, and their possible involvement in it; and to invite them into the research project after our first meeting (rather than the third meeting as planned). My choice to do so was based on my years of experience as a school guidance counsellor which has shown the benefit to young people of working together in counselling conversations about making

a difference to how they are known about the school. Both young people were enthusiastic in their response.

From dispositions to interviews: Adaptation 2.

My research plan had us meeting for the next two or three weeks to see if alternative stories could be established, and to give the young people a chance to see the type of counselling involved, in order that they might give informed consent to being part of the doctoral project. However, the next week when we three met, Peter told me had been excluded from all his classes for continual disobedience, and was that morning to meet with the assistant principal to be removed from school to an alternative education centre.

I note here that the naming of Peter as continually disobedient, and the separation from his peers through removal from classes and consideration of alternative education are examples of the dividing practices discussed in Chapter Two, which are part of a process giving rise to disordered subjectivities (Foucault, 1982). Thus Peter's identity was described as disordered and remedial responses were invoked. Hoping to maintain the relationship already established I went with Peter to see the assistant principal. In a lengthy conversation, and with the support of Peter's dean and the deputy Principal, the assistant principal made a decision to retain Peter at school, provided he was to change all his classes.

My original research plan had drawn on the work of Carr (2001) to focus on young peoples' dispositions to learn. I had arranged to interview teachers before and after meeting with Peter, in order to assess whether a process of re-authoring identity stories with Peter made a difference in his dispositions to learn. Although being allowed back in classes enabled Peter to continue as a part of the research, the research plan to explore changes in Peter's dispositions to learn was now not possible. The new teachers, into whose classes Peter was re-assigned, had no previous knowledge of Peter's

dispositions to learn, and thus could not offer a pre-programme assessment. As a result, the research plan was adapted to interviewing the teachers after the programme, asking what they had noticed across that time.

The programme continues.

Over the next three weeks I met with Peter weekly for counselling conversations, exploring his actions at school and elsewhere, and, as I discuss in Chapter Eight, developing an account of his hopes for himself, and identity stories which were alternative to those of his school reputation. Peter's friend Tama was present for these conversations, and I routinely asked him to comment, as an outsider witness (White, 2007) to Peter's emerging identity stories, on what he was hearing, and what his perspective on those stories was. Tama was supportive of the development of Peter's alternative identity stories throughout this time, and contributed with anecdotes, comments and questions in ways which further developed Peter's preferred stories. Tama was also keen to speak about himself, and show that he too was making changes as we reviewed the possibilities of alternative reputations at school.

During part of this initial three week period, Peter was again removed from the classes into which he had just been put. After some days at a desk in a school corridor, with representation from a supportive teacher and dean, Peter was allowed back into those classes. In spite of these disciplinary interventions, after three weeks it was clear that Peter did have alternative identity stories to develop and step into, and he and Tama declared themselves keen to continue as participants in the research project. Consequently, I sought and received support and permission from their parents for their formal involvement (See Appendices Two and Three).

Meeting parents.

In keeping with my research plan, I met with Peter's father at their home to explore his experience of Peter's reputation at school. I felt I met with a

caring, supportive father, one with a good relationship with his son. After a warm reception, Neville offered his analysis of what was producing the problems for Peter at school, including a need for work opportunities for young people to counteract the boring nature of school life. In an inquiry shaped by Statement of Position Map 1 (White, 2007)(see Chapter Four), Neville reported that, as an effect of Peter's actions and reputation at school, he had experienced phone calls and letters from school, being asked to come in to school for meetings during work hours, and tension at home. When I asked, Neville gave permission for Peter to be involved in the project. In response to my questions about times and places where Peter was known in ways which contradicted his school reputation, Neville added to Peter's alternative stories with accounts of his son's life outside of school, including the judo they had done together, that Peter was good with children, and that Peter was a welcome visitor at a friend's home. This is an example of how details of alternative reputations exist outside of the school setting as well as within it, and makes clear how important it is to co-research with peer, family and community figures in developing preferred identity accounts for young people to step into.

I was also warmly received by Tama's mother. At their home we discussed the project and Tama's mother agreed to his being involved, on condition that the project was endorsed by the Māori liaison worker at the school. With this endorsement and with his mother's support, Tama continued with the project. As part of this consultation process, Tama's mother required that she speak first with the school Māori liaison person, to ensure that he was supportive of the research. I discuss this particularly Māori relational approach, and my developing awareness of its importance, in Chapter Twelve.

Further peers invited.

In my research outline I planned to invite up to four peers to join Peter in co-researching, telling and re-telling alternative stories of preferred reputation. Peter, Tama and I discussed who we might invite to the conversations, and decided on two further peers. These young people agreed, and with the permission of their parents, became part of the weekly co-research team.

Each week I further interviewed Peter, exploring the hopes he had for himself and others implicit in his actions both in and away from school. As I discuss in detail in Chapter Eight, Peter's peers contributed additions and alterations which supported Peter's alternative tellings, responding to questions such as: What might Peter's diligence in delivering pamphlets for his employer suggest about what is important to him? And where else they may have noticed Peter acting in similar ways? Together we told and retold Peter's emerging stories through interviews, storytelling, drawing, and outsider witness conversations. I detail these responses in later chapters.

Where previously Peter's peers had been a willing audience to his earlier reputation through laughing at and encouraging his class-based actions, they now became an equally willing audience to his new stories, some of which they knew and had contributed to, and some of which were surprising even to them. As part of the ongoing conversation about reputation and its effects, all the young people spoke of noticing a difference for Peter, and for themselves, in how they were both acting and being treated at school.

During this time, the pattern of our meetings included beginning with hot drinks and a catch up, interviews about emerging alternative stories and what that suggested about their ethical intent at those times, and re-telling those stories in words or drawings. As I discuss in Chapter Eight, drawings became a tool for later tellings, such as when my co-researchers for this field work, Huia and Brent Swann visited from the Second School, and later at Peter's

Definitional Ceremony (see Chapter Four and p. 134), and again as part of a poetry document sent to South Africa to other young people there.

Focus on Peter: Adaptation 3.

A further adaptation to the planned programme came with a focus on Peter's stories. Initially, I aimed to focus equally on each of the young peoples' stories, developing an alternative reputation for each boy with their teachers and family. However, as it unfolded, the time was not sufficient for a full telling and re-telling of each boy's stories and, as it seemed on reflection, turning to the peers' stories as a focus might detract from the primary emphasis on Peter's stories, and their effects for him. Thus we came to focus on Peter's stories in the main, giving just one week to each of the peers as an experience of the process, and for Peter to see the effect for the others of exploring the possibilities of ethical agency and alternative accounts.

Sharing stories: Adaptations 4 and 5.

During the time of meeting weekly with the four young people, two further developments added to the richness of the re-telling of alternative stories and identity claims. These were provided by Huia and Brent Swann coming to visit the First School to hear from the young people what had emerged for them, and through an opportunity to write and share poetry with a group of young people in South Africa.

From the outset, the counselling/outsider witness conversations with the young people included the idea that the work they were doing could be shared with others, as a support to others in their efforts to escape from troubling reputations, and as a support for their own emerging identity claims. Although initially I had imagined this process as being within the young peoples' own school and wider communities, a new opportunity emerged when Huia and Brent came to visit Peter and his peers at the First School. Huia and Brent had by this time begun the Second School's work on this project, together with Hohepa and his community (see later in this chapter

and also Chapter Ten). This was the first time the young people had told and retold their stories to people from outside of their own school community. Together they prepared for the meeting with drawings and stories in order to share what they had been doing together.

A second new and significant opportunity for telling their preferred stories emerged through my University supervisor, Elmarie Kotzé's, relationships in South Africa. Elmarie's friend and colleague Therese Hulme had been working on a project of writing poetry with a group of young people in a South African school. When at Elmarie's suggestion we shared the South African young peoples' poetry with the young people in this project, they were excited to reciprocate. In both these examples, the process of art work and poetry preparation served as re-telling of preferred identity claims to a responsive audience, and supported a sense for the young people of their efforts having importance and value to the wider community (Denborough, 2008). I discuss this poetry project more fully in Chapter Nine.

Teachers as co-authors and a restorative process: Adaptations 6 and 7.

As the action research project continued, so did adaptations to the process. The next two adaptations came in response to engaging teachers in the First School as an audience to Peter's preferred identity accounts.

While developing the research programme, I consulted a number of people, including David Denborough of the Dulwich Centre in Adelaide. David responded by reminding me of the place of restorative justice in this work. Before inviting teachers to be an audience to alternative identity stories, David emphasised that it would be important to discuss what harm, if any, had been done under the auspices of old identity stories, and how the effects of any harm might be restored. This important reminder joined with my own Masters in Counselling research, and the work I had done over the years in schools (Adams et al., 2003; Drewery, Winslade, & McMenamin, 2002; McMenamin, 1999) offering restorative practices as a response to relationship

and behavioural difficulties at school. This emphasis on restorative practices led to including a restorative process with Peter's teachers in which we discussed what harm they may have experienced and what might help restore relationships.

Secondly, after three weeks of meeting with Peter and Tama, it became clear that Peter's teachers needed to be more than simply the reporters of what they noticed in class, as planned. In order to both support and develop the emerging alternative identity claims being made by Peter at school, we needed Peter's teachers to be actively engaged in the re-authoring process: through offering input to alternative accounts; through actively noticing and witnessing alternative ways of being around school; and through inviting preferred responses at times in classes. In order to discuss this, I invited the teachers who were named by Peter as supportive to his project to a meeting to discuss these developments in the programme and to invite them to take up this new role. Four of the five agreed.

Inviting teachers to a restorative and co-authoring process.

On meeting with the teachers to invite them to a restorative process I reviewed the PhD project thus:

In any school of 1000 students there are often students who are approaching suspension or exclusion. Those are the students this doctoral study is focused on. With those students the aim is to research with them, their families, their peers and their teachers, stories about the things they care about, and stand for, that are not about trouble, but are about what they hope for and care for in life. Through a growing awareness of that version of their identity, the work is to invite the young person to stand more fully in that preferred identity, wherever possible.

Before asking family, peers, and teachers to support the young person in this project of standing more fully in a preferred identity, we need to acknowledge that harm may have been done both by and to the young person in the past.

A restorative process asks people affected about what harms have been done, and what might help make that right? In this way people can name harms done, and can take steps to demonstrate a willingness and actions to participate in making things right.

Recognising that stepping into a preferred identity is a process to be supported, rather than a goal to be reached, those who choose to support the young person in the process of living more fully in a preferred identity can do so in ways that fit for them and their relationship with the young person. Care is taken to monitor how things are going, and at an appropriate time, those involved are invited to come together — young person, family, peers, and teachers — to celebrate any significant steps that have been noticed.

Following this review, I asked and received responses to these questions: In your experience with Peter, has there been harm caused that needs to be addressed at all? For example, you could have experienced classes being disrupted, lessons disturbed, people hurt in some way; what if anything might make a difference for you, might help restore things? What might act as evidence that Peter understood harm had been done, and wanted to make a difference? What do you know of Peter that does not fit with a troubled story?

In response to these questions, the four teachers named by Peter told me that Peter had been removed from classes, but that now he was "much better, much improved"; that sitting with another student had led to trouble, and that not doing so would be an indication of understanding; that writing notes about class topics would make a difference; that disrupting classes had been a problem and that "calling him into a new way may help"; and that "staying in his seat is a key piece of evidence that he is serious about trying to make a difference." The teachers continued, offering that "when the spotlight is off him he seems to do well"; that "he is an uncle who cares for his sister's son, he goes to pick his nephew up from day care because the child loves Peter"; that Peter is "a caring kid who loves his family, and it makes a difference for

me as a teacher to know this"; that Peter will "work hard, try and do a good job, try to get an A"; and that "he does try, and wants to be good".

The conversation concluded with me saying that, like all of us, Peter needs to be called towards preferred identity. He may not arrive fully, but we can keep calling, and that Peter would be invited to recognise these requests as supportive of his hopes for a changed reputation. I took these responses back to Peter who agreed to not sit near the named student, to write down notes, to get serious at the beginning of the lesson, and to stay in his seat (much more). These responses were reported back to the teachers.

Others supporting Peter.

It is important to note here that, during the whole time of Peter's involvement in this project and beyond, others were involved with Peter's care. At home, Neville continued to parent Peter with the skill and care that was apparent when we met. In class, teachers continued to offer their teaching and pastoral care. During this time, the deans maintained their efforts with Peter, including systems of recording and reporting his daily achievements in class. That the deputy principal, dean, and a supportive teacher had twice enabled Peter to be returned to classes in the face of removal to alternative education has already been recorded.

As well as these everyday supports, the school RTLB worked with Peter's teachers, offering advice and encouragement in effective classroom responses to unwelcome behaviours, and supporting teachers' noticing of Peter's developing preferred actions in class. During this time also, both the school principal and the assistant principal met with Peter, and told him clearly that, while he was wanted in the school, his ongoing actions put his remaining at school at risk. Finally, the Māori student liaison person supported my request with Tama's mother for Tama's involvement by responding positively to Tama's mother about the research project. Thus, alongside the work within this research project with these young people, there

continued a whole system of effective pastoral care, offering support to the young people and for their education.

Definitional Ceremony (at the First School)

The thus-adapted intervention programme consisted of meeting with Peter and his peers over a period of ten weeks to co-author preferred identity accounts. During that time Peter's peers, teachers and family heard of and contributed to Peter's developing accounts. At the end of the ten weeks of meetings and re-authorings, tellings and re-tellings, in consultation with Peter I invited all those involved to further tell and re-tell the preferred identity stories which had emerged. In Chapter Four, this event is described as a definitional ceremony. The letter I sent to the participants provided a record of this event, as well as serving as yet another telling of the shared identity project:

Dear All,

Thank you again for the support you show for Peter in stepping into a new reputation at school. While for us all it is only ever an 'on the way' report, what we heard on Tuesday seemed to most of us to be a pretty good step in the right direction!

Coming out of a project looking at how schools can respond to young men in ways that avoid exclusion, we have all been working in our own ways to support Peter, and through his story, to support others in getting the most out of these years at school.

As we heard, Peter was heading for Alternative Education, or a course, or looking for another school. Now he's saying that he gets second chances, privileges, rewards, trust, good attention, food, house cards, and compliments.

To achieve this, Peter decided to get things better for himself at school. He did this by deliberately bringing his out-of-school reputation for reliability, kindness, good work etc into school.

But he could not do that on his own, because old reputations stick quite closely. To make the change he had some very real help:

- *Mr. Mac helped clarify his preferred reputation;*

- *Tama, Andrew, and Jim supported Peter by being there with him, and adding ideas;*

- *Peter's teachers knew of his efforts, and supported them by noticing them, and by acknowledging them with attention and rewards;*

- *Peter's Dad has always, and continues, to lead Peter and support him with trust and encouragement;*

- *Huia and Brent from another school supported Peter with their keen interest in his story;*

- *I know too that D, the RTLB, has supported Peter and his teachers. And I know that Mr. B, Mr. S, and others have supported Peter with clear guidelines and consequences.*

Here are some quotes from Tuesday's meeting:

Peter:

I don't have to be bad.

Instead of getting bad attention I can get good attention.

Ms. B said I am becoming one of her top students and I can get into good classes in the future.

The friends said:

It was a bit of a surprise because he had a bad reputation, but now he thinks about his consequences.

He used to get E's in class and now the blue book is filled with A's. [Teachers record daily in the 'blue book' with grades for behaviour, attendance and so on.]

He didn't used to be like that!

And the teachers said:

He's been paying more attention to what you say, he's listening, taking what you say and using it.

In PE, and from a dean's perspective, the switch has been a major one. His manners, his ability to be attentive, doing what is asked of him, offering to help; there's high energy and positive energy. I've seen a major shift. There is more of an ability to reason with Peter, he will listen and try and change things. It's a lot nicer because it's not negative, so much nicer.

Peter is more open to my ideas, he's listening a lot better. Success is coming from wanting to learn, I've noticed Peter doing better, and the work he is doing.

I've seen a big change after the first two days where he had to be removed, then, when he came back, he didn't do that stuff again. In the last 3 weeks I've noticed a real improvement, a huge difference. It makes me want to pay more attention to smaller things, because I know he is not playing with mates. He is higher in my attention for help when asked, this is really noticeable.

Peter's father said:

Getting notes about trouble in school is hard. Without those there is no drama happening. Now he brings his blue book home, and mostly it is all A's! Now there is no need for that terrible feeling of taking away from your child the very things you want to give him — he gets more trust, and I am not needing to restrict him. It's more peaceful!

And in the community?

In the other school which is following Peter's story, Huia said that Peter has given her so much hope! She said, "I see doors to futures of brilliant young men flying open all over the place!" Huia described the process as simple: "The most important is about doing the relationship differently, focusing on the small and positive. This has definitely made a difference. There is one boy in particular who is hearing about these things, and now I have more insight into possibilities for him and for others."

And these stories will be sent out to South Africa, and the people there will respond to what it's like for them to hear it — the echoes bouncing out all over the place!

So it's been great working together on this project. It's only a step along the way, but it's a good step.

A genuine thank you to you all.

Donald

I'll leave the last word to Peter:

What's it like to hear all this Peter?

"It puts a smile on my face! It's pretty cool! Thanks! And the teachers probably appreciate that I'm not bad in class!"

Thus the proposed programme of ten weeks of support for Peter's migration of identity came to an end. While Peter's teachers, deans, peer supporters, and RTLB continued their pastoral care and education, the formal involvement of me and the research project in Peter's life and actions ended. However, as I discuss in Chapter Twelve, there is a clear need to continue intentional involvement with young people over time in support of their preferred identity claims, and the structuring of such support, including recruiting peers, guidance and teaching staff, and family members is an important finding of this research.

The weekly reflections during the time of research at the First School shaped what happened at the Second School. I turn now to that story.

The Second School

Like the First School, the Second School is a large, multi-cultural, years 9-13 state-funded high school. The story of the Second School began with the ideas and practices developed from our experiences at the First School. As a result, the research programme was set up to engage a young person and their peers at the same time as engaging with their teachers and parents.

As with the First School, during this time of action research practice, Huia, Brent and I reflected weekly at the Friday kitchen-table conversations at Huia and Brent's home. As discussed in Chapter Ten, Huia and Brent participated richly in this part of the research project both as co-researchers, and as Māori cultural advisers. As a member of the Second School staff, Huia was well placed to initiate and conduct the research project in her school, while as narrative therapists Huia and Brent offered peer reflections on the therapeutic aims of the project. Steeped in both Māori and Pakeha cultures, Huia and Brent offered a unique and valuable insight into the hopes and concerns of Māori young people and communities.

In her role as support teacher for Māori students, Huia took the lead throughout the practical research work at the Second School, arranging to meet and invite the young person, Hohepa, and his peer, Max, to be involved in the project, organising teacher meetings, and communicating with Hohepa's mother. At the Second School, as discussed more fully in Chapter Ten, a particularly Māori emphasis, carried and offered by Huia and Brent, came to the fore. This emphasis is reflected in the concepts and practices which I discuss here, and in the use of Te Reo Māori (Māori language) to describe those concepts and practices. As with the first school, the counselling conversations (in this school held by Huia with Hohepa) were

recorded and transcribed. Together with letters and emails, these notes formed the data analysed in later chapters.

Selecting a student.

In her capacity as support teacher for Māori students, Huia met with the deputy principal who, after hearing about the research project, gave his permission to go ahead in principle. Subsequently, I met with the deputy principal and the school guidance counsellor separately, to discuss the research project (see Appendix Five). The lead role in the project would be Huia's in her school role as Māori student support person. Both the deputy principal and the school guidance counsellor were supportive of the research project, and the University Ethics Committee guidelines. I subsequently sought formal permission to conduct the research project from the School Board of Trustees (see Appendix One).

During this time the deputy principal and the guidance counsellor provided Huia with a list of potential candidates for the research project, and discussed how a likelihood of a student being suspended during the project might make some candidates ineligible. In further discussion it was decided that even with that risk, a suitable candidate could be invited into the project, and that a later suspension or exclusion would form part of the project's outcome data to be analysed. After discussion, a number of young people emerged as potential candidates — including Hohepa, a year 10 student who was known to Huia from the previous year. Huia had recently met Hohepa's mother and felt their relationship would support Hohepa in the research work. Hohepa's mother had been supportive of him spending time with Huia.

From these discussions, an invitation was offered by Huia to Hohepa, who replied, "Yep!" Huia discussed with Hohepa how a group of his peers could join the team later to support whatever new stories may have emerged. They discussed how, later still and through his choice, others such as family and teachers could be invited to hear and celebrate what he and his friends came

up with during the ten weeks of discussions — be that a story told in talking, in music, or in art. Hohepa said "Yep!" to signify his agreement with this plan. I note here that even in such negotiations of involvement, in being invited to give informed consent, Hohepa was being offered a subjectivity of ethical agency, through reviewing the choices he would prefer, and how the invitation might fit with his hopes for himself and others. This initial positioning set the scene for subsequent invitations to ethical agency, as discussed below.

Hohepa's letter.

Prior to his becoming engaged in this research project, Hohepa had been part of a group of students involved with bullying another student at school. In response to that, and as part of his work with Huia at the school, Hohepa had written a letter to the deputy principal outlining that, while he was present with the group involved with bullying, he had not taken part in any actions of bullying, that he was sorry that the cleaners who witnessed the event had to see what happened, and that he wanted something different for himself at school. In this letter, which represents Huia and Hohepa's efforts to present an alternative version of Hohepa's preferred identity to the deputy principal, Hohepa is described a moral agent, acting on behalf of his preferred ethics.

Huia reported that when Hohepa's letter was read to the deputy principal and a school pastoral worker, there was a shift in atmosphere — that Hohepa's perspective was listened to, and other possibilities for who he might be at school, seemed to become possible. This shift in relationship is an example of the social construction of identity through language — the letter offered an alternative description of Hohepa to the deputy principal and the school pastoral worker in which Hohepa's alternative identity claims, and his taking up of a responsibility for his actions, were made more visible. This led to a shift in relationship as the deputy principal and the school pastoral worker began to relate with Hohepa in the light of this new and preferred identity claim. This shift was to be important, as the new relationship which was

formed at that time with the deputy principal became a platform, though at times a tenuous one, which continued to develop through the project.

Huia took these beginnings, and with Hohepa continued to develop an account in keeping with what he said he wanted in the letter, drawing on the co-researching, co-authoring and co-publishing conversations outlined in Chapter Four. In kitchen-table conversation we, the research team, resolved to publish the idea that Hohepa was "moving towards or reaching for a new reputation" to his teachers, and that he needed a helping hand and a pick-me-up if things were to go wrong. The idea that changing reputation is something moved towards rather than quickly arrived at is a learning which I discuss in Chapter Twelve. As Huia said at the time, "When there are ups — great. When there are downs, let's link arms in support", and Brent said, offering a metaphor of care for someone having fallen out of a canoe, "We don't put a foot on the one trying to get back into the waka (canoe), we offer a blanket." I note here that these metaphors speak to a different construction of subjectivity than that of current educational discourse. Shaped by Māori discourses of selfhood, Huia is drawing on ideas of awhi (support) and Brent on manaakitanga (hospitality) as central to interconnected relational identities as persons and as carers.

An emerging new reputation.

Huia met with Hohepa over the next three weeks, and through the process of questioning and discussion detailed below, began to develop an alternative account of his identity based on his wishes as stated in his letter, and from other stories of his life which they explored together. I draw here from the transcripts of Huia and Hohepa's conversations:

When Huia asked, Hohepa described his existing reputation as "smoking, wagging, all that stuff ... stand overs." Huia reminded Hohepa how tagging, and wearing uniform incompletely and incorrectly had also played a part. When Huia asked about "those reputations hovering around you", Hohepa

spoke of feeling like teachers were targeting him for trouble. This is an example of Huia externalising the problem (named here as "those reputations") and wondering about the effects of this problem on Hohepa's lived experience (see Chapter Four, Statement of Position Map 1). In this conversation Hohepa is positioned as standing back from his experience of an existing reputation and noticing the effects it is having for him as something he does not want.

As Huia and Hohepa explored these ideas together, it emerged that, although he had previously, at this particular time Hohepa had not tagged in the school grounds, rather "just in my books." Here Hohepa and Huia have identified something small but significant that does not fit with the existing reputation, in narrative therapy terms, a unique outcome (White & Epston, 1990). According to the existing reputation, Hohepa tags buildings at school. But by Hohepa's account, his tagging (at least in this instance) is, "just my books". Thus the beginnings of an alternative story of choosing where and when to tag is made possible through the questioning and answering — Hohepa is someone who can choose not to tag school buildings, and who may be able to restrain tagging to his books.

Shaped by Māori (this boy belongs and is valued) and social constructionist (what does it suggest about Hohepa that he restrains from tagging at some times) discourses, I suggest that this is an example of Huia valuing inquiries about what may otherwise be overlooked or discounted. In order to develop this emerging alternative account, and to explore Hohepa's restraint in not tagging on school grounds, even though it was easily possible for him to do so, Huia asked, "I wonder why you choose not to?" Here Huia begins to explore any intent which may be implicit in Hohepa's restraint. Such questioning is shaped by the narrative therapy conversation map described in Chapter Four as Absent but Implicit (Carey, Walther, & Russell, 2009; White, 2007). In these questions Hohepa is positioned as having a say in how he is described, rather than his earlier experience of being described by others.

The subjectivity he experiences is one of ethical agency — Huia's careful questioning invites Hohepa to reflect on his actions in the light of what he was reaching for at those times. Hohepa is invited into a position of describing his actions in terms of ethical agency — of his having acted on behalf of some notion of good. In this way, Huia's questions elicit a description of Hohepa as capable of exercising restraint, and the values which shape such actions of restraint become available for him to speak about, and to potentially shape his actions in the future.

In time, Hohepa's teachers were invited to hear these emerging alternative identity claims through practices of telling and re-telling, and were invited to take up a relationship with Hohepa in terms of those identity claims. Their taking up of those alternative relationships further reinforced Hohepa's identity as the person he is claiming to be. But more of that later.

As the weeks passed, and as Hohepa began living into his emerging preferred sense of self, in their ongoing conversations Huia asked Hohepa if he was noticing any differences at school. Her questions developed the emerging accounts of Hohepa's preferred identity claims, and continued to offer Hohepa opportunities to reflect on the effects of those claims both now and in the future. Hohepa reported, "I get no notices [school disciplinary reports] now." Huia explored: What did this say about the choices Hohepa was making at school? If he carried on like that, what difference might it make to the next few weeks? Could that affect his reputation at school? Huia asked if Hohepa could guess whether this new reputation might still be working in six months' time, and Hohepa replied, "Yeah — probably." As a result of Huia's enquiries, these actions are changed from being simply what he did, to actions that Hohepa can reflect on as evidence for his hopes for himself and others, and re-describe as examples of him exercising ethical agency.

Huia enquired what other changes there had been. Hohepa replied that the teachers "don't get angus [angry] at me." For him that was "better", and, "I was being good." During this time Hohepa had stopped smoking, and he

reported that it was "not hard." Some teachers had been saying, "Good stuff" to Hohepa, and of a dean he reported: "She steps in — she stops me from getting detentions and stuff." Thus Hohepa was positioned as able to report on the new ways he understood himself, and how others understood him, and reflect on the real effects of these developments in his relationships. Just as the existing reputation had been having real effects in his relationships, for example, Hohepa's sense that the teachers had been targeting him, his new reputation was having real effects: the teachers "don't get angus at me."

Again Huia enquired: Had all this made any difference to Hohepa's learning in class? Hohepa replied, "Kind of … I kind of learned some more. All the classes I notice learning more", and, "Sometimes it used to be quite difficult in class, but now that's changed — I'm taking notice, asking for help, asking questions, getting good marks." These effects, which are brought into focus by Huia's enquiries, may well have been overlooked or discounted without such inquiry. As a result of Huia's questions, Hohepa is now able to wonder about these developments and their potential effects for himself and for people he cares about, such as his mother. Thus Huia asked: Did Mum know about these changes? "I think so"; and would Hohepa guess if Mum was pleased or not pleased by this? "Pleased" was Hohepa's guess. In these ways, layer by layer, Huia carefully worked with Hohepa to describe and reflect on his actions in order to develop a preferred account of Hohepa's actions and his hopes — a preferred identity story. Just as described in Chapter Four (see Re-Authoring Conversations) (White, 2007), a potential alternative subjectivity is made available to Hohepa as the ways he is described by others and by himself are reiterated, and have preferred effects.

One peer for Hohepa: A further adaptation (8).

When the time came to recruit peers to the re-authoring team as per the research programme, Hohepa suggested one peer was the right number. The research plan called for three peers, but we (the research team) adapted the plan to fit with Hohepa's hopes for the work.

Hohepa's friend Max had a story of giving up both wagging at school, and criminal activity in the community. He had a story of deciding to attend school, and of succeeding in attending school, which at that time had added up to 480 classes in a row since returning to school. Max's story sat well alongside Hohepa's hopes for himself. That is to say, in Max's story Hohepa saw an account which could fit with his own hopes for himself. In eliciting Max's story below as one of successfully reaching for attending and succeeding in school, Huia helped make such a story available to Hohepa as a resource for his making sense of his own hopes and efforts. After discussion with Hohepa as to whether Max would be a suitable support person for him, Max was invited to be an audience to Hohepa's emerging new reputation. When approached, Max willingly agreed. The following dialogue is constructed from the transcripts of Huia's conversation with Max (with Hohepa as audience) about Hohepa's reputation at school:

Huia: Hohepa used to have a reputation for a whole bunch of stuff, now not for that stuff. Have you noticed?

Max: Yeah, he is happier, not angry, not yelling at the teachers. Not getting in trouble now, 'cause he's not yelling at teachers. Not just in classes — everywhere.

Huia: Have you ever made a shift from one reputation to another?

Max: Yes. Last year, I got kicked out, and had to come back. I was going round getting into trouble. I've stopped it now — moved from one way of doing stuff to another. It's not difficult — just don't do it, then it ain't going to happen.

Huia: How do you think Hohepa has done it?

Max: Thinking about it — thinking before he does it.

Huia: Is Hohepa a guy who thinks about things?

Max: Yeah.

Huia: What's your prediction for Hohepa's new reputation? What do you think the dean will say in six months?

Max: Hohepa is a good guy — yeah — it depends if he keeps on thinking. He probably will keep on thinking.

Here Hohepa is positioned as audience to Max's tellings about his and Hohepa's emerging identity claims. In this position Hohepa is able to hear about himself, and reflect on how what he is hearing fits with his hopes for himself and others. Thus Hohepa experiences ethical agency as he considers how Max's tellings align with his own preferred identity claims.

As with the First School, the tellings and re-tellings between Hohepa, Max and Huia served to highlight the actions Hohepa was taking in his efforts to develop a new reputation at school. As various actions were identified with Huia's careful questioning (for example stopping smoking, restraint in tagging, attention in classes), Hohepa and Max could reflect on what these actions might say about who Hohepa preferred to be known as. These actions and the reflections on these actions are examples of Hohepa expressing ethical agency — taking and evaluating action on behalf of his understandings of good. In Chapter Twelve I explore the tenuous nature of such developing alternative reputations, and how continuing relationship and support may be needed to maintain preferred developments in identity stories.

Around this time Huia reported at the Friday kitchen-table conversation what she was seeing of Hohepa's new reputation at school: "Lots of changes." One teacher had stopped Huia in the hallway saying, "Hohepa is looking good, I can't smell smoke on him." Others were talking to Huia about the changes they had noticed, and how happy they were about that. They had said, "Hohepa is holding his head up."

After Donald met Hohepa and Max.

During the seventh week of Huia's conversations with Hohepa at the Second School, I visited the group of Hohepa, Max, Huia and Brent at the Second

School, and interviewed them about their experience thus far. While my primary role in doing so was as lead researcher in the project, both my interview, and the letter which followed, served as an opportunity for Hohepa to declare his preferred identity claims, and to hear Brent, Huia and my responses to those claims. Thus, while I gathered data for the research project in the form of interview notes, this was an opportunity for Hohepa and Max to tell and retell their emerging accounts with someone from outside of their school and home communities.

After this meeting I wrote the following letter to Hohepa, as a re-telling of the accounts I had heard, in order to give Hohepa yet another opportunity to be an audience to his own story through another person's point of view. As discussed in Chapter Two, ongoing reiterations of preferred identity accounts support such accounts being available as guides to future actions.

Dear Hohepa,

It was good to come to your school and meet with you and Max. Thanks for making me feel welcome.

I was impressed by the story I heard from you and Max — that you used to have a reputation for wagging and smoking, and maybe stand-overs. And that you worked to change that. And now you have a reputation for not wagging, and not smoking, and wearing the right uniform. That is the exact opposite of before!

This new reputation makes a difference. Before you said the teachers did not like you, and were mean. Now you say, even the dean says you are good, and she steps in to help you when it is needed. And you told me that you learn more now — is that right? And Max said, you are not getting in trouble in class — he noticed that.

Huia said that she gets teachers coming up to her in the staffroom and in the corridors wanting to say how well they think you are doing. And did I hear that

Mr. S showed how much he cares too? Huia said that you, Hohepa, have been holding your head up. She seemed to like that.

Max has done the same thing as you — changing his reputation at school — so he knows what you have done. Max said it was because you think about things. He said, if you keep thinking about things, this new reputation will just get stronger.

Brent said that he noticed this real change — a huge difference, he said. Brent was glad because he knows that Māori are clever, and he noticed the way you use words carefully, and say what matters. Brent remembered that you know about pig hunting, and the sea — he said the school does not know about these good things about you.

Hohepa, I asked if your mother might be pleased to hear about how well you have done, shifting that reputation like that — thinking, having teachers speak so well of you, learning more, uniform and so on — and you thought she would be pleased.

Because you have done this, your story will be part of the book we are writing. That book will go to schools to help other people make a change like you.

And your story will go to the school I work at — and help people there make a change like you.

And your story will go to South Africa, to those people who wrote that poetry in Afrikaans, to help them make a difference.

Hohepa, I asked you if you thought this change in reputation would be with you in six months, and you said "Yeah — probably." I agree. If it is OK with you, I would like to come back to your school at the end of the year to see what has happened, and to let you know who has heard your story — is that OK?

So, thanks for your effort, Hohepa. And thank you for your valuable part in this project.

All the very best,

Donald

The Second School Teachers

In keeping with what had been learnt at the First School, Huia, Brent and I decided to engage Hohepa's teachers early in the process in order that they might offer what they knew of Hohepa that supported and developed an alternative account of his hopes at school, and to invite them as an audience to Hohepa's emerging alternative identity claims.

Huia consulted Hohepa as to which teachers to invite, and Huia invited Hohepa's chosen teaching staff (and me) to a meeting to discuss joining Hohepa in his re-authoring hopes. Hohepa's letter to the deputy principal was a starting point of a conversation between Huia, Brent, me and his teachers about Hohepa's hopes for himself at school, and his awareness that his reputation at school did not accurately represent these hopes for himself. At that meeting, the research team of Huia, Brent and I discussed the notion of identity migration with Hohepa's teachers, wherein identity is developing rather than arrived at, and in need of support and encouragement along the way. We invited Hohepa's teachers to support his hopes for a new reputation, and to offer ideas as to what might make a difference for him. As with the First School, we discussed restorative practices, wherein the notion of harm done could be raised, and what might make things right be discussed.

In this way Hohepa's teachers were invited to take up an alternative position to that offered by current educational discourse. The teachers were invited to be both co-authors in Hohepa's emerging alternative stories, and audience to them. As co-authors, the teachers were invited to speak of times they had noticed actions by Hohepa that did not fit with the existing reputation. Such unique outcomes became doorways to conversations about what Hohepa was intending in those actions, and what that might say about the sort of person he preferred to be. As audience to Hohepa's emerging preferred

identity accounts, the teachers were invited to both notice actions by Hohepa which fitted with his new identity claims and to listen and respond to tellings about such claims. The definitional ceremony described below was a site at which the teacher's noticings and responses were offered to Hohepa for his reflection and consideration. As stated throughout, Hohepa's actions on behalf of a preferred reputation and his reflection on those actions can be seen as sites where Hohepa was positioned as exercising ethical agency — as choosing on behalf of some notion of good.

The results of the meeting with his teachers were taken back to Hohepa, and those results became part of the plan for moving forward in his alternative reputation story. Thus in the Second School, the teachers were involved from the outset, not simply as observers, but as co-authors and audience to Hohepa's new reputation, focused on movement towards the preferred, rather than on a meeting of static goals to be achieved. This is an example of a supportive audience participating in the social construction of preferred identities.

The range (in terms of subject areas) and number of teachers was similar between the First School and the Second School. The teachers gathered for this initial hui (meeting) were Hohepa's class teachers, plus one other teacher who was supportive of Hohepa's hopes for changing reputations at school. The notes from that meeting were summarised in a letter sent by Huia to all present:

Kia ora koutou,

Thank you all for attending this meeting to hear about Hohepa's wishes to move toward another reputation at school. I appreciate you taking the time at the end of a long and tiring term.

These notes from our discussion are for your reference and to fill the gaps of those who arrived a little later. If you have any queries or think I may have missed something please let me know.

Hohepa has given permission for all the following information regarding him to be made available to you all. As discussed, our conversation is confidential to those attending this meeting and to the research team as per permission form (See appendix Three).

Research Project:

Huia Swann is a member of a PhD research team that is developing a process for young people (Yr. 10, Māori, male) in trouble at school. The project is looking at the migration of identity from a reputation of trouble (truancy, disruptive, attitude, etc...) towards a reputation of something else.

The project uses a metaphor of Rites of Passage — that is, we should expect difficulties and hiccups along the way. How do we support when the young person is blown off course? I told you so? Or lend a hand?

Hohepa and family have agreed to participate in this project hence the request for all staff present to sign the Permission Form to use notes from our discussion.

Did you know that Hohepa wants to change the reputation that hangs around him at school? With his permission and using his words, these are some of his goals, intentions and values.

