The Meeting of Two Tides: Journeys of Mixed Heritage Māori–Pākehā towards Identity Strength

Hēni Collins *(Ngāti Raukawa, Ngāti Haumia, Te Arawa, Pākehā)*

WELLINGTON

Abstract

Consistent with the theme of this year's conference, "Tōna Kanohi, Kauae Moko: The Face that Turns Towards her Ancient Self", this article includes a personal narrative about taking moko kauae, and some of the cross-cultural tensions associated with that decision within our whānau/family. It also describes my thesis Te Pūtahitanga o Ngā Tai e Rua (The Meeting of Two Tides) (Collins, 2004). The thesis aimed to provide new insights and understandings about the challenges, vulnerabilities and strengths associated with being of mixed Māori and Pākehā heritage in Aotearoa New Zealand. It was based on the life narratives of eleven men and women of dual Māori-Pākehā heritage and looked at change over time, particularly the process of seeking and developing cultural and ethnic identity strength as Māori. It acknowledged ongoing stresses and tensions; coping strategies; and described two cases in which coping strategies were overwhelmed and breakdown occurred. It considered whether a dual Māori–Pākehā ethnicity can be maintained and stabilised over time in the light of inequities and racism in society. Most participants in the thesis were high achievers in terms of education, career success and acculturation and socialisation as Māori. These factors perhaps facilitated the level of self-validation required to tolerate the stress of maintaining a dual identity position for some. The Māori cultural and political renaissance has involved defining Māori in terms of difference from Pākehā/Europeans, but this thesis explored the overlap — genetic, cultural, and social — between the two ethnic groups and provided new insights into diversity within the Māori ethnic group.

Waitara

Ōrite ki te kaupapa o tē hui o tēnei tau, "Tōna Kanohi, Kauae Moko: The Face that Turns Towards her Ancient Self", kei roto i tēnei tuhinga he kōrero whaiaro e pā ana ki te tāmoko kauae, me ētahi o ngā maniore ahurea-whakawhitinga uru mai ki tērā whakaritenga i

roto i tō mātou whānau. Ka whakaahuahia anō taku tuhinga roa 'Te Pūtahitanga o Ngā Tai e Rua (Collins, 2004). Ko te whāinga a te tuhinga he whakarato tirohanga mātatau hou e pā ana ki ngā wero, hauaitu me ngā awe piri ki te hunga whai totorua- Māori-Pākehā i Aotearoa Niu Tīreni. I pūpū ake mai i ngā kōrero koiora ā ngā tāngata tokongahuru mā tahi heke mai i te toto Māori-Pākehā, ā, ka titiro ki ngā nekenekehanga haere o te wā, whaitika tonu I te huarahi kimihanga ā, whanaketanga o te awe ahurea, awe ahurea tuakiri Māori. E whakaaea ana e haere tonu ana ngā kōhikuhiku, ngā maniore; ngā whakahaere rautaki; ā, ka whakaatuhia ngā tauria e rua i te āpuruahangatia ngā whakahaereng rautaki, ā, ka puta te mānukanuka. I whakaarohia mēnā ka taea te pupuri te whakakōhatu i te ahurea Māori-Pākehā huri noa te wā, inā rā i te āhua o ngā rerekētanga me te aukati iwi i rō porihanga. Ko te nuinga o ngā kaituku kōrero o te tuhinga nei, he ihupuku teitei i roto i te mātauranga, te mahi, te tuakiritanga me te hāpori i roto i tōna Māoritanga. Nā ēnei whiwhinga pea i āwhinahia ai te pae o tōna whaitake-whaiaro i taea ai te hiki i te kōhukihukinga o te mau ki o rātou tuakiri rua. I te whakaaranga rangatiranga ahurea, tōrangapū Māori te whakaurunga mai o te rangatiratanga o te Māori rerekē anō ana i te iwi Pākehā/Kiritea, engari ko tā tēnei tuhinga he rangahau i te tautoro — ira, ahurea, hāpori — i waenganui i ngā rōpū tuakiri e rua, ka whakauru tirohanga hou ki te kanorautanga kai roto i te rōpū tuakiri Māori.

Ngā Mihi

Ngā mihi kia koutou, ngā rau rangatira mā, tēnā tātou katoa.