- *I want to be at school;*

- *I care about getting a good education;*

- *I want my reports to show good results;*

- *I want to be known for good behaviour and good manners.*

I interrupt this account of Huia's letter, in order to comment that Hohepa had given his permission for his teachers to read the letter he wrote to Mr. S. after being stood down early in term two for issues with uniform, smoking and bullying behaviour. Hohepa's teachers at the hui were asked to name two or three easy-to-achieve things that could make the most difference in

supporting Hohepa's preferred identity. The teachers suggested: Sitting close to the front of classroom; turning up to class on time; asking for help; bringing equipment to class; and bringing gear to PE. Suggestions made to support Hohepa included: Keeping a uniform set at school; making a uniform credit available to the family at school; and providing access to the McKenzie trust for funding for uniform. Teachers at the hui were also asked if there had been any harm done through Hohepa's unwanted behaviours, and what might make things right again? The teachers' responses included: "Lots of lying and untruths, waste of time" with "Take responsibility for actions and words" as what could make it right; "Evading, no shows, running away", with "Front up, show up and talk" as a suggestion to make things right. With the teachers, Huia discussed that the work is to relate with Hohepa differently, to relate with a new version of who he wants to be known as, so that they might join him in this identity project as supporters and co-authors of a preferred identity account.

Huia's summary letter continued:

I will be taking these requests back to Hohepa and his responses to these requests will be reported back to you. When speaking with Hohepa will you please use this phrase "Can I rely on you to..?" Whether in a group or alone, when he hears "Can I rely on you to ..?" he will be reminded that we are all his supportive allies working toward his preferred identity.

Mid-way through term 3, depending on progress, we may have a checking in on progress, celebration, etc.

You are welcome to email me with any noticings of changed behaviours, progress, causes for concern or celebration.

Naku noa,

Huia Swann

Teachers' witness developments.

Some weeks later, Huia asked Hohepa's teachers via individual conversations what, if anything, they had noticed about Hohepa during this period of research. They made many comments in reply, including that Hohepa is: Looking really good / nice haircut / handsome; uniform — great improvement; no malice in Hohepa / a good boy; big improvement in term 2 compared to term 1; likes working by himself; don't think he's smoking at school anymore / can't smell smoke on him; no problems with behaviour, just needs to do some work! "Bully behaviour" does not fit staff description of Hohepa; and he has moved from Level 3 up to Level 4.

Huia reported that teachers are coming up to her and saying, "That boy — he's smiling!" These descriptions can be seen as effects of the alternative story about who Hohepa prefers to be. We can speculate here that such effects may well be making a difference to Hohepa, to his teachers, to his family and friends. Just what those differences were came to be explored at the definitional ceremony described below.

A hiccup – Falling off the waka.

During this time Hohepa was called to see the deputy principal. He had been found smoking at school, and was now on daily report. Added to this, Hohepa had infringed uniform policy, had not attended a scheduled mentor time, had been late to school, and had missed a restorative meeting concerning an earlier tagging for which he had previously been stood down.

Throughout all that, the supportive relationship between Hohepa and the deputy principal remained in place and influential. Huia reported that now, Hohepa "speaks to him with his head up", and that, "Hohepa expects he will be listened to now." In the light of this relationship, rather than invoking a disciplinary response, the deputy principal said, "You have been doing so well Hohepa. We have been so pleased. Now this has happened. I want you to go with Huia, and work out a plan." Again, such responses can be seen as the

effects of Hohepa's preferred reputation, and the relationships which developed through it.

As to the smoking, it transpired that Hohepa and a friend had taken up nicotine patches in order to give up smoking, and the time they were caught was because, "I did not have the patches with me", and that this was the, "First time I've smoked at school in ages." As examples of unique outcomes not predicted by the original reputation stories, Huia developed these actions to give up smoking as part of the stories of Hohepa's hopes for his life, and his ability to take action on behalf of those hopes. Again, Hohepa was described as acting with ethical agency.

Inviting Hohepa's mother.

Huia had met with Hohepa's mother within the community, and she had been supportive of Huia's time spent with her son. However, Hohepa said he did not want his mother to come to the school — for interviews, or for a definitional ceremony. As our plan was that Hohepa would be able to say who we consulted, we respected that wish. However, we remained hopeful that Hohepa's mother could hear, and witness, Hohepa's efforts at school. At kitchen-table conversations we discussed telling and re-telling through letters, through separate meetings with Hohepa's mother, and perhaps the use of a venue away from the school. In the end, Hohepa did invite his mother to attend the definitional ceremony, the "celebration so far" hui, and she was able to be there.

I suggest that this shift in Hohepa's desire, to have his mother present at the definitional ceremony, was an example of Hohepa's knowledge and care for his mother. Given that Hohepa was not pressured to invite his mother, I surmise that Hohepa's original restraint may have been in keeping with not wanting his mother to be further exposed to negative stories about him, and that his experiences of a preferred re-telling of his reputation allowed for him

to share this meeting time with his mother, with a desire for her to be a witness and support to this preferred version of his self.

Kaupapa Māori preparation for a "celebration so far" hui.

From the beginning of the project, with both the First School and the Second School, in letters, invitations, and conversations, the hopes for a future definitional ceremony to celebrate the achievements of all involved had been clearly signalled. As discussed in Chapters Ten and Twelve, Huia and Brent offered and developed a particularly kaupapa Māori understanding of what was happening, especially in the Second School. In this light, the karanga (call) and welcome to the definitional ceremony had been offered right from the beginning of the meetings with participants, as we variously invited them to join in the project of re-authoring preferred identities. Thus from the outset, Hohepa, Hohepa's friend, Max, Hohepa's teachers, the school deputy principal, and, in time, Hohepa's mother had all been "called" to join us in celebrating the identity claims which were to come. As it transpired, unbeknownst to us, the karanga had also reached into Hohepa's community, resulting in a local kaumatua (tribal elder) taking up the invitation to attend.

Huia and Brent described the invitation to attend the hui in Māori terms: just as when visitors are called onto a marae (tribal meeting place), a karanga was sent out to the various people to be involved, the kaupapa (method) of working together had been laid out, the purpose set out, the process made clear. For the definitional ceremony part of the project we were inviting people to bring a koha, a gift of their presence, and the presence of the people they are connected to, and their korero, their spoken words. For Huia and Brent, from the outset of the project the invitations to be involved, the process of engagement, and of getting to know each other, was seen as a movement towards whakanoa — a movement towards a freedom from restriction within which each person's mana is upheld, and conversations of difference can freely be held. In our kitchen-table preparations for Hohepa's definitional ceremony, Huia, Brent and I discussed the idea of waewae tapu — that we

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are all newcomers to this process, acknowledging that all of us are, to some extent, uncertain as our legs have never been in this particular place, this process, before.

Huia and Brent spoke of the invitation to and arrival at the definitional ceremony as guided by a marae protocol, where manuhiri (visitors) are welcomed onto the marae by tangata whenua (those whose place it is). Such a marae welcome protocol includes wero (challenge), karanga (invitational call), whaikorero (speech making), hongi (physical greeting), and kai (shared food). In such a process, participants move from tapu (sacred) to noa (ordinary) and our legs would end up under the table as we eat together. Such a powhiri process, formal and informal, would acknowledge uncertainties of relationship and place, and help each participant, those welcoming and those welcomed, to engage through appropriate introductions and acknowledgements of their presence and the presence of those who stand with them. Perhaps singing could be part of that, perhaps later or not at all — expressions of delight, and a babble of voices, might be the same thing as singing in some times and places. Throughout, there would be a seamless movement through stages of welcome, and joining, leading through to the hospitality and whakanoa of food, where speaking of a lighter nature might take place. Thus kaupapa Māori shaped Huia and Brent's vision of definitional ceremony, and came to shape the meeting of Hohepa's co-authors and audience.

Guiding questions.

In preparation for the definitional ceremony, and in keeping with practices of narrative therapy (see Chapter Four), Huia, Brent and I prepared guideline questions to ask each of the participants. For Hohepa these questions guided a telling of the effects of Hohepa's previous reputation and his movement towards an alternative reputation, and later, a responding to what others had said at the meeting. For those listening, the questions explored their responses to what Hohepa had said. Thus:

For Hohepa, at the start:

When we first starting talking together, what sort of things were going on that caused trouble? How did that make you feel? Did it affect the way teachers talked to you? Did it affect anything else? When you decided to change, what were you hoping for? Now that you have made those changes, have you noticed any difference in the way teachers speak to you or about you? Have you noticed any other differences? What do you guess your reputation might be now? Is that OK with you?

For Max:

Have you noticed the change Hohepa has been talking about? What do you think is the biggest change? How do you think Hohepa has been able to do that? Have you ever done anything like that — changed your reputation? How did you do that? Is it better for you now? In what ways? Did anyone help you with that? Did you support Hohepa in his change? If so, in what ways?

For other participants (Mother, kaumatua, teachers, principal, Huia, Brent and me):

As you listen to Hohepa (and Max), what stands out for you? Do you have a picture in your mind of what is important to Hohepa (and Max)? How does this connect with your own life? Does it make a difference hearing these young people speak like that? In what ways?

For Hohepa (and Max) after listening to the re-telling:

When you listen to what these people have said, is there something that stands out for you? Have you heard anything that is a bit of a surprise? Does it make it more or less likely that your reputation will keep strong with these people? Is that OK with you? Can you say why you like that? Do you want to say anything else at all?

Such questions aimed to name the problem story, map its effects within the community, invite people to take a stand for something else, explore actions taken in keeping with reaching for the preferred, explore the effects of such

actions for the community, invite people to take a stand for those effects, reflect on what that might say about Hohepa's preferred identity claims, connect such claims with the hopes and stories of the community, and wonder about the effects of such claims on Hohepa and others' future actions. The telling and re-telling of actions taken by Hohepa on behalf of his preferred identity claims can be seen as highlighting examples of Hohepa acting with ethical agency. The repeated invitations, offered to Hohepa and others at the definitional ceremony, to reflect on his hopes for himself and others can also be seen as an invitation to exercise ethical agency.

Inviting Hohepa's teachers.

In preparation for the definitional ceremony, and in my role as lead researcher of this project, I added to Huia's previous invitations by sending the following email to the teachers invited. This was an opportunity for me to reiterate what Huia had already spoken with them about the purpose of the gathering.

Greetings, and thanks for the chance to email you these thoughts.

The 'celebration so far' we are attending together this term has the two main aims of:

- *Supporting and celebrating with Hohepa his steps to change his reputation at school, and;*

- *Thanking his support team for what they have done and may yet do in these achievements.*

For your information, these 'celebrations so far' follow a particular format:

- *A time of welcome;*

- *A time where Hohepa and his friend are interviewed about the steps Hohepa has taken to make a difference to his reputation. What he hopes for, how he managed this, and who stood with him in that are part of that interview;*

- *A time where the people invited are interviewed about what from Hohepa's story stands out for them the most. They (you) are asked what that suggests*

about Hohepa's aims in life, and what he might be standing up for in that. There is a chance to make connections with your own lives — ways in which Hohepa's story connects with or is similar to your own. And what, if any, difference it might make for your work, knowing about Hohepa's efforts and achievements;

- *A time where Hohepa has a chance to respond to what he has heard from the people who listened to him;*

- *A time of gathering the thoughts so far;*

- *A time of celebrating together with food and conversation.*

These gatherings can be powerful times of support and encouragement for young people making a difference to where they see themselves going in life. Thank you for your participation which can have a strong effect.

Thank you for your work and support,

Donald

This letter is an example of me reiterating the position calls made previously to Hohepa's teachers. I invited Hohepa's teachers to take up a relationship with Hohepa based on co-authoring his preferred identity accounts, and as audience to the effects of his actions in their experience and in these particular tellings. I turn now to an account of Hohepa's definitional ceremony.

The Definitional Ceremony: A "Celebration So Far" Hui

As arranged, at the end of ten weeks of conversation with Hohepa, and with Max and the school staff, a hui (gathering) was held in the meeting room of the school guidance area, of all those who had been supporting Hohepa in his efforts to develop a new reputation at school. Invited were Hohepa, his mother, and his friend, Max. Also invited and present were the school staff members who had been supporting Hohepa during this time, along with Huia as leader and researcher, and Brent and me as co-researchers. On the day, the meeting was further enriched by the arrival of a local kaumatua (tribal

elder) representing the local iwi (Māori community), bringing further community and family ties to the hui. Huia led the meeting, which was opened by Brent with karakia (prayer) and mihi (greetings). Huia invited each person to introduce themselves, and their hopes for this time together, and outlined the process for the meeting — a telling of Hohepa's story, a re-telling with those present responding, and a summary from Hohepa's point of view.

Speaking in a gathering of family and school staff was not easy for Hohepa. In response to Huia's gentle questioning, Hohepa described how wagging, disobedience, tagging, and smoking had all contributed to the reputation hanging around him at school. He said that for him, that, "wasn't good." Speaking few words, and in a quiet voice, Hohepa said that such a reputation did affect the way teachers talked to him: "Oh, yeah, I think it did", and having that reputation had made trouble came around him more easily. In his efforts to develop a new reputation at school Hohepa had done some things such as: "Going to class ... being good in class ... being good out of class ... being good." When Huia asked had teachers been talking to him differently since he had made those changes, Hohepa replied, "Yeah — 'cause they are not growling now." With those teachers Hohepa's reputation was now, "pretty good, being good", and "yeah — it's all right, pretty good."

Thanking Hohepa for his efforts, Huia asked those gathered, "As you have listened to Hohepa, what has stood out for you?"

Hohepa's mother described Hohepa as "happier around home."

One teacher described his admiration for Hohepa wanting to make these changes. He described the "much more positive" relationship he had been enjoying lately with Hohepa, and how he noticed Hohepa engaging more in class. He said, "That is why I like to be a teacher — it's the relational thing. There's been no yelling [from the teacher] in a long time, and we say, 'Hi', around the school."

Hohepa's dean described Hohepa as a quiet person who "seems to have got a lot happier", and who had, this year "been able to be his own person." In her disciplinary role as Dean, this teacher had not had to call to talk to Hohepa at all recently, and had, she reported, said to another student, "Why can't you be more like Hohepa!"

Another teacher described how last year Hohepa would not answer questions in class, though she felt he knew the answers. She reported that now Hohepa is "interacting in class with different students" and that Hohepa had got "some good grades, and excellences in science tests."

The deputy principal felt that Hohepa had "grown in confidence this year." He described a time Hohepa had seen him in class, and had smiled at him because "he knew I wasn't there about him!" The deputy principal said that he could have a conversation with Hohepa, that he was "holding his head up" and "meeting your eye."

The kaumatua responded to the group saying, "Thank you for your human kindness." In holding to Māori tradition, he acknowledged Hohepa's mother and the family saying, "I'm thoroughly impressed with you, Hohepa — you have good parents, your granddad's wonderful, you are going in the right direction, you are making the go." Hoping that Hohepa would "keep going in the right direction", and not be "influenced by all these other customers", he described Hohepa as having determination: "He could have gone in other directions, it's been touch and go at times, but he has stuck to it." Speaking to the group, the kaumatua again acknowledged Hohepa's family: "I think it's for his family — they live next door to each other. He has a good grandfather, he has good breeding, good stock!"

Brent summarised what had been said, noticing the effect of what Hohepa had achieved on the people gathered: It's easier in the classroom; happier at home; there is delight in his ability to speak; a pleasure of a different sort of conversation; and the pride of family and community expressed here. "It is the effect on others that stands out for me." Brent described having heard

Hohepa's stories, his experiences, his knowledge of the sea, and appreciating "the way he speaks and thinks. He is perceptive. I'd love to see that flourish. He's a Māori, he has his whenua (land) — when I see him, I see that, and the importance of that — it's there, it's in him."

I spoke of the influence that Hohepa's story had been having with the young people from the other school involved in the research project. Showing the booklet of poetry from South Africa, I told the group that the young people from both schools were preparing their own book of poetry (see Chapter Nine) that would be sent to South Africa in support of what the young people were doing there.

Turning attention back to Hohepa, Huia sought a re-telling of the re-telling, asking, "So, Hohepa, as you have been listening — has any of that been a surprise to you?" and Hohepa replied, "Some of it ... that I've been good." Did Hohepa think all these changes were going to make it easier for his reputation to stay strong? "Yeah, 'cause I won't get in trouble" was the reply.

Then Huia began the conclusion saying, "This celebration so far, it's been a real delight. Seeing some of the steps you have taken Hohepa, it's not the end of the story. Thank you so much for who is present, and for the others who are supportive. We are wishing you all the best, you awesome young man! Well done Hohepa!" And with karakia and kai the formal gathering ended.

In this account of Hohepa's definitional ceremony I have sought to give the reader a sense of the meeting — how it felt for those present, and what was important for them. In Chapter Ten I discuss Hohepa's definitional ceremony in terms of the theories and practices which shaped what happened there.

Follow up conversations.

As part of the action research process, Huia, Brent and I met with Hohepa's teachers after the definitional ceremony to discuss how to develop this work

together. In preparation for that meeting, the following questions were emailed to the teachers:

Do you think that your influence has had some effect on the steps Hohepa has taken?

Did you give him any advice, or support him in some other way?

Which one out of all your practices do you think has supported Hohepa the most in bringing this new reputation forward?

What advice might you give other parents/teachers if they wanted to support a young person changing their reputation at school?

What was it like for you to see Hohepa making steps towards getting free of the old reputation?

Was there a highlight for you during this time?

Does your class go better in any ways as a result of what Hohepa has achieved so far?

Does that influence your work with others during this time/in the future?

As far as the project goes, do you have any ideas/advice for us about how it could be improved or developed?

When we gathered to discuss their experience of the definitional ceremony, the teachers highlighted that while the definitional ceremony had been very good for Hohepa in their opinion (e.g. "I felt it was a step forward for him — he had a glow inside, even though embarrassed"), there was more needed. Their comments in this vein included: I think we need all the teachers involved from the very beginning — you can't have just a few; we have to be conscious that the process needs to carry on. He is on a precipice — it could go well for him; he is smarter and more perceptive than he gives himself credit for, but he needs to be kept at; at other schools the permanent guidance staff is there to carry the relationship on; and his life is probably not

organised in a way that supports the class work - would an after school study time in the library help?

Hohepa's teachers went on to say that, while it had been a good meeting, and Hohepa had turned up to a restorative meeting that had been planned earlier as part of the school pastoral work, Hohepa had subsequently been coming in late to school, wearing his uniform incorrectly, and continuing to sport a (non-uniform) cap. I discuss these comments in Chapter Twelve along with the finding that ongoing pastoral support for the development and maintenance of identity stories is necessary to maintain and advance what has been achieved during the reflective conversations outlined in this research project.

Having heard their concerns, I invited Hohepa's teachers to tell stories of how Hohepa's new reputation was appearing at school. Hohepa's teachers reported that when he was attending classes, he was doing particularly well in social studies, that he was producing good quality work, and that he was being focused in classes. The teachers reported no behaviour issues, and that Hohepa was "lifting his head up, and giving a response." Other comments described Hohepa as "working with other kids in the class, having a growing sense of maturity, moving outside his comfort zone." While Hohepa continued to not bring equipment to school, his teachers reported that he was attending school regularly.

Although all this represented progress in terms of engagement with school and people, the teachers wanted particularly to focus on how to get engagement with the school work. The teachers asserted that for Hohepa and themselves "the relationship has been formed and achieved. Now the question is how to move into studies." In keeping with these hopes, the teachers suggested that teaching Hohepa the specific skills of doing well in class, a checklist of how to achieve a new reputation, might be helpful. As above, they questioned how Hohepa's care might be transitioned into the

future, given that Huia's role in the school was temporary, and ending that year. Again, these ideas are discussed in Chapter Twelve.

Having described the field work phases of this action research project in the First and Second Schools, in the following chapters I offer an analysis of how the discourses which shape subjectivity affect the actions, and interpretations of those actions, of the people involved in the two schools' stories. I demonstrate that currently prominent discourses of schooling shape some teacher/student interactions in a way that produces the very subjectivities they describe, and in doing so make suspension and exclusion more likely for some young people. I further demonstrate how alternative understandings of young people and their actions, through reflective conversations shaped by practices of narrative therapy, can invite and invoke subjectivities preferred by both the young person and the school, and can reduce the likelihood of suspension and exclusion in keeping with schools' own ethical hopes. In these following chapters I offer an analysis of Peter's story, and later, of Hohepa's story.

CHAPTER 7: PETER LEAVES A GAME OF NETBALL – RATIONALIST DISCOURSES OF SCHOOLING

When we met, Peter was removed from all his classes for continual disobedience. In a kind of limbo between finding new classes and being referred to an alternative education site, Peter and I met to discuss the effects of his reputation and the possibility of his preferring alternative reputations. As part of these conversations, in response to my asking about times when he had experienced trouble at school, Peter recounted a story of a game of netball and his interactions with others there. These interactions, and their subsequent effects, form the subject matter of the analysis to follow. In this analysis I demonstrate how Peter and his teachers act with ethical intent, in keeping with the shaping of prevailing discourse. I go on to demonstrate how reviewing Peter's actions through a discursive lens of narrative therapy gives rise to alternative descriptions of Peter which both he, his teachers and parent prefer.

In this chapter I explore the presence of rationalist discourses of schooling, and their effects, through a lens of three tellings about Peter leaving a game of netball. My purpose is to demonstrate that, shaped by rationalist discourses, the descriptions of Peter and his actions that are used by Peter's teachers increase the likelihood that the school will invoke suspension or exclusion in their responses to Peter's actions. This exploration demonstrates in practice the theories of discursive positioning and performative language discussed in Chapter Two. In these accounts I demonstrate how Peter is positioned by others' actions and the language used to describe him, and how he responds to such positioning.

The first telling is drawn from the transcript of a research interview, where Peter tells me his version of what happened when he left a Physical Education (PE) class netball game, and how that led to his being stood down from

school. The second and third tellings are drawn from emails where Peter's PE class teacher and the head of the PE department give an account to the school deputy principal of their interactions with Peter after he left the netball game. These emails became part of Peter's school records.

My purpose in presenting these three tellings is to demonstrate how the language used in each version produces, reproduces and can be explored for traces of the discourses which shape each person's understanding of what had happened. To demonstrate this I offer a series of readings of each version:

The first reading is a discourse description where I seek to make visible something of the range of discursive calls and shapings experienced by each of the participants; the second reading looks at how these discursive calls shape the specific words used by each teller; the third reading explores performative language, showing how each teller uses language skillfully to achieve specific purposes; and the fourth reading explores intertextuality showing how subtle invoking of shared knowledge of similar stories adds strength and meaning to the use of language in each telling.

Each of the readings in this chapter is initially in terms of a rationalist discourse of schooling.

Peter Leaves a Game of Netball (and Becomes a Disorderly Subject)

I have argued in Chapter Two that rather than being fixed, "human identity is a social achievement, contingent on time, context, audience, culture, history, memory and personal agency" (White, 1995, p. 14), and that the stories we tell ourselves and each other in our day-to-day exchanges "actually shape our lives, constitute our lives" (White, 1995, p. 14). In this light, who Peter is is contingent upon the ways he is spoken about as much as some fixed entity called "Peter." Further, I have argued that the way people are spoken about is shaped by the available vocabularies of prevailing discourse. In this following

extract, where Peter describes his experience of a game of netball, I demonstrate that a chorus of discursive voices hail (Butler, 1995) all of the people involved. I invite the reader to consider how the actions of both teachers and young people, within a benign intent to "render unruly bodies productive" (Foucault, 1984, p. 58), are shaped by taken-for-granted rationalist discourses about how one acts in this kind of interaction, and how those discourses also shape the meanings given to each person's actions. Along with Burr (2003, p. 115), I hold that these "everyday conversations ... represent an important arena where identities are formed." My thesis is that, in reinterpreting these everyday exchanges through a lens of discourse awareness, interpretations which lead to problem identities and the suspensions or exclusions which can follow from them, can be reduced or avoided, and preferred future identities and actions can be made more likely.

In his telling, Peter attempts to constitute his own identity as he describes leaving a game of netball part way through a PE class. Later versions of this story, by the head of department and the class teacher, constitute Peter's identity quite differently. The teacher Peter refers to in this extract is the head of department, who comes across Peter sitting outside the game and attempts to have him rejoin the game. The head of department talks to Peter, and believing that Peter is about to move off, removes Peter's bag so that he cannot leave the scene without returning to the game. The class PE teacher is with the class during this time.

This extract is drawn from a field work counselling conversation between Peter and me, conducted in Peter's School Guidance Department's office. As part of an early exploration of Peter's reputation at school for troubling actions, I asked him to describe for me a time when he had been stood down from school.

First telling: Peter.

Peter: The first time I got stood down was because one of my PE teachers, felt like I wasn't joining in, we were doing netball and they wouldn't let me join in. They wouldn't pass me the ball so I sat out for a while and had a break with my bag and stuff. So he [head of department] *took off my bag and then he was talking and I was trying to rip my bag off him and stuff and I was pushing him away.*

Donald: Hang on, go back. You were taking a bit of a breather...

Peter: Yeah, and then he goes, "Come with me", and then he grabs my bag and sits me down for the end of the period. And then after school he just wouldn't give my bag back, and I was waiting and waiting, and I was like, "Just give me my bag back", and he ended up standing me down.

Donald: Because in that time you started to swear at him or something? [Nods] *So just go back to the beginning of that so I can get the story right. You were playing netball...*

Peter: Yeah, and I wasn't feeling, like I was being like, I wasn't cooperating — no one was cooperating with me. They weren't passing me the ball or anything so I was just like, I will sit out for a while and wait until the next game and see if they cooperate.

Donald: So why did the teacher get annoyed with that?

Peter: I don't know. He thought I was just being lazy and didn't want to do it. I sort of did want to do it, but then I had just had enough and went, "Oh nah, it is not my thing."

Donald: You sort of did want to do it, and if people had been cooperating it might have been different?

Peter: Yeah, I would have joined in. And so I just took a breather and that's what happened. He took my bag off me.

Donald: And so the teacher understood that when you were sitting down you were being lazy or something?

Peter: Yeah. That I was just being like, not ... cooperative.

Donald: Yeah, good word. Ok, and that lead to chachacha, ends up with you swearing and hello, stood down.

Second telling: Head of department.

The interchange described above by Peter was also reported by the head of department in an email to the deputy principal, and in school pastoral notes, as follows:

Had an incident with Peter period 5 today. He had to be spoken to by [PE Teacher] for misbehaviour earlier in the lesson, then came a game; he dropped his netball bib and began to walk away.

I caught up with him, insisted he rejoin the activity he was supposed to be involved in, and while walking back he grabbed his bag. Fearing he planned to take off I asked for it, and it was handed over. However, instead of staying where he was asked to stay, he followed me and kept trying to grab the bag in spite of me asking him to return to his activity and to leave the bag alone.

This continued for 5 or 6 minutes, until the bell went for the end of the day. I then asked him to sit down so I could talk to him, and he again refused. He was demanding I hand his bag back to him. I refused to give it to him until he did what was asked. At one point during this exchange he swore.

Finally, seeing he was not getting anything until he did what was asked he sat down, and then when I attempted to lecture him he kept answering back. [PE Teacher] came over and he even did it to her.

Eventually he sat quietly. Copped his lecture and then received his bag and was on his way. Obviously, I am completely unhappy with his behaviour, his defiance, his swearing, and rudeness.

[PE Teacher] was a witness.

Hope you can deal with him. Cheers.

[Head of Department]

Third telling: PE teacher.

The head of department's version of the interaction and its effects was further reported by the PE teacher in a second email to the deputy principal.

Peter was very defiant and for a long time refused to do a simple request which was to sit down even once the bell had rung. Yes he did say at one point, "Just give me my bag, Fuck" is what I heard (there may have been other incidence of swearing but I was dealing with other students and was not present for the whole altercation). Furthermore, his general disrespect when respectfully and REPEATATIVELY (sic) asked to sit down and discuss the matter. Then his poor attitude in trying to resolve the issue.

The Deputy Principal and Board of Trustees respond.

Acting on this interchange as described, as well as the pre-existing school pastoral notes and his own experience and understandings of Peter's previous actions, the deputy principal referred Peter to the school Board of Trustees Disciplinary Committee. With the information available to them on file, the Board Discipline Committee came to a decision to stand Peter down for a period of three days.

My Comment On These Tellings

I propose that in each of these cases, the participants, from Peter and his peers through to the Board of Trustees Discipline Committee, acted in good faith according to the discourses shaping their understandings of how to respond in these sorts of situations. I suggest that in the absence of alternative understandings, much of the way each person acted had an air of inevitability about it — one knows how to act in these situations and one does so. A readily available rationalist reading of the interchange described above is, I suggest, a "disobedient young man receiving the consequences of his

poor behaviour." However in the four readings which follow, I attempt to show something of the complexity of the discursive callings experienced by each participant, and how, within those callings, each participant acts with skill and purpose. It is within this complexity that I later propose that alternative readings and potential alternative responses can be found and explored.

First reading: A description of the discourses.

I draw here on Davies and Harré's (1990) understandings of discourse as producing subject positions, wherein "a person inevitably sees the world from the vantage point of that position and in terms of the particular images, metaphors, storylines and concepts which are made relevant within the particular discursive practice in which they are positioned" (p. 46). In writing about the positioning effect of discourses, Davies and Harré draw on Althusser's (1971) notion of being hailed by ideological positions, and here I demonstrate that, throughout the interchange described below, each of the participants was hailed by a number of "rehearsed and familiar ways of making sense of things" (Speedy, 2008, p. 123). I show that, at times, the imperatives put forward by prevailing discourses are contradictory and mutually exclusive — that is, by acceding to one the participants cannot accede to another, and must fail in the light of one or another discourse. I maintain that each participant does their best to get it right according to the positions available to them and according to their discursively produced hopes for themselves and others.

Discourses hailing Peter.

While I cannot be certain about the presence or volume of any of these discursive calls, I speculate here that, while he is playing, and after he leaves the game of netball, Peter "hears" many overlapping and conflicting discursive calls: I seek to amplify the sometimes contradictory position calls that Peter, and later, his teachers, experience. I offer here a tentative listing of potential discursive hailings, with the intention of highlighting the complexity of the discursive environment rather than producing a definitive list of discursive

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calls. I propose that an appreciation of this complexity stands as an antidote to the monologic certainty (Seikkula, 2002) of meaning of others' actions offered by current educational discourse. That is, I suggest there is more going on here than first appears.

As he engages in a game of netball, and as he experiences his peers' responses to the game and to him; as he decides to leave the game of netball, and as he encounters the head of department, I demonstrate that Peter has different, and at times contradictory, ideas about how best to proceed. These ideas could be informed by:

A contradictory patriarchal discursive voice (hailing) saying:

Netball is a girls' game;

But you are supposed to be skilled at sports regardless;

You are supposed to be skilled at relating to others;

You are also supposed to be skilled at academics, relationships, being a good student;

People should find you attractive — they ought to pass the ball to you;

You are supposed to be self-contained and reserved;

Young people don't suck up to others, complain, or ask teachers for help;

But teachers have been saying all through school that you should report any bullying — we will support you;

Leave the court — this lack of inclusion is unacceptable to you as a man;

Stay on the court and tough it out, you are supposed to be able to do this; man up and just get into it;

Don't back down when this teacher growls at you;

Be obedient to the teachers;

Even though you are smaller, you can demonstrate your muscularity by taking on the teacher in a public way or by playing up or clowning.

It may be that Peter is hailed by a complex of **sporting discourses** saying:

We are here to win — do what you must to support your team winning, even where that means you are left out because you are too short/unskilled to help the team win;

To take up this position is to surrender the competent position of skilled sportsman;

It is sporting to give others a chance;

Toughen up — you have to be in to win.

Perhaps **discourses of schooling** laced with **discourses of legality** say:

Obey the teacher; teachers have a right to authority — do what they say, give them what they ask for;

It's not fair that he blames you for others' actions; you have rights to your property — it is your bag;

When caught out doing wrong, display the appropriate signs of humility and a desire to be good;

Be strong, don't show signs of weakness, don't back down.

In outlining such potential discursive hailings, I emphasise the complexity of discursive expectation that Peter navigates in this account. Within this "great anonymous murmur of discourses" (Foucault, 1989, p. 27) Peter is expected to display a unitary, rational personhood within which he can be held accountable for his decisions.

What I seek to interrupt with this reading of the potential complexity of these discursive hailings is the taken-for-granted assumption that everybody involved in this interaction knows and agrees how Peter ought to be. Knowing something of the complexity of discursive positioning which Peter experiences highlights the skill he employs in navigating towards a rational subjectivity. In a later reading I will seek to demonstrate that Peter's account of the interchange is a skilled attempt to constitute himself as exactly that: "I am

rational, and chose the best available to me." For now, I turn to the head of department who, like Peter, navigates a complex discursive environment.

Discourses hailing the Head of Department.

While, like Peter, the head of department may hear contradictory calls, I suggest that his experience is less troubled, given that his role in the school is to promote and enforce current educational discourse. The discursive hailings heard by the head of department may include:

Discourses of rational selfhood saying something like:

While it may be true that Peter has been poorly treated by his peers in the game, Peter should be able to speak up for himself and let others know if anything is wrong; Peter knows what he ought to do, and his choosing not to do so is evidence of his deliberate wrongness; Peter is in control of his actions, he is responsible to act according to the expectations of the class; to not do so is to act wrongly and irresponsibly, hence misbehaviour.

I suggest that the fact that Peter has "done wrong" in the past, as recorded and entextualised in Peter's school records file, supports the rational conclusion that Peter is acting either deliberately or irrationally now, and in either case, a strong response is required. A rational discourse of responsible selfhood may go on to say:

Peter must demonstrate humility and awareness of doing wrong as evidence that he is taking up "good student" subjectivity — sitting down, surrendering bag, copping a lecture without complaint, rejoining the game, saying sorry, accepting any punishment — all these supply the required evidence; to not supply this evidence is a sign of opposition, a deliberate taking up of "bad student" subjectivity, for which he is accountable.

Discourses of teacher identity may be influential in shaping the head of department's responses, perhaps saying:

You must support your fellow teacher regardless — we are a team, we have each other's backs; it's a struggle out there; give an inch and they'll take a mile;

Our training and Te Kotahitanga (Bishop, 2008; Bishop & Berryman, 2010; Bishop et al., 2003), teaches us that relationship is paramount; I came into this work because I care for young people and their education;

Education requires discipline first, relationship second. Your authority as a teacher to discipline students must not be compromised or seen to be ineffective;

I was motivated to take up teaching by humanitarianism, compassion, a desire to grow people, to teach like I was or was not taught;

Full student involvement is an important marker of successful teaching;

Do not show weakness through backing down, nor admit being wrong;

I feel for young people, I have an interest in how to model good relationships;

Other students are influenced by Peter's bad actions; a strong response to Peter clearly shows others what the expectations are.

It may be that **patriarchal discourses** say:

Peter's PE teacher is a woman — as a man you ought to support her;

You cannot let this boy beat you in a competition of authority; as a male teacher, and a male PE teacher, be seen as strong — do not back down.

Perhaps also the head of department may be shaped by **militaristic discourse** calls implicit in schools where assemblies, uniforms, the use of 'Sir' and 'Miss' as titles, and a hierarchy of command all support a sense of entitlement and authority in staff. Equally, **discourses of industrialisation** may call, where being on time, working hard, changing with the bell, being productive; where curriculum subjects are separated for efficiency, students are collected and taught in batches, and there is testing for standardisation, all inform an imperative to *produce results and stop holding things up.*

Whatever the varied, and at times conflicting, calls experienced by the head of department, my point in presenting them here is to notice that the taken-for-granted right way to respond can be described as a product of the skilled negotiation of complex discursive positioning. As such, I suggest there is also potential to negotiate these territories differently.

Discourses hailing the PE teacher.

Hailed by similar discourses as the head of department, the PE teacher may be further shaped by ideas such as:

The head of department has supported you in dealing with this boy — support him in return;

We are a team here;

You were supposed to be in control of this class — have you done your best?

This situation must be Peter's fault,

I like Peter; I wish he would do better;

You have done your job as well as can reasonably be expected;

Do not admit fault as this may be seen as evidence of poor teaching;

Peter knows what he is doing and his choices are deliberate.

One outcome of the teachers' responses to these discursive calls is the emails sent to the deputy principal. Prevailing discourses around each participant shape both their in-the-moment responses, and the language they use to report the interaction. The writing of the emails is yet another discursively shaped action — the way one ought to respond in this kind of situation. As I discuss later, the construction of the emails produces particular subject positions for Peter, for the writers, and for the deputy principal as reader. Peter is positioned within the emails as culpably disobedient and defiant, the teachers as doing their best and being good teachers. In his reading of the emails, the deputy principal is hailed and positioned as needing to support the teachers' reading of the interaction described and effectively

leading and managing the educational institution in the light of current educational discourse's expectations.

Discourses hailing the Deputy Principal.

On reading the emails from the PE teacher and the head of department describing their interactions with Peter, the deputy principal may be shaped by discursive calls such as:

This boy is influential with some others — it is important his example is shown to be unacceptable;

We have tried everything possible for this boy and he refuses to learn — he'll need to go in front of the Board of Trustees Discipline Committee;

We are a team — it is important to support the teaching staff in their version of events;

Show strong leadership; we have a pastoral care process which outlines steps to be taken in response to poor behaviour — it is time for the next step.

For the deputy principal the next step is a referral to the Board of Trustees Discipline Committee.

Within all this discursive shaping, expectation and positioning, I suggest that the head of department, the PE teacher, the deputy principal and Peter all act appropriately in light of their discursive understandings of this kind of interaction. I maintain that the near-inevitable effect of the discursive chorus outlined above is the conclusion that Peter's behaviour, and his refusal to respond appropriately within prevailing discourse, indicates there is something wrong with him that needs to be corrected. Having tried discipline, pastoral care, and referrals to guidance without effect, a referral to the Board of Trustees Discipline Committee for a decision as to how best to respond is the next rational step suggested by current educational discourse.

Discourses hailing the Board of Trustees Discipline Committee.

The Discipline Committee is set up with specific purposes in mind. As discussed earlier in Chapter Two, institutions are established to preserve and maintain the truth games (Foucault, 1972) that a community deems appropriate. While the Discipline Committee has an objective of the best possible care for the individuals sent to them, an overriding concern for the Board is care for student progress and achievement for the school as a whole (NZ MoE, 2013). When Peter arrives at the Board of Trustees Discipline Committee meeting (the name is discourse shaped) I suggest that prevailing discourses invoke imperatives for action such as:

In spite of our concern for Peter, we are responsible to send a firm message to the students that bad behaviour will not be tolerated;

We must send a clear message to teachers that they are supported by this Board;

It is our task to hold the line of what is acceptable and what is not; parents are relying on us to keep their children safe, and to deliver effective, uninterrupted education;

Peter's actions are the result of clear choices on his part. He knows what is expected, has had ample opportunity to mend his ways, and is responsible for his actions.

I maintain that the final result of all this discursive positioning, interpreting, reporting and shaping is the conclusion that Peter is assigned an identity (Graham, 2007) as "continually disobedient", and thus responsible for his misdeeds (Gergen, 1999). The term "continual disobedience" is made available to schools by and within the Education Act (New Zealand Government, 1989), further highlighting that the interpretation of young peoples' actions is in terms of the discursively produced language available to schools. In this light, Peter's actions warrant correction, for his own good, to

support the teachers, and to send a clear message to the students and their parents that such behaviour is not acceptable.

In presenting these potential discourses and their effects, I have shown how the shaping of dominant discourse produces actions and understandings which increase the likelihood of outcomes such as suspension for continual disobedience. I agree with Graham (2007) when she writes that "things said about kids in schools may call into being a 'recognizable' object of discourse, the 'behaviorally disordered' or disruptive child" (Graham, 2007, p. 15). I maintain that in their well-intentioned use of the vocabularies and interpretations provided by current educational discourse, the teachers and the Board of Trustees are moved inexorably towards describing and thus contributing to the production of Peter as a behaviourally disordered and disruptive child.

As already stated, I hold the presumption that each participant in this world of discursive production acts with good intent. I propose that current educational discourse and other prevailing discourses shape and require the interpretations and actions seen. However, as discussed in Chapter One, such rationalist interpretations risk imposing a particularly cultural and historical way of making meaning of young peoples' actions, and may well cause harm. It is my thesis that intentionally embracing alternative understandings which are less likely to impose dominant cultural norms, nor cause harm, fits more closely with schools' own ethical purposes — safe and quality education for all. I continue here to demonstrate the shaping effects of prevailing discourse as it appears in the language used by participants.

Second reading: Discourses in speech.

In the first reading I have shown something of the discursive chorus shaping the actions and interpretations which are reflected in the particulars of each person's reported speech. Thus the way a person thinks, the categories and concepts by which they make meaning, are provided by the discursively

shaped language they use (Burr, 2003). In the following section I make links between the discourses which may be shaping of the interpretations, the actions, and the subjectivities taken up by the participants, and the specific language used by each person.

Peter's language.

Western rationalist discourses, as seen, for example, in psychology, medicine and education, posit Peter as an individual, stable, unitary person capable of accurately reporting on his internal state (Gergen, 1999). These discursive ideas routinely shape Peter's speech. Drawing again from the transcript on page 181, when Peter uses phrases like, *"I felt like; I wasn't feeling like; I sort of did want to do it"* he is referring to himself as an individual self, reporting on his inner state. In contrast to this stance, throughout this thesis I have maintained that, rather than being that of a stable unitary individual, Peter's identity is a product of the influence moment by moment and storied discursive shaping. In this light I will demonstrate that Peter's identity stories can effectively be re-negotiated between Peter and his community, in support of Peter being positioned as having ethical agency available to him to take up.

I suggest that sporting discourses appear as Peter invokes the rules of fair play. Where he says, *"They wouldn't let me join in; they wouldn't pass me the ball; no one was cooperating with me; they weren't passing me the ball or anything",* Peter's language is shaped by taken-for-granted understandings of the way things "ought to be": in fair play the ball is shared, and players work together to include everyone. Where Peter says, *"He took off my bag; he grabs my bag; he just wouldn't give my bag back; he ended up standing me down; he thought I was just being lazy",* I suggest Peter's language is shaped by discourses of natural justice. Peter's protest is: "It's not fair!"

Such use of language is not neutral in effect. As I argued in Chapter Two and demonstrate here, discourses which shape the language used to make sense of experience also shape the subjectivities and the identities of those speaking and those spoken about.

The Head of Department's language.

Writing in a measured, thoughtful way, the head of department presents himself as a person who speaks after thinking clearly about what it is they want to say: the considered, thoughtful subject. At the same time an opposition is formed: Peter as the poorly regulated, unreasonable subject (Graham, 2007). A rational discourse of a "reasonable person" shapes the head of department's words and phrases as in, *"I asked for [the bag]; in spite of me asking him; I then asked him to sit down; until he did what was asked; I attempted to lecture him."* A legal discourse appears in the use of the words *"incident"* near the beginning of the email, and *"witness"* near the end. The strength of a good teacher discourse shaping what needs to be done in these situations appears as, *"[Peter] had to be spoken to";* referring to *"insisting"* that Peter return to the *"activity he was supposed to be involved in;* and, *"refus[ing] to give it to him until he did what was asked."* The position of teacher collegiality is strongly proffered in the final phrase, "*Hope you can deal with him. Cheers."*

Psychological discourse which positions Peter as disordered, as the poorly regulated, unreasonable subject, appears in the use of language such as, *"misbehaviour; he refused; he was demanding; he swore; he kept answering back; he grabbed his bag; he even did it to her; his behaviour, his defiance, his swearing, and rudeness."* These words draw on specific discursive interpretations of what happened in the game of netball. They are not the only words which can be used to make sense of the interchange, but as they reflect and reproduce the prevailing discourses of schooling, current educational discourse, they are the more likely words to appear in teachers' descriptions.

These words have real effects: the scene is set for Peter for his disobedience to be ongoing, and already deserving of disciplinary intervention, as someone whose actions invite caution and care. Even the potentially moderating effect of, *"eventually he sat quietly [and] copped his lecture",* reflects a taken-for-

granted stand that this is the to-be-expected response. The final phrase, *"Obviously I am completely unhappy with his behaviour, his defiance, his swearing, and rudeness",* outlines that, "obviously", Peter's action was too little, too late. Peter's ongoing defiance further reinforces the need for discipline and justifies that the actions taken by the writer were the obvious actions to take.

The discursive effects of such language continue well after the head of department's use of them, entextualised in the form of documents kept on record. These documents represent Peter in a file that serves to describe and objectify Peter and his actions in rationalist terms, that is, in terms acceptable to the current educational discourse which shapes the words of the authors of those texts (Bauman & Briggs, 1992). This process of entextualisation through record keeping contributes to the likelihood of future disciplinary actions being taken with respect to Peter, as these documents are available for later consultation, and serve as guides for subsequent decisions. As Foucault (1977) maintained, the case file is "no longer a monument for future memory, but a document for future use" (p. 191). Thus the use of a particular discursively shaped vocabulary to make sense of Peter's actions continues to shape Peter's perceived subjectivity beyond the head of department's specific use of that vocabulary. It is both the in-the-moment effect of rationalist interpretation, and the ongoing effect of the record of that discursive vocabulary, that I seek to disrupt here.

The PE teacher's language.

The PE teacher's use of words also makes visible the effect of discursive positioning. A rationalist discourse, which sees Peter's actions as disordered, provides a vocabulary for the PE teacher to describe Peter as "*very defiant*"; as doing *"refusal; disrespect"*; as having a *"poor attitude",* and as *"not wanting to resolve the issue."* A good teacher discourse shapes the writing of *"a simple request which was to sit down; I was dealing with other students; respectfully and REPEATATIVELY (sic) asked to sit down and discuss the matter"*; and

"trying to resolve the issue." The use of these specific words reflects the discursively shaped, taken-for-granted understandings the teacher has of the way things ought to be. Alternative understandings — the way things could be — are either not available, or not preferred, for the PE teacher to use in her description of Peter's actions.

In this section I have demonstrated that the discourses hailing participants in any exchange appear in the words used by participants as they make sense of their experience. As each person speaks the language of the shaping discourse, they are both shaped themselves, and in speaking, contribute to the presence of that discourse for their own and others' future use.

In the next section I will show how, within the shaping context of multiple discourses, participants act with purpose. Using lenses of performative language and intertextuality, I show how in speaking, each participant attempts to act as an agent in their own regard, employing language for "illocutionary force" (Harré & Van Langenhove, 1991, p. 396) to accomplish something, not least, to create a sense of public identity, the image of themselves as an acceptable person (Gergen, 1999). In this section I answer the question: what do each person's statements achieve?

Performative Language and Intertextuality

Referring to peoples' discourse-shaped utterances as having a performative function, Gergen (1999) states that "in the very saying of something, we are also performing an action within a relationship" (p. 132). This is what Burr (2003) refers to when she writes, "In this sense language is an action, has a performative role" (p. 8). Following these theorists I propose that when Peter speaks, he acts skillfully to make appear the objects of which he speaks: uncaring peers, overbearing teachers, and an innocent self. Equally, Peter's teachers use language skillfully to achieve effect: Peter as disobedient and deserving of correction. In this section I show Peter, the head of department, and the PE teacher, each skillfully using language performatively. Following

this, I go on to show how intertextuality, the relationship of current stories to other familiar stories, further enhances speakers' (discursively shaped) desired effect.

Peter.

Stories of uncaring peers and overbearing teachers are readily available in popular discourse. Peter draws on these existing stories (intertextuality) and amplifies them (performative language), creating by comparison an innocent view of himself, and forming the subjects of which he speaks (peers and teachers) as in the wrong. In speaking the way he does, Peter invites a particular reading of the exchange described; he actively constructs his account to build a defensible identity, and to have his version of events legitimated or endorsed by others (Burr, 2003).

Examples of Peter's performative use of language.

"He took off my bag" implies both forceful and extra-legal action, against Peter's will, by the head of department. There is no mention of requests to give over his bag, or of the teacher's assessment that Peter was about to leave and that taking his bag was an attempt to keep him there. (Note that these points are amplified in the teacher's version of this exchange.) Peter is passively located in his speech, as being acted upon by the teacher. On these terms, what happened, and therefore what followed, comes as a result of the teacher's unilateral actions.

"I was trying to rip my bag off him and stuff, and I was pushing him away" implies that a struggle was entered into, that the teacher was the aggressor (Peter had to resort to "ripping"), and that Peter was an innocent, defending himself in some way. Peter's explanation of "ripping" is based on the teacher's wrongful act of "taking" his bag.

"We were doing netball and they wouldn't let me join in; they wouldn't pass me the ball" invokes the idea of a conscious excluding of Peter from the game — the other students failed in their duty to include him in the game, and

deliberately so. The notion of conscious intention is important, because rational intention is a significant element of culpability (Graham, 2007). Also implied in this speaking is the idea that joining in is an appropriate action, and that Peter would join in if he were allowed to by his peers. Peter invokes norms of participation to position himself as a willing student.

"So I sat out for a while, and had a break with my bag and stuff" implies a thoughtful, considered action — Peter as a rational actor.

The words *"took off, rip, pushing, wouldn't let, wouldn't pass"* invoke images of others' deliberately wrongful actions further positioning Peter as in the right. Peter takes a pre-emptive position against the possible accusation that he has acted either wrongly or irrationally. His is a reasonable, rational response. Peter constitutes the teacher as overbearing, forceful, and outside of the scope of his authority. The other students are positioned as deliberately excluding. By contrast, Peter is constituted as rational and reasonable.

Peter's use of intertextuality.

This understanding of Peter's account is supported by his use of intertextuality. The theme of a boy left out of a game because others would not pass him the ball, and of a boy's bag roughly removed by authority are familiar to listeners, inviting care and concern. Through personal experience, through movies seen and other well-known accounts, listeners know of similar stories, which serve to thicken this particular telling of such stories, and to enhance this tellings effects. Hearing Peter's account, the listeners are invited to make sense of it in the light of their knowledge of such subjectivities produced in other stories.

While Peter cannot guarantee or secure how a listener will interpret what he says, he seeks to influence the process of interpretation through the techniques of performative language and intertextuality. In doing so he conveys his meaning more forcefully saying, I suggest, "I am a rational, orderly subject, a blameless victim of others' lack of care and aggressive behaviour. I am innocent." Peter's invoking of discourse and language

technique to proclaim his innocence — peers ought to include classmates, teachers ought to be fair and listen before acting, where people choose to act wrongly they are to blame, blameless people are rational and self-controlled — serves as yet another telling of familiar tellings, further enhancing the availability of these sorts of tellings as taken-for-granted truths — as available discourses — within the community.

The teachers.

Equally, the words the head of department and the PE teacher use to construct their emails also function performatively, and draw on intertextuality to enhance the meaning of their words, thus contributing to available local discourse.

I propose that the performative function of the language used in the emails to the deputy principal is to demonstrate Peter's culpability, and to position the teachers as doing their job well. Peter is described as being deliberately disobedient and therefore a suitable subject for censure. The teachers are described as acting reasonably under difficult conditions, and the readers (the deputy principal, and later, those who read the file) are invited and positioned to take up a similar interpretation.

The head teacher: Performative use of language.

"He had to be spoken to by [PE teacher] for misbehaviour" implies severity in Peter's actions, and also perhaps frustration on the part of the head teacher in "having to." There is a suggestion that there was plenty of other work on his plate at the time.

"He dropped his netball bib and began to walk away" invokes ideas like contrariness, insubordination, unwillingness.

"I caught up with him, insisted he rejoin the activity he was supposed to be involved in." Here the language invokes an idea of chase and flee, of Peter as a resister of the rules, and of a teacher making efforts.

The phrase, *"He grabbed his bag"* suggests risk of either flight, or violence and struggle.

"Fearing he planned to take off" invokes danger of rule breaking.

That Peter *"kept trying to grab the bag in spite of me asking him to return to his activity and to leave the bag alone"* invites an image of Peter's being out of control as ongoing.

The phrase, *"He was demanding I hand his bag back to him"* suggests Peter was being inappropriately aggressive.

That, *"I attempted to lecture him he kept answering back"* suggests a struggle and an ongoing conflict, and an absence of appropriate submission to authority.

The phrase describing when the *"[PE teacher] came over and he even did it to her"* amplifies the bemusement, the incredulity, offered as an interpretation of Peter's actions.

Finally, the phrase, *"Hope you can deal with him. Cheers"* invokes both a collegial and a stern final response from the reader.

The PE teacher.
In a similar way the PE teacher's words also perform the function of enhancing meaning. Thus where she writes, *"Peter was very defiant and for a long time refused to do a simple request",* the meaning of the language is amplified by the "very", and the focus on the length of time — an extremity of defiance and of time. That the request was "simple" further increases the sense of incredulity at Peter's actions, and his culpability. Note that the word "simple" belies and disguises the discursive complexity I suggest was going on at this time.

Where the PE teacher writes, *"I was dealing with other students and was not present for the whole altercation",* the phrase, "dealing with" invokes a sense

of her busyness and responsibility in getting on with the work of teaching, while "altercation" raises the meaning of this event to one of conflict.

In the sentence, *"Furthermore his general disrespect when respectfully and REPEATATIVELY (sic) asked to sit down and discuss the matter",* the word "furthermore" raises the bar saying that not only has this happened, but there is more to come. That Peter has been disrespectful even outside of the account given here is amplified in the use of "general", while the unusual word *"REPEATATIVELY",* written in bold type, strengthens the account of both the efforts the teacher has gone to, and the extent of Peter's disobedience.

In these examples I have sought to demonstrate the way words the teachers used to construct an email amplify the discursive norms of interpretation which shape both the writers' and the readers' understandings of Peter's actions. Here I suggest the authors have conscripted language that will "celebrate the proposal, and protect it from doubters" (Gergen, 1999, p. 55), enabling the authors "to justify particular versions of events, to excuse or validate their own behaviour, to fend off criticism or otherwise allow them to maintain a credible stance in an interaction" (Burr, 2003, p. 60). The purpose of shaping an understanding of Peter, and of recruiting an audience to that understanding, is enhanced through the speakers' skilful use of performative language.

Intertextuality.

More subtly, but equally powerfully, such rationalist discourse-shaped interpretations are reinforced and strengthened through the familiarity of the way these stories are told — through their intertextual connectedness with other stories familiar to the readers. The description of a recalcitrant boy defying his teachers by refusing to do what he is told is familiar story-telling in school staff rooms. As Walther and Fox (2012) put it, "Staff rooms are an informal but powerful social and public setting in which problematic identity conclusions about children are shared and sustained" (p. 8). While such staffroom talk may simply be, on one level, a site of teachers sharing work frustrations, such stories are so well known that each telling joins with similar

tellings, enhancing the meaning and authority of this particular rendition of that story.

Similarly, an account of embattled teachers doing their best against a rising tide of modern disobedience is commonly available, and serves to connect with this story, thickening its effect on the listeners. The stories of Peter's "disobedience" across the years (as contained in the records in Peter's school file) also serve as a backdrop to the amplification and interpretation of these particular tellings. The head of department and the PE teacher's invoking of the language of rational discourse to "tell the truth" about Peter's deliberateness in his actions serves, I suggest, as yet another telling of these familiar tellings, thus enhancing their availability within the community as taken-for-granted truths — as available discourse.

In this chapter I have named potential discourses shaping each of the participants; I have drawn attention to the presence of those discourses in the specific words used by each participant; I have described each participant as a skilled user of language for purpose; and I have described each participant as connecting their tellings with other available tellings, enhancing their own purposes and adding to the availability of those stories in the future. In doing so, I have sought to demonstrate how discourses of schooling are powerful in shaping the reported descriptions, and thus in the production, of the described events and of teacher and student subjectivities alike.

In the following chapter I continue to focus on the discursive shaping of subjectivity. However, moving from a focus on discourses of schooling, my emphasis is now on the potential for alternative shaping effects in explorations of ethical intent through narrative therapy.

As described earlier in Chapter Four, the reflective conversations I offer in this thesis researches peoples' actions as expressions of what they value; as actions in keeping with cherished hopes and purposes in life. Such explorations research peoples' desired outcomes, while recognising that the means used to achieve desired outcomes can be challenged and changed. In

focusing on ethical agency as a desired result from such reflective conversations, I seek to demonstrate that subjectivities shaped by such explorations are more likely to fit with schools' ethical hopes for safe and quality education for all.

CHAPTER 8: PETER AND HIS PEERS IN INTERVIEW: DEVELOPING ALTERNATIVE REPUTATIONS

In the previous chapter I demonstrated how the language used by young people and teachers alike contains, and can be explored for, traces of the discourses which shape each person's understanding of themselves and others. In the transcript presented I proposed that rationalist discourses shaped Peter's and his teachers' actions and responses in a way which produced troubled subjectivities, making disciplinary responses such as suspension and exclusion more likely. In this chapter I demonstrate how exploring Peter's intent, his hopes for himself and others implicit within his actions, makes alternative and preferred subjectivities available, and invites Peter to exercise ethical agency. I demonstrate this through a series of short extracts from counselling interviews with Peter, and later, with his peers.

As we spoke over a period of weeks, accounts of Peter as being able to decide, as caring for children, as being reliable and honest emerged in response to my questions and Peter's reflections. When he was invited to comment on these accounts, Peter preferred these developing alternative identities. In the light of these preferred identities, Peter saw himself as capable of, and desiring to act differently at school.

In offering these brief extracts — two concentrating on troubled reputations and six concentrating on emerging preferred reputations — my purpose is to show how practices of narrative therapy as described in Chapter Four — such as externalising, exploring and storying alternative descriptions and explorations of ethical intent (White, 2007) — made different ways available for Peter to speak of himself. I demonstrate how, as alternative descriptions of preferred identity were invoked, new possibilities for subjectivity emerged, allowing for different ways of being to become available for Peter. I propose that, where taken up by Peter, these emerging subjectivities are likely to fit

more closely with schools' ethical desires, and make disciplinary responses such as suspension and exclusion less likely.

After commenting on each brief extract, I go on to discuss the discursive shaping of new stories about Peter, and to highlight the role of performative language and intertextuality in strengthening those stories. I look at the role of audiences in supporting and developing Peter's preferred identity claims in a later section.

First extract: Externalising troubling reputation.

Before beginning to explore the various influences which may invisibly shape Peter's actions, and before looking more widely within his life experience for alternative ways of speaking about him, and guided by narrative therapy's Statement of Position Map 1 (see Chapter Four), in this extract I externalise Peter's current reputations, and some of the effects of those reputations in his life. I propose to Peter that he has reputations in the school which affect the way his actions become interpreted by others. I then interview Peter in front of three peers chosen by him as supporters, further exploring the role and effect of reputation in his life.

I invite the reader to notice how, following externalising practices of narrative therapy (White & Epston, 1990), we speak of Peter's reputation as a separate entity, whose effects can be seen and reviewed (See Chapter Four). This use of language to externalise reputation and its effects reflects a central narrative therapy understanding that the problem is the problem; the person is not the problem (White, 2007). Such a separation of the person and the problem positions Peter as an observer and critic of his reputation at school, and its effects in his life. This represents a first step towards Peter declaring he would prefer things to be different.

This first extract is part of a counselling conversation in which I invited Peter to speculate as to why the deans might have put his name forward as someone likely to be suspended or excluded:

Donald: The game is ... I reckon that peoples' lives get kind of, who people are gets storied or told by other people. So like for instance, when I said to the deans, "Could you give me somebody, the name of somebody who's in trouble a bit", they said you, but that might not be the way that you talk about you. Right? So this work is really about finding out about how you talk about you. That stuff, that's the hard part! But before we get there I'm interested in this idea of trouble. Why would the deans say ..?

Peter: Ah, some classes I don't like so I tend to play up.

Donald: Oh yeah?

Peter: Like I just can't help it, [lost words] pencils and I bang them around and stuff. And like, I don't know, I just want to get teachers angry sometimes.

Donald: Do you?

Peter: Yeah I just want to push their limit. I don't know why, but ...

Donald: Yeah? Cool. How do you push their limit?

Peter: Yeah just like, I don't know, they just seem to like, you know how I told you about that reputation?

Donald: Yeah, tell me about that.

Peter: Some people don't even give me a chance. They just, "He won't even be good. We will just kick him out of this class." Like drama. I didn't like drama, so I was playing up and stuff, and I wanted to go to another class. There was a teacher that I didn't even know; I hadn't seen her or whatever. It was sport science. I hadn't even met her, or spoke to her or anything, and she said, "No." Because she has heard about me: the reputation!

Donald: Just like that. Without even meeting you she's saying, "No"?

Peter: Yeah

Donald: So one of the effects your reputation has in school is that teachers don't even want you in classes. Is that true?

Peter: Yeah, they don't even give me a chance, because what if I want to be good in that class? Maybe it's because I don't like drama, but if I get put into something I do like I will be good. But they don't even give me a chance.

Donald: Yeah. So when that reputation, that idea of reputation ... what sort of reputation do you have about the place?

Peter: Like my reputation?

Donald: Yeah

Peter: What with friends or like?

Donald: No, let's start with teachers. But friends are all good too, because that will be a different sort of rep. Let's see if we can get an idea of what your reputation is like right now.

Peter: I think my reputation is quite bad because last year I was, like, pretty bad.

In this extract I show how the language I use acts to separate Peter's identity from that of his reputation. From this stance Peter is positioned as able to reflect on the effects of actions he has taken. In this "observer and critic of reputation" subjectivity, Peter is positioned as beginning to speak of his knowledge of the effects of reputation as something apart from himself.

Second extract: Re-telling the troubled reputation to peers.

In this extract, Peter's three friends join us in conversation as outsider witnesses to Peter's emerging preferred stories of identity. I interview Peter about his experience of school reputation. My purpose in including this here is to show how the telling and re-telling with peers as an audience further develops an understanding of the school reputation as something external to Peter, and something having undesired effects. The importance of the peer audience lies in their joining with Peter in his desire to see himself differently, and in adding to his preferred alternative identity accounts. I invite the reader

to notice Peter's developing awareness of the breadth of effect the reputation is having in his school life, and as a result, his developing subjectivity as an observer and critic of that reputation and its effects.

Donald: Peter, what sort of reputation did you have when we first started working together?

Peter: Um, I had a bad reputation.

Donald: Yeah?

Peter: Yeah, like, naughty, from last year.

Donald: Did you? From last year. How come from last year?

Peter: Cause I got stood down 7 times and that ...

Donald: Yeah, yeah, for what? I know this stuff, but I'm just doing it for these guys.

Peter: For like swearing at teachers, and like, trying to push teachers, and tagging, and that stuff.

Donald: Yeah, and all that stuff. And that reputation came through with you to this year?

Peter: Yep.

Donald: How did that reputation affect you this year?

Peter: Oh, I didn't have much privileges, teachers thought I was like, all naughty as and stuff, so they didn't let me have a real chance.

Donald: They didn't give you a real ..?

Peter: They didn't give me a real chance to start over new ...

Donald: And what other things did that reputation do for you around the classroom?

Peter: Everybody wanted me to play up and make them laugh.

Donald: Oh, your mates wanted you to play up and make them laugh ... so that reputation had teachers not wanting to give you privileges, and people around you wanting to make you play up and stuff ..?

Peter: Yeah.

Donald: Anything else that reputation was doing for your work at school?

Peter: Ruining my concentration in class and stuff.

Donald: True? And what effect might that have had on the way you were learning in the classroom?

Peter: Like, I would have got sent out a lot.

Donald: Yeah? Did you get sent out a lot?

Peter: Yeah!

Donald: Yeah?

Peter: Out of every class.

Donald: In fact you got sent out of all your classes eh?

Peter: Mmm, I got sent out of all my classes.

Donald: Into a whole new set of classes.

Peter: Mmm.

Throughout this part of the conversation I am speaking of reputation as external, as something we can name, explore the effects of, and take a stance for or against. Examples of this externalising language can be seen where I say: *Anything else that reputation was doing? So that reputation had teachers...; and what other things did that reputation do for you? How did that reputation affect you? What sort of reputation did you have?*

My practice here invites Peter into an understanding that the problem (named here as reputation) is the problem, he is not the problem. Such a counselling conversation is part of a larger exploration of how Peter may have been acting on behalf of his (discursively shaped) hopes for himself and others, or

perhaps how positioning had him acting against his better judgement, although this may not be seen by others; that there are other versions of Peter that are available, if unknown. I am intentionally interrupting taken-for-granted ways of speaking of and understanding Peter's actions, and making space for new ways of speaking about Peter. In this extract Peter's description of the reputation and its effects grows to include classmates, his schoolwork, and getting removed from classes. The more clearly the reputation is seen as having undesired effects, the more likely it is that Peter will look for alternative ways of being known and of acting — that is, the more likely it is that he will take up alternative subjectivities as they become available through our explorations. It is here that the maps of narrative practice described in Chapter Four offer guidelines for an analysis of the undesired reputation and its effects, as well as an exploration of preferred reputations and their effects.

Looking For Alternative Stories

Much of narrative therapy guides counsellors in looking for and expecting to find people "living out their lives according to intentions that they embrace, in pursuit of what they give value to in life" (White, 2007, p. 103). I enter these conversations with Peter (and his peers) assured that, within his actions, there will be evidence of what Peter cares about (his ethical intent), and the characters of self he has developed over the years in keeping with those hopes for himself and others. In the six brief extracts presented in this next section, Peter and I search for and explore alternative reputations that have been implicit in Peter's stories.

In these extracts I demonstrate how language practices of narrative therapy, including an exploration of ethical intent implicit in Peter's actions, make alternative descriptions available for Peter; descriptions which are drawn from his real experience and are preferred by him. Having taken a stance against the effects of his previous reputation, and against the subjectivities offered by rationalist interpretations of his actions, Peter reviews the alternative subjectivities offered by these preferred descriptions. It is within these re-

descriptions, and in the peer/community endorsements that follow that preferred subjectivities are more fully developed and made available for Peter to take up.

In the first of these six extracts I begin to explore with Peter alternative reputations, starting with a summary of Peter's account of an ability to decide, and his desire to learn. Next I explore with Peter some alternative descriptions of his actions which arise from his community. In the following extract I invite Peter to evaluate these emerging reputations. In the fourth extract Peter takes a stand for these emerging reputations. In the next extract Peter outlines some of the effects of the new and preferred reputations. Finally I interview Peter's peers, with Peter as an audience, for their responses to Peter's tellings of his new and preferred reputations. I invite the reader to notice the way these tellings and re-tellings of Peter's hopes for himself and others, which are implicit in his actions, are made visible through the particular forms of inquiry demonstrated here and support emerging subjectivities becoming available to, and taken up by, Peter.

First extract: A summary of emerging school reputation.

In a previous conversation I had asked Peter, *"How did you make that change?"* He replied, *"I don't know. I just decided. I got sick of my old behaviour."* Later in that conversation Peter commented, *"I think it is just because, you know how I said that I can decide? I think it is commitment, I need to be committed to something and then I can do it."*

Following a narrative therapy practice of naming emerging character traits in order to review them with a young person (Morgan, 2000), in this interview I asked Peter about the word "decide" as a possible name for an action he had taken to make a difference for himself. I wondered if we might begin to develop an account of Peter as "Someone who can decide". I went on to explore Peter's desire to learn: Is Peter interested in learning? Is this yet another character he would include in his preferred identity accounts? This

focus on preferred identity is an example of exploring alternative descriptions and character preferences implicit within a person's actions (see Chapter Four).

The transcript continued:

Donald: So in the middle of all this I'm hearing you say two things: one is you can, if people speak to you properly, you can decide to just do things differently...

Peter: Yeah, get respect back from the teacher.

Donald: So that is the first thing: you can just decide. That's the first thing right? And the second thing is, forgive me if I have got this wrong, it sounds like you are quite interested in learning stuff?

Peter: Yeah most of the time. But it depends like the teacher, because last year Miss W., like she is such a cool teacher and I love English, and this year I absolutely hate English. I look at my timetable and I would be like "Oh yeah, I got English first" and then like...

Donald: But apart from teachers and all that sort of stuff, are you quite interested in learning stuff?

Peter: Yeah.

Donald: Can you say something about why?

Peter: It's just good 'cause like you know something, right, and then next lesson you can just write it down, just be like, do the work. And sometimes I like producing like neat work and stuff.

Donald: Do you?

Peter: Yeah.

In this extract, in response to my inquiry that focuses on potential alternative descriptions, Peter begins to make preferred identity claims — *I can decide, I like producing neat work.* These self-descriptions are constructed in the

vocabulary of Peter's hopes for himself and others, his ethical desires, and describe subjectivities which are attractive to Peter, and invite him into a position of ethical agency — of choosing on behalf of these emerging accounts of good. Through practices of exploring Peter's actions for hopes and intentions (see Chapter Four), these preferred identity claims become available for Peter to use in taking up preferred subjectivities.

In the next extract, guided by my interest in how people in his community might describe him, Peter uncovers and evaluates further possible claims to preferred identity. Through such explorations and Peter's preference for them, descriptions of alternative subjectivities are made increasingly available for Peter to take up.

Second extract: Community based reputations.

In this interview, Peter has been answering my questions about how his friend Tama's mother would describe him. He has also described how a local internet cafe owner hired him to deliver pamphlets for the business. Implicit within these accounts that Peter reports from members of his community are descriptions of Peter that may not have been previously articulated, yet are available for use in developing a preferred account of Peter and his ethical purposes in life. Here I highlight the way that these less noticed stories co-exist simultaneously with prevailing dominant descriptions. Again my practice in this conversation is shaped by maps of narrative therapy, which explore alternative descriptions of people implicit within their actions in life. Thus, implicit within an account of Peter being hired to deliver pamphlets is the possibility that others may see him as reliable, as honest, as a worker. I invite Peter to reflect on these descriptions, and wonder how they might fit with his preferred sense of self. That is, Peter is invited to exercise ethical agency.

The transcript begins with me recalling what Tama's mother had said about Peter, and how a local internet cafe owner had employed Peter to deliver pamphlets:

Donald: So can you see what we are doing here, like together we are working out a different kind of reputation for you! So far we have seen that Tama's mum speaks about you in ways that are cool as, like good you know, "I like this guy." And Nick [the internet cafe owner] *has trusted you with this whole thing, and paid you for this whole job, even though, you know, some guys would just chuck it* [the pamphlets] *off a bridge; but he knows something about ... does he know that you are honest or reliable, or some sort of words like that? Or nah?*

Peter: Oh yeah, he does. Because one time I was at the internet cafe, and he gave me more money than he should have given me, and I was like, "Oh bro. Look, you gave me about $2.50 extra." He was like, "Oh. Ok. I will just take that back."

Here a tentatively offered description of Peter as "honest or reliable" is taken up by Peter, and further developed with an example of honesty in action. This extract demonstrates part of narrative therapy's re-authoring map discussed in Chapter Four. This map of narrative practice helps a person to connect a series of events across time according to the preferred theme of whatever they are reaching for (White, 2007) — in this case an account of Peter as honest. The language produced in this exchange shapes an emerging subjectivity for Peter as an honest and reliable person. I emphasise here that this is not simply semantics — Peter's sense of identity and self is shaped within these re-descriptions. I propose that the actions Peter takes in response to such emerging subjectivities are likely to be very different to those actions shaped by his previous school-based reputations.

In the next extract I invite Peter to evaluate the emerging identity claims he has made thus far. In inviting Peter to take up a position as evaluator of the emerging accounts, I am seeking to position him as authoritative in his own identity claims, and to invite Peter to take up a position of ethical agency. This position stands in contrast to the expert, rationalist descriptions of current educational discourse that positions persons in authority as telling young

people the "truth" about themselves. Not surprisingly, Peter takes up these preferred descriptions with some enthusiasm.

Third extract: Evaluating emerging reputations.

Within practices of narrative therapy it is important that the emerging stories told about Peter are ones that fit with his own preferred sense of self. Just as Peter was active in evaluating and rejecting earlier rationalist versions of his identity, here he is invited to evaluate emerging new descriptions. Peter enthusiastically takes up the alternative versions of himself, drawn from an exploration of the ethical intentions, the hopes for himself and others, implicit within his actions. In this exchange, Peter is again positioned by the language I employ as an active observer and critic of this emerging account. Rather than being described by others from a rationalist discourse, Peter is positioned as author of his own identity claims.

Donald: So how is it going for you, in the sense of this idea of we can tell a different story about you Peter? How is it fitting? What are you hearing about yourself? What have we been talking about so far?

Peter: Good things. I realised that I can be good if I were to be committed, and get a good reputation, and like eyeing up, decide what ... things now for my future ... all those reasons.

Donald: You are hearing all that stuff, eh? See all that stuff there? [Showing notes of the various things people have said about Peter] *What sort of a guy, what name would you give to a person who has all that stuff going on for them? How would you describe a person like that?*

Peter: Happy ... on to it.

Donald: On to it! Happy ... on to it!

Peter: If I was all those things, all those things all the time. Oh, maybe not occasionally ... even if I be myself, I would be a good person I reckon.

As described above, I ask Peter to evaluate the results of the preceding weeks — the explorations of alternative accounts from different parts of his life, and the explorations of the hopes and intentions implicit in those alternative accounts. In this extract Peter is positioned as editor of the emerging accounts of his identity, and describes such a person as "*Happy ... on to it.*"

Fourth extract: Continuing to take a stand on new reputations.

In the preceding extract, Peter expresses liking what is being said about him, and he begins to describe a future in living that way. In the next extract Peter expands on the effects of a new reputation, and together we reflect on how he has made such a shift in reputation. In response to my questions, Peter talks about how new reputations are making a difference for him, and that he prefers these reputations. My reiteration of preferred descriptions makes the subjectivities associated with such descriptions increasingly available for Peter to take up. Such emerging subjectivities are constituted in the language used to describe Peter, his actions and intentions.

Donald: When you think about that reputation, what do you think about it now? What, are you for it, or..?

Peter: It's changed a lot I reckon.

Donald: Yeah? How has it changed?

Peter: I've been getting A's, and House Cards and stuff.

Donald: OK.

Peter: And like, it's fun being good, cause you get privileges, and you can still play up a little bit.

Donald: You play up a little bit?

Peter: And still get A's!

Donald: And still get A's!

Peter: Mmm.

Donald: So you found the balance between good reputation and a bit of fun?

Peter: Yeah.

Donald: How did you make that change — from one to the other?

Peter: I don't know — I just decided — 'cause I was sick of my old behaviour.

Donald: How come did you decide?

Peter: Because I felt like it.

Donald: Yeah?

Peter: And I had consequences if I didn't.

Donald: Yeah — you saw those consequences. What consequences were they man?

Peter: Um, going to [another local school].

Here Peter re-uses an earlier description of himself as "a person who can decide." That description, previously tentatively offered and taken up by Peter, appears here as an established part of his preferred self-description. Although I did not pick up on it in this interview, implicit in Peter's account is an ability to weigh up consequences and make decisions. In keeping with a re-authoring project, such a description of Peter as someone who can weigh up consequences and make decisions could be offered tentatively and, if taken up, explored for other times when it had been of use to Peter, and for what it might say about what Peter holds as important. Through the practices of telling and re-telling of these accounts, Peter is able to hear, evaluate and take a position on these new ways of describing him. Shaped by practices of narrative therapy, these descriptions make alternative and preferred subjectivities available to Peter.

Fifth extract: Reflecting on differences noticed.

In this extract, I discuss with Peter the effects of his new ways of being, and add yet more vocabulary to the preferred descriptions available. In this interview Peter reports that his new reputation has preferred effects in the present, and it appears it may have preferred effects in the future as well.

Donald: So, have you noticed any difference since you have been bringing this new reputation to school?

Peter: Yep.

Donald: What difference have you noticed?

Peter: Like that I'm good and stuff, and that I get House Cards and get privileges.

Donald: And I know it's kind of an obvious question, but what difference do you think it might make to your exam results at the end of the year?

Peter: Quite good, 'cause I am learning more and I'm enjoying it. I'm learning more.