Ko Tainui te waka, ko Ngāti Raukawa te iwi, ko Tararua te maunga, ko Ohau te awa, ko Waiwiri te moana, ko Ngāti Kikopiri te hapū. This pepeha identifies me as a member of the iwi of Ngati Raukawa, from a hapū called Ngāti Kikopiri, situated by the Ohau river, just south of Levin. My other iwi are Te Arawa, Ngāti Haumia, and Pākehā — my English ancestors were some of the earliest settlers in Wellington and Nelson. My background is in newspaper journalism, where I became involved in covering what was then (in the 1980s) called "Māori affairs". In 2004 I completed a thesis titled *Te Putahitanga o ngā Tai e Rua: The Meeting of Two Tides — Journeys of Mixed Heritage Māori/Pākehā descent towards Identity Strength*. My methodology was qualitative, involving the recording of a series of life history narratives relating to identity development. The topic of identity development for Māori/Pākehā is sensitive, both personally and politically, and it was important to apply the "kia tupato" principle and take great care on the journey. My primary responsibility was to the participants who shared their stories with me, and tikanga such as the sharing of food and relationship-building were part of the process. The subjective approach of the researcher was acknowledged, as in a Māori cultural context it is understood that knowledge arises from personal connection (Marsden, 1975; Selby, 1996). Consistent with kaupapa Māori research (Smith, 1999), and with participatory action research (Small, 1989) I was committed to inclusion of the participants beyond the initial interview — due to principles of reciprocity and accountability, as well as further analysis and guidance.

As a result of this ongoing korero with participants and other researchers, a group of us developed the belief that there was a need for wider understanding of issues relating to dual and multiple ethnicity for Māori. Consequently a broadly-advertised hui was organised at Taputeranga Marae, Island Bay, Wellington in May 2001, with the title *"Half-caste, Half-pie, Half-baked? Exploring Dual and Multiple Identities as Māori"*, which attracted about 40 people. There, the issues of dual and multiple ethnicity were discussed in general and political aspects raised. Speakers included Moana Jackson, Irihapeti Ramsden, Tess Moeke-Maxwell, and Paul Meredith. The hui was recorded by National Radio and a half-hour programme resulted (Diamond & Leonard 2001); and a feature article in the *New Zealand Weekend Herald* was also written by my brother Simon (Collins, 2001).

Facing the Other

Turning now to the theme of the conference — "Tōna Kanohi, Kauae Moko, The Face that Turns Towards her Ancient Self" — I mihi to the organisers, including Waka Oranga, for the choice of this theme, which gives us as Māori a strong point of recognition and identification at this hui, and also inspired me to share some insights into the process of obtaining my own moko kauae. As Ngahuia Te Awekotuku (2009) wrote, mau moko, "wearing ink", was often explained as:

> a symbol of honour or success ... it is also about remembering ancestral treasures under threat of oblivion.... By this active remembering in designs upon their skin, contemporary Māori assert a strong sense of identity, of survival and resilience, and by doing this, they also defy the colonial agenda. It is about being in the face of the other.

For me, taking a moko kauae was a major step in my development as Māori, though, of course, the identity journey never ends. In pursuing the moko kauae, I had a desire to make visible that which was not visible by my skin or by my untattooed face: values of whanaungatanga, whānau, hapū and iwi; service; respect for tupuna, respect for kaumatua, and respect for our traditions. This process of forging a stronger Māori identity over the previous ten years was not supported by my parents, but was supported by other whanaunga and friends. Gaining the moko kauae for me felt fraught with risk, and required determined faith both in the artist and in the process. As it was done with the uhi (traditional bone needle) it was a long and painful process, but also spiritually uplifting, and brought me closer to the experience of our pre-European tupuna more intensely than anything else in my life.

Through my thesis research I learnt more about how the process of choosing to consciously reconnect, or "turn towards your ancient self", is shared by many Māori who as whanau or individuals have experienced a loss of connection, for example, urban Māori; those living at a distance from their whānau and hapū; and adopted Māori. I also want to comment further on the phrase: "in the face of the other". Whilst the Treaty of Waitangi promised that as Māori we would retain our rangatiratanga (chieftainship, self-determination, and Māori identity), the historic transfer of power and resources from

Māori to European, discrimination against Māori, and the sheer scale of the numbers of non-Māori in the country: all add to the challenge involved in doing so. So many of the statistics — health, education, socio-economic — provide evidence that Māori continue to be disadvantaged (see Statistics New Zealand, 2006). It is this inequality, social division and racism which makes it difficult to straddle both cultures and communities and claim a dual Māori–Pākehā identity (Bevan, 2000). Also, in embracing Māori identity, we are absorbed into that ethnic statistical profile and may start to reflect its characteristics, such as lower health status. The stresses of identification with a disadvantaged, oppressed minority ethnic group may need to be considered alongside the apparent mental/emotional/spiritual health benefits of a more secure identity as Māori.