In this extract Peter and I have grown his preferred account to include future possibilities, and Peter has again evaluated those possibilities as positive. Through these carefully layered inquiries, a broad vocabulary for a re-description of Peter has become available. Peter is not constrained to making sense of himself through the vocabularies and categories of current educational discourse. He now has alternative descriptions available through which to make sense of himself. As we shall see in the extract to follow, and as described in his definitional ceremony (see Chapter Six), significant others can be invited to join Peter in these preferred vocabularies, and to add their own descriptions to a growing pool from which Peter's alternative reputation can be constituted.

I turn next to the effect of Peter's peers on his emerging preferred subjectivity. I stand here with White (1995) where he writes that "if the stories we have about lives are negotiated and distributed within communities of persons, then it makes a great deal of sense to engage communities of persons in the

negotiation of identity" (p. 26). Throughout this study, the ongoing re-storying of Peter's identity is first negotiated with Peter, then with his peers, and subsequently with his teachers and family. In this way Peter is supported throughout this work by those who are an audience to his actions. In this way too, these people are recruited into the description-of-self language that Peter prefers, further supporting the presence of the preferred subjectivities.

In this final extract I invite Peter's three peers to respond to what they have heard of Peter's account. When I invoke an audience of teachers through the written comments they had provided in response to my request, Peter responds with delight. My purpose in including this extract is to yet again demonstrate the emergence of preferred subjectivities in the tellings and re-tellings (White, 2007) of Peter's identity, this time through the eyes of his peers and teachers.

Sixth extract: Peers' response.

After several weeks of meeting together, and hearing explorations of Peter's preferred accounts, I interviewed Peter again in front of his peers, and invited them to respond. In the following transcript Andrew and Tama make comments, while Jason has nothing to add at this point. I ask Peter to evaluate what he has heard, and he responds.

Donald: You three — what did you just hear about Peter?

Andrew: He has a good reputation in class.

Tama: He's been concentrating a lot.

Donald: He has been concentrating a lot. [To Jason] Did you hear anything in there, man? What did you hear what I was reading out to Peter?

Jason: He was …

Donald: Oh, sorry man — I didn't mean to put you on the spot — you might see something as we go along … So this guy has improved over the last week. Is that true, or not true?

Peter [calls out] Yeah!

Tama [jokingly]: Mmm … not really sure about that … Mmm.

Donald: So how does it fit for you — being the guy who's improved in the last week?

Peter: Awesome!

Donald: Yeah?

Peter: It feels good.

Donald: [Showing Peter the paper with the teachers' names and comments recorded] *See all these teachers? Every single one of them said some stuff about you that was sweet.*

Peter: [singing] I feel good!!

Peter is clearly delighted with the descriptions he is hearing. The rich language which has emerged over the weeks from Peter's own tellings, and those of his peers and teachers, has developed an account of Peter which he prefers, and has shaped subjectivities he can take up and act differently within.

In these extracts I have shown how language developed through explorations of ethical intent implicit within Peter's actions can invoke new descriptions, and how within such descriptions new subjectivities, such as a reliable worker, a determined student, a valued cousin, become available for Peter to review. In the presence of new possibilities for self-identity constituted through the reflective conversations described above, Peter hears and evaluates what is being said about him, takes up a preferred stance, and begins to act differently at school.

In the section to follow, I explore the role of discourse, performative language and intertextuality in the production of this emerging sense of Peter's identity.

Discourse, Positioning and Performative Language

I turn again here to the way discourses shape the language used to make sense of life, and in doing so, shape the subjectivities available for participants. In spite of my focus on explorations of Peter's ethical intent implicit within his actions, prevailing rationalist discourse-shaped descriptions still appear in the language used by all the participants in the extracts above, including me. In this first section I show how rationalist discourses of a unitary and single-storied self shape both my language and Peter's. I invite the reader to notice how, even with intent to do otherwise, taken-for-granted rationalist language continues to shape identity claims made.

Discourses of a unitary and single-storied self .

Thus when I use the phrase, *"So this work is really about finding out about how you talk about you",* there is an implied notion that Peter has a true account of who he is. This draws on rationalist understandings of a unitary self-reporting on an inner state. When I use language such as, *"Let's see if we can get an idea of what your reputation is like right now; so you've got a reputation for being..."* The implication is that Peter has just one reputation at school, with a possibility of others in other places. This way of speaking posits Peter as having one reputation, one identity across time and place, rather than highlighting the way that Peter's actions are understood and described by different people across time in response to prevailing discourses — that Peter's identity is multi-storied. Peter too takes up the notion of a single reputation, saying for example, *"I think my reputation is quite bad because last year I was like pretty bad."*

Such taken-for-granted ways of speaking routinely shape the language used to make sense of experience. In order to highlight the ever-presence of discourses shaping language and meaning-making I now describe two further

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taken-for-granted ways of speaking which influenced our conversations together.

Discourse of understatement.

In a Sunday Star Times article, prominent New Zealand author Owen Marshall (2011) lamented that "the traditions of the laconic have been submerged by a popular and raucous culture." Picturing one prime time television interview programme, Marshall described how those plucked from the audience to receive a car and a pallet of baby food, weep on Ellen's neck, cry, "Oh, my god. Oh, my god", dance on the spot, cover their faces, and brokenly recount their tragedies. Marshall wished that, just once, the recipient would shake Ellen's hand, and say calmly, "Yes, it's been tough. Thanks for the baby food. Cool." He went on to write, "The consideration for others and regard for ourselves that we once displayed in our reticence and respect of privacy seem outmoded."

I suggest that, despite the presence of international chat shows on television and Owen Marshall's concern, the discourse of the understated which is valorised in that article — a laconic, calm, reticent, private way of speaking — is alive and well in New Zealand culture, and appears in the extracts above. Thus, where I report to Peter my request to the deans: *"Could you give me the name of somebody who's in trouble a bit?"* the phrase, "a bit", was understood by the deans and by Peter within this discourse of understatement as, "a lot."

My use of such understatement in our conversations makes it easier for Peter to take up or decline offered descriptions of his efforts and achievements. Where I say, *"Forgive me if I have got this wrong, it sounds like you are quite interested in learning stuff? Tell us a little about that?"*, the modifying of phrases and words "quite interested" and "tell us a little" assist Peter in being able to take up or decline the offered descriptions. In my use of such language I scaffold the steps within the development of an alternative story; the modifiers such as "a little" reduce the size of the step towards preferred

identity claims and thus make the alternative identity claims more accessible and available.

Peter also uses understatement to describe his actions in class: *"Some classes I don't like so I tend to play up";* and his achievements in changing his reputation[s]: *"Like a good reputation — polite and stuff; Umm, quite good? Like that I'm good and stuff; quite good 'cause I am learning more and I'm enjoying it. I'm learning more."*

Here Peter's language has at least two effects: Peter makes steps away from a description that he is always poorly behaved in class, describing a "tendency" rather than an internalised feature of his identity; and he draws on understatement to reduce the effect and amount of time in class that his actions bring about disruption.

Peter's friend Tama uses diminishing, understated humour to compliment his friend's achievement: *"Mmm … not really sure about that … Mmm."* The understated tone allows Tama to offer the compliment, and Peter to receive it, without either appearing fawning or arrogant.

Yet this preference for understatement is not always the case. At one point Peter seems so filled with pleasure at hearing his story of success through teacher reports and through his friends' responses, that he abandons understatement in favour of superlative:

Donald: So how does it fit for you — being the guy who's improved in the last week?

Peter: Awesome!

Donald: Yeah?

Peter: It feels good.

Donald: See all these teachers? Every single one of them said some stuff about you that was sweet.

Peter: [Singing] I feel good!!

Here Peter expresses himself in song, celebrating what has been achieved. I note how powerful the effects are for Peter in having his reputation change, where his bodily and vocal responses demonstrate him enjoying the effects of that.

Discourses of privilege and consequence.

Within rational discourse, a discourse of rights and responsibilities, of privileges and consequences earned for behaviour holds sway (Barish, Saunders & Wolf, 1969; Glasser, 1978; Hoy & Hoy, 2006). Peter's language articulates this discourse in describing the effects of past and preferred reputations. Peter's previous reputation[s] had effects: *"Oh, I didn't have much privileges; I had consequences if I didn't. [What consequences were they man?] Um, going to [another local school]"* The new reputation[s] earn privilege: *"And like, it's fun being good, cause you get privileges; like that I'm good and stuff, and that I get House Cards and get privileges."*

Here Peter names the effects of an emerging new reputation in keeping with discourses of earned privilege and, in demonstrating an understanding of privilege and consequences, takes up a position of responsible maturity as seen within that discourse.

Practices of Narrative Therapy

I turn now to a discussion of the practices of narrative therapy and their part in making alternative descriptions available for Peter to evaluate and take up. The premise, "The problem is the problem; the person is not the problem" (White, 2007) is central in the work of narrative therapists. This stance emphasises problems as external to a person, leading to conversations about their preferred relationships with the problems which beset them and their preferred directions in life. In the light of this premise, problems are spoken about as separate from the person, and often given a name in the language of the people affected by that problem. Conversations which seek to expose the

effects of the problem, and the ways it works in a person's life, are also central to this way of working (White & Epston, 1990, Morgan, 2000; White, 2007).

Such externalising practices are seen throughout my conversations with Peter in phrases like: *"This idea of trouble; that reputation came through with you to this year? What other things did that reputation do for you around the classroom? Anything else that reputation was doing for your work at school?"*

In this context, the language used serves to separate Peter from the reputation he is known by, supporting him in taking up a position of observer of his own actions and their effects. In this conversation, the effects of the reputations in his life no longer speak to Peter's character — they speak to the character of the reputations, and Peter can decide to what extent he wants to align himself and the ways he is known with those characters.

Also within narrative therapy is the idea that identities can be developed through exploring alternative stories. Here, stories of identity are scaffolded, moving from familiar accounts of life to the "not yet known, but possible to know" (White, 2007, p. 276) accounts of preferred identity. This idea shapes much of the conversations above, for example: *"So can you see what we are doing here, like together we are working out a different kind of reputation for you!" "Forgive me if I have got this wrong, it sounds like you are quite interested in learning stuff? How is it going for you in the sense of this idea of we can tell a different story about you, Peter?"*

On social constructionist terms, Peter's subjectivity is shaped by the ways he is described. Through my questions, which focus on descriptions of Peter based on the hopes and intentions implicit in his actions, alternative and preferred descriptions of Peter can emerge. Through the development of such alternative ways of speaking about him, Peter has access to more choice as to how he wants to be described and act in the world. Such choice "is never freedom from discursive constitution of self, but the capacity to recognise that constitution and to resist, subvert and change the discourses themselves through which one is being constituted" (Davies, 1991, p. 51).

Through the externalising of his previous reputation and its effects, and an exploration of the many alternative descriptions implicit within his actions, and offered by significant others, Peter is able to review how he is described and re-author his preferred identity claims.

Within the practice of narrative therapy, an emphasis on privileging the everyday words common to the person speaking shapes language such as: *"All I'm ever writing down is your words. I'm not trying to analyse you, I'm not trying to work out what your head does."* This language is shaped by ethical practices of power. Narrative therapy asserts that:

> In a system of modern power, social control is established through the construction of norms about life and identity and by inciting people to engage in operations on their own and each other's lives to bring their actions and thoughts into harmony with these norms. (White, 2007, p. 268)

Rather than seeking to analyse Peter according to pre-existing norms of modern power, the reflective conversations I demonstrate here focus attention on Peter's own understandings of his actions, offering, "support in subverting these operations of modern power" (White, 2007, p. 269). Thus, rather than have his identity, the "truth" of who he is, told to him by an expert, Peter is positioned as exploring his own hopes and intentions, and invited to produce an experience-near description (White, 1997) of who he prefers to be. This is not to say that Peter's hopes and intentions are something available within him, waiting to be discovered. Rather, in the reflective conversations described here, various possible descriptions and stances are made available, and Peter is invited to evaluate these positions. As such, Peter exercises ethical agency, which is the hoped for outcome of these practices.

In such reflective conversations I am interested in how actions taken by people hold within them evidence of their hopes and desires for themselves and others. This interest can be seen in my questions such as: *If people speak to you properly, you can decide to just do things differently? It sounds*

like you are quite interested in learning stuff? Does he know that you are honest or reliable or some sort of words like that? Each of these questions implies and asks for identity conclusions which are potentially implicit in actions taken — that Peter may have an ability to make decisions in keeping with his hopes for himself and others, that Peter may be interested in learning, that Peter may be honest and reliable. It is up to Peter to decide if these potentially implicit characters fit with his preferred sense of self, which is his emerging new reputation.

In response to my enquiries, Peter makes a number of identity claims: *"I was sick of my old behaviour; [I am] polite and stuff, funny, good to get along with; I'm good and stuff; I am learning more and I'm enjoying it; I feel good!!"* These identity claims have become available to Peter through my explorations into his hopes and intentions, and into other places and relationships where he may be known differently, and through the paying of attention to Peter's small claims thus adding to their credence. In light of these preferred identity claims, I propose that Peter is less likely to act in ways contrary to the school's hopes for him, and as a result suspension, exclusion or referral to an alternative education site are less likely in his future experience.

Performative language and intertextuality.

As discussed in Chapter Seven, performative language and intertextuality enhance the constitutive properties of discourse (Graham, 2007), and people use language skillfully for purpose, to amplify their meaning and to achieve a desired positioning in relationship with others. In this section I show how Peter, Tama and I use performative language and intertextuality to enhance our telling and re-telling of Peter's preferred self-descriptions. I invite the reader to notice the subtle yet powerful way the language used shapes the relationships between the speakers, and supports Peter's emerging reputation. I begin with examples from my language, followed by the words used by Peter and Tama which demonstrate the use of language for purpose — performative language.

Donald.

In social constructionist terms, the words people use take their meaning in reference to words previously used by themselves or others. As Bahktin (1986) writes, "Any concrete utterance is a link in the chain of speech ... utterances are not indifferent to one another, and are not self-sufficient; they are aware of and mutually reflect one another" (p. 91). As already described, prevailing discourses continue to shape peoples' interpretations and responses, even in the presence of preferred alternatives. Within this context, the rich tellings and re-tellings of alternative preferred stories can help stand against the problem saturated accounts.

The idea of performative language focuses attention on the purpose of words, on what they achieve in the relationship. Thus, when I use the words, *"The game is",* the phrase deliberately moves the conversation away from serious conversation into a more playful, collegial genre. That is to say, the language I use has real and intended effects. This phrase takes its strength from the mutually understood intertextuality of the seriousness with which school disciplinary conversations about "trouble" are normally held. In describing what we are doing together as a "game" the meaning I intend is, "We are doing things differently here; this is a light, playful conversation; I will not impose meaning on you." This stands in contrast to the experience Peter has had with some teachers and school authorities, where the seriousness of Peter's conduct has been emphasised.

I note here that, in counselling conversations, the use of the word "game" might invoke the counselling theory of Transactional Analysis; however, that particular intertextuality was not known to Peter and his peers, nor was I invoking those ideas in this exchange. Although I was not referencing it in this conversation with Peter, my use of the word "game" also resonates with Foucault's use of "truth games" (Foucault, 1972), where versions of truth held within communities produce practices that shape preferred subjectivities.

The function of the phrase, *"I know this stuff, but I'm just doing it for these guys"*, is to reference the previous conversations Peter and I have had, and to position Peter and I as co-experiencers of these stories. This phrase invites Peter to, and positions him as, re-telling his preferred story to a new audience, with the purpose of including them in the developing project.

The series of speakings, *"I'm hearing you say two things; you can just decide; so can you see what we are doing here"*, function to focus Peter's attention on particular aspects of the conversation to date. Here I use language to deliberately draw a particular emphasis in the emerging story. Peter is positioned in this language as editor of the emerging story, and I am positioned as offering summaries for Peter to edit. The function of the language is to focus on Peter's emerging preferred story, and on the invitation to ethical agency, to agree or not with what is being said.

Peter.

There are many examples of Peter using language deliberately to emphasise a point, or to achieve a certain position within the story. In the phrases, *"Some people don't even give me a chance; a teacher that I didn't even know; I hadn't seen her or whatever; I hadn't even met her or spoke to her or anything; but they don't even give me a chance"*, Peter emphasises perceived injustice, and positions himself as being able to do better if only given the chance.

In keeping with well-known before and after stories (Booker, 2004), Peter skillfully draws on intertextuality to emphasise the "badness" of his current reputation, describing it as *"pretty bad; I got stood down seven times; I was like all naughty as; I got sent out of every class."* Peter emphasises the injustice of his present situation through a comparison with the goodness of last year's teacher: *"Because last year Miss ... like, she is such a cool teacher and I love English; and this year I absolutely hate English."*

Later, when described by a teacher as someone who is making a real difference, Peter expresses his pleasure, calling loudly, *"Yeah!"* Here the

performative emphasis is achieved through both body movement and volume, as well as the word used. The words Peter uses take added strength from shared stories and meanings — from intertextuality. Listeners understand that, in speaking this way, he is evoking images from well-known accounts of experience. Thus when I ask the questions, *"What sort of reputation do you have about the place?"* and later, *"What sort of reputation did you have when we first started working together?* Peter again understands the questions in the light of a "before and after story". This is a story routinely told in books and movies in which a young man unfairly put upon by strong forces makes good over time. As outlined by Booker (2004), the particular form of this story asks for a strong account of the troubles of "the before", so as to make clearer the achievements of "the after."

Thus, in response to the questions above, Peter conforms to the well-known shape of the story with, *"Um, I had a bad reputation",* and goes on to develop the story of "badness" saying, *"For like swearing at teachers, and like, trying to push teachers, and tagging, and that stuff."* Peter's positioning of powerlessness in the before story is carried on in his account where he says, *"Like I just can't help it",* and, *"They didn't give me a real chance to start over new."* Here Peter invokes an account of a young man powerless before malign forces.

Peter continues this intertextual telling, going on to amplify the goodness of the after story. He describes himself as having won through, and now being *"good and stuff."* Peter gets *"House cards and ... privileges."* Peter describes himself as *"learning more and ... enjoying it",* reporting again that he has been *"getting A's, and House Cards and stuff."* Peter amplifies his delight, saying it is *"Awesome",* and *"It feels good",* and even singing *"I feel good!"*

I suggest that these examples demonstrate Peter's skilled use of language and intertextual reference to achieve a desired purpose — to present himself in his preferred light.

Tama.

A further example of the skilled use of language for effect is seen where Tama employs understatement to endorse Peter's achievements:

Donald: So this guy has improved over the last week. Is that true, or not true?

Peter [calls out] Yeah!

Tama [Jokingly]: Mmm … not really sure about that … Mmm.

By saying the opposite of what he means, Tama communicates his support for Peter's achievements in a way which is able to be received by Peter without positioning him as weak or dependent. Here the ironic humour references and takes power from familiar conversations of understated endorsement and humour, in situations such as television programmes, movies, and home and school conversations. Fairclough (1992) notes that irony depends upon interpreters being able to recognise the meaning of the echoed text. Tama's skilled use of ironic humour, and Peter's ability to recognise the meaning of the echoed text (Fairclough, 1992), acts to support and endorse Peter's achievements, without the toxic effects of flattery or fawning.

In this section I have explored the participants' skilled use of language for effect. I have demonstrated that Peter, Tama and I have all used language for specific purposes. I turn now to the positioning effects of language. I ask: how does the language used in such reflective conversations position the speaker, and the hearers, and to what effect?

The positioning effects of language.

A key goal of my explorations of Peter's hopes and desires, implicit in his actions, is that Peter is positioned as the teller of his own ethical stories. Here Peter is positioned as having an editorial role in how he is described, and my enquiries invite him to observe and reflect on his experience. Such a positioning effect of language can be seen in phrases I use such as:

But that might not be the way that you talk about you; tell me about that? How would you describe a person like that? Have you noticed any difference since you have been bringing this new reputation to school? Have you noticed anything about the way they see you?

One effect of this positioning is that the emerging descriptions of Peter are in his own language, and are thus more likely to be preferred by him. I invite Peter to take up an editorial position and evaluate the conclusions to date:

"Is that true? So how is it going for you? How is it fitting? What are you hearing about yourself?"

In this language Peter is positioned as the authority on what gets included in his stories. As such he is invited to take up moral authority, the ethical agency with which he decides how the ways he is described can fit with his hopes for himself and others. From a position of editor of his stories, Peter makes identity claims. Previously, in the context of the rationalist shaped problem story, the claims Peter made for his identity were couched in terms of individual deficit:

I tend to play up; I just can't help it; I think my reputation is quite bad.

Or again in the form of protest:

People don't even give me a chance; I hadn't even met her or spoke to her or anything and she said "No"; they don't even give me a chance."

In the context of the emerging preferred reputations, Peter makes new claims to his identity and its effects:

I would be a good person, I reckon. Sometimes I like producing like neat work; I realised that I can be good if I were to be committed; [I'm] funny, good to get along with; I'm good and stuff."

Peter takes up a commentary on the changes he has seen and how they were achieved:

It's changed a lot I reckon; I just decided.

As to the effects of new reputations, Peter reports:

I get respect back from the teacher; they treat me with a little respect and stuff. I get House Cards and get privileges; I am learning more and I'm enjoying it.

He concludes:

"It feels good", singing *"I feel good!"*

These reports tell of the effects for Peter of the positioning made available through the practices described herein. With himself, with his future, and with his teachers, Peter is positioned in ways that he clearly prefers.

Such alternative identity claims lie at the heart of the discursive shift from rationalist understandings to experience-near understandings of Peter's actions. These ways of understanding Peter do not simply describe him differently, rather, as Butler (1993) explains, "a performative is that discursive practice that enacts or produces that which it names" (p. xxi). In describing himself differently Peter experiences a possibility of enacting himself differently. Emphasisng a need for the telling of preferred accounts to be ongoing, Butler (1993) states that performativity "must be understood not as a singular or deliberate 'act', but, rather, as the reiterative and citational practice by which discourse produces the effects that it names" (p. 13). I discuss the need for on-going support for preferred identity stories in Chapter Twelve.

This example of Peter taking up new identity claims also draws attention to the paradox of agency: That any attempt to take up a different discursive position is itself shaped discursively. Rather than "a voluntarist subject who exists quite apart from the regulatory norms which she/he opposes, [the] paradox of subjectification (assujetissement) is precisely that the subject who would resist such norms is itself enabled, if not produced, by such norms" (Butler, 1993, p. 24). In this sense, just as Peter's previous unacceptable actions were themselves a citation of discursive positioning, as Peter takes up a preferred description of his identity, he does so through citing the alternative

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descriptions that have become available through an exploration of the preferred descriptions implicit within his actions and the descriptions of those near to him. In relation to the theory discussed in Chapter Two, here Peter subjects himself to preferred discourse on behalf of an aesthetic life, in keeping with telos, his discursively shaped aims in life (Foucault, 1997; White, 2002 a). The contribution of the counselling process described here is the co-exploration and reiteration of the preferred descriptions, making them increasingly available for Peter to take up if he prefers.

I note here, and discuss in Chapter Twelve, that Peter is not the only person to take up preferred ethical subjectivities in this reflective process. Through being invited to co-author with Peter his alternative identity possibilities, and to audience Peter's preferred identity claims, Peter's family, peers and teachers are all invited to take up alternative understandings of Peter, and through this process, of themselves. In Chapter Twelve I reflect particularly on how teachers can be intentionally invited to consider the effects of current educational discourse on their interpretations and actions, and to consider alternative possibilities.

My positioning effects.

Thus far I have focused in the main on Peter as author of his own stories. However, as discussed throughout, identity is a social process rather than an individual one. Thus Peter's preferred accounts, while edited and chosen by him are co-authored through the responses of the various audiences to his tellings and re-tellings, including my own interest and questions. I turn here to the role I play in this co-authoring endeavour. Following narrative therapy practices that position the counsellor as decentred but influential (White, 2007), I seek to influence Peter's telling towards making visible his own (discursively shaped) purposes and hopes implicit in his actions.

Thus my influence is seen in questions such as: *"What sort of reputation do you have about the place? Let's see if we can get an idea of what your*

reputation is like right now." From the outset, my positioning is one of interest in events and interpretations which bring forward a preferred language for knowing Peter. My interest is in inviting descriptions of Peter that fit with his preferred understandings and which produce subjective positionings he can take up, in keeping with his own hopes for his life.

When Peter introduces elements of his story that do not fit an exploration of new and emerging identity claims, for example continuing with a "before" story (*"I used to get in trouble with the police and stuff"),* I express interest in the emerging "after" story saying, *"Yeah, yeah, but now it's quite good?"* Later, when Peter returns to talk about difficulty with teachers, I advance the theme of "interest in learning": *"But apart from teachers and all that sort of stuff, are you quite interested in learning stuff?"* These questions are examples of the positioning I take up as shaped by practices of narrative therapy.

Following White and Epston's examples of asking questions that privilege sub-stories and neglected aspects of experience (White & Epston, 1990; White, 2007) my own discourse-shaped positioning in this conversation guides the inquiry towards stories of difference and possibility. Although ultimately, it is Peter who decides what of what emerges gets included in the ways we go on to talk about him with others, my interest in generating alternative story lines influences the questions I use, and hence the pool of stories from which Peter decides. As previously discussed, my position as co-author requires I be alert to the ways "we are liable to inadvertently impose our expectations, our cultural ways, our ways of thinking, on the people with whom we work" (Raheim et al. (2003).

In this chapter I have shown how a focus on alternative stories, guided by practices of narrative therapy, gives rise to accounts that Peter prefers. I have shown how skilled use of performative language and intertextuality develop these stories' authority. I have shown how peers and teachers, through their comments, act as audience and as responders and add further strength to these stories. I turn now to a further engagement of audience, through the

telling and re-telling of stories to a wider audience as a means to further develop and strengthen Peter's preferred accounts of himself, and his purposes.

CHAPTER 9: TELLINGS AND RE-TELLINGS

Because Peter's new stories about himself are just beginning to be introduced, they are vulnerable to being obscured by existing stories about Peter's identity. Tellings and re-tellings are an opportunity to load new stories with significance (White, 2000). In the preceding chapter I have shown how telling new stories with Peter's peers, and inviting their responses, supports Peter in making his preferred stories stronger and more available as a guide to future action. In that chapter I explored the discursive shapings, the performative language and the use of intertextuality in the strengthening of these preferred stories.

Throughout my work with Peter, I seek to achieve telling and re-telling in a number of ways: through interviews with Peter (where his stories are summarised back to him for his review); through his peers (where they listen to Peter's stories and make comment, including art work); through his teachers and family (where they are gathered to hear Peter's stories and respond); through emails and meetings with teachers (where they are invited to support and encourage Peter's stories); through letters (where the emerging stories are told in letter form to Peter and others); and through poetry (where Peter and his peers' words connect with the stories of other young people).

In this chapter I focus on the telling and re-telling of Peter's emerging preferred stories through the media of art, letters and poetry. To demonstrate this, I firstly present an example of a poster created by Peter's peer, Tama, as one re-telling of Peter's story. I follow this with two letters which I wrote in the course of our time together — one to Peter and one to Peter and his father. Lastly I offer an example of poetry constructed from extracts of Peter and his peers' interview notes.

My purpose in presenting these tellings and re-tellings here is to demonstrate the power of these opportunities to support and enhance the emerging stories

that Peter is taking up in his life. That is, through repeated reiterations of preferred accounts, the stories of Peter and his identities in different settings, and implicit within his actions, become increasingly available to shape Peter's future sense of identity and action.

Art

When they had heard Peter's preferred stories, and responded in conversation to them, I asked Peter and his peers to each make a poster, describing in some way the shift they had seen in Peter's reputation. We spent the better part of an hour playing with ideas and colour, talking over the work about all manner of things including, in part, what Peter had achieved. This activity served as another site of the telling and re-telling of Peter's story, and reinforced the peers' support for Peter in what he was seeking to achieve.

In this poster example entitled "From E to A", Peter's peer Tama highlights the change for Peter as seen in his school Daily Report booklet scores.

Here Tama celebrates Peter's achievement of moving from E scores (lowest) to A scores (highest), and in doing so supports Peter in knowing himself as someone who can do that. This description supports the alternative identity conclusions that Peter is making through his various tellings. The poster is a form of language in which Peter's story is told again. These peer generated posters were presented at Peter's definitional ceremony, where their power to speak differently about who Peter can be known as was further invoked. Just as Peter's subjectivity was previously described through disordered identity descriptions, here he is described through preferred descriptions of achievement, which, in as much as they represent his own (discursively produced) hopes for himself, Peter can choose to take up and enact.

I draw attention here to the intertextual aspects of Tama's art which I suggest include the Māori motif, "*I am speaking out of what is important to me, I'm proud of you*"; the personal tagging signature, *"This is me saying this, and I'm*

pleased for others to see that"; and use of school-based assessments, A's and E's, to state *"We are doing well!"* These intertextual references demonstrate powerfully the communication of approval and support for Peter's achievement.

Letters

I present two letters here as further sites of telling and re-telling Peter's emerging alternative stories. Both letters develop an account of who Peter prefers to be, and seek to connect Peter's story with the lives of people who care for and support him. My purpose in presenting these letters here is to demonstrate the effect of descriptions which focus on what Peter may have been hoping for, and which are implicit in his actions. With each letter I draw attention to my usage of performative language and intertextuality in crafting these letters in support of Peter's preferred identity claims.

Letter one: To Peter.

This letter is from early in the counselling conversations between Peter and me, and marks a point where, through our reflective conversations, alternative reputations are becoming visible, while existing reputations are still available and shaping of Peter's subjectivity a school. In this letter, I name Peter's ability to decide as a powerful tool in the transition between reputations. My purpose in writing this letter was to retell the emerging stories from our conversations, to give Peter a chance to see his own words and others' in writing, and, in the hope that he would share this letter with his father, further audiencing and supporting his preferred sense of self.

Hi Peter,

It was excellent to meet with you and Tama on Tuesday. I look forward each week to catching up with you guys.

We've been looking at the reputation you have with the people who really know you — people like your dad, Tama's mum, Nick, the kids you look after.

When we ask those people "What sort of person is Peter?" they say things like:

- *Always (mostly) polite, greeting, helpful, trustworthy, respectful, cool with kids — stuff like that;*

- *Kids smile when Peter is around, 3000 fliers get delivered honestly and by the map, help happens around the house… it's all good!*

- *And at school — all A's and B's;*

- *What else should we write here?*

I asked you how we can get that reputation to school — because a reputation like that at school means no trouble, and good marks and a better job. And you said the other (bad) reputation is like a sea monster that needs to be stabbed! You said stabbing the monster means "trying to control myself, having respect, having a new reputation" And you said "this is earned by being good — for a long time — maybe even a term. A week is not enough because people remember."

I remember how you DECIDED last year in English, and went on to get top marks in that class. Are you DECIDING to bring this good reputation to school? We could tattoo it on your forehead, or you could just remember! Good luck with trying that out this week.

Next week you can tell me the teachers you have, and I'll ask them to keep an eye out for your good efforts.

I'm looking forward to catching up next week. Until then,

All the very best.

Mr. Mac.

In this letter the problem reputation and the emerging reputation are both externalised as in, "*How we can get that reputation to school; a reputation like that; the other (bad) reputation; stabbing the monster; bring this good reputation to school.*" Such phrases serve to separate Peter from reputations,

inviting Peter into a position of ethical reflection and agency, thus supporting him in taking a stance for or against the effects of different reputations.

The practice of narrative therapy can be seen in the naming of preferred characters, such as Peter's ability to decide: "*I remember how you DECIDED last year in English; Are you DECIDING to bring this good reputation to school?";* and in the recruitment of audience to Peter's story, "*You can tell me the teachers you have, and I'll ask them to keep an eye out for your good efforts."*

Language which positions Peter as the central figure in this story is shown in phrases: "*I look forward each week to catching up with you",* and *"I'm looking forward to catching up next week."* The positioning of Peter as editor of his own story is seen in, "*What else should we write here? We've been looking at the reputation you have; I asked you how we can get that reputation to school; And you said; You said; I remember how you DECIDED last year; you can tell me."*

Where I report Peter as using the metaphor, "*the other (bad) reputation is like a sea monster that needs to be stabbed!"* such use of battle metaphors in everyday language and stories is widespread (Booker, 2004). In a discussion of the use of adversarial metaphors in therapy, White (2007) speaks of a concern about "reproducing battle and contest metaphors in the context of therapeutic conversations" (p. 34) as part of an ethical stand against the presence and support of violence within society at large. One concern White raises is that where metaphors are used which invoke notions of defeating the problem, and where later the person experiences a resurgence of the problem, "he or she may view this reemergence as tantamount to personal failure" (White, 2007, p. 31). In this letter to Peter, I re-invoke the intertextual imagery of a sea battle, in order to privilege Peter's words, add excitement and power to his story, and reflect the difficulty of what he is trying to achieve and his desire to triumph. Peter's use in conversation, and my use in this letter

of such intertextual imagery, emphasises the identity claims he is making, and invites subjectivity in keeping with adventure and courage.

Letter two: To Peter and his father.

This letter comes after Peter has made progress in bringing his preferred reputation to school, and his teachers have commented on their experience of this. My intention in writing this letter is to reiterate that story in Peter's home, making it more available for Peter and his father to discuss and enjoy, and thus as available to further shape Peter's sense of self and actions. That Peter's efforts may make a difference for others is alluded to in the final sentence. This thread, the telling of Peter's story to audiences beyond his immediate school community, formed an important part of this work and is later developed in the sending of poetry to a group of young people in South Africa. I invoke this potential international audience here as an intertextual device to add further weight to the significance of Peter's achievements to date. I invite the reader to notice initially how rationalist discourses shape the teachers' noticings and desires for Peter.

Dear Peter and Neville,

Recently, as part of the project we are working on, I asked Peter's teachers what they are appreciating about him in his classes. The responses fit really well with the reputation Peter is interested in having at school. According to his teachers Peter is:

- *Working really well at times;*

- *Responding well to positive reinforcement, and can reflect on his own behaviour;*

- *Producing neat and tidy written work, which can be of a high quality;*

- *Proactive in getting himself work;*

- *Uses manners and is polite to others;*

- *Can stay on task;*

- *Asks questions;*

- *Can get House Cards;*

- *Can be pretty good;*

- *Has been trying to complete his class work;*

- *Peter enjoys reading.*

  The final comment I will write in full: Peter is a "bright boy, who completes work well when he tries, and always has good ideas."

  This seems a very different reputation to the one I was introduced to when Peter was first referred to this project! My question is, How does this fit for you, Peter — is this what you are after in these classes? And what can we do to support this reputation in class?

  When I asked Peter's teachers about their experience of him in class, I also asked them what things Peter could do to support his new reputation in their class? According to his teachers, it would help a new reputation if Peter would pay attention in four areas:

- *Not talk when the teacher or someone else is having a turn to talk;*

- *Leave other peoples' stuff alone!*

- *Settle to work when asked;*

- *Keep up the effort to complete the work given.*

  Peter, does that fit with your plans?

  I notice that Peter already has a deal with a teacher for House Cards when he does these things.

  So, this letter is a letter of congratulations to you, Peter, for the effort and success you have had over the last weeks. And this letter is also to let your

Father, Neville, know about your efforts and success — although I suppose you two have already talked about them.

I'm looking forward to coming round to your place and talking about where to from here. It is my belief that your efforts will help other young men in their efforts to make a difference.

All the very best,

Mr. Mac.

In Chapter Three I drew on the discursive research of Popkewitz and Brennan (1998) who, describing rationalist discourse, list the attributes of a good student as one who is teachable, secular, conforming to approved learning styles, reflective on their thoughts and actions, taking pleasure in being educated, and desiring to be self-disciplined. In this second letter Peter's teachers' noticings produce a near exact copy of what Popkewitz and Brennan had described more than a decade previously. Thus a "good student" is affirmed as Peter being seen to be "*working really well* (although only "*at times"); responding well to positive reinforcement; reflecting on his own behaviour; producing neat and tidy written work; proactive in getting himself work; using manners; being polite to others; staying on task; asking questions; getting House Card rewards; being pretty good; trying to complete his class work; enjoying reading; being a bright boy; completing work well; and always having good ideas.*"

Here the teachers are not deliberately following a script, they are simply noticing and reporting according to the current educational discourse shaping of what is seen as good. That more than a decade previously Popkewitz and Brennan had described the desired good student in almost exactly the same terms serves only to highlight the continuing discursive shaping of what is considered good in schools, and therefore what is noticed.

The taking up of an alternative identity within an audience is carefully negotiated. Through our conversations Peter has produced a preferred

alternative description of himself, and Peter's father and teachers have been invited to contribute to and support him in this. In this letter the teachers are offering their own discursively shaped hopes for Peter's identity, thus negotiating something of what it is that they are supporting. I suggest, in effect, they are saying, "We hear and support what Peter is saying of his identity, and we put forward that these things are also important to us, and yes, we can see them in Peter's efforts."

In this letter I invite Peter to take a stance for or against the teacher-generated descriptions of him. When I write, "*My question is, how does this fit for you, Peter — is this what you are after in these classes?"* I am inviting Peter to take up a moral position as editor of his own story, to take up or decline the identity conclusions being offered by the teachers. I am asking if these identity conclusions fit with Peter's own ethical desires (telos) in life.

It is worth noting here that the use of "we" by people in authority has the potential to deprive another of voice. Thus the shop-keeper who may ask, "How are we today" is not co-authoring, but producing a person as a generalised other. Equally, the teacher who says to her class, "Now we are all going to work quietly" is not inviting a co-authoring of possibility. As I wrote this letter, my use of the word "we" was an attempt to offer a co-authoring position. However, within a relation of power my use of "we" is not innocent, nor necessarily an example of co-authoring. Such potentially ambiguous attempts at collaborative positioning and co-authoring may be seen in my use of the phrases:

As part of the project we are working on; and what can we do to support this reputation in class? I'm looking forward to coming round to your place and talking about where to from here.

My intent in using these questions and phrases was to increase the availability of a preferred subjectivity for Peter, a preferred reputation, which may guide Peter's future actions at school through his potential exercising of ethical agency. How Peter saw these attempts is open to conjecture.

Performative language.

My writing of these letters has a purpose, and my use of performative language aims to amplify such purpose. Examples of amplification can be seen in phrases such as: "*Fit really well; working really well; a very different reputation.*" Where I say, "*What can we do*" and *"We are working on"* I seek to amplify collegiality and co-research. In the phrase, *"When Peter was first referred to this project"* I draw attention to successful movement across time. I highlight Peter's central role in the project with, *"Peter already has a deal; Peter is interested."* In drawing attention to my use of performative language here, and following Davies and Harré (1990), I stress the speech-act nature of words, that words have purpose and effect as much as they have meaning. In letters as in any social interaction, being aware of the potential effects of one's use of language enhances the possibility that language can be used intentionally to achieve one's hoped for ethical purposes.

Intertextuality.

In their description of the preferred student they see Peter becoming, I suggest that the teachers, as reported in this letter, draw on the intertextuality of a widely known story of "the successful student." As previously demonstrated, this story has persisted across time, as evidenced by Peter's teacher's use of almost exactly the same words to describe their preferred student as the research descriptions Popkewitz and Brennan (1997) had all those years previously. Peter will have heard and seen this story played out many times in his school and home life. Whether Peter is drawn to or rejects the implicit invitation to be such a student is part of his editorial/authoring role, which itself is shaped by prevailing discourse. What the practices described herein offer is an opportunity for Peter, and those he elects to join with him, to seek to expose and influence these discourses, and thus to position Peter as an ethical agent in his choices for the future.

Poetry

I turn here to one final forum within which Peter's stories (and those of his peers) are told and retold: the use of poetry as a site of telling and re-telling. In supervision conversations about the lives of young people becoming known differently in their communities, my doctoral supervisor Elmarie Kotzé drew my attention to the work of Therese Hulme (2009) with young people in South Africa. In that South African context, and with Hulme's guidance and support, a group of young people wrote and published a book of poetry in which aspects of their previously untold stories were able to be expressed. Following Elmarie Kotzé's lead, I showed the South African young peoples' writing to Peter and his peers (and subsequently to Hohepa and Max in the Second School). Following my invitation to do so, they were enthusiastic to respond in kind and to see their own words published. As a result we took words from the transcripts of our various interviews, and sent them as poetry via Therese Hulme to their South African peers.

My interest in this sharing of stories and involvement in a larger project across time and place is in keeping with White's (2003) emphasis on connecting the work of individual therapy with wider community purposes. Developing White's theme, Denborough (2008) writes:

> social movements involve people taking action not only on their own behalf but on behalf of others, future generations, past generations, and other people with whom participants are identified but who they have never met ... One part of our work can be to create contexts in which the local initiatives, skills and knowledge of one group of people who are experiencing significant hardship can make contributions to others in similar situations. (p. 193)

The young people with whom Hulme worked contributed to the lives of the young people in this project by offering an example of a poetic forum in which

their voices could be published and heard. In return, the young people in this project responded in kind, seeking to offer support and encouragement to their unmet but influential South African peers.

I include here two of the six poems which, together with photos, formed a book of poetry sent in reply to the young people in South Africa. In presenting these poems I emphasise their purpose as a forum for yet again telling and re-telling the young peoples' preferred stories, opening spaces and producing "a rich and multi-storied text" (Speedy, 2005, p 288). As well as a site for re-telling preferred identity accounts, the sharing of poetry across countries invites the young people to know themselves as involved in a project of making a difference in others' lives — that is, the subjectivity of someone who makes a difference becomes available to be taken up within their preferred identity stories.

In these poems I have taken tellings of preferred identity from transcripts of interviews with the young people involved, and put them together as poetry. This work draws on the notion of rescued speech poetry (Behan, 2003), wherein the counsellor arranges the client's words in poetic form in order to document unexpected and unstoried events of people's lives, and in so doing, contribute to rescuing the said from the saying of it (Newman, 2008). Writing of the effect of such poetry, Speedy (2005) asserts that "there are times when people are sustained by more subversive and creative poetic texts that represent the 'heart and soul' of their words and phrases" (Speedy, 2005, p. 206).

Each young person has reviewed and approved these collected quotes, and their inclusion in these poems. For reasons of confidentiality of participants, the photos which formed half of the booklet of poetry are not included. Here are Peter and Tama's contributions, drawn from their own words:

Peter.

What if I want to be good in that class?

If they sit down with me and just be nice

I will do it.

Sometimes I like producing like neat work and stuff

I was awesome in English

Do you really want the teacher not to respect you, not to give you privileges and stuff?

My Dad's a boat builder

He's good with his hands

He's a welder and he has to be good at maths

His friends have told me, "Your dad is just a legend at work"

He just wants me to be good

He knows that I can show respect because he taught me like manners and stuff

I can show commitment and respect.

Tama.

Honestly bro I've made a difference in all my classes

But it is so easy to finish homework now

I mean I actually like school now

I actually like learning

Well obviously

Since I have been learning

It's easier to learn

If that makes any sense

I just think ahead of myself

Choosing my goals that's what I'm doing now

Try, try your best

It's not that hard if you just focus on it

Not because someone is making you

It's up to yourself

I've got a brain

Isn't that what anyone would want?

Summary

In this chapter I have explored telling and re-telling of preferred stories through art, letters and poetry. I have shown the presence and effect of discursive shaping and the role of audience in the developing authority of preferred versions of self. As Peter's preferred accounts of self have developed, they have been published through various tellings and re-tellings. In these ways Peter's story has been woven into his relationships and has received the support of his peers and community. In these practices, new ways of understanding Peter have become available for Peter and for his community. These new ways of understanding Peter make it possible for

Peter to act in new ways, and for his community to respond. In the light of these new possibilities I propose that the chance of suspension and exclusion from school being invoked is much reduced.

Thus far in this thesis I have demonstrated how the discourses that shape subjectivity affect the actions and interpretations of the people involved. I have shown that current rationalist discourses of schooling shape some teacher/student interactions in a way that produces troubled subjectivity, and makes suspension and exclusion more likely for some young people. Following Gergen (1999), I have discussed that the outcome of suspension or exclusion is not a result of "evil intent" nor of "true motives" but rather that forms of life "are favored (or destroyed) by various ways of putting things" (p. 38). I have further shown that alternative understandings of young people and their actions, shaped by explorations of (discursively shaped) ethical intentions implicit within action, can produce aesthetic subjectivities (Foucault, 1997) preferred by both the young person and the school, and can reduce the likelihood of suspension and exclusion. In these preceding chapters I have demonstrated how participants are skilled users of language for purpose, and how recruiting participants to alternative understandings creates space for new language to describe self and new purposes to enact self. I turn now to a discussion of The Second School.

CHAPTER 10: THE SECOND SCHOOL

Introduction

In this chapter, rather than exploring the specific uses of language as with the First School, I focus particularly on knowing and unknowing positioning (Davies & Harré, 1990) and its effects in counselling and research practice. At times during this research process I encountered a particularly Māori way of approaching life, and did not at the time realise it, or realised it only partially. In response to these experiences I focus here on my positioning as a Pakeha researcher in relationship with Māori co-researchers, and with Māori research participants. I highlight my growing practice as a counsellor and as a researcher working with Māori students and families within a general school population.

Positioning, and the varying awareness it produces.

My awareness of the influence and meanings of particularly Māori-discourse shaped experiences developed across the time of this study, and continues to do so with this reflective writing. I have found myself both willing and reluctant to write about this developing awareness. Such ambivalence is partly because my developing awareness was, and is, just that — developing. Another source of ambivalence is that, within Māori contexts, there is "the tikanga [rule, method] of speaking rights being earned, and speaking in appropriate contexts" (Swann, 2012, p. 8). Such awareness has me feeling that these are matters to be written about by others with more knowledge and experience than me. In writing here, I take up the position of cultural safety (Papps & Ramsden, 1996) (as also expounded in both narrative therapy and post-structuralist theory — see Chapter Five) to reflect on my experience in order that my practice may support the ethical desires of the communities with whom I work, and that my taken-for-granted cultural positionings may frustrate those ethical desires as little as possible.

Drawing on a concept of multiple discursive positionings, I divide this section into three parts: Firstly, I explore the ambivalence of knowing and not knowing which I experienced during the weekly kitchen-table discussion phase of this co-research. Here I discuss the several discursive positions shaping my experience of working and theorising with Huia and Brent Swann as co-researchers in this phase of the project. Secondly, I discuss how the language used by Brent, Huia and me during the definitional ceremony with Hohepa and his community of care positioned participants in ways which had them noticing some things rather than others, in support of Hohepa's developing preferred reputation. Thirdly, in reference to the presence of the kaumatua (elder) at Hohepa's meeting, I discuss how my varied positions both at the kitchen table and at the definitional ceremony shaped my awareness of knowing that I did not know what this elder's presence and words meant in that place.

Thus in this chapter I use positioning theory (Davies & Harré, 1990; McLeod, 2002) to demonstrate how many discursive positions operate at one site, how position calls shape peoples' speech for purpose, and how events may be invisible to a person from one position, while being clear to others from another position. These reflections have come to shape the discussion in Chapter Twelve about how teachers and other adults might be invited to their own explorations of discursive positioning and ethical agency.

My Discursive Positioning

When the time came to undertake and to analyse the research project at the Second School, it was apparent that my research experience of that school was quite different to that of the First School. In the First School I was theorist, practitioner and researcher. It was I who developed the research plan, I who engaged the young people and undertook the intervention as planned, and I who led the conversations with my co-researchers in which we made sense of and adapted the work as the weeks passed. The principal discourses shaping my work were those of narrative therapy and post-

structuralist analysis. At this first stage of the research, my conversations with my research partners, Huia and Brent, were focused on preparing with them to replicate or develop the work of the First School, rather than drawing on their unique perspectives to make sense of what was happening in the First School.

By contrast, in the Second School the research plan was co-developed with Huia and Brent as a continuation of the practice from the First School, with adaptations from what had been learnt there (see Chapter Six). At the Second School the counselling conversations with Hohepa were led by Huia and Brent, and together, we three made meaning of those conversations around Huia and Brent's kitchen table at weekly co-research meetings. What emerged in the Second School conversations, and in the weekly co-research meetings, was a blend of post-structural and narrative therapy-shaped practice, together with a distinctly Māori-discursive practice and analysis, which was quite different to that of the First School. I only gradually became aware of the extent to which these weekly meetings led to what Brent describes as "the production of thick descriptions of valued Māori cultural knowledges [which] open spaces for the performance of discursive practices that are counter to and resistant of oppressive dominant colonising discourses" (Swann, 2012, p. 3). As I make clear below, my various positions in these conversations had me more, and less, open to hearing what was being offered.

The Kitchen Table.

All events are sites of more or less complex discursive hailing, and participants navigate such event-sites according to the interaction of prevailing discourses and their own (discursively shaped) hopes and intentions. As with Peter and a game of netball (see Chapter Seven), the kitchen-table research discussions with Huia and Brent were for me sites of complex discursive positioning. I demonstrate here how the various discursive positions available to me at the kitchen table supported both an ability to hear

and understand a uniquely Māori perspective, and at times, as only partially, or unable, to hear and understand such a perspective.

I came to this research project thinking that my life experience and background would have me understanding things Māori where necessary. At the kitchen-table conversations I realised, however, that even with explanation offered, at times I did not and could not understand the fullness of some perspectives which Huia and Brent discussed. An example of this is where Brent spoke of the whakapapa narratives which shape his sense of self and identity, and which include an always-present awareness of relationship with others, and with place, in past-present-future time. While I could offer willing intellectual assent to such a sense of self, I did not (could not?) fully share an experience-near knowing of this seemingly central kaupapa Māori identity. My faith, family and cultural positionings have me knowing myself in relation to an understanding of God, my wife, my parents, my family, and my cultural background, including some sense of place. However, while treasured, this relational self is an intermittent awareness at best, and interacts with a predominantly individual sense of self. It is the discursive positioning of such relational and individual selfhood which positions me ambivalently as able, partially able, and at times unable to hear nuances of Māori identity-in-relationship being discussed.

This ambivalent sense of knowing and not knowing was paralleled by my understanding of the role I played in the lives of the people involved in this research. I entered these conversations thinking I was a key protagonist in a story of my own authoring — as researcher with co-researchers and research participants. However, at times I came to realise I was (at best) a minor player in other peoples' stories, in some of which I did not figure at all! Thus while my work was central when seen from the point of view of my research story, from the point of view of the local iwi's (Māori community's) concerns for Hohepa, their son, grandson and community member, their concerns were

central, and my work was, at best, that of a potential and yet to be decided upon support person.

I address this complex positioning here, in order to demonstrate that the experience of navigating discursive positioning is as inescapable for a researcher as it is for young people and teachers in schools. Such discourse awareness makes plain the multiple positionings and subjectivities from which actions derive.

Kitchen-Table Positions

For most of the Friday mornings of the field work phase of this research project, Huia, Brent and I met at their home around their kitchen table to discuss the project and our next steps. These were, for me, rich times of welcome and stimulating conversation; a site where my research project was advanced and developed in creative ways. One result of these times is my desire to continue researching in such generously creative, dialogic ways. In order to demonstrate the complexity of discursive positioning, I name here some of the positions available to me at these kitchen-table conversations, and the at times competing discourses which shaped those positions. I emphasise that such positions exist in the flux and interplay of conversation — I name them here as if they were distinct positions, in order to make clear the complexity of discursive positioning which occurs in conversation. Thus I was variously and multiply positioned at the kitchen table conversations:

As lead researcher.

As the research proposal was mine, I was positioned at the kitchen table as lead researcher, with a clearly-thought-out project into which Huia and Brent were invited as co-facilitators of an intervention, co-researchers of that intervention, and as cultural advisors. This position invited me to take a lead in shaping what was to be done and how, with mine being the authority of finally deciding what was written into the project. This position acted as a

restraint to my awareness of alternative discourses offered by Huia and Brent through focusing my attention on what it was that I wanted done, and how.

As a researcher consulting on culture.

From the initial design of this research project, I aimed to show the effectiveness of re-authoring practices with Māori students, because they were, and are, the most vulnerable of New Zealand students to practices of exclusion from school (see Chapter One). I anticipated that I may not have sufficient understanding of things Māori to do that work, and therefore included a stance of cultural consultation from the outset. Taking up such a consultative stance positioned me as listening carefully and with humility, in the awareness that to be effective I needed to be open to what I did not know (Glynn, 2008; Smith, L., 2000). This position supported my hearing alternative discourses as offered by Huia and Brent, as it had me aware of my not-knowing, and alert to consulting about cultural difference.

As an action researcher.

As discussed in Chapter One, the practices of action research which shaped this project required reflection with, and input from, those involved during the analysis and development of practice. Thus I was positioned as wanting to share with participants – young people, teachers and families - in discussing what was happening, and its implications for the research. This position made it more likely that I would hear alternative discourses as offered by Huia and Brent, through an explicit openness to varying and developing perspectives.

As a supporter.

The site of the kitchen table cannot be described simply as a site of meeting about my research project. At the same time as we three were developing my research project, Huia and Brent were developing a particularly Māori view and practice of whanau therapy (see Swann, 2012; Swann, Swann & Crocket, 2013). The kitchen table was also, therefore, a site of exploration of

that genuinely kaupapa Māori project. In this light, I was positioned with naive and respectful curiosity (Speedy, 2000) as an interested support person in that research conversation, and as a supporter of Huia and Brent exploring what their experience meant for their developing practice. In this naive, supportive position I was invited to be curious about Huia and Brent's particular experiences of counselling and research. As a counterbalance to the position of expert lead researcher, this position had me listening carefully to the alternative discourses as offered by Huia and Brent, through their clear invitation to reflect on the particularly kaupapa Māori ways Huia and Brent made sense of their practice with Hohepa, and in our theoretical discussions.

As a narrative therapist.

As discussed in Chapter Four, narrative therapy takes "an approach to everyday talk, as well as therapeutic conversation, that is specifically crafted to avoid the risk of incorporating the other, [based on] respectful inquiry on the presumption of difference rather than commonality" (Drewery, 2005, p. 310). As a narrative therapist, this political and ethical position had me expecting and looking for Huia and Brent's unique perspective. This stand for being directed by the interests of those who are consulting me made it more likely that I would hear alternative discourses as offered by Huia and Brent.

As a teacher of narrative therapy.

In light of my years of experience as a counsellor and teacher of narrative therapy, I was positioned in the kitchen-table conversations as a skilled practitioner and teacher. I came as a doctoral student to the home of colleagues who were students in a Masters of Counselling programme. Thus as a teacher of narrative therapy and as a student further along the academic pathway, I was positioned as more knowing of the topic at hand, the theory and practices of narrative therapy, and with a role to teach those theories and practices. Discourses of teaching positioned me as bringing core knowledge and practices to the conversation for Huia and Brent as co-researchers to

learn about, together with a focus on finding and appreciating already existing skill and knowledge on which to build new practice.

In the role as bringer of counselling practice knowledge, my focus was on teaching the practices of narrative therapy and noticing where any gaps in knowledge and practice might be. This position made it more likely that I would not hear alternative discourses as offered by Huia and Brent, through my focus on what I already knew and could pass on. However, like narrative therapy, teaching discourses also highlight the appreciation of existing knowledge (White & Epston, 1990). Shaped by these discourses, I was positioned as likely to hear that both Huia and Brent had alternative stories — including extensive pastoral and personal experience — which made their position as "learners" tenuous. As an appreciator of existing knowledge, I was able to see that Huia and Brent were skilled social practitioners who were developing the specific practices of narrative therapy as part of their wider kete (basket) of social practice.

As shaped by Western and Māori views of education.

I came to the kitchen table shaped by discourses of Western education, which, in part, hold knowledge as a commodity able to be abstracted from its relational context, and taken up and used in other contexts (thus, for example, the use of libraries compared with a Māori focus on oral, relational modes of holding and passing on knowledge). Such discourses positioned me as a seeker after knowledge, in pursuit of an expertise which could be used in other settings. While this position supported my hearing alternative discourses through a promotion of curiosity, that position was moderated by discourses of Māori knowledge, wherein not all knowledge is made readily available, depending on the nature of relationship (Swann, 2012). At the kitchen table, Huia and Brent held knowledge that was never mentioned in my hearing, knowledge which was talked about, yet not available in public forums, as well as those knowledges which in consultation appear here. As I discuss below, during the times that Huia, Brent and I talked therapy and

research, a trusting relationship developed, leading more and more fully into kaupapa Māori-shaped conversations. This relationship supported my hearing alternative discourses, but only in as much as Huia and Brent considered that appropriate and timely. Thus I was positioned by both Western and Māori concepts of knowledge.

As shaped by family and broader cultural discourses.

I came to these conversations as a Pakeha man steeped in the complex positionings of my culture and experience. My father (of a New Zealand Irish Catholic family) grew up in the presence of Mt Ruapehu, in the then timber mill towns of Makaranui and Ohakune; later he taught in the tiny Far North community of Te Kao. These predominantly Māori communities seeded in him a sense of connection to things Māori, which shaped much of his interest and conversation. My mother (of a New Zealand English Anglican family) taught primary school for many years in Grey Lynn, when that Auckland suburb was a thriving centre of Pasifika immigrant communities. Her experiences regularly brought cross-cultural conversation and appreciation to our family evening meals. Thus a form of cultural awareness and appreciation was part of my family discourse during childhood. In my turn I have made decisions about where I have developed that conversation, choosing for example bicultural and te reo courses while training as a teacher and beyond, and taking up an iwi liaison position when I began teaching. These influences and others shape in me a particular valuing of Māori knowledges as a way of making sense of life and experience. Thus I came to research-as-dialogue in part because a dialogical approach was and is in keeping with my preferred ways of life, as shaped by the various influential discourses of mutuality in my life experience.

Furthermore, this discursive family and personal shaping took place within the wider New Zealand context, wherein an invitation to bi-cultural dialogue exists in the Treaty between Māori and the Crown. While there is a mixed and widely varied history of taking up that invitation, discourses of dialogue and

partnership between Māori and Pakeha are readily available in NZ. Thus, for example, initiatives in the wider community, such as the Treaty of Waitangi Community Discussions Initiative (New Zealand State Services Commission, 2006), and within school communities the Te Kotahitanga Programme (Bishop, 2008; Bishop & Berryman, 2010; Bishop et al., 2003), seek to shape cross-cultural interactions in a way that promotes dialogue on behalf of rich cultural understanding and effective education.

This wider cultural dialogue is shaped by the availability of much writing, fictional and otherwise, which offers Pakeha communities, such as mine, an at least partial view of Te Ao Māori (the Māori world). Thus authors such as Witi Ihimaera, Patricia Grace, Eruera Stirling, Anne Salmond, Keri Hulme, James Ritchie, Claudia Orange and Michael King, to name just a few from my own shelves, have offered me some insight into a Māori world view, and some awareness of what might be valued there. In this light, my intertextual use of the phrase "kitchen table" to describe these research conversations, intentionally invokes the humour, relational care, and insight of well-known Māori author Witi Ihimaera's (2009) beloved nannies, as they play cards around the kitchen table.

And such an analysis of positioning can continue back and back, asking: What conversations shaped the authorship of each of these writings, such that they became available to shape my awareness of Te Ao Māori, such that I might be alert to something of what was being said at the kitchen table? The point here is that the kitchen table was (as all such events are) a site of complex discursive positioning resulting from a history of actual events and their on-going effects. From a position of family and cultural discursive shaping, I had enough awareness of Te Ao Māori to know that I did not, and could not, know Te Ao Māori as an insider. Thus my complex family and cultural position of tentative awareness at times supported my hearing alternative discourses, while not always understanding them, and other times

precluded both my hearing, and my being offered, such alternative discourses.

As a receiver of hospitality.

The warmth and hospitality I received from Huia and Brent — greetings and smiles, hongi and hug, coffee, food, winter-heated space to meet, generous offerings of regular time to talk and theorise — can be read as "simply human" hospitality, positioning me as a welcome guest and friend. In such a position I interpreted the warm flow of conversation, the generous deference to my knowledge and experience, and the advancing of my project as examples of kind hospitality, together with co-researchers who agreed and understood the value of the project.

However, my reading of the warmth of the kitchen table as "simply human" hospitality obscures, at least in part, the particularly Māori nature of Huia and Brent's manaakitanga (hospitality and care for my person). As Swann (2012) writes of his own kaumatua and kuia (elders), "It didn't seem to matter that I didn't always understand, but smiles of approval were always given when I responded in te reo, and showed attempts to follow and attune myself to the tikanga and kawa of their home" (Swann, 2012, p. 15). From the more reflexive position of discursive analysis, I now wonder to what extent my sense of "doing well" was a gift from Huia and Brent, and itself an example of the manaakitanga I gradually came to see as fundamental to their ways of being: ways which encapsulated mana, ihi, wehi, and manaaki, (the respect, awe and care for another's personhood) (Tate, 2010), expressed as deliberately being in support of each person's mana. While not effacing my own relational desire and skill, nor my own efforts to offer and receive hospitality, my lack of conscious awareness of the extent to which Huia and Brent's offer of manaakitanga upheld my sense of doing well was another effect of discursive positioning, and the taken-for-granted expectations of a "simply human" reading of hospitality. Thus I emphasise yet again the complexity of discursive positioning, and the effects of such concurrent

discursive positionings on what may and may not be paid attention to or understood.

As a friend.

As the weeks and months of meeting and sharing continued, the warmth of shared purpose and interest around the kitchen table fostered our growing friendship. Thus discourses of friendship — mutuality, generosity, care — supported a closeness of sharing of ideas and curiosities. I experienced a position within which it felt possible to speak freely about my personal feelings, ideas, and uncertainties. On reflection I see, for example, that my ability to wonder openly about the kaumatua's role in Hohepa's definitional ceremony was supported by the safety I felt within the discourses of friendship I enjoyed at the kitchen table and beyond. This position supported my being able to wonder about, and to hear, alternative discourses as offered by Huia and Brent.

Summary of Kitchen-Table Positioning

In the light of these complex and, at times, competing discursive positions, I was both alert to, and obscured from, that which was available during these times of co-research and discussion. Thus those discourses which shaped my interest in things Māori, my openness to learning and valuing what was being said, my prior learnings of Māori language and concepts, my efforts to pronounce Māori words well which allowed for moments of a vernacular peppered with te reo Māori, all contributed to me being open to hearing and understanding as much as was possible. Whereas those discourses which shaped my certainties, my implicit and explicit focus on particular outcomes, my largely Pakeha New Zealander life-experience, and parts of my roles as teacher and researcher, contributed to me not being open to hearing and understanding all of what may have been available.

In this section I have outlined how the various positions available to me at the kitchen table conversations shaped what I was and was not able to hear and

understand of the things Māori being discussed. Just as with Peter, Hohepa and their teachers, the discursive hailings around the kitchen table offered me competing positions from which to respond to and interpret events. As with Peter, Hohepa and their teachers, my responses to those competing positions offer evidence of the ethical desires which implicitly shape the choices I made.

Continuing to draw on my analysis of the research project at the Second School, I turn here to yet another complex site of discursive positioning — Hohepa's definitional ceremony (see also Chapter Six). As with the kitchen table conversations, I explore here how words used in this setting by the various participants position themselves and others with purpose.

Hohepa's Definitional Ceremony: A 'Celebration so Far' Hui

As described in Chapter Six, after several weeks of Hohepa meeting with Huia and Brent, Hohepa's friends and supporters — peers, teachers and family — were gathered in a definitional ceremony to celebrate their progress thus far. Through the reflective conversations outlined herein, Hohepa had taken a stand against the effects of the reputation that had him in trouble at school. With Huia and Brent guiding the therapeutic conversations, Hohepa had researched and articulated a preferred reputation. Hohepa's friend, his teachers and his mother had all played a part in developing and supporting Hohepa's preferred reputation alongside Brent and Huia. The gathering was a time for these supporters to meet with each other and to hear a full account of what had been done to make a difference.

Those present were Hohepa's mother, a kaumatua from the local iwi (tribe), Hohepa's friend and peer, Max, Hohepa's support teacher and his English teacher, the dean of Hohepa's School House, the school deputy principal, Huia, Brent, and me.

In this section I focus particularly on how each of the participants at this definitional ceremony was positioned through the language used at this

meeting. In particular I refer to the effects of the opening words used by Brent, Huia, and me on the speaking positions available to participants. I demonstrate that, while various tellings were available to the participants, these opening words shaped much of what came to be told, in keeping with Hohepa's preferred identity stories.

I present this section in order to demonstrate how intentional position calls shape particular tellings of preferred identity stories. As throughout this thesis, I emphasise that such tellings of preferred identity stories co-create alternative subjectivities for young people to step into, and reduce the likelihood of suspension and exclusion being required as a response to times of young peoples' troubling actions at school.

Brent (1).

Brent opened the meeting with karakia (prayer). Here participants were invited into a position of acknowledgement of a particularly Māori spirituality as central to the day's conversation. This invitation interrupted more normal school discourses of teachers gathering to discuss a student, and marked this meeting as different to other, more routine, meetings about young people and behaviour. Brent's fluency with te reo Māori, and his easy prayerful manner, positioned him as a warmly authoritative presence in the meeting.

Huia.

After Brent's karakia, Huia began her welcome saying, "Thanks for attending." Huia described the meeting as "for our boy, Hohepa", and welcomed the participants as "treasured guests", naming the whanau (family) and their iwi connections, and affirming the teachers: "Your care and time put in." Huia invited those present to begin with each describing, "How we all fit in with Hohepa."

As with Brent's karakia, Huia's ways of speaking shaped the tone and content of what followed. The invitation in Huia's welcome positioned her as a warm host receiving "treasured" guests with grace, and as grateful for "your care

and time put in" in the weeks leading up to the meeting. At the same time, Huia's words made clear that the purpose of the meeting was "for our boy Hohepa" and again, "how we all fit in with Hohepa". Participants were positioned by this language as in ongoing relationship with Hohepa, and as collaborators in Hohepa's support story. A position of critique of Hohepa was not offered, and so became less available to those present — this in spite of a dominant school discourse which routinely positions teachers as noticing what is going wrong with a student's behaviour. Huia's invitation to collaborative, relational interactions, along with an invitation to whanaungatanga (family spirit), effected in the definitional ceremony participants "the affirmation, nurturing and strengthening of relationships, cultural connection, and both individual and collective identity" (Swann, 2012, p. 20).

Donald.

After Brent and Huia had spoken, I, too, made opening comments, wherein I spoke to the project as a whole. I described how this meeting was "similar to the project at the First School", and that we were "passionate about a small number of our kids that get kicked out of school." I spoke about the invitation we had made to each of the young people: "If you were to introduce yourself as new to the school, what would you want others to know about you?" and how together with the young people we had wondered, "How can we bring that new introduction to school?" Speaking about the First School and the Second School, I said that "we are gathering this support team, because we don't change the way we understand a person on our own, we do that as a community." As with Brent's opening karakia and Huia's invitational welcome, my words positioned listeners as part of a project aimed at new reputations, as a team working "as a community."

In this way, the position calls made by each of us shaped the way Hohepa was spoken about at this meeting. Together with the questions of outsider witnessing (see Chapter Four), and the effects of the many conversations and

meetings which led up to the definitional ceremony, the participants of this meeting were strongly positioned as noticers and supporters of Hohepa's preferred reputation. As I describe in Chapters Two and Four, such tellings and re-tellings act as a powerful site for the social construction of preferred identity.

I describe now how being positioning to notice and to support claims of difference, appeared in each of the participants' responses. I also highlight alternative positionings which appeared.

Hohepa.

Huia's opening comments to Hohepa offered him a position of story teller — but of a particular kind of story. The story invited was one of "good news", wherein Hohepa had moved from a reputation for trouble to a preferred reputation for "being pretty good." The following extract from the transcript of this meeting demonstrates Hohepa being invited through Huia's language to tell this preferred account. Given that Hohepa was known as a young person who spoke little, was in a setting with an audience of adults, including his mother, a community elder and those with school authority, and that he came from a background of youth and wider discourse that limits speaking well of one's self, Huia's language is a powerful example of creating a viable position (Davies & Harré, 1990; Drewery, 2005; Winslade, 2006) from which Hohepa might speak. Thus:

Huia: When we first started, what sort of things were going on that did cause some trouble?

Here the externalising language "what sort of things" and "some trouble" separated Hohepa from blame or boasting, and positioned him as more able to speak about these things without a call to shame or bravado.

Hohepa: Wagging, disobedience, tagging, smoking ... this was all hanging around this rep.

Huia: We know you have made some really good steps — have you noticed any changes in the way teachers have been talking to you since you made those changes?

Huia offered Hohepa a speaking position as reporter of what he had noticed others doing rather than focusing on his own steps. Again this position call allowed him to speak about his experience without seeming to boast.

Hohepa: Yeah — cause they are not growling now.

Huia: What do you think your rep around school might be now?

Huia's externalisation of "your rep" and her use of the word "might" in the subjunctive tense (Hedtke & Winslade, 2005) offered Hohepa an invitation to take up a reporter's position as to what might be possible (Epston & Roth, 1995) in how others were seeing and speaking about him.

Hohepa: Pretty good, being good.

Here Hohepa draws on the rhetorical strategy of understatement (discussed in Chapter Seven) wherein those listening who understand such discourses will have heard: "My reputation has changed a lot for the better."

Huia: Is that OK for you to have that changed reputation?

At the last Hohepa is invited, and positioned as able (Davies & Harré, 1990; Drewery, 2005; Winslade, 2006), to make a personal statement. Huia's question at this point offers Hohepa an invitation to evaluate the identity story (White, 2007) as told thus far and how it might fit with his purposes. In this invitation Hohepa is related to as a moral agent, one who is capable of exercising ethical preferences. Such questions are shaped by the narrative therapy map, Statement of Position Map 1 (White, 2007) as discussed in Chapter Four.

Hohepa: Yeah — it's all right, pretty good.

Again, understatement allows Hohepa to speak well of himself without feeling that he is boasting.

Hohepa's teacher.

Brent, Huia, and my own introductions at the beginning of the definitional ceremony offered each participant a position as supportive of Hohepa's preferred identity claims. Thus when Hohepa's teacher spoke from a position of experienced educator, she described it as "admirable" for Hohepa "to have that self-analysis, wanting to make those changes." From an affirming position, yet one that allows for authority to describe the other, Hohepa's teacher reported that "it's difficult to change a rep, so it's really admirable what has been done ... He has design skills to develop and I can see them going far ... He's quite perceptive, and as the term has gone on he has given more perceptive answers in class."

In a position of witness to an emerging preferred story (White, 2007) (see Chapter Four), participants speak about what stands out for them in what they have heard the person saying. Hohepa's teacher took up this position by noticing Hohepa as having "that self-analysis, wanting to make those changes." Outsider witnessing process invites participants to connect what has stood out for them with their own experience. From this position Hohepa's teacher described appreciating "a buy-in to the relationship", saying, "That is why I like to be a teacher. It's the relational thing, there has been no yelling in a long time", and "we still say Hi around the school."

Outsider witnessing was not the only position call shaping the teacher's responses. From the more common practices of affirmation and praise, the teacher responded to Hohepa with, "It's really admirable" and "He's quite perceptive."

Dean.

Also invited and positioned as an outsider witness, the dean of Hohepa's School House described what had stood out for her, saying Hohepa is, "a quiet person, who seems to have gotten a lot happier", and reported: "I haven't spoken to him at all", this "not speaking" indicating she had not

engaged in disciplining Hohepa. The dean recounted a story of how she had said to another student, "Why can't you be more like Hohepa!" As with Hohepa's teacher above, here the dean was responding to Brent, Huia and my invitation to take up a position in support of Hohepa's preferred identity account, shaping her reflections to offer an account of Hohepa developing a new reputation, with new effects. She reinforced this account, in effect saying, "I not only say this here — look, I have been saying this in other places as well!"

Deputy Principal.

The deputy principal spoke of his noticing directly to Hohepa, saying: "You have grown in confidence this year", and "You feel better about who you are." In a repositioning of the more normal hierarchy of school life, the deputy principal spoke to Hohepa as a valued conversation partner. Such a positioning action speaks as clearly as the words used, in support of Hohepa's preferred identity claims. Connecting to his personal experience, the deputy principal described a time when he had visited a class: "Hohepa was in class, he smiled at me, because I wasn't there about him — that's a nice thing. He's grown in confidence; you can have a conversation together." He described Hohepa as "holding his head up, meeting your eye." From all the possible reflections and reportings the deputy principal could have spoken of, the powerful positioning effects of this particular meeting had him speaking of these particular events and his experience of them. In this way the deputy principal took up a position to contribute to Hohepa's preferred reputation and its viability in the school community.

Hohepa's mother.

Hohepa's mother said very little at this meeting. I speculate that it may be that Hohepa's mother had experienced difficulties in her relationships with the school, as she stood for her son across time. In our conversations around the kitchen table, Huia, Brent and I had discussed the positioning experience of

another Māori mother and her baby known to them who, on coming to a school in response to her son's troubles, was asked to fill in a form which included asking, "Have you seen domestic violence?" While noticing the school's ethical intent in asking such questions, Huia, Brent and I had wondered what effects such a question might have, and how that question might contribute to a discourse that families are in some ways responsible for troubling actions of their children at school. Similarly we recalled a time when four senior members of a school staff met with a Māori woman to discuss her son. We had wondered what it might have meant that the staff members reported that she "got defensive". How might that and similar experiences have connected for that mother with other stories from the community, about their difficulties in coming up to the school?

That such accounts exist within the community may have contributed to Hohepa's mother's positioning in this definitional ceremony, either silencing her, or positioning her as waiting to see if this meeting would be different to others she had attended. In Waters' research into Tongan parents' experiences of their daughters' school, Waters and Crocket (2011) record how Tongan mothers encountered obstacles to communication between their community and the school. In response to such comments, Waters and Crocket wonder how "understanding something of the effects of our privilege, authority, misunderstandings, and judgements, we might find ways to position ourselves better so that we might listen to, accept, and take seriously the views and understandings of people from cultures other than the dominant one" (p. 25).

In keeping with such sentiments, and as I discuss in Chapter Twelve, one outcome of this research is an invitation to further establish and develop relationships between schools and their families and communities at times when schools seek to respond to unacceptable actions at school. I propose that a positive experience of the school coming to know her son differently may well result in a more open and mutually supportive relationship between

Hohepa's home and the school in the future. In this light, I recorded Hohepa's mother as saying, "Hohepa's my son — thanks for everything." I can only speculate what experiences sit behind this expression of appreciation.

Brent (2).

Positioned by the outsider witnessing-shaped calls of the meeting, Brent described what stood out for him as participant in the research story, reporting: "It's been interesting, hearing his story and what else he is good at, what he has experienced, his knowledge of the sea." Brent affirmed that "the way he speaks he thinks, he is perceptive; I'd love to see that flourish."

Speaking from a particularly kaupapa Māori position, Brent alluded to Hohepa's whakapapa narratives, those living stories that "include events, relationship and connectedness between people, creation, place, whenua, atua (gods) and tipuna (ancestors) [creating links] for relational interactions with each other, to place, the land and the many ancestors we descend from" (Swann, 2012, p. 9). To the definitional ceremony Brent said, "He's a Māori, he has his whenua (land) — when I see him, I see that, and the importance of that — it's there, it's in him." In this speaking, those who were positioned to hear were reminded of their "collective identity, affirming relational connection and belonging, and highlighting the hope and direction that could be found in the narratives of our tipuna and whakapono (faith)" (Swann, 2012, p. 20).

Kaumatua.

While taking up the invitation to speak for Hohepa's preferred accounts, the kaumatua (community elder) did not take up the form of outsider witness position on offer. Rather, speaking from a particularly Māori position with humour, humility, and a seemingly scant regard for his pivotal role in the wider community, the kaumatua introduced himself as "a retiree — I enjoy sitting in the sun!" Like Hohepa above, this can be seen as an example of the rhetorical device of understatement.

Positioned with a Māori emphasis on relational connection, the kaumatua responded to the group's tellings on behalf of Hohepa, saying, "I thank you for your human kindness." This relational emphasis continued with, "I acknowledge Mum and the family — she does not smoke." These words acted powerfully to counteract potential evaluative discourses which may shape current educational discourse. Such discourses may construct the family, through role modeling or negligence, as contributing to the presence of trouble at school. In effect the kaumatua said: I testify that this is a disciplined, caring family, and further, that this family is part of a wider, caring community. He continued: "There is a lot of effort out there to try and get them [our young people] back on the right track, bussing our group out to [the local marae] (gathering place) once a fortnight."

To Hohepa the kaumatua said, "I'm thoroughly impressed with you Hohepa — you have good parents, your granddad is wonderful, you are going in the right direction ... I just want to see that you are not influenced by all these other customers, going in the right direction." As with Brent's speaking above, these words invoke whakapapa narratives (stories of family history and connection) together with that particular form of direct talk which is in keeping with a kaumatua's position as an elder in the community (Waldegrave, 2000). Such an invocation of parents and grandparents offers to Hohepa, "an immediate sense of belonging, pride, inclusion and identity wholeness, which [may] further affirm connection to the people, the whenua and the beliefs and values of [his] tipuna [forebears]" (Swann, 2012, pp. 21–22).

While I reflect more fully on this example of speech below, I include here an excerpt from the transcript of the meeting to further demonstrate the kaumatua's weaving together of direct talk and invocation of the presence of a wider community of care:

Kaumatua: Where do you hope to go to, Hohepa? You got anywhere you going to?

Such direct talk offers an alternative to Huia's gently externalised invitations above. Here Hohepa is positioned as having the possibility of somewhere to go. The position of elder speaking to a younger community member supports both the directness of the kaumatua's speech, and the Hohepa's receiving stance as that of listening to an elder (Waldegrave, 2000).

Hohepa: Ohhh...

Huia: Maybe he'll go to design school?

Kaumatua: Well I'm kaumatua at [local polytechnic] — anyway, he'll stay at school for now. When I was at school all I wanted to do was make my mother proud — good on you, make your mother proud ... Hohepa has got that determination — he could have gone in other directions, it's been touch and go at times, but he has stuck to it ... I think it's for his family — they live next door to each other ... good grandfather ... good breed ... good stock!

As an elder, the kaumatua spoke on behalf of Hohepa: "He'll stay at school for now!" As Waldegrave (2000) writes of the direct speech of Māori kaumatua, "He delivered it in the way he did because it was culturally appropriate as he is a Māori elder" (p. 9). The relational connections were invoked through mother, family, grandfather and beyond into "good stock". Here Hohepa was positioned as part of a larger set of relationships in which he was and is cared for, and to which he has responsibilities — to "make your mother proud" being one of them.

Summary.

I have demonstrated how each participant was positioned to speak in keeping with the hopes of the meeting, through the introductory language used by Brent, Huia, and me. I have also demonstrated that each person was also shaped by other position calls, as particularly seen in the kaumatua's responses, and in those of Hohepa's teacher. My purpose in doing so is to make clear the complexity of discursive positioning at schools, and to

reiterate that it is possible to influence the discourses and position calls which shape how young people are made sense of at school.

I return now to the kaumatua's responses in order to further explore my becoming awareness (Jenkins, 2009) of what was being invoked as the kaumatua spoke at the definitional ceremony. As with Peter's story, where he and his teachers read each other's actions from positions shaped by current educational and other discourses (see Chapter Seven), my developing ability, and otherwise, to hear and interpret the kaumatua's presence and speaking at the definitional ceremony was shaped by discursive positioning which I now discuss.

The Community Speaks Through Their Elder

After the definitional ceremony meeting with Hohepa and his supporters I had a sense that a cultural practice on particularly Māori terms had happened during the meeting, of which I had been only vaguely aware. I was at ease with the meeting, the outcomes had been much as I had hoped for, and yet I felt I had missed something of the importance of the older Māori man's presence and speaking. My various positionings had me alert to a sense of missing something, while not providing the discursive clues to make meaning of it.

Following my curiosity, in a later kitchen-table conversation, Huia and Brent made some of what I had missed more available to me. They suggested that, through this kaumatua's presence, the local iwi had been present at the definitional ceremony. In him, a crowd of witnesses were present, and through him the conversation was going back into the community. Huia and Brent interpreted this for me, saying that their school colleague, knowing of the work that Huia was doing in the school, and knowing Hohepa as an integral part of her community, as "our boy", had asked her husband (the kaumatua) to come to the meeting to represent the community's interests.

Huia and Brent understood that this tangible representation of the local iwi added mana (prestige) to the definitional ceremony, saying in effect, "We know of your work, and we thank you for what you are doing with our moko (grandchild). He is valuable to us, he is ours, and he is special." Thus the wairua (spirit) Māori that Huia and Brent brought to the work was recognised and reciprocated by the community.

Huia and Brent further developed my understanding, explaining that what I took from the kaumatua's speaking of Hohepa as an offhand compliment, "He's of good stock", in fact called those people at the meeting, those who could hear it, to an awareness of whakapapa (genealogy) — the past speaking into the present, the rich story of a history of belonging and care of which Hohepa is a part. Brent translated the kaumatua's comment for me as saying, "This boy's whakapapa is from a family held in high regard. They have an ability to offer manaaki (generous hospitality); this boy is from a generous line, of mana (prestige, status) that has an ability to give, to help, to awhi (offer support)." All this is acknowledged in the phrase, "He's of good stock." In this light Hohepa does not come into the room on his own; he carries his whakapapa, his landed-ness, his community, past, present and future, with him, and Huia and Brent know this and acknowledge it. The kaumatua spoke to them, knowing of their awareness that Hohepa was connected through whakapapa to whanau (extended family), hapu (clan) and iwi (tribe), that he belongs and is woven into his whakapapa narratives, the stories of his iwi, his maunga (mountain), his awa (river), his stories of turangawaewae (standing place) (Swann, 2012).

As the kaumatua spoke, he joined our shared research project of developing and publishing Hohepa's preferred alternative reputation with the rich, pre-existing whakapapa narratives (see Swann, 2012; Swann, Swann & Crocket, 2013) in which Hohepa is uniquely positioned within a network of relationships. In this light, whether Hohepa or the school community knows this or not, he is to be treated with the utmost respect. As Brent further

explained, in recognising these whakapapa narratives, we are invited into an ethic of care: When you see the face, kanohi ki te kanohi (face to face), there is an obligation, a cultural imperative to act in a particular way, to engage in a particular way. The presence of the kaumatua at Hohepa's definitional ceremony was not by accident. Rather, because Huia and Brent expressed this way of being Māori within their work in the Second School, these culturally pre-existing ways of being were able to be invoked at the definitional ceremony; because the cultural door was open, and the community could walk through.

Positioned by Huia and Brent's manaakitanga (generous care and hospitality) as party to these conversations at the kitchen table, I came to understand something of what was being invoked as the kaumatua spoke. From this position I could see our work as counsellors and researchers, not as the centre of Hohepa's story, but rather as one, small support piece in an ongoing multi-generational project. This awareness contributed strongly to my shaping of future proposals for how schools might work with young people at times of troubling actions — that when we work with young people to support a migration of identity from troubled to preferred, we do so in keeping with a community of people who have been involved in that project over time, and to whose project we are invited supporters rather than leaders or teachers. This important outcome is discussed in Chapter Twelve.

As the following discussion chapter demonstrates, my growing awareness of the place and value of kaupapa Māori epistemology shaped my interpretation of these research materials, and became an aspirational goal for further post-doctoral research. In that aspirational goal I join with Bishop (1998) who writes how the structure and function of a whanau describes and constitutes the relationship among research participants within Māori-discourse shaped research practice. Such research cannot proceed, "unless whanau support is obtained, unless kaumatua provide guidance, and unless there is aroha (mutuality) between the participants, evidenced by an overriding feeling of

tolerance, hospitality, and respect for others, their ideas, and their opinions" (p. 204).

In Chapters Six and Seven I have described the complex discursive sites, and the positioning effects at work in Peter's game of netball, and in Hohepa's definitional ceremony. In those chapters I have written as an academic observer, applying post-structuralist and narrative theory to participants' actions, in the belief that to do so demonstrates possibilities for schools to consider alternative actions in keeping with their ethical desires. In this chapter I have taken up the position of reporting on my own experience of discursive positioning in an attempt to nuance this academic understanding, as it were from the inside. In doing so, I add to my own understanding of the complexity of positioning. What becomes plain as I do this is the difficulty of seeing discursive positioning whilst in the moment of being so positioned.

Having discussed the positionings variously experienced at the Second School, I turn now to a discussion of my research experience. After a summary of the research story thus far, I ask: What has been learnt, and what are the implications for schools in responding to young people at times when their actions might have them as candidates for suspension or exclusion from school?

CHAPTER 11: A REVIEW

Introduction

Reinharz (1992) wrote, "Although changing the researcher is not a common intention in feminist research, it is a common consequence" (p. 194). Reinharz further proposed that "learning should occur on three levels in any research project ... that the researcher should learn about herself, about the subject matter under study, and about how to conduct research" (p. 194). This has certainly been my experience in this research project.

I began this research project with a broad interest in how schools can respond to young peoples' actions, deemed unacceptable at school, in ways which retain young people within the pastoral care and purpose of the school, and how schools can do so without further disrupting teaching and learning for others. In response to this interest, I asked my research question: What is the effect of peer co-researching, co-writing, and co-publishing of alternative accounts of their actions and intentions on young men designated as troubling, particularly on their subsequent sense of identity and on their engagement in life's choices? However, the research process took me beyond answering that original question.

In the light of the experience and reflection on the research process, this original question now appears as a thin description of what it is possible to ask of this interest. In keeping with narrative therapy as discussed in Chapter Four, I can now see that the question, framed as it is from familiar territory, reflects a hope that I would move from the known and familiar to what it is possible to know (White, 2000). That is, in asking a question about what I already knew (that re-authoring the identity stories of young people makes a difference to their subsequent actions) I might encounter learnings that were at that time unknown to me. Because I was interested in such fuller learning, I was not constrained by the original question, lest I simply found out what I already knew. In these next chapters I highlight learnings from my research

project, including what I learnt about myself, about alternative responses to young people at times when suspension or exclusion is a possibility, about engaging teachers and family in a parallel process of identity change and about the research process.

The Thesis Story Thus Far

I began this doctoral writing by introducing the matter which concerned me in the first place — that when young people get suspended and excluded from schools, this risks both harm and cultural imposition. I proposed that there are alternatives to the use of suspension and exclusion at times when the unacceptable actions of young people have them as candidates for censure, alternatives which may avoid the risks of harm and cultural imposition. I set out to research one such alternative response, and its effects.

Thus I asked: How can schools respond to young peoples' unacceptable actions at school in ways which retain young people (where appropriate) within the pastoral care and purpose of the school, and do so without further disrupting teaching and learning for others?

As I wrote about alternative responses to unacceptable actions taken by young people at school, I drew on what I had found effective during my years of work as a guidance counsellor in New Zealand high schools — that an exploration of ethical intentions which may be implicit in a young person's actions can lead to a conversation about what is important to a young person; and that, in the context of such a reflective conversation with a young person, along with their peers, teachers, and family and community members as appropriate, a re-authoring of identity for the young person can be invited. In such re-authoring conversations I had experienced that young people can and do take up alternative and preferred ways of enacting their hopes for themselves and others at school and beyond, and can and do receive the support and encouragement of people close to them (McMenamin, 1998; see also Winslade & Monk, 2007; Winslade & Williams, 2012).

This research project was based on my history of responding to the concerns of young people and teachers at school. It has been my experience that much of the counselling work undertaken at school is done under pressure of time. There often seem to be more young people for a school counsellor to see than a leisured or measured response allows for, and there is often a sense of urgency in a school's needs for responses to unacceptable actions. Undertaking this research project has offered me the time to think carefully about how I, and schools I speak with, can respond when young peoples' actions are of concern, and I hope to offer the fruit of this reflective space back to school counsellors and other pastoral carers working under the various pressures of everyday school life.

Clearly, my proposal draws on a particular theoretical base. Thus in Chapter Two I outlined the ways that post-structuralist and social constructionist theory shaped my inquiry and interventions in this research project. In those chapters I described how post-structuralism focuses on language as the site within which meaning is made of life and experience. I described how taken-for-granted understandings of life and experience, "are more or less an encrustation of dominant discourses upon the organization and teleology of social life and personal practice, in specific geographic and economic locations" (Rocco, 2004, p. 140). I described how, by this view, making meaning of young peoples' actions is not so much the discovery of an underlying structure, as it is the shaping of identity by discourse and its construction in language. I drew on Foucault to highlight that common understandings of young people and their actions, shaped by current educational discourse, are "the result of some very precise historical changes" (Foucault et al., 1988, p. 10). Thus I was able to show "the arbitrariness of institutions, and show which space of freedom we can still enjoy, and how many changes can still be made" (Foucault et al., 1988, p. 10).

I described how my taking up of such a post-structuralist stance is in service of agentic re-authouring of identity stories (White, 2007), and I sought to demonstrate something of the history and effects of current educational discourse and rationalist science (Graham, 2007, Harwood, 2006; Foucault et al., 1988; Lincoln & Canella, 2004; Popkewitz, 2001; Rose, 1996) within which the identity stories of young people and teachers at school are routinely shaped. In this process I explored how the subjectivities of young people facing suspension or exclusion are created and shaped through practices of classification and division, through "the development and transformation of modes of conceptualizing persons — vocabularies, explanatory systems, and the like" (Rose, 1996, p. 99), which produce persons as "a certain kind of theory" (Rose, 1996, p. 9). In this context I explored school's taking up of the categories and vocabularies of the DSM (American Psychiatric Association, 2000) and acting as a proxy for the psychological knowledges named within (Harwood, 2006). I described how young people "willingly and voluntarily" (Winslade, 2006, p. 504) take upon themselves "a certain number of operations on their own bodies, on their own souls, on their own thoughts, on their own conduct ... to transform themselves, modify themselves" (Foucault, 1993, p. 303) in keeping with what is deemed desirable by prevailing discourse.

Developing this post-structuralist stance, I highlighted that "who one is, is always an open question with a shifting answer depending upon the positions made available within one's own and others' discursive practices, and within those practices, the stories through which we make sense of our own and others' lives" (Davies, 1989, p. 229). I emphasised that the way young people and others think, the categories and concepts that provide a framework of meaning for them, are provided by the language they use and are "reproduced everyday by everyone who shares a culture and a language with them" (Burr, 2003, p. 8). In this light, I outlined that there are varying descriptions and explanations possible for an event. Thus I demonstrated how, based "on a continuous process of generating meaning together"

(Gergen, 1999, p. 49), the language we use to describe, explain or otherwise represent reality, has real effects and fashions our futures.

In the light of this theoretical position I have argued and demonstrated that understanding the actions of young people as arising from prevailing discourses offers schools effective responses which are alternative to those of current educational discourse. To achieve this I have proposed and demonstrated a process of co-authoring preferred identities focused on an exploration of ethical intentions which may be implicit in young peoples' unacceptable actions, together with alternative descriptions of young people available from peers, teachers, and family and community members.

In Chapter Four I outlined how narrative therapy offers a set of conversation maps which guide an exploration of peoples' responses to life's situations, in order to co-develop alternative accounts of what the person intends and values, and what alternative identity conclusions might be made available in such an exploration (see for example White, 2000 a; White, 2002; White 2007; White & Epston, 1990). I described how, given that identity is seen as a verb rather than a noun (Riessman and Speedy, 2006), narrative therapy offers inquiry "into what is happening, into how things are becoming other than what they were, or into the potential for things to become other than what they are" (White & McLean, 1995, p. 112). I outlined how narrative therapy supports such inquiry through the exploration and development of lived experience not fully encompassed by the dominant story (White & Epston, 1990), in this case the dominant story of a troubled youth who, according to current educational discourse, needs to be removed from school.

As part of a project of re-authoring preferred identity stories, I highlighted how "identity is a public and social achievement" (White, 2007, p. 182), and that "people cannot be treated as being simply persons in themselves; they owe their personhood to others" (Shotter, 2004, p. 7). In this light I discussed how preferred identity claims made by young people must be held in tension with

the ethical hopes and purposes of the communities of which they are a part. Such tension requires solutions that respect the principles of the community of concern as well as personal responsibility, offering attractive conceptions of each that satisfy both (Dworkin, 2011).

In this vein, among the various narrative therapy maps of conversation discussed in Chapter Four, I emphasised the role of outsider witnessing and definitional ceremonies (Myerhoff, 1986; White, 1995; 2000 d; 2007) in bringing together the aspirations of the wider community with the ethical aspirations and preferred identity claims of the young person concerned, wherein community members are invited to respond to young peoples' preferred identity claims in ways that connect those claims with the hopes of the community. As demonstrated in Chapter Six, such audiences are invited as co-authors of and contributors to preferred emerging accounts as collaborators throughout, and as co-celebrators towards the end of the process. Such bringing together of individual and community aspirations emphasises the reciprocal responsibility inherent in the ethical agency, the tino rangatiratanga (chieftainship in their own lives in relationship with care for and from their community) which I demonstrate young people experiencing in the re-authoring of their identity stories.

In order to research the effects of interrupting the discourses shaping the meaning made of young peoples' unacceptable actions at school and of opening up possibilities for re-authoring preferred identity conclusions, I drew on action research (Carr & Kemmis, 1986; Huang, 2010; Kemmis, 2009; Somekh & Zeichner, 2009) as a methodology to shape this research project. To achieve this I researched a counselling intervention in two schools plus weekly meetings with my co-researchers, Huia and Brent Swann, throughout the counselling and interviewing of participants phase of the research.

Given the location of this research project in Aotearoa/New Zealand, as part of that ongoing action research process, in Chapter Five I reflected on how a Pakeha (European) New Zealand researcher might work with young people

of Māori descent within the wider school population in ways which supported the aspirations of such a young person's community, and which avoided where possible an imposition of taken-for-granted cultural values. I discussed taking up a stance of cultural safety (Crocket, 2010; Papps & Ramsden, 1996; Richardson & Carryer, 2005; Tolich, 2002) which, like post-structural theory, invites, "a process of reflection on [a researcher's] own cultural identity, and recognises the impact of the [researcher's] culture on their own ... practice" (Papps & Ramsden, 1996, p. 491).

Having established a theory and practice from which to research, I worked together for this section with co-researchers Huia and Brent Swann, in two schools with one young person in each school — and with their peers, teachers, and family and community members. Drawing on data generated throughout the ten weeks of counselling and interviews with participants in the two schools, in Chapters Six and Seven I employed a post-structural discursive analysis to reflect on the language used in different settings to describe, explain or otherwise represent the actions of young people being considered candidates for suspension or exclusion from school. In those chapters I demonstrated how the discursively produced descriptions of Peter's actions by the teachers positioned the teachers as doing their job well, and Peter as a candidate for censure. Equally, Peter's discursively produced descriptions positioned him as hard done by, and willing to make a difference if given the opportunity. In Chapters Eight and Nine I explored how practices of narrative therapy contribute to alternative socially constructed subjectivities becoming available for Peter to consider and take up as preferred identity claims.

In Chapter Ten I described the position calls experienced by participants, including myself, at the Second School and reflected on how such position calls make some awareness available, while obscuring others. In particular I highlighted the ways my positions at the Friday kitchen-table conversations of researcher, supporter, therapist, teacher, Pakeha and friend produced

varying and at times conflicting awareness. I also highlighted the way that Huia, Brent and my invitations to participants at Hohepa's definitional ceremony positioned them as noticing and speaking about Hohepa's emerging preferred reputations.

A Brief Summary of Researching Stories with Young People

Researching Peter's story.

As discussed in Chapters Six and Seven, after a history of what the school named continual disobedience, Peter faced suspension following an incident during a game of netball. Chapter Seven details the versions of this event as variously described by Peter, his PE teacher, and the head of PE department. In keeping with my thesis that peoples' words and actions are the moment-by-moment expressions of the position calls of discursive shaping and identity stories, in that chapter I described some of the discursive hailings through which Peter and his teachers navigate their responses, and which shaped their subsequent actions. Chapters Eight and Nine described my alternative responses to Peter's actions, based on an exploration of ethical hopes and intentions which may have been implicit in his actions, and on a re-authoring of identity stories around a metaphor of preferred reputation.

Thus I described Peter's identity stories as fluid and changeable, as constantly negotiated and revised in the flux of relationship and discourse, within "a multitude of flows of becoming which involve experiences and activities, some of which are complicit with and reproduce dominant cultural interests, and some of which are resistant and produce creative and alternative interests" (Jenkins, 2009, p. 11).

I offer here some brief examples of my practices of inviting Peter towards an experience of knowing himself in the light of preferred identity descriptions. I do this in order to demonstrate the moment by moment shifts in positioning and identity conclusion which become available to Peter through my inquiries.

In this brief extract I offer two potential descriptors (Peter as deciding and liking learning) for Peter to evaluate for a place in an alternative reputation:

> Example 1: (see page 176): In this brief extract from a counselling conversation between Peter and me, I reflect to Peter some of what is implicit in his speaking:

> *Donald: So in the middle of all this I'm hearing you say two things: one is you can, if people speak to you properly, you can decide to just do things differently ...*

> *Peter: Yeah, get respect back from the teacher.*

> *Donald: So that is the first thing: you can just decide. That's the first thing right? And the second thing is, forgive me if I have got this wrong, it sounds like you are quite interested in learning stuff?*

In this example of inquiry shaped by the narrative therapy practice of landscape of action and identity questions (White & Epston, 1990), I reflect back to Peter two potential identity descriptions. While Peter never said so explicitly, implicit within his accounts of experience at school have been intimations that he can decide, and that he is interested in learning. I reflect these intimations back to Peter for his consideration. In the first place my focus on these two descriptions illustrates a narrative therapy-shaped interest in alternative stories (Epston & White, 1990) and absent but implicit ethical strivings (White, 2000 c), a listening for what it is that a person may be hoping for, or caring about in the actions they have taken. I tentatively offer these potential re-descriptions for Peter's assessment, and they are taken up by Peter as desirable descriptions. My second narrative therapy-shaped interest is in these descriptions as potential unique outcomes (White, et al., 1995; White & Epston, 1990), as actions or characters that stand outside of the prevailing reputation of Peter, and which offer access to alternative possible reputations. As such I am assisting Peter in "seeing, hearing, experiencing, and valuing [in order to] organize our lookings and listenings, our sense-

makings and judgments of value, and thus ultimately, determine the lines of action we resolve on carrying out further" (Shotter, 2012, p. 10). Through highlighting such unique outcomes, I make them available for Peter to notice, evaluate, and if preferred, to take in to his emerging alternative self-descriptions.

Example 2: (See page 180): In this brief extract from a counselling conversation between Peter and me I invite Peter to evaluate his emerging new reputation:

Donald: When you think about that reputation, what do you think about it now? What, are you for it, or ..?

Peter: It's changed a lot I reckon.

Donald: Yeah? How has it changed?

Peter: I've been getting A's, and House Cards and stuff.

Donald: OK.

Peter: And like, it's fun being good, cause you get privileges, and you can still play up a little bit.

Donald: You play up a little bit?

Peter: And still get A's!

Donald: And still get A's!

Peter: Mmm.

Donald: So you found the balance between good reputation and a bit of fun?

Peter: Yeah.

In this example I invite Peter to reflect on what has been achieved in the light of his hopes for himself — Peter has been rewarded for his efforts, while still maintaining the valued "playing up a bit". Positioned by my inquiry as

evaluator and editor of potentially new identity claims, Peter can reflect on whether the effects of these new identity claims fit with his hopes for himself. Here I invite Peter to exercise ethical agency — to reflect on, and decide about what White (2002) describes as "those aspects of life that people judge to be of primary relevance in regard to how they lead their lives" (p. 59). It is not that Peter has discovered a pre-existing description of himself. Rather, these conversational practices have made alternative ways of speaking about Peter available for him to consider and include in his identity accounts. This is an example of the social construction of identity in practice.

Example three: (See page 124): In Chapter Six I described how Peter's emerging preferred reputation was told and retold to his peers, his teachers, his father, and his gathered supporters, and discussed the effect these tellings had on Peter's sense of self and his ongoing actions at school. In this brief extract from a letter to participants in which I recorded responses at Peter's definitional ceremony, Peter's PE teacher (and dean) described the effects for her of the shift that had resulted from a re-authoring of Peter's identity stories:

> *His manners, his ability to be attentive, doing what is asked of him, offering to help; there's high energy and positive energy. I've seen a major shift. There is more of an ability to reason with Peter, he will listen and try and change things. It's a lot nicer because it's not negative, so much nicer.*

Throughout this thesis I have emphasised that the identity claims which are shaped by practices of ethical reflection need to be co-researched and developed with significant members of the young person's community. Here Peter's teacher offers Peter a preferred identity story which also fits with her own hopes for Peter, for herself, and for her other students. Thus Peter's teacher offers descriptions of Peter as having manners, paying attention, offering compliance and helpfulness, having energy, displaying reasonableness, doing listening and adaptability; descriptions which are not

only offered as contributions to Peter's developing identity descriptions, but are also assertions of what the (discursively shaped) teacher herself values. In this light, Peter's identity claims are "neither the pure creation of autonomous individuals, nor the unalloyed expressions of subjective views, but rather a result of ongoing dialogue ... within fields of intersubjectivity" (Jackson, 2002, p. 22). As such, the identity claims which Peter is invited to carry forward are shaped by the ethical hopes and desires of his invited community members, who corroborate Peter's story, "mounting its persuasion" (Harwood, 2006, p. 115). Through the narrative therapy-shaped practices of "working collaboratively in the world in taking steps to prepare the foundations for new possibilities" (White, Hoyt & Combs, 2000, p. 150), it is not simply the claims that Peter makes "but the imprimatur of a community" (Jackson, 2002, p. 62) which gives his stories value. As above, this re-authoring project is not a discovery of some pre-existing truth about Peter, but rather provides nuanced and negotiated descriptions which become available to Peter within the dialogues described herein. In the presence of such descriptions Peter is positioned as exercising ethical agency — as choosing what to take up, and how to proceed in the light of what he, together with his community, describes as good. Thus Peter's subjectification (Butler, 1993; Foucault, 1997, 1982) is agentic to the extent that he is positioned to see discursive alternatives and their effects, and positioned as able to choose (Davies, 1990).

I have emphasised throughout the complexity of what gives rise to the actions of all involved in Peter's account, and to the alternatives offered herein. The setting in which Peter, his peers and his teachers were embroiled, and which gave rise to suspension from school being considered, was one of complex discursive hailings offering competing positions and inviting contradictory responses to each participant. What occurred as a result demonstrates each participant's navigations of these hailings, skilfully shaped by their ethical

purposes, or enacted against their better judgement, as the moment by moment discursive positions offered them allowed.

Thus the responses required for making a difference to the actions of all participants are as complex as the discursive cacophony that shaped those actions. As I demonstrate, such a complex response requires an awareness of the moment by moment positioning effects of prevailing discourse, an invitation to reflect on the effects of such positionings in the light of one's hopes for oneself and others, the development of alternative identity accounts in keeping with preferred identities reached for, a recruitment of significant others for co-authorship and supportive audience of preferred identity claims, a focus on restorative practices to attend to any harm done, and an ongoing period of support for change during which preferred reputations and deficit reputations may vie for effect.

Having reviewed how Peter came to be positioned with the ethical agency to describe himself differently, and to act differently at school, I turn now to a summary of the similar positioning effects made apparent through Hohepa's story.

Researching Hohepa's story.

In Chapter Six, I described how Hohepa's story was co-researched through Huia's careful questioning, and through peer and community input and support. I employed a kaupapa Māori-informed analysis combined with post-structuralist discursive analysis to shape both the tellings of and meaning-making of Hohepa's experience and actions.

Like Peter, Hohepa faced suspension or exclusion, for Hohepa in response to a reputation for bullying, disobedience, smoking, absenteeism, and tagging. Whereas with Peter what I analysed were the tellings and writings which emerged from aspects of the problem story and of the preferred story, with Hohepa I analysed the discursive positioning which took place in Hohepa's definitional ceremony and in the kitchen table conversations between Huia,

Brent and me. This analysis has been particularly valuable in developing future invitations to teachers, family and community members to consider their discursive positioning and its effects as part of supporting preferred identity conclusions for the young people involved, as I signal in Chapter Twelve.

I discuss here the positioning effects which supported shifts in teacher positioning. In a later section I discuss my own identity shifts which resulted from participation in and reflection on this research process. I offer several brief examples from a letter which Huia wrote to Hohepa's teachers, and go on to develop the learnings from them. I do this in order to emphasise how the language used by Huia offered Hohepa's teachers positions (to accept or decline) that made it more likely that their accounts would be supportive of Hohepa's preferred identity claims.

Extracts from Huia's letter to Hohepa's teachers.

Example One (See page 136):

Thank you all for attending this meeting to hear about Hohepa's wishes to move toward another reputation at school. I appreciate you taking the time at the end of a long and tiring term.

Example Two (See page 136):

Huia Swann is a member of a PhD research team that is developing a process for young people (Yr. 10, Māori, male) in trouble at school. The project is looking at the migration of identity from a reputation of trouble (truancy, disruptive, attitude, etc...) towards a reputation of something else.

Example Three (See page 136):

The project uses a metaphor of Rites of Passage — that is, we should expect difficulties and hiccups along the way. How do we support when the young person is blown off course? I told you so? Or lend a hand?

Did you know that Hohepa wants to change the reputation that hangs around him at school? With his permission and using his words, these are some of his goals, intentions and values.

- *I want to be at school;*

- *I care about getting a good education;*

- *I want my reports to show good results;*

- *I want to be known for good behaviour and good manners.*

In these brief extracts from Huia's letter to Hohepa's teachers, Huia offers the listeners a position of joining with the clearly stated purpose of the meeting, "*to hear about Hohepa's wishes to move toward another reputation at school*" (Extract One); to join with a project about migration of identity (Extract Two); and to do so as a supporter (Extract Three). As Davies and Harré (1990) outline, "a person inevitably sees the world from the vantage point of that position and in terms of the particular images, metaphors, storylines and concepts which are made relevant within the particular discursive practice in which they are positioned" (p. 46). In these extracts Huia makes Hohepa's wishes for another reputation at the school the vantage point from which to view the conversation they are about to have. When the group meets together, Huia invites the teachers to offer images, metaphors, storylines and concepts which fit with that vantage point. That they take up that discursive positioning is evidenced in the ways they describe Hohepa and his achievements in meetings and at Hohepa's definitional ceremony discussed below.

While such discursive positioning may well be different to more everyday conversations about young people at school, still the teachers are hailed by a number of "rehearsed and familiar ways of making sense of things" (Speedy, 2008, p. 123). Thus, for example, teachers are familiar with notions like reputations and their effects; end of term tiredness for teachers and students alike; PhD research projects; and lending a hand when someone is blown off

course. The position calls which Huia makes to the teachers join with their existing knowledge of these ideas as notions they value and would want to be a part of. In this light, Huia can be seen as skillfully negotiating performative language, intertextuality, and discursive positioning on behalf of her ethical project to recruit Hohepa's teachers to his support team.

Teachers reporting back.

In response to meeting with Huia and receiving the letter discussed above, Hohepa's teachers reported back as to what they had noticed in the intervening weeks.

They made many comments in reply, including that Hohepa was:

> Looking really good / nice haircut / handsome; uniform — great improvement; no malice in Hohepa / a good boy; big improvement in term 2 compared to term 1; likes working by himself; don't think he's smoking at school anymore / can't smell smoke on him; no problems with behaviour, just needs to do some work! "Bully behaviour" does not fit staff description of Hohepa; and he has moved from Level 3 up to Level 4.

Here I focus on these replies as evidence of the position calls made by Huia in the meetings with teachers and the letter she sent to them. Rather than reporting what Hohepa was getting wrong, the teachers have all reported that Hohepa is getting things right in terms of their hopes for him and others at school. This is not to say that other descriptions of Hohepa are not available. Had the teachers been discursively positioned as noticing and reporting any slip ups, any deviations, any acts not in keeping with a new reputation, their reports would likely have reflected that vantage point. And this is the key point to make here: that the position calls made by Huia invited particular noticings and responses, and these noticings and responses have real effects, as the teachers respond to Hohepa in the light of the ways they are thinking about him and describing him to others. Hohepa's identity, who he is to himself and

to others, is affected by these alternative descriptions which have become available through Huia's conversational position calls.

As demonstrated in Chapter Eight, through the discursively shaped support of his peers, his teachers, his family and community, Hohepa took up preferred ways of seeing himself, and began to act in keeping with those. In the presence of alternative descriptions of his reputations, made available through the ethical reflections, tellings and re-tellings described herein, Hohepa was able to exercise agency in choosing how he preferred to be seen by himself and others. These alternative identity claims offered Hohepa a different range of actions, which may not have been previously available to him, and which the teachers reported on above. Thus the language used by Huia invited responses from Hohepa's teachers which in turn provided part of the language resource which Hohepa was able to take up in his preferred identity accounts and subsequent actions.

In this chapter I have offered an overview of my research into the place and value of discursive awareness and reflection coupled with co-authoring practices. I have emphasised the complexities of identity formation, and demonstrated how ethical reflection and re-authored identity claims become increasingly available to young people through the conversational practices I have described. I have further highlighted the place of cultural safety in taking up a research position with Māori young people and communities. I turn now to a reflection on what I learnt during the practice of engaging with Peter, Hohepa and their communities. Initially I focus on the learnings gleaned from research field work in each school. In later sections I reflect on learnings from theory and research practices.

CHAPTER 12: REFLECTION ON LEARNINGS

Learning From Adaptations to the Programme

As I began this research project, I intended offering a researched programme for schools to follow. However a number of learnings became clear from reflection on the adaptations made throughout this action research process. Firstly, I understand that each site, and each group of people within each site, is unique — while a programme can offer areas of inquiry, and suggest useful practices, a programme needs to be in dialogue with the people involved, and capable of adaptation to the unique conditions of that site. Secondly, restorative practices are an essential element in a migration of identity process where harm has been caused by and to those involved, and any response should take account of a need for restoration. Thirdly, while the telling and re-telling of preferred identity stories within the community involved is essential, extending the telling and re-telling of preferred stories to communities outside of the site further strengthens and supports migration of identity.

I begin a discussion of these learnings, arrived at through reflection and conversation, by focusing on the need for a programme to be in dialogue with the communities involved. I discuss how, in spite of a preferred stance for a post-structuralist practice, my approach to this project was none-the-less influenced by structuralist thought and practice. My growing awareness of the need for the whole community to be involved in a migration of identity project led to a shift from a programme in monologue to a programme in dialogue (Geroski & Kraus, 2010).

A programme in monologue offers schools a set plan for making a difference, a recipe that, applied well, will achieve the hoped for effects. My stance is now for dialogue, where the programme offers potentially useful ideas and practices, and these ideas and practices are taken up, responded to, adapted, put aside and so on, as partners in dialogue reflect on the effects of

these ideas and practices within their communities. In this way, a programme in dialogue makes available the thinking and practices of research, and those ideas and practices are adapted to local conditions and local ethical desires. I reflect here on my experience of initially offering a programme in monologue.

Monologue To Dialogue

Given that much of my research project has focused on identifying rationalist ideas in favour of a post-structuralist stance, I begin by highlighting the ways that rationalist thought continued to shape my practice even while I was writing about post-structuralist ideas and practices. Particularly near the beginning of this project, I sought to develop a one-size-fits-all programme in order to support a migration of identity for young people at school at times when their actions had them as candidates for suspension or exclusion from school. In doing so, and in spite of my writing to the contrary, my work was shaped by two rationalist assumptions. The first of these rationalist assumptions was the idea that the problem was with the young person themselves and the answer lay primarily in adapting their thinking and behaviour. The second was the idea that one programme could offer a response in many settings. Thus even when I realised that teachers needed to be more closely involved to achieve the identity shifts hoped for in this work, I continued to be influenced by the idea of people as the problem, simply expanding the sense of "people" to include the teachers. Although aware that "person-hood is a status conferred upon one by others" (Shotter, 2004, p. 7), still I was influenced by "the *monological* Cartesian conceptions ... that have dominated our thought for so long here in the West" (Shotter, 1997, p. 71) (emphasis in the original).

By this analysis, and against my own best intentions, I initially employed post-structuralist discursive analysis as a rationalist tool to name and expose error in the thought and practice of those involved. I sought to correct the behaviour of teachers by changing the way they made sense of young peoples' actions — this through the development of a programme which

would serve to correct the "wrong" thinking of all involved. Thus, in rationalist fashion, my research project was set up to develop a programme, and to demonstrate its assured efficacy.

That I did so while intending to write a post-structuralist thesis stands for me as evidence of the ever-presence of dominant and competing discourses, often invisibly shaping practices. As Davies (1990) asserts:

> access to a new discourse does not undo or outrule the other ... Not only will others continue to constitute us in terms of humanist discourse, but we cannot easily shed the patterns of desire, nor the interpretive frameworks that we took up as our own in learning to understand and use humanist discourses, not just as social scientists, but as participants in the everyday world. (p. 47)

In reflecting on this research project I have found that prevailing discourses continue to assert influence over my thought and action even when they are named, and I have taken a stand against them. And this point is important for all involved in thinking and acting differently at times of responding to young peoples' actions at school. That is, although ethical reflection on the various hailings of discursive positioning offers some insight into the complexity of action-taking, still agency is a moment by moment response, vulnerable to varied prevailing influences. I return to this important point in discussing the need for ongoing support for young people's preferred identity claims after the initial intervention has finished.

While both a desire for and a rhetoric of post-structuralism has been present throughout this research project, it is only gradually, through reflection and analysis, that I have begun to see more clearly that the whole complex situation which leads to suspensions and exclusions at school is indeed discursively produced. A programme, whatever it may be, needs to gather all involved in forums of conversation, in order to notice prevailing discourses, reflect on their effects, and take up ethical positions for preferred ways of

being. The implications of this learning are expressed in the practice guidelines developed throughout — including that all those involved in the re-authoring project of young peoples' identity claims are invited to be involved from the outset of any intervention. I return to this point below.

By this later understanding, the practices of a programme may remain the same: Individual and peer conversations about alternative stories of life, leading to ethical reflections on the effects of previous life-stories and actions; meetings of teachers to reflect on current educational discourses and their effects and position calls, including invitations to take up alternative discursive positions of preferred identity claims and ways of performing self; and meetings of families and communities to discuss the discursively shaped interpretations of young people and of schooling, and their effect, including invitations to take up preferred positions. However, such practices are to be dialogical, co-constructed within reflective conversation and open to change in conversation with all those involved, and effecting change in all, including researchers. Such practices need regular review in order to notice and respond to the ongoing shaping influences of less preferred prevailing discourses, which, as Davies and Gannon (2006) alert "may take us over, reinscribe us, transform us, without us having realized that it was in urgent need of deconstruction" (p. 180) .

By this light, action research has taken place within me as well as within the two school sites, and my understanding of what I am doing has developed with reflection. Rather than developing and demonstrating the efficacy of a programme, I have come to a more robust description of suspension and exclusion as a product of complex discursive positioning, and to propose that effective responses to such complex discursive positionings are the above mentioned thorough-going explorations of the presence and effects of discourse (See also Drewery & Kecskemeti, 2010; Kecskemeti 2011; 2013). As Davies (2011) writes:

Teachers could work with students to become aware of the discourses and positionings and relations of power that are at play. Together they might turn their attention to the practices of schooling and their disciplining effects, and examine the tensions between conformity and conscience, between policing and questioning, and the tension between normalising practices and openness to difference. (p. 67)

The implication here is that practices that invite teachers, school guidance counsellors and young people (together with peers and family) to reflect on the effects of prevailing discourses help those communities to explore where ethical agency might have them understanding and performing multiple identities differently. Such practices are strongly located within dialogue — the co-authoring of preferred identities.

Thus to provide the conditions, relationship and skills in which a young person takes up a migration of identities is to be in dialogue with participants, robustly offering researched ideas and practices such as those discussed herein, while remaining open to their expression being adapted in particular situations. Here I emphasise that a programme, in offering a prescription for effective ways forward, risks precluding the very dialogue on which hope for this work rests. Hence what has come to be proposed here is a programme-in-dialogue about migrations of identity for all participants.

Individualist Discourse

Parallel with a move from monologue to dialogue, in response to my reflection upon this research experience, I began to see the extent to which, within a framework of highlighting the social and institutional practices which give rise to suspension and exclusion, I inadvertently took up an individual-based response (the boy is the problem) within a rhetoric of socially-based response (we all participate in identity formation). As I proceeded throughout the research process, I was confronted by the discursive complexity of the times

that lead to suspension and exclusion being considered. I saw more clearly than previously that to simply hold young people and others' actions as a product of individual choice misses the complexity of discursive hailing which became apparent in the action and reflections phases of this research project (see, for example, my discussion of discursive complexity in Chapter Seven).

I was confronted early in the work within the First School by the complex nature of identity formation and the actions which flow from it. Although Peter had begun to take up an alternative stance to his identity stories at school and at home, his teachers were unaware of Peter's claims that he wanted differently for himself at school, and that he was known differently in other settings. Teachers seemed to be responding to the previous reputation which Peter was attempting to leave behind, and it was clear that Peter's own assertions about making a difference would not advance far without his teachers' active participation. Thus I realised two important points: Firstly that Peter's teachers needed to be invited from the beginning to be part of the re-storying process, rather than simply being invited as an audience to it, and secondly that Peter's teachers were shaped by discursive positioning just as Peter was, and thus I needed to pay attention to the discourses shaping teacher responses, as much as those shaping Peter's responses.

This shift in understanding on my part was important, leading me to focus more fully on collaboration and inviting and including responses of significant others in the preferred identity stories that emerged in our counselling conversations. This shift led me to invite Peter's teachers to take up a new position of interpreting and responding to Peter and his emerging new reputation at school. Having reflected on the experience of the First School, together with Huia and Brent, I invited the teachers at the Second School to be involved in Hohepa's re-authoring project from the outset.

It was in the process of inviting teachers to take up such a re-authoring, discourse-aware position that I more fully recognised current educational discourse as a powerful agent in the construction of teacher identity. Thus I

recognised the need to engage current educational discourse through conversations with teachers about the ideas which shape their interpretations and responses to young peoples' actions. In light of reflection on this research project, and following Kecskemeti (2010, 2013), I am now clearer as to how I might engage teachers in such conversations. Initially, I sought to invite teachers as observers and reporters of what they noticed of the young peoples' changes in reputation. However the research clearly showed that teachers were more than an audience to young peoples' actions and identity claims. On reflection I realised that the teachers were important co-authors of such changes, and their retellings of and responses to preferred reputations both added to and sustained what was possible for the young people to achieve in a migration of reputation. In support of this teacher role in developing alternative identity stories with young people I now see that it is important to reflect with teachers on the ideas that shape their interpretations of young peoples' actions (current educational discourse among others) and to invite teachers to take up an alternative position with respect to those discourses and their effects at times of interactions with young people, especially when such interactions lead to suspension or exclusion is being considered. Thus the programme-in-dialogue includes teachers in discursive discussions and invitations within which they might take up alternative discursive positions. I do not make such suggestions lightly. If as I describe above I have not thoroughly made such shifts with a Masters in Counselling and fifteen years of attempted post-structuralist thinking, it may be that some effort is involved in supporting such moves for teachers.

I speculate that involvement in discursively aware re-authoring conversations will make a difference for teachers also. Where teachers are closely involved with co-authoring and audiencing young people's preferred identity claims in the presence of ongoing discursive influences which would shape them otherwise, they may also consider their own discursive positioning and their preferred identity claims. However, I also speculate that such identity shifts may need a more direct approach, within which the focus of conversation is

directly upon the discursive influences in teaching and teachers' lives, and within which teachers are invited to reflect directly on their own preferred positionings. As above, such possibilities have been explored by Kecskemeti (2010, 2013) and shape the next stage of this ongoing research project where the effect of teacher-focused discursive analysis and reflection will be further developed.

Individual heroism.

An inadvertent focus on individuals as the site of change was not the only place where rationalist discourses shaped an individualist response in the research project. Even within the central context of the re-storying of identity, the taken-for-granted individualist shapings of preferred stories became evident to me through the writing of Davies (1991). As part of what she terms a humanist discourse, Davies (1991) describes modern history as:

> [t]he story of celebrated individuals and their impact on the world. Modern stories ... are about heroes who engage in specific tasks and conquer the difficulties that the world puts in their way. The people about whom these stories are told are not understood as beings discursively produced by their times, but as the individuals writ large that we might each become as we struggle toward our own individual personhood. (p. 42)

By this light, my descriptions of Peter as caring for his nephew, for example, (see p. 121) make no effort to locate such caring within a matrix of discursive expectation and positioning or the social practices of his family, nor to any great extent is such a description located in a context of Peter's discursively shaped ethical desire (Foucault, 1997). In that writing I describe Peter's identity as preferred individual characteristics, rather than as Peter's nuanced negotiation of prevailing discourse, wherein he reflects on and accepts some position calls, while declining others, in keeping with his explorations of what

Foucault describes as "that relationship you ought to have with yourself" (Foucault, 1997, p. 352). While Peter's doing so is an example of the ethical agency hoped for in this project, I now see it as important to emphasise Peter's ethical desires and achievements as shaped by the discursive influences of his communities. I might now prefer to describe Peter, for example, as responding to ideas and traditions within his family and wider community which value caring for younger family members, and how his actions on behalf of these ideas position him in the family in ways he prefers.

Equally, I have written descriptions of Hohepa as desiring to participate in school as if these were characteristics particular to the individual Hohepa, rather than as a description of his positioning within a complex of discursive hailings. I might now prefer to discuss with Hohepa the ideas within his peers, family and community which support his stand for making a difference at school. Thus even the preferred identity accounts that form the heart of this research work are reflections of an individualistic understanding of personhood, rather than the discursive personhood my rhetoric espouses.

The implications of these realisations are a yet firmer commitment to the thoroughgoing reflective conversations outlined in this thesis, wherein the positioning calls of prevailing discourses are reviewed as to their effects and alternative agentic positionings are considered (see Chapter Eight). These reflective conversations require that a careful ear is maintained as an antidote to the ubiquitous hailings of prevailing discourse, in order that preferred identity claims are in the light of agentic choice rather than taken-for-granted positioning.

Identity migration for all?

In response to these research experiences, I have come to more fully recognise that a process of migration of identity for a young person at school includes a parallel invitation to a migration of identity for all involved (Jenkins, 2009). That is to say that in a process of joining with young people in re-

authoring preferred identity claims, community members (peers, family, teachers, counsellors, Board of Trustee members, and so on) are also invited to re-consider their preferred identity claims in the light of emerging discursive positioning. In this thesis I offer an invitation to dialogue with school guidance counsellors, Boards of Trustees, principals, teachers, community members, families, young people and their peers on behalf of a different sort of conversation about how to reduce the use of suspensions and exclusions from school. This offering is not a programme for an individual young person in order to achieve change. Rather this is an invitation to all involved to conversations about alternative meaning-making for that small group of young people for whom suspension and exclusion are being considered. While I offer maps of such conversations in Chapter Four, they are maps of a unique, evolving territory, a programme-in-dialogue with each particular site.

A Complex Response

My shift in emphasis from a monologic programme to a dialogue with those involved has arisen from awareness of the discursive complexity of the formation of preferred identity claims, and the actions which flow from them — what I am referring to as a migration of identity (White, 2005). Just as actions at times of troubling events at school are taken within a complex of discursive hailings, so equally, a migration of identity is a complex process of attending to prevailing discourses within the relationships which support preferred identity claims. In clarifying the ways in which both young people and teachers take up subjectivities in the light of prevailing discourses, I draw attention to the possibility:

> of the speaking/writing subject, who ... can move within and between discourses, can see precisely how they subject her, can use the terms of one discourse to counteract, modify, refuse or go beyond the other, both in terms of her own experienced subjectivity and in the way in which she chooses to speak in relation to the subjectivities of others. (Davies, 1991, p. 46)

Thus, as in Chapter Seven where I highlighted the ways that Peter and his teachers skilfully navigate a complex discursive environment offering at times contradictory hailings as to how they ought to enact themselves in order to be a good person, so a programme-in-dialogue invites skilful navigation of complex discursive positions for all involved, on behalf of emerging preferred ethical stands.

Affirmations, a Challenge and Developments

As a result of my research project, some key elements of the programme as originally proposed were affirmed, some were challenged, and some were developed. From the outset I proposed that through researching the effects of troubling reputations with young people, together with explorations of times and places where they are known differently, young people can be invited to consider preferred reputations for themselves, and to both publish and enact those preferred reputations. As hoped for, Peter and Hohepa were open to reviewing the discourses which shaped the actions which had them as candidates for suspension or exclusion, and the positions they took up. Peter and Hohepa were both attracted to subjectivities produced and described by a different reputation at school based on stories of times and places where they were known differently, and in preferred ways. As alternative identity claims emerged in response to the reflective conversations (described in Chapter Eight), both Peter and Hohepa began to enact emerging preferred subjectivities at school. That is to say, as Peter and Hohepa came to know themselves differently through the telling and re-telling of preferred identity stories, their actions at school reflected those preferred identity claims. These effects affirm my original proposal that the maps of narrative practice (White & Epston, 1990; White, 2007) (see Chapter Four) are effective in inviting young people and their communities to take up alternative and preferred identity claims. Further, these effects make plain the formation of ethical subjectivity, the modes of subjectification, aesthetic desire and telos (Foucault, 1982) of participants, as described in Chapter Two.

As outlined in Chapter Seven, it was clear from the counselling and interview phase of this research, as well as from the reflection and analysis phases of this research, that prevailing discourses did indeed shape the practices of both the young people and their teachers, and that their discursively-shaped identity stories influenced how these people responded to themselves and to others. This research project, including conversations and meetings with Peter and Hohepa, with peers, teachers, family and community, has made even clearer to me that identity is a social process within an association of life (White, 2007). The communities in which Peter and Hohepa belong are indeed "composed of significant figures and identities of a person's past, present and projected future, whose voices are influential with regard to the construction of the person's identity" (White, 2007, p. 129). While the ideas of identity as shaped within social communities informed my original research proposal, the practice of this research project has amplified and refined my awareness of this central point. As a result I now more fully emphasise the centrality of co-authoring preferred identity claims within a young person's community.

Along with these affirmations of my original research proposal, new learnings have developed my thinking about how best to respond with young people and their communities at times when suspension and exclusion are being considered. These include: The already discussed move from monologue to dialogue and from an individual to a thoroughly social response; that the relationships and discourse awareness which uphold preferred identity claims must continue to be supported and encouraged across the time beyond the initial intervention; that the young people in schools are a cherished part of communities of care, and as such, engaging with those young people and their communities brings with it an emphasis on the reciprocal commitments of relationship; and finally, the central need for restorative practices in response to harm done.

I turn now to these further learnings arrived at from this research and reflection process.

Blueprints and Agency

As discussed in Chapter One, my original research proposal was based on the idea that, implicit within unacceptable actions, young people (and others) are pursuing ethical intent, but may follow misguided blueprints (Jenkins, 2009) for expressing such intent, or in the absence of agentic positioning, may act against their better judgement. By this analysis, blueprints for action are shaped by often unconsidered discourses in life, wherein a person acts according to how they understand one ought to act in these sorts of situations. However, I emphasised that the agency to choose how one acts is constrained in that "institutions do not simply structure social life, they also constrain what can be said, who can say it, and how people may act and conceive of their own agency and subjectivity" (Parker, 1994, p. 103). Thus I described that it is through exploring the prevailing and constraining discourses (for example, those of developing manhood or of good teacher) that people can be invited to wonder how the effects of such discourses fit with their hopes for life, and to wonder what, if any, other expressions exist which fit more closely with their preferred hopes for life.

Through my own reflections on the prevailing discourses shaping my practice as a counsellor and as a researcher, I have become more keenly aware of the rationalist discourses which have shaped my individualising interpretation of ethical intent as a character within people. As a result, I have taken up a more robust position on behalf of the discourse awareness and social construction of identity which is central to this thesis. As White (2007) drawing on Vygotsky writes, the previously unrealised adoption of rationalist conclusions about the internal nature of character reflects "the extent to which this person is mired in the known and familiar and is not experiencing the sort of social collaboration that would support the scaffolding of her or his zone of proximal development" (p. 281). Through effective doctoral supervision,

through collegial conversation with co-researchers and counselling peers, through reviewing available literature, and in my own reflections, I have experienced the sort of social collaboration which has brought this rationalist positioning to my attention. Hence I re-emphasise the social construction of identity as dependent upon the conversations in which it can be constituted.

Exploring what shapes identity stories.

Thus central to the emerging programme-in-dialogue's theoretical base is the idea that peoples' identity stories are shaped by the complex interactions of prevailing discourses. What I emphasise here is the way discourses offer different languages within which certain interpretations are made more likely, and which invoke and invite particular subjectivities and actions in keeping with those subjectivities. As I have demonstrated in Chapters Six and Seven, Peter, Hohepa, and their interlocutors speak and act in keeping with the discursively produced and sometimes contradictory ideas of how one ought to behave in this situation. How each person subsequently describes their experience is in keeping with their discursively shaped identity stories.

By this understanding, a young person's identity stories are on the one hand a discursively shaped account of those life experiences selected for inclusion in that account, and on the other hand a moment by moment editing of current experience and an adding to one's identity accounts. This idea is in keeping with Bateson's (1979) understanding that "there is a non-random selective process which causes certain of the random components to 'survive' longer than the others" (p. 147). As White (1986) puts it, such selection of what survives within identity stories is the result of a "network of presuppositions, premises, and expectations [which] establish rules for the selection of information about perceived objects or events" (p. 169). Thus White and Epston (1990) can write that, "We prune, from our experience, those events that do not fit with the dominant evolving stories that we and others have about us" (p. 11).

The importance of this is that, without the opportunity to reflect on the various influences shaping their identity stories, and hence their actions, young people (and others) continue to select and enact those experiences which fit with their current sense of self, their current identity stories. What the alternative practices demonstrated in this thesis achieve and emphasise is a site within which young people can review their current identity claims, research and select alternative descriptions from the broad pool of previously unselected life experience which may be available, and take up invitations to exercise ethical agency, choices for action, on behalf of their hopes for themselves and others. That such moral agency may align with schools' own hopes reflects the ever presence of shared discourses available to shape both schools' and young people's desires.

Re-authoring identity stories.

It was central to my initially proposed programme that through an exploration of ethical desire implicit in a person's actions or explicit in their desire for an alternative reputation, alternative stories of identity can be co-authored. As discussed above, and in order to emphasise the emerging nature of alternative accounts, I now describe that process thus: That an exploration of the effects of prevailing reputations, together with an exploration of alternative reputations which may co-exist in other arenas, offers young people an opportunity to exercise ethical agency in choosing to take up preferred descriptions made available through re-authoring inquiries.

Thus the narrative therapy practice, Statement of Position Map 1 (See Chapter Four), guides a reflective conversation on the effects of problem reputations and actions, and invites a young person to take a stand for or against those effects. As described in Chapter Eight, any alternative identity claims which emerge in such taking of a stand can be co-researched for times and places where such emerging identity claims may have been present, if unnoticed, in the past. By bringing together accounts of times and places where such identity claims may have been present, narrative therapy's Re-

authoring Map (see Chapter Four) guides the development of an alternative identity account by connecting a series of events, across time, according to the preferred theme of the emerging identity accounts. As White (2000) explains, "It is through [such frames] that people make sense of the events of their lives, [linking them together] in sequences that unfold through time according to specific themes" (p. 10). What such re-authoring of identity stories achieves is both a preferred identity account available to shape further action taking, and an alternative selection process through which experience, both past and present, can be selected or deselected for inclusion in one's ongoing identity conclusions.

Thus in Chapter Eight, I demonstrate how in researching and reflecting on Peter's stories from times of his life not described by a troubling reputation, descriptions of Peter as displaying determination, honesty, reliability, and kindness were all made available for his consideration. When Peter claimed these as preferable descriptions, these descriptions became available as beginning points for alternative identity accounts. Through co-researching other times and places where such preferred descriptions may also be seen as preferable, richly described alternative accounts of how he has been, and may be in the future, become available to shape Peter's sense of self. Such "thick" (Geertz, 2003) accounts act as a powerful antidote to the ongoing presence and effects of the prevailing account that Peter is a troubled/troubling young man.

In these ways, new descriptions of self provide entrances to alternative accounts of self that, if selected for inclusion, create preferred identity accounts that support new ways of acting in the world. In the same way, Hohepa's actions of stopping smoking, attending in classes, paying (more) attention to uniform, and his increasing openness in conversation with teachers were all expressions of a developing account of a young man who was interested in education — this in spite of a reputation for the opposite.

Vulnerable identity accounts.

In both Peter and Hohepa's stories, their emerging alternative reputations were shaped by their preferred identity claims. However, in both cases, these claims remained vulnerable to existing and ongoing established reputations and ways of being, to the "rehearsed and familiar ways of making sense of things" (Speedy, 2008, p. 123). Although referring to research methods, it is relevant to young people and others that Davies (1991) writes: "Access to a new discourse does not undo or outrule the other ... we cannot easily shed the patterns of desire, nor the interpretive frameworks that we took up as our own in learning to understand and use humanist discourses" (p. 47). Thus, in order to support and sustain preferred identity claims, it is important to put in place processes which continue to thicken and affirm those preferred identity claims. I turn now to the recruitment of co-authoring and supportive audiences to such claims, and as I discuss later, to maintain such co-authoring and audience support across time: I turn to identity stories as a social process.

Identity Stories As a Social Process

When during Hohepa's definitional ceremony the kaumatua responded to Hohepa and those gathered with *"I'm thoroughly impressed with you, Hohepa — you have good parents, your granddad's wonderful, you are going in the right direction, you are making the go"*, and *"I think it's for his family — they live next door to each other. He has a good grandfather, he has good breeding, good stock!"* he emphasised that Hohepa has always been, is, and will remain part of an ongoing community of care, with its own stores of community stories which shape whanau (family) hopes and aspirations. As Tate (2010) writes, the links of such community relationships and stories "are contained in the whakapapa (genealogy) of people. Whakapapa links them with their more immediate tūpuna (ancestors), but may even go as far back as their original tūpuna who first arrived in Aotearoa from Hawaiki" (Tate,

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2010, p. 54). As well as these recent and ancient relationships, whanau (family) connections and stories within Te Ao Māori (the Māori world) also include, "mountains, rivers, kāinga [village], marae [local public place of meeting] and other distinguishing features of their tribal areas. In this way they seek to proclaim the reality (te mea pono) of their relationship links" (Tate, 2010, p. 122). In this multigenerational light, the efforts of Huia, Brent and I with Hohepa and his school stand as a very small piece alongside the very many generations of care and belonging of which Hohepa is a cherished part. Whether our efforts have value is to be decided by that community of care according to the values of their own community, while that community in turn is itself shaped by various discursive contexts, for example, of a post-colonial nation.

The awareness that Hohepa is a cherished member of a multi-generational community contributed strongly to my shaping of future proposals for this work — that when we work with young people to support alternative and preferred identity claims and relationships, we do so in keeping with a community of people who have been involved in that project over time, and to whose project we are invited as supporters rather than as leaders or teachers. This awareness invites me to a stance of humility and of consultation with the community as to what is important to them. As I discuss below, I have become increasingly aware that "we have a special responsibility to consider the ways in which we may have unwittingly reproduced assumptions about life and identity that are disqualifying of diversity in peoples' acts of living, and the ways in which we may have inadvertently colluded with the power relations of local culture" (White, 2007, p. 31).

Thus while my initial proposal held the place of audience to preferred identity development as essential, I now have a renewed emphasis and awareness on the central place of community in the co-authoring of preferred identity claims, and I take up a more humble stance about my role within such community based re-authoring projects. The implication of this stance is seen

in an emphasis on early and wide consultation and inclusion of community members in the re-authoring team supporting a young person in exploring alternative identity claims.

I thus highlight the "ever-changing sea of rights and duties, privileges and obligations, and enablements and constraints" (Shotter 2004, p. 7) within which:

> person-hood is a status conferred upon one by others, and if others do not take one's expressions of self seriously, if they do not respond to your utterances and other expressions as you intend, then you are being denied your opportunity to be a person. (Shotter, 2004, p. 7)

The implications here are twofold: Firstly, as already discussed, without the support of significant community members, alternative identity conclusions cannot thrive, hence the central place of community in co-authoring preferred identity claims; and secondly, preferred identity claims are thus not an expression of individual desire or design, but are rather an interplay of socially negotiated and affirmed possibilities. Thus alternative identity claims are a matter of reciprocal care — between the young person and their school and local communities, between the school and the young person and their community, between the counsellor, the young person and their communities, and so on. In these ways, what emerges as preferred identity claims represents the ethical hopes and desires of all those involved, in as much as this is possible.

In this light the forums and gatherings discussed in Chapter Six are not only sites of research into preferred ways of doing life, and sites of tellings and re-tellings of emerging alternative identity claims — they are places of negotiation where preferred identity claims are heard, enhanced, modified and endorsed within a community of care. These are places where local history, and community ethical preferences, can be discussed in a way which interrupts taken-for-granted ways of making meaning, and supports

community-preferred alternatives for young peoples' identity stories. These sites of negotiation between individual and community preferences include the interviews with young people, their teachers, their families and community members; outsider witness groups where supportive audiences can hear and respond to preferred identity claims in ways which interweave the young person's preferences with those of the audience; staff meetings where the hopes of the school can be explored; definitional ceremonies where all the support people can gather to declare their support for the preferred identity claims; and documents of various sorts which record preferred claims, and act as an antidote to school pastoral accounts of troubled reputations.

My research has emphasised that to bring about alternative identity claims, with a resultant change in behaviour, is to provide forums within which a young person's preferred identity claims can be explored and heard, supported and remembered, together with the ethical desires of the wider school and community. While this focus on community involvement was one part of my original proposal, here I emphasise the centrality of such community co-authoring. Having discussed the centrality of community re-authoring, I turn now to the ongoing need of support for emerging identity claims.

Identity Migration as a Process Requiring On-going Dialogue Rather Than an Event Achieved

My originally proposed programme offered a ten week intervention without consideration of ongoing support for any changes made. While I have demonstrated that such a ten week intervention makes a significant difference to the identity claims and actions of young people and their support communities, it is clear that that the co-research and co-authoring of preferred identity stories is a process requiring ongoing support rather than an event to be achieved; and that this is true holds for communities as well as for individuals.

In order to support and sustain preferred identity claims across time, it is necessary to continue to provide sites of conversation for young people and staff alike that supports migrations of identity as an ongoing process. As a result I highlight here that the alternative identity stories which can emerge, shaped by preferred discourses, remain vulnerable to the re-shaping and continuous recruitment of prevailing dominant discourses. As quoted previously, "institutions do not simply structure social life, they also constrain what can be said, who can say it, and how people may act and conceive of their own agency and subjectivity" (Parker, 1994, p. 103). The various discourses which shape the actions of young people (and similarly teachers and researchers) within community relationships continue to assert their "ought-tos" in ways which can undermine even heartfelt ethical desires for alternative ways of doing life. Existing cultural and personal stories sit alongside emerging preferred stories of the now and the future, and provide a conservative element, continuing to make available existing accounts and foregrounding existing positions. Any re-authoring of identity stories takes place in relation to these existing accounts of what is possible and desirable, and new stances must be reviewed in relation to the prevailing body of social memory which exists in the stories of culture.

Thus I highlight here the importance of keeping preferred stories alive and active through ongoing dialogue with existing cultural and personal stories, through repeated tellings and re-tellings of preferred stories and through engagement in projects wherein the achievements made become available for others to follow as an example (Denborough, 2008).

In Chapter Four I referred to the work of Barbara Meyerhoff (1992) in which she outlines the efforts of a small Jewish community to retain, and sustain, their unique identity within the discursive cacophony of 1970s California. I discuss another example of such telling and re-telling in Chapter Nine, where the sharing of poetry with other community groups is reciprocal in that it both makes available to that community alternative ways of understanding life, and

continues to support the preferred identity claims locally through the telling and re-telling of preferred accounts.

In those poems, where Peter declares, "*If they sit down with me and just be nice, I will do it*" and "*I can show commitment and respect*" and his friend Tama claims "*I just think ahead of myself, choosing my goals, that's what I'm doing now* (see p. 208) the way these identity claims are intended, in this form, for an international audience invokes a powerful community of support for those claims, and increases the likelihood that such claims will be selected and included in ongoing identity accounts. Here it is my practice of gathering these claims into poetic form, and invoking the audience, that adds the importance to these claims that supports their identity story inclusion as an influence on future actions.

Another example of ongoing support for preferred identity claims draws on the metaphor of Two Islands and a Boat (see Chapter Four), which allows for an extended conversation after the period of time of re-authoring preferred identity with young people and their community. This extended conversation provides for an ongoing focus on desired goals, the resources required, the support recruited, and the obstacles encountered, and offers support for an ongoing engagement with preferred identity. Thus Huia and Brent recorded with Hohepa his movement across time away from a reputation that risked suspension or exclusion, and towards a reputation for doing well at school.

In reflecting on the need for ongoing support for preferred identity claims, I realise that alternative identity claims, and their vulnerabilities, are a product of the at times contradictory discourses prevailing in the various domains of peoples' lives. Although both Peter and Hohepa made significant changes to their preferred and claimed identity stories, and although these claims were well supported by their communities of care, both boys left their schools within a year of the data generation phase of this research project. Given that the changes made were heartfelt and effective in the short term, I theorise that, in the absence of concerted support for alternative identity claims, prevailing

discourses may have shaped what had been re-shaped. In time, Peter and Hohepa, each in their own way, were positioned within discursive shapings that had them, for example, answering back in classes and wearing non-uniform clothing. Such actions, in the light of previous reputations, led to their staying at school becoming untenable. Equally, I theorise that, while the teachers involved in both schools had robustly taken up an alternative interpretive stance with respect to Peter and Hohepa's actions at school, still prevailing current educational discourse asserted a shaping influence on their subsequent interpretations and actions. As I discuss above, in my own research project I also realised the extent to which, in spite of a principled stand for post-structuralist interpretation, my own thinking and actions were still shaped by taken-for-granted rationalist ideas.

Thus I have learnt how important it is that these supportive conversations carry on across time, and continue to provide a forum for ongoing clarification of the young person's migration of identity, and offer support for all those involved in times when prevailing discourses might be influential in asserting a rationalist or other stance. I suggest that this might be done through the young person maintaining an on-going conversation with the school guidance counsellor and a small group of peers, and through occasional gatherings of wider supportive teams (teachers, peers, and family and community members) to further hear, support and further develop preferred identity claims.

These Are Our Kids

A further emphasis that grew out of my research experience has been a keener awareness that the young people with whom schools work are cherished members of their communities. My growing awareness of this has been shaped by my co-researchers Huia and Brent's guiding phrase, "These are our kids".

Throughout our times together at the Friday kitchen table, and throughout their work at the Second School, Huia and Brent emphasised the importance of relationship with young people and their communities as central to their work. This emphasis highlighted a particularly Māori sensibility that the young people with whom we work are precious to their communities — communities that are made up across time and place including whanau (family), tūpuna (ancestors), whenua (land), and for some, notions of nga Atua Māori (God and gods). Cavanagh et al (2012) take up this theme with the aim of establishing a culture of care within schools, "whereby schools and teachers take ownership and responsibility for students' holistic well-being (adopting an ethic of care), for building trusting and respectful relationships" (p. 444). Such a culture of care includes culturally responsive pedagogies which "respond to the cultural knowledge and understandings that minority students bring to school and ... affirm and incorporate these within classroom learning and teaching" (p. 445). Cavanagh et. al. (2012) summarise a culture of care as centred on the twin themes of whakawhanaungatanga (building respectful and reciprocal student-teacher and student-student relationships wherein students know that they belong, and feel safe to participate without threat to their cultural identities, values and practices), and manaakitanga (holistic caring) wherein teachers care for students well-being as well as for their learning. By this understanding, "students' holistic well-being and learning are dual priorities" (Cavanagh et. al., 2012, p. 452).

This emphasis on caring for young people and seeing them as belonging within extended communities of care was highlighted through my experience of the kaumatua who attended Hohepa's definitional ceremony (see Chapters Six and Ten), bringing clearly to the school's and to my attention that Hohepa was and is part of a family, and a community that cherishes him, and to whom it is of critical importance what happens to, and for "our boy".

From a perspective of Māori sensibility, as described by Huia and Brent, in taking up a position of pastoral care for a young person who is a member of

such a community of care, school pastoral staff are reminded that they are thus included in that community of care, and that such a position invites reciprocal responsibilities for the welfare of the cherished young person. In this light, the emphasis that the young people we work with are "our kids", that whatever we do in response to their actions must be in the light of whanau care and belonging, became a central guide to the ways we spoke about and planned on behalf of the young people and those involved with their care.

This learning emphasises a particularly Māori understanding of the reciprocity of both personal agency and pastoral care. Drawing on notions of tino rangatiratanga (self-determination, sovereignty), this understanding suggests that young people and teachers alike can experience an authority to say what is important to them, in the context of an equally important responsibility to their community — past, present and future — for how they go about exercising such authority.

By this understanding of tino rangatiratanga, because a person is a person-in-relationship with their whanau (family), tipuna (ancestors), whenua (land), and, for some depending on their understanding of the world, nga Atua Māori (God and gods), a person is not always in control of what they want to happen or how life's complexities unfold. That is, ideas of agency shaped by tino rangatiratanga suggest humility in relationship with those with whom they have their identity, and of forces beyond individual control — that the agency a person may enjoy is vested in them in the context of relationship — conferred, offered, a given thing within a community of care.

Further, such authority is not so much a noun to be possessed, as a verb to be experienced. Like identity, by this understanding, tino rangatiratanga and agency are in flux — a relational experience that a person may have at times, and not at other times; experience in some relationships, and not in others — the context matters, and who is involved, and what is going on. Such authority is constantly shifting, depending on where a person is within the relationships that are happening.

In this light, working with a young person and their peers to co-create explorations of ethical intent that may be implicit within unacceptable actions is not simply an invitation to collude with a young person and their peers in asserting their rights, according to their discursively shaped ethical desires. Rather such conversations, through producing the possibility of and the invitation to ethical reflection, place an equal emphasis on such reflections continuing into the young person's wider community, in order that any identity claims, and the actions which flow from them, are in keeping with the wider community in which the young person takes up their identity. In this sense, a young person experiences tino rangatiratanga in the only way possible to do so — in the context of the whanau, tūpuna, and whenua relationships from which tino rangatiratanga arises.

The implications of such a stance for young people is that being positioned with the agency to make alternative identity claims carries a reciprocal care and responsibility for the effects of those claims within their community. For schools, this means being reminded that having the authority to require from young people certain ways of behaving, carries a responsibility for the ongoing care and relationship with young people at school and their communities within which the young people are precious — "these are our kids".

Attending to Harm Done With Restoratively-focused Invitations to Responsibility

As discussed in Chapter Six, a further learning highlights the need to include, for all those involved, invitations to responsibility for any harm done (Adams et al., 2003; Corrigan, 2012; Drewery, Winslade, & McMenamin, 2002; McMenamin, 1999; Thorsborne & Vinegrad, 2008). While I have demonstrated how young people can be invited to take up alternative claims to identity, their actions shaped by previous subjectivities taken up may well

have caused harm for others. These others are often the same people, for example teachers and peers, who are invited to offer supportive audience for and contributions to preferred identity claims being made by young people whose actions have previously caused harm to them and their work.

While, teachers may be discursively shaped to want see young people who have been in trouble take up identity claims that support their hopes for life, that young people might do so without acknowledging and responding in some way to harm previously done is seldom acceptable. The restorative practices outlined in Chapter Six allow for conversations about harm done, and the means to make things right, in a way which is supportive of such teacher hopes for young peoples' well being. As Bird (2004) writes, inquiry into "injuries to the relationship ... provides enormous scope for close exploration of context and agency without cornering a person in a blame-position" (Bird, 2004, p. 264). In restorative conversations young people are offered the position of hearing the effects of their actions on others, and of offering to make amends where possible. In this light, the invitations to responsibility for harm done by their actions allow young people to offer teachers and others evidence of their preferred identity stories in action, and provide an opportunity to enact preferred identity claims in ways which demonstrate their sincerity and commitment to those identity claims in action.

I draw attention again, as discussed in Chapter Three, to the ways in which responsibility for the effects of actions taken is for those aspects that are in the control of the young person rather than "those aspects of our lives over which we have (as yet) no control whatsoever" (Shotter, 2004, p. 12). As Shotter describes, "When someone acts, their actions cannot be accounted as wholly their own, for each individual's acts are partly shaped by their acting in response to the acts of the others around them" (Shotter, 2004, p. 12). In this light, restorative processes offer an opportunity for people to take up whatever responsibility for actions taken and their effects may be theirs to take up, and to offer redress on behalf of their preferred identity claims. For other people

who may have experienced harm at the hands of young peoples' actions, restorative processes can provide assurances of safety and redress which may be necessary for them to feel at ease at school, and to offer support for others preferred identity claims.

In Chapter Six I outlined how the teachers in this project were asked how they had been affected by the actions of the young people, and what might help make things right. I demonstrated how, when Peter and Hohepa responded with agreement to what was being asked for, and with actions in keeping with their own and with their teachers' hopes, the teachers were encouraged to continue supporting the boys' efforts to make a change. Thus to bring about a change in behaviour is to attend to harm done by young people when enacting discourse-shaped subjectivities, whether positioned with agency or acting against their better judgement. The learnings detailed here shape what I offer as an alternative response to the actions of young people at school when such actions are deemed unacceptable. I turn now to further discussion of the theory and practice learnings from my research project.

In this final section, I turn from a discussion of my research intervention to a discussion of the effects of my use of discursive analysis as a research tool. Here I consider that the use of discursive analysis provides young people and others with a possibility of choice, and that my use of discursive analysis participates in a broader conversation about rationalist and post-structuralist stances and effects. I go on to discuss my positioning as a researcher, considering how my relationship with Huia and Brent Swann produced a discursive shift for me, prior to which my positioning as a Pakeha researcher had me focussing my use of discursive analysis on some things and not on others. I then discuss my use of discursive analysis as being on behalf of my own particular (discursively shaped) ethical desires.

Some Effects of Using a Discursive Analysis Approach

Effects in schools.

Through taking up a position as a researcher who deconstructs the discourses which shape identity claims and actions (Derrida & Caputo, 1997, Foucault et al., 1984, Sampson, 1993), I have demonstrated how the positions taken up by young people and teaching staff are shaped by prevailing discourses. As a result of the re-authoring practices described herein, Peter and Hohepa were able to articulate preferred ethical positions, and take positions on the effects of the ways they are expressing such ethical positions; teachers and other pastoral carers were able to explore the languages and powerful positioning effects of current educational discourse, and take up, for them, preferred positions with respect to those ideas and practices. I have explored a map of pastoral practice that, in dialogue with each unique site and people involved, guides conversations about possible alternative responses to young people at times of unacceptable actions at school.

My use of discursive analysis has made clear that schools are a product of discourses within the wider society, and I have highlighted the ways that the actions of young people and teachers in schools can be understood in terms of the discursive shaping of wider society, as much as the product of individual agentic actions. I have demonstrated how this analysis allows for a different conversation about young peoples' behaviour at schools, a conversation that includes the social construction of identity with peers, teachers, family, and community. Thus, while in current educational discourse young peoples' actions and behaviour are seen as endemic to them or to their school or family, the approach I have taken allows for these actions to be seen as a complex construction within relationships — social and moment by moment — rather than simply in terms of individual expression. Thus I have proposed that alternative answers to changing behaviour in schools lie

within a broad response including all those involved in the social construction of young peoples' identities at school and beyond.

Effects in broader societal conversation.

As I have highlighted in Chapter Six, when teachers and young people take up these ideas, and their actions are shaped by these ideas, they shape prevailing educational discourse, and make alternative actions more available for future shaping of teacher and young person identity claims. In this sense, my use of discursive analysis in the area of current educational discourse is itself shaped by a larger conversation (see, for example, Corcoran, 2007; Davies, 1990, 2011; Harwood, 2006; and Kecskemeti, 2011, 2013) about a move from rationalist to post-structuralist thinking. As such, this brief doctoral contribution participates in and advances that larger conversation about the deconstruction of rationalist certainty in schools. Through my use of discursive analysis in these particular school sites, the broader conversation about how schools can speak differently becomes advanced, and a post-structuralist interest in knowledge as flux is made more available.

In a similar way, where the teachers in Peter and Hohepa's schools take up different understandings and responses to unacceptable actions at school, those understandings and responses are available to shape future responses to young peoples' actions at school. An example of this is shown where Hohepa's deputy principal (see page 138) responded to Hohepa's setback with reference to their newly established relationship, and invited Hohepa to reconsider his actions with Huia's help. Again, where relationships with community members are formed around these preferred understandings (see for example Peter and Hohepa's definitional ceremonies where young people, school staff and community members shared their hopes for the young people) those relationships are available to shape future interactions between the school and the community members.

The Positioning of the Researcher Shapes the Focus of Attention

As discussed in Chapter Two, discursive analysis provides a perspective from which to explore the history and trajectory of particular discourses, for example, current educational discourse. The work of this project is an example of such an exploratory project. As a researcher, I am "caught up in moral/political choices concerning the reproduction and transformation of discourses" (Parker, 1992, p. 34). My experience of bringing discursive analysis to two distinct sites has highlighted the ways my positioning in each site made a difference to what the exploration was focused on. That is to say, my analysis was not as a neutral tool; rather I used discursive analysis as a tool at the service of my own (discursively shaped) research aims.

Thus, in the First School, in a practice shaped by my cultural and professional background, I focused on exploring discursive effects shaping the ethical desires of the individuals involved. This focus highlighted conversations about the effects of language, and about the counselling practices that produced positions for the young people and their teachers to consider their ethical stances towards the effects of their actions. By contrast, in the Second School my taken-for-granted research positioning was interrupted through my work with my co-researchers Huia and Brent. Huia and Brent's cultural and professional background was alert to the same discursive interest as mine. However, they also brought a particularly Māori discourse-shaped emphasis on the lived experience of the cultural and relational aspects shaping the peoples' stories, and on the reciprocal responsibilities inherent in such experience. Thus while it remained important to deconstruct the discourses shaping actions at the Second School and to explore possibilities for alternative discursively shaped actions, Huia and Brent emphasised the relational responsibility inherent in being involved in exploring with a young person the possibilities of preferred identity claims. Through conversations about cultural identities, whakapapa narratives, and iwi histories (see Swann,

2012; Swann, Swann & Crocket, 2013), Huia and Brent emphasised a cultural call for reciprocal care, and a commitment to staying relationally involved with the people for as long as it takes to make a difference. Such reciprocal care was expressed in the phrase, "These are our kids".

Huia and Brent communicated, emphasised and demonstrated such reciprocal responsibilities of care through meetings with both Peter and Hohepa's families, meetings at school, and our weekly meetings at the Friday kitchen table. These sites were places where, for me at least in part, such alternative understandings and practices were explored and considered, leading to a cultural knowledge analysis which took us in new directions. Thus, just as the analysis of Peter's story arose from my years of practice as a school guidance counsellor supported by extensive reading and research preparation, shaping the action of the project in the First School, so Huia and Brent brought a lifetime of experience, cultural knowledge and perspective to shaping the interests of the analysis at the Second School.

It was in this context that the history of the iwi, local to the Second School, was brought into the analysis as socio-cultural knowledge. The history of the iwi, and its relationships across time with various institutions, including the Second School, was thus able to play a part in our understandings of the discourses that shaped Hohepa's responses at school. (In the interests of anonymity, I do not describe these histories here). These historical yet ever present understandings, which Huia and Brent made available, included that Hohepa's interaction with the school, the presence of the kaumatua at the definitional ceremony, and Hohepa's interaction with the kaumatua (see Chapter Six) all took place in the context of a colonial history largely unconsidered within the school pastoral responses. While schools may not do so, Huia and Brent highlighted that such histories are held in keen awareness within the Māori communities involved.

Thus when the kaumatua attended the definitional ceremony because he had heard of what we were doing, Huia and Brent offered an interpretation of this

action as the community offering awhi (support), and as the community keeping an eye on what we were up to with their precious young person. In Māori terms, such an offering of support for our work brought a reciprocal responsibility for the school to offer the same level of care and commitment to Hohepa and his peers. As I discussed in Chapter Five, this position invokes partnership responsibilities explicit in the Treaty of Waitangi — the guaranteed protection of that which is precious, in an ethical relationship of partnership, within which "relationships need to be mutual and reciprocal, and extend to the mana of those in relationship" (Tate, 2010, p. 163).

I emphasise two points here: Firstly, that my positioning changed between the First School and the Second School, in relationship with Huia and Brent and their immersion in a particularly Māori awareness and commitment. In response to this shift in researcher positioning, the focus of the discursive analysis moved from the close analysis of the effects of words used as in the first School, to an analysis of the effects of positioning on what can and cannot be seen by participants in the Second School. Thus I highlight that the focus of discursive analysis shifted with my positioning as a researcher. Secondly, the experience of recognising that my positioning had me focussing on some things and not on others had me wondering what my positioning in the First School had made less visible there. Thus I now ask, if I were to enquire as to what I had missed noticing in the First School, who might I consult. And what might become clearer?

It was my sense of discomfort, of having missed something, together with the invitations of my co-researchers to take up that reflective position, which alerted me to the possibility that there might be more going on at the Second School than I was aware of. I did not have that experience at the First School. As a person who was familiar with the First School, with its staff and processes, and through the familiarity of working with a young person and family of the same culture as me, I was positioned as comfortable and culturally knowing in the First School. Thus, to some extent, I pursued my

research interests without the discursive interruption of the uncomfortable or the new.

What may have emerged if I had included Tama's mother and the school Māori liaison worker in the conversations about Peter's preferred identity claims? Were there cultural awarenesses that they were positioned to notice in ways that I was not? What might Peter's previous English teacher have added from her perspectives? Or the owner of Peter's internet cafe? By deliberately noticing my own positioning, I can now wonder about other positions from which available others may add to young people developing preferred identity claims.

A Further Reflection on Positioning and Agency

Throughout this thesis I have contrasted what I have termed a rationalist approach with a post-structuralist approach to understanding the actions of young people at school. I have offered a critique of the moral and diagnostic stances offered by current educational discourse, which may be expressed as variations of, "He's naughty", or, "There is something wrong with him." However, I note that my post-structuralist stance is also a moral one on behalf of notions of justice and of agency for those involved. Thus I too have offered responses at times of troubling actions at school which are in keeping with my own (discursively shaped) moral and ethical stands. Here Foucault's (1988) rubric of truth, power and self are expressed through a cultural valuing of justice and agency, through institutional development of these ideas, as for example through the institution of the University of Waikato, and through my willing submission to a subjectivity shaped by these discursive preferences.

I also note that while my use of post-structuralism explores how certain experiences come to be shaped and made meaning of as mental illness, my approach does not discount the presence and effects of organic illnesses of the body or the mind. Thus there may very well be "something wrong with this boy", and how we make meaning of that will affect how we respond. What I

draw attention to here is the subject position of the person offering or receiving such moral or diagnostic interpretations.

I have argued (see Chapters Two and Three) that rationalist discourses (with benign intent) risk imposing interpretations on those they wish to help. By this analysis, the subject position (Davies, 1991) for the authoritative person is agentic, while in the case of young people at school, the young person is subjected to the interpretations made (Drewery, 2005). That is, with a rationalist diagnostic approach, the young person's agency, their ability to co-author the accounts of their life and their actions, is constrained. Such positioning produces a version of the culpable subject, the needing to be transformed subject, the subject choosing to not make themselves into a responsible citizen (Graham, 2008).

In contrast, while also taking up a moral stance, and offering my own diagnosis of discursive construction, from a post-structuralist stance (also with benign intent) I seek to enter into a dialogue with people about the interpretations of their life and actions. Thus while my interpretations may include moral and diagnostic descriptions, the offering of these descriptions is dialogic — the desired subject position for both parties is agentic and relational. In this version of a relationship of care, the young person is positioned and invited to reflect upon their preferred accounts of self, and to co-author - together with their communities - accounts of their life and their actions. In this light, moral and diagnostic descriptions are agentically taken up (or not) in dialogue. It is the position of dialogue between affected people that I emphasise here as an antidote to the imposition of meaning and identity.

We need multiple voices

I note here that, while for years as a school guidance counsellor I have provided a place where teachers and young people can come together and talk carefully through whatever is concerning them, I have also relied on the

presence of a stern school-pastoral voice enforcing that unacceptable actions are just that – not acceptable. One of the practices described in Chapter Four is Statement of Position Map 1, where young people are invited to explore and map the effects of the actions they have been involved in. In that conversation, students are asked to take a position as to whether they prefer those effects, or some others. A preference for alternative effects is a common outcome of such inquiries, and is often on behalf of ethical stands the young person is making. Thus, for example, Peter preferred a new reputation in part because he "wants a chance" with his teachers (see page 172) or prefers fun to the trouble of the old reputation. However, the point I want to make here is that a prospect of punishment as part of a rationalist pastoral care response is also a potential effect of the young person's actions, and can also act as something the young person prefers to change.

Throughout the years that I have worked as a school guidance counsellor, deans, deputy principals and Boards have provided a backdrop to my conversations with young people, saying to them in effect, you can work it out yourselves, but if you do not, we will speak with you from within discourses of correction, be that remediation or punishment. I acknowledge that such a backdrop has provided a set of potential effects from their actions which may have young people wanting to make a difference. The fact that a young person may get into serious trouble, even be removed from school, has been a powerful support for young people to take up the alternative conversations I have offered. Thus I highlight something of a paradox —the very stance which I seek to find alternatives to in my research in some ways supports the effectiveness of the alternative approach I propose. I acknowledge therefore that multiple voices shape effective pastoral practice in schools, each supporting the other, each in service of effective, safe, inclusive education for all. Again I emphasise as above, that while everyday pastoral care works well for the majority of students, for some few students a re-authoring of identity accounts is a helpful response.

Further Personal Thoughts

I turn now towards an element of this research project that I have not yet highlighted, and yet one which is central to my commitment and energy for this work with young people: When I am in conversation with one or more young people, I often experience a joy, combined with a sense of kinship; a sense of whanaungatanga, of common purpose and connection characterises such conversations. While a young person referred to my counselling office within a school may be described as naughty or unwell, my experience is that the young person I meet with is a particular and unique person, who will, in my experience, respond to the sorts of conversations described herein with ethical hopes and desires. In conversations with such a unique subject, a sense of shared purpose emerges. And I experience that this fellow-feeling is as much responsible for shifts in identity as the overt re-authoring project which shapes our conversations.

By this light, I see the re-authoring of identity as taking place within the relationship between those involved, as much as it does in crafting of words to co-describe preferred identity claims (see Gelso & Carter (1985) for an extended discussion of the effects of relationship in counselling). Such a stance emphasises the narrative goal of recruiting and enriching communities of care; that it is in the context of relational belonging and support that preferred meaning is uncovered, explored and strengthened. While my personal experience of the whanaungatanga (fellow-feeling, kinship) of this work has not been the focus in my academic writing (see Chapter One for a glance in this direction), yet it shapes my efforts, and is a desired characteristic of my work with young people. The relationships experienced in counselling conversations are a site of connection within which preferred identity is shaped and developed.

As I write this I am reminded that it was hearing an interview with the well-known New Zealand author Patricia Grace (2008) that contributed to my desire to enter this doctoral project. In that interview, Grace drew on Māori

understandings to speak of the ancient relationships with people and place which are ever-present in the "now" of many Māori people. She spoke movingly, for me, of interconnectedness across time and place between people, across past, present, future. Grace's talking resonated for me with my experience of therapeutic conversations, and with the relational thriving of preferred selves, which I have experienced as becoming possible in such conversations.

There is something about these experiences of relatedness that makes my heart sing, and which is fundamental to why I do this work; something about encountering people in rich ways, and their connections to those they cherish, across time and place, in ways which are nourishing and healthful. This is something I experience in my best therapeutic conversations. It is both what shapes my efforts and what contributes to the differences made.

These, for me, beautiful discursive re-authoring conversations provide a context, a fertile ground, in which reciprocal participation in relationship occurs, and within which preferred identity claims become possible. Equally, it is within reciprocal participation in relationship that a taking up of preferred identities becomes possible. It is my pragmatic experience, as well as my belief that, at their best, and given the opportunities such as those described in this thesis, teachers, parents, and friends are motivated by a similar ethic and energy for relationship with those they care for. And that such conversations make a difference.

I conclude this writing with what will become the topic of my next research project: Bringing these ideas to schools.

Bringing These Ideas To Schools

To achieve a movement towards inclusive, discursively aware practices within schools, Macfarlane, Hendy and Macfarlane (2010) see a clear shift of focus required, "from the traditional emphasis on exclusion and segregation ... to

that of inclusion and participation" (p. 13). Such a shift requires educators "to challenge previously-held beliefs and assumptions about how and where students' learning and behaviour needs are best able to be addressed" (p. 13). However, writing of her work about bullying in schools, Davies (2011) describes how "teachers resisted this literature, seeing the questioning of the current model as a reversion to teacher blaming" (Davies, 2011, p. 60). In exploring a possible response to the difficulty of advancing such ideas and practices in schools, Davies (2011) goes on to write:

> We are suggesting that responsibility rests in the network of practices, discourses and relations of power through which subjects are constituted and for which schools have some considerable responsibility through the development of ethical reflexivity. We are arguing for an expansion of individual and collective responsibilities. (p. 67)

Drawing on their research within the Te Kotahitanga project, Cavanagh et. al. (2012) highlight that "assisting teachers to reach a deep understanding of how and why each of these components of a culturally responsive, relationships-based pedagogy is crucial, and how to introduce and sustain them in their teaching, takes a large amount of professional development, time and effort" (p. 447).

The writing of and Drewery and Kecskemeti (2010) and Kecskemeti (2011, 2013) offers a way forward in engaging school staff members in conversations about the positioning effects of prevailing school discourses. In doctoral her research project, Kecskemeti (2011, 2013) led focus groups of teachers developing specific conversational and discursively reflective skills aimed at improving teachers' ways of speaking and responding to stressful situations, managing relationships, building learning communities and improving well-being in a diverse school. In this process teachers came to model and teach peaceful ways of relating to students. Throughout her project, learning sessions were timetabled in each school term for

participating teachers, providing regular and ongoing opportunities for practice, discussion, and development of the concepts and the conversational strategies being advanced. Drawing on a broad understanding of restorative relationships in schools, Kecskemeti (2013) states that, "If we accept that schools are complex institutions then there will always be competing ideas, tensions and personal disagreements. Restorative practices are seen as offering ways to manage these fairly and positively, to prevent conflict and harm but, importantly, still allow the expression of difference" (p. 211). The findings of that doctoral study suggest that a restorative relationship approach can reduce teachers' stress through improving their capacity to manage differences and the complexity of their work (Kecskemeti, 2011).

Throughout this research project I have joined with these and other theorists' conclusions that discourse and language awareness is necessary for teachers aiming to support and audience young people in taking up alternative identity claims. I see the next piece of this project as entering into dialogue with schools about how such "ethical reflexivity" (Davies, 2011, p. 67) can be taken up and developed within schools. I envisage conversations with school guidance counsellors through to Boards of Trustees in which such ideas and practices are considered, and as appropriate to each site, trialled for effectiveness in those sites.

Such ethical reflexivity could encompass a discursive analysis of the vocabularies of school, including Board of Trustee statements, school report writing, pastoral care notes, and playground and classroom interactions. Such a project analysing the use of language in schools would ask such questions as:

What are the cultural and ethical values implicit in these uses of language?

What discourses are shaping of such language?

What are some of the effects of the use of such language? and

How do such effects fit with our valued ethical intentions?

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GLOSSARY OF MĀORI TERMS

Ahuatanga Māori - Māori tradition

Aroha – Love

Atua – God/s

Awa - River

Awhi - Offer support

Hapu - Clan

Hui – Meeting

Iwi – Tribe

Kāinga - Village

Kanohi ki te kanohi - Face to face

Karakia - Prayer

Kaumatua – Male elder

Kawa – Protocol, customs

Kuia – Female elder

Kete - Basket

Mana - Prestige

Mana whenua - Authority over land

Mana tangata - Inherited status

Manaaki - Care for another's personhood

Marae - Local tribal place of meeting

Maunga - Mountain

Moko - Grandchild

Nga Atua Māori - God and gods

Pakeha - NZ European

Pono – Truth

Rohe – Area of practice

Taonga – Things valued

Te mea pono - Reality

Tika - Justice

Tikanga – Custom, correct procedure

Tino rangatiratanga - Sovereignty

Tipuna - Ancestors

Turangawaewae – Place of belonging and kinship

Waka - Canoe

Wehi - Awe

Whakapapa - Genealogy

Whakapapa narratives - Stories of family history and connection

Whakapono - Faith

Whanau – Family

Whanaungatanga - Family spirit

Whenua – Land

APPENDICES

Appendix one: Introduction to Board of Trustees letter.

Dear Board of Trustees of [Second] College,

I am a Doctoral student with Waikato University undertaking an Auckland based PhD research project looking into effective ways of helping young men experiencing trouble at school. The aim of this research is to assist young men in moving towards more positive life decisions and engagement with education.

My interest in this work stems from 20+ years in High Schools as a teacher, Dean, and guidance counsellor. I have worked as a guidance counsellor at Hamilton Boys High School, Hillcrest High School, and Waitakere College. My Masters in Counselling work focused on restorative justice in High Schools. This present research with young men experiencing trouble at school is a continuation of these years work. My passion is to see young men freed from the effects of trouble in their lives and moving on to achieve potentials that may be available to them. The focus of my research is an intervention with young men who are seen as leading troubled lives and who are in potential danger of being excluded from school.

Having met with your Deputy Principal, in this letter I am asking your consent to conduct a part of this research project in your school.

This research work aims at enhancing young men's dispositions to learn (e.g. 'taking an interest', 'being involved', 'persisting with difficulty', 'expressing an idea or a feeling' and 'taking responsibility or taking another point of view') through a process of autobiography, peer reflection, and community support.

I understand that young men (and others) act in life according to the stories they have about 'who I prefer to be'. In working with young men and their peers to develop preferred self-stories, this research aims to offer young men new

possibilities for speaking about themselves and for acting differently in life. This work is informed by ideas from narrative therapy.

The peer group meetings that form this research will focus primarily on the life stories of the member's one at a time, with the others acting as a peer reflecting team. Over ten one hour meetings during school time the group will be:

- Exploring what the young men stand for in life.
- Connecting those stands with the stories of their family and community.
- Listening to introduced stories that enrich their ways of speaking about what is possible.
- Developing an alternative account of 'Who I prefer to be'.
- Publishing that alternative account to family and wider (including school) community members.
- Responding to an invitation to support others in the same process at a later time.

The involvement of peers, and later of family and community, is seen as central to this work. The on-going effectiveness of a new story in guiding a young person's future actions is strongly related to the support of peer, family, and community relationships.

The PhD research into this intervention takes three forms:

1. Measuring, before and after, key indicators of the young persons' engagement in education, including Dean's records of (hopefully reduced) troubling behaviours, school reports, an interview with key teachers and career counsellor, and an interview using a matrix on which movements on young men's dispositions to learn can be measured.

2. Interviews with the young men as to which parts of the intervention, if any, made the most difference.

3. My reflections as researcher based on the notes, records, and recordings I have made during the various meetings. The meetings we hold together will be video recorded and transcribed for analysis. These recordings and transcriptions, together with any notes, will be kept securely in my office until the research process is complete – up to five years.

With your permission, the peer group intervention at your school will be conducted by my co-researcher Brent and Huia Swann, while the research conversations will be conducted by myself.

The results of these conversations will be published as part of my PhD thesis, and as journal articles in appropriate professional journals. It is possible that some of the results will be available for either Brent or Huia Swann for use in later Masters thesis work, subject to ethical approval. All institutions, families, and individuals involved in this project will be anonymous in any writing. Contact with the University of Waikato can be made through my Doctoral Supervisor Dr Kathie Crocket at kcrocket@waikato.ac.nz.

I am very much looking forward to the chance to undertake this exciting and hopefully effective work in your school.

Please contact me if I can clarify this request further.

With thanks,

Donald McMenamin

donaldmcm@gmail.com 0273074339

Appendix two: Invitation letter to participants.

Dear [Participant],

Thanks for your interest in joining this group we spoke of – I appreciate that.

Because this is a University project, there are some things it is important that I tell you so that, if you say 'Yes' to joining, you know exactly what it is you are signing up for. The university and I call that informed consent. Please be aware that if you do not want to be involved for any reason at all, that is fine – simply tell me and I will respect that.

I have written some questions and answers about this project:

What is this research about?

Sometimes when young men are in trouble at school the story of what is most important to you in life does not get heard much. By looking carefully at what is most important to you, we can write your own preferred story together – sort of a preferred autobiography. The friends who join you in the group will help with that, as well as telling their own stories. My theory is that the more a person tells their own story of what is really important to them, the more they are likely to get what it is they are after in their life. Our meetings together will be aimed at finding out if that works for you and your friends.

Will the group be confidential?

Yes – nothing you say in the group will be spoken or written about by me in any way that identifies you or the people you know, or your school or home. Our work together is confidential. I need to say clearly here that the others in

our group, and any others that we might choose to tell our stories to later (you get to choose if anyone gets to hear), those people are able to talk about their experience. We can and will ask each other to respect what is told, but I cannot order people (or you) to do that.

Who is in the group?

There will be 4 or 5 people in the group. We will discuss who joins, and we will all agree with the final group.

Will the group be recorded?

The meetings we hold together will be video recorded and transcribed for analysis. These recordings and transcriptions, together with any notes, will be kept securely in my office until the research process is complete – up to five years.

What do you do in this group?

My job is for you and I to talk together about what is most important to you in life. I do that using ideas from narrative therapy. While we talk, your friends will listen. Later I ask them what seemed most important to them about what they heard us say. Then I will ask you if any of what they said is useful to you. The idea is that, all together, we are helping each other write a story that says what you really stand for in life.

What else do you do in this group?

For a long time people have been telling stories about what is most important to them. Some of the weeks when we meet I will tell you some of those other people's stories. Some will be familiar because they come from your own

cultural background – some will be new. But they will all add to our goal of telling your story as best we can.

Can I change the group if I want to?

Each time we meet we will talk about how things are going for you. Together we can decide what is best. The chosen group will stay the same for the whole group time. If you decide you do not like it, you can leave at any time – you do not have to stay even if you agree to start. If you do leave and want to talk over that experience for any reason, the school guidance counsellor is available for you to talk to.

What happens at the end?

The last part of our work together is to tell your new story to some people whom you think will enjoy hearing it. That might be parts of your family, or maybe someone else from your community or school – we will talk together to decide who to invite to listen to your new story. The idea is that when you tell a new story to people, it helps make that story more likely to happen.

What are you going to do with this after we finish?

Actually, I am doing this as part of a PhD study at University. When this is all finished they will call me 'Doctor Mac'! So what I do with all this is I write a sort of book, called a thesis, for the University. Then I write an article about what we did together for a counsellor's magazine so other people can try these ideas out too. Your story is the most important part of that. In those writings all the names of people and places are changed, so no one knows who or where is being talked about.

Will other people get to hear about me?

Yes they will! That's a really important part of this work. Others will get to hear of your stories, and they might want to try that themselves. But they won't know it's you because all the names of the people, and of the school, and of anyone else involved will be changed. As I said above, nothing you say in these groups will be spoken about by me to others in a way that you can be identified – the meetings we have are confidential.

How many meetings are there, and will we meet at any times outside of the group meetings?

All together we will meet fourteen times over fourteen weeks. The actual group meetings are once a week for ten weeks during school time. As well as that I aim to meet you before we start to talk about how things are at the beginning. Then I will meet with you after we finish to see if anything has changed for you. Also I invite you to have a meeting with the career counsellor at school before and after we meet to discuss your ideas for your future – this is to help us see if the meetings with me and your friends has added any new ideas for you.

That's how I figure out if these group meetings make a difference. Plus we will meet with some other people (we will work out who they could be together – you choose) to tell them the new story we have written together - your biography.

How else do you see if the group meetings make a difference?

If you agree, I will do several things:

- Look at your reports before and after.

- Ask the Deans if they have seen any change after our meetings.

- Ask a teacher (you tell me who) if they have seen any change after our meetings.

- Talk to the career counsellor to see if anything has changed for you before and after.

- There's a sort of grid thing, I'll show it to you, which records how you think about learning (they call it dispositions to learn) and we'll fill that in together before and after to see if anything has changed.

I take all that stuff, and I write up a report about any changes that have happened for you and the others. When I write that report, we will all sit down together and talk about it - to see if you agree with what I have written or not. You can change things in it if you want to.

What if I have got some more questions?

Just ask me!

If I want to talk to someone else about this, who can I talk to?

You can talk to the person who is supporting me in this work - my doctoral supervisor. Her name is Dr Kathie Crocket. She is an easy person to speak with – and you can call her at 07 8384466 ext 8462, or email her at kcrocket@waikato.ac.nz. Also, of course, you can talk to your care-givers at home, and your school guidance counsellor and friends at school about all this.

So – that's what these group meetings are about. If you want to join just fill in the Consent Form and we'll get started. If you do not want to join please just say so and there is no hassle at all with that.

All the very best,

Mr. Mac.

Appendix three: Consent form for participants.

I have read the **Participant Information Sheet** for this project and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions about the project have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time. I understand that the conversations I have in this group will be recorded, and that those recordings will be used for research and presentation purposes. I understand that I may ask for any visual images of me to be removed from any public presentation.

I also understand that I am free to withdraw from the study before the final analysis of the data begins, or to decline to answer any particular questions in the study. I understand I can withdraw any information I have provided up until the researcher has commenced analysis on my data. I agree to provide information to the researchers under the conditions of confidentiality set out on the **Participant Information Sheet**.

I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the **Participant Information Sheet**.

Signed: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____

Additional Consent as Required

I agree / do not agree to my images being used (I understand that agreement at this point can be changed if later in the process I decide to.)

Signed: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____

Researcher's name and contact information: Donald McMenamin 027 307 4339 donaldmcm@gmail.com

Supervisor's name and contact information:

Dr Kathie Crocket **07 8384466 ext 8462,** *kcrocket@waikato.ac.nz*.

Appendix 4: Parents/caregivers letter/information sheet/consent form.

Dear [Care-givers],

[Participant] may have spoken to you about a group he has been invited to join. This letter is for me to introduce myself and to let you know what is planned for this group, and to ask for your consent that [Participant] be involved.

Please understand that, of course, you are free to agree or not agree with [Participant] joining this group, and also that [Participant] is free to decide to join or not join this group, and also that he may leave it at any time if he chooses.

First to introduce myself…

I grew up in Auckland where my parents Joe and Joan McMenamin were teachers in primary schools – my Father at Waikowhai Primary School and my Mother at Grey Lynn Primary School. I am the third of their six sons. My wife Charmaine and I have 4 children. Charmaine has been a midwife and is now a kindergarten teacher. As for myself, I have worked for 20+ years in schools as a teacher and counsellor, focusing on restorative practices in schools.

These days I am a doctoral student with Waikato University doing a PhD research project looking into ways of helping young men experiencing trouble at school. My passion is to see young men freed from the effects of trouble in their lives and moving on to achieve what might be possible for them.

This letter is to tell you about and ask your consent for [Participant] to be a part of a group I will be running and researching over fourteen weeks from the time we start.

The aim of this group is for the young men to be able to tell stories about their lives that are not about trouble – stories about what they care about, and what they value. My belief is that when we talk with young men about their own

preferred stories – the things they care about and look forward to - they are less likely to keep having trouble at school.

I have written here some answers to questions about this group which [participant] may want to join:

How often will you meet, and when?

Overall we will meet fourteen times during this research process. Initially we will meet for an hour to discuss the project and information about consent. If we all (Participant, yourselves and I) agree to go ahead, we will meet once a week for an hour for ten weeks during school time with a small group of peers – this is the main research intervention. We will meet at school in a room provided by the guidance counsellor. After the ten weeks of peer group meetings we will meet three more times – twice to tell the new stories to invited guests, and one final meeting to discuss how the whole process went.

It is planned that the peer group meetings will take place mainly during Term 2, with one earlier meeting in Term 1, and the final meetings in Term 3.

The meetings we hold together will be video recorded and transcribed for analysis. These recordings and transcriptions, together with any notes, will be kept securely in my office until the research process is complete – up to five years.

What is this research about?

The idea is that the story of what is most important to young men in life does not get heard much at school. By looking carefully at what is most important to them, we can write their story together – a sort of autobiography. The friends in the group will help with that, as well as telling their own stories. My theory is that the more a person tells the story of what is really important to them, the more they are likely to see it happen! Our meetings together will be aimed at finding out if that works for these young men.

Will the group be confidential?

Yes – nothing that is said in the group will be spoken or written about by me in any way that identifies any of the people involved, their school or home. Our work together is confidential. I need to say clearly here that the others the group, and any others that the group might choose to tell their stories to later (they get to choose if anyone gets to hear), those people are able to talk about their experience. We can and will ask each other to respect what is told, but I cannot order people (or you) to do that.

Who is in the group?

There are four or five people in the group – each is invited and can choose to join or not, and to leave at any time if they choose.

What do you do in this group?

My job is to talk with the young men about what is most important to them in life. I do that using ideas from narrative therapy. While we talk, the friends listen. Later I ask the friends what seemed most important to them about what they heard said. Then I ask the first person if any of what the friends said was useful for them. The idea is that, all together, we are helping each other write an autobiography that says what they really stand for in life.

What else do you do in this group?

Some of the weeks when we meet I will tell some other peoples' stories of overcoming trouble. Some of these stories will be familiar because they come from the young men's own cultural background – some will be new. But they will all add to the goal of telling their story as best we can.

Can people change the group if they want to?

Each time we meet we will talk about how things are going. Together we can decide what is best. If someone decides they do not like it, they can leave at any time – they do not have to stay even if they agree to start.

What happens at the end?

The last part of the work together is to tell the new stories to some people that they think will enjoy hearing it. That might be parts of their family, or maybe someone else from the community or school – we will talk together to decide who to invite to listen to the new stories. The idea is that when you tell a new story to people, it helps make the new story more effective and helpful.

What are you going to do with this after the group is finished?

I am doing this as part of a PhD study at University. At the end of this study I will write a thesis. I will also write an article about what we did together for a counsellor's magazine so other people can try these ideas out too. The young men's stories are the most important part of that. Please note that all names of people and places will be changed in anything that is written – no one will know who or where is being talked about.

Will other people get to hear about them?

Yes they will! The aim of this work is to see if this idea is helpful for young men. And if it is, we want others to try it out too. So the young men's stories are the main thing. But others won't know it's them because all the names of the people, and of the school, and of anyone else involved will be changed.

Will you meet at any times outside of the group meetings?

Yes, just a bit. I want to meet with the young men before we start to talk about how things are at the beginning. Then I want to meet with them after we finish to see if anything has changed for them. That's how I research if these group meetings make a difference.

How else do you see if the group meetings make a difference?

If the young men agree, I will do several things:

- Look at their reports before and after.
- Ask the Deans if they have seen any change,
- Ask a teacher (the young men tell me who) if they have seen any change.
- Ask the young men to talk to the career counsellor before and after to see if there is any change for them.
- Use a grid type matrix that records how people think about learning (they call it dispositions to learn) filling that in together to see if anything has changed.

I will take all that research data and I write up a report about any changes that have happened for the young men. When I write that report, the young men and I will sit down together and talk about it - to see if they agree with what I have written or not. They can change things in it if they want to.

What if I have got some more questions?

Please just ask me. I am very happy to come to your home to talk with you, or to meet you at school or at another place if you prefer. I can be called on 8189952, 027 3074339, or emailed at donaldmcm@gmail.com.

If I want to talk to someone else about this, who can I talk to?

You can talk to the person who supports me in this work - my Doctoral Supervisor. Her name is Dr Kathie Crocket. You can call her at 07 8384466 ext 8462, or email her at kcrocket@waikato.ac.nz. Or you can talk to the school Principal or Guidance Counsellor who know about this work.

I hope that clarifies what [Participant] may have talked about. I've also included here the Information Sheet that I sent to the school, as well as the letter I gave to [Participant] for your information.

If you have any concerns or questions, please contact me.

All the very best,

Donald McMenamin / Mr. Mac.

Consent form for parents/caregivers.

I have read the **Participant Information Sheet** for this study and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions about the study have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I also understand that [Participant] is free to withdraw from the study before final analysis of the data begins, or to decline to answer any particular questions in the study. I understand he withdraw any information provided up until the researcher has commenced analysis on my data. I agree that [Participant] may provide information to the researchers under the conditions of confidentiality set out on the **Parents/Caregivers Information Sheet**.

I agree to allow [Participant] to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the **Parents/Caregivers Information Sheet**.

Signed: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____

Researcher's name and contact information:

Donald McMenamin 027 307 4339 donaldmcm@gmail.com

Supervisor's Name and contact information:

Dr Kathie Crocket *07 8384466 ext 8462, kcrocket@waikato.ac.nz.*

Appendix 5: School staff letter, information sheet.

Dear [Deans, Teachers, Career Teacher]

Thank you for helping with the data gathering and generating part of this project.

As you know I am a doctoral student with Waikato University undertaking an Auckland based PhD research project looking into effective ways of helping young men experiencing trouble at school. The aim of the research is to assist young men in moving towards more positive life decisions and engagement with education.

My interest in this work stems from 20+ years in High Schools as a teacher, Dean, and guidance counsellor. I have worked as a guidance counsellor at Hamilton Boys High School, Hillcrest High School, and Waitakere College. My Masters in Counselling work focused on restorative justice in High Schools. This present research with young men experiencing trouble at school is a continuation of these years work. My passion is to see young men freed from the effects of trouble in their lives and moving on to achieve what might be possible for them.

You will see from the attached Information Sheet what the scope of the project is. Your part in this is central to the validity of the results. By assisting with information before and after the intervention takes place you provide both an objective and a subjective view of any changes that have occurred.

I would like to be able to:

- Interview you briefly before and after the intervention, using the attached questions to guide that interview; and

- Ask you to discuss with me any changes you may have noticed in the young men's dispositions to learn as listed in the matrix below.

- Please note that the interviews we have together will be video recorded and transcribed for analysis. These recordings and transcriptions, together with any notes, will be kept securely in my office until the research process is complete – up to five years.

Again, thank you for your valuable part in this project.

If you have any questions at all, please ask them of me. If you have any concerns that cannot be raised with me for any reason, please contact my Doctoral Supervisor Dr Kathie Crocket at kcrocket@waikato.ac.nz. And finally, please be aware that if you want to withdraw your involvement at any time for any reason you are entirely free to do so.

Many thanks,

Donald McMenamin

School staff information sheet.

Project Title

Un-troubling stories with young men: Co-research, reflection and celebration.

Purpose

This research is conducted as partial requirement for the degree of PhD in Counselling. This project has the researcher meeting with a group of young

men to co-author alternative accounts of their lives. One other group will undertake the same research intervention in a different school with a different counsellor.

What is this research project about?

This project aims to investigate the effect on young men of co-researching and writing an alternative self description, moving from a troubling one to a preferred one. This research is conducted through peer group meetings to co-research, co-author, and co-publish participants' preferred accounts of life. The research aims to demonstrate that these alternative accounts of life act as a positive guide for young men's actions in life and dispositions to learning at school.

What will you have to do and how long will it take?

As school staff members I would like to interview you before and after the peer group intervention about your experience of the young men involved in the research project - about your perceptions of their engagement in schooling and dispositions to learn. This will involve a 20-30 minute interview guided by the attached questionnaire guidelines and dispositions matrix.

Our conversations together will form a valuable part of assessing whether or not the research intervention described below has had an impact, and if so, what that impact is.

What will the students be doing?

The young men involved in this research project will meet during school time in Term 2 for ten one hour peer group meetings. At these meetings the participants will explore with the research counsellor and their peers what their actions reveal about what it is they care most about in life, and the history of those caring inclinations. These emerging alternative accounts will be

supported by the telling of others' introduced stories – stories from historical and cultural sources as well as those of experience-near family and community connections. The result of these meetings will be for each participant a rich personal account of their stands in life – a preferred biography. It is hoped that this preferred biography will act as a guide fore young persons' future actions and choices at school and beyond.

The result of those meetings - the new biography of each participant - will be shared with an invited audience. These meetings will be held outside of school time during Term 3.

The group meetings will be recorded. Participants (and their care-givers) will be asked to give consent to their involvement in group meetings, and to the use of the data for a PhD project. Participants will be asked to give consent prior to the research intervention beginning, and at a later stage to discuss, and if appropriate give permission for, any further involvement in related activities.

The participants will be interviewed before and after the research intervention (an hour each meeting) to record any changes they have experienced.

I am asking that relevant documents or sources be accessible for this research, such as school reports, dean's records, attendance records, so as to further research the effect of the intervention with the participants.

What will happen to the information collected?

The information collected will be used by me to write a thesis for the degree of PhD in Counselling, as well as articles and presentations about the research. Only myself as researcher and my supervisors will be privy to the notes, documents, recordings made during the research. Afterwards, when the process of PhD is complete, notes and documents will be destroyed and recordings erased. According the University rules the resources are kept secure until that time, and treated with the strictest confidentiality. No

participants or institutions will be named in any publications and every effort will be made to disguise identities.

Declaration to school staff members involved:

If you take part in the study, you have the right to:

- Refuse to answer any particular question, and to withdraw from the study before analysis has commenced on the data.
- Ask any further questions about the study that occurs to you during your participation.
- Be given access to a summary of findings from the study when it is concluded.

Who's responsible?

As the researcher I am primarily responsible for this work. If you have any questions or concerns about the project or about my work, either now or in the future, please feel free to contact me directly (Donald McMenamin 027 3074339 donaldmcm@gmail.com) or my doctoral supervisor, Dr Kathie Crocket (07 8384466 ext 8462, kcrocket@waikato.ac.nz.