This makes our determination to identify as Māori difficult for some to accept or understand. For many of us, however, it becomes a "spiritual imperative", and the only pathway towards wellbeing; for me it was the way out of depression. Moreover, the process is not straightforward. Some of the barriers faced on this journey are internal issues such as early negative associations, fear/anxiety and inadequate socialization, as well as external issues such as social acceptance and class/power differences. Even after the initial vulnerabilities associated with transition, people of mixed heritage can continue to have difficulty stabilizing a dual ethnicity identity (Brown, 1990; Gibson, 1999; Moeke-Maxwell, 2001;), an identity that can be described as "threatened" (Breakwell, 1986). Ongoing issues can include: awareness of conflicting value systems within yourself and society; the stress of traversing these contrasting cultural/ethnic groups or, as Ramsden (1993) described it, "border-crossing"; and poor understanding and acknowledgement of dual/multiple ethnicity (Meredith, 1999; Moeke-Maxwell, 2003).

An example of conflicting attitudes from my own life, while I was trying to focus on my determination to obtain a moko kauae, was my non-Māori mother's discomfort with and opposition to the idea —she protested that I was rejecting my European heritage. While this was not so (I respect my Pākehā ancestors), I claim the right to prioritize my time, energy and commitment with a view to contributing to society to the best of my ability. Working towards greater equality is also in the interests of the nation as a whole. With regard to the moko kauae, some means of helping my mother to adjust to this included the length of time between first discussion and the actual event (several months), and a discussion with a sympathetic family friend (whose husband is Ngāi Tahu). So, while she never approved, at least the pain that she apparently experienced from my decision was addressed and reduced as much as possible. She also found it difficult to accept that my son could win an award as an outstanding Māori student at his secondary school. My father was more understanding of my passion to serve Māori and to reconnect. He had studied our whakapapa and, through his research and positive attitude, he facilitated re-connection for myself and others of my generation. He, however, did not identify himself as Māori, due to the social and cultural disconnect from Māori society across the generations in our family (my Māori grandfather was born in England); the influence of assimilationist attitudes as he was growing up; and the "bio-metric fraction" framework of thinking, i.e. that it is important what "fraction" of Māori blood a person is, and that only if you are "half" or more can you identify yourself as Māori, as was the basis of the New Zealand Government's official census until 1981.

From Biometrics to Mixed Heritage

My thesis included historical context relating to attitudes and the counting of mixed heritage Māori–Pākehā. Changes in definitions and questions across censes made it difficult to get clear data series. "Half-castes", or at least those "living in the European manner", were first counted in New Zealand's census in 1874 (Butterworth & Mako, 1989). Legislation in the 19th century supported the Europeanization of mixed heritage Māori while denying the Māori ethnicity of anyone of "less than half" biological descent (Meredith, 2000). This was due to European attitudes towards Māori as a racial or biological category (now scientifically debunked), rather than a socio-cultural or ethnic category. However, expectations that mixed heritage Māori–Pākehā would start to identify themselves as Pākehā/European were not borne out, with most acknowledging mixed heritage and many identifying themselves as sole Māori (Buck, 1924). In 1926 those who were not "half or more" Māori, but identified themselves as Māori were counted in a category called "part-Māori" which, by 1986, made up 27% of the total New Zealand Māori descent population (Butterworth & Mako, 1989). By the 1970s a broader understanding of ethnicity and the rights of people to identify themselves had achieved official acceptance, as reflected in the *Electoral Amendment Act 1975* (Pool, 1991). The 1981 census was the last in which people were asked to provide bio-metric fractions or percentages of "blood", and in 1986 there was a stronger emphasis on self-identification and acceptance of dual and multiple ethnicity for Māori and others. Official recognition of self-identification and dual/multiple ethnicity provides an important signal which can help to influence social attitudes, impacting on individuals in their everyday lives. In 2001, more than a third of the total Māori ethnic group identified themselves as both Māori and Pākehā (193,533 people). Theoretical background for my thesis included qualitative research, critical theory, ethnicity, culture/cultural identity, hybridity and post-colonial theory.

Health and Identity

In common with Western psychotherapy models, Māori models of health (e.g. Durie, 2001) recognize the need to nurture the individual and Rose Pere (1984) cited uniqueness or *mana ake* as a key component of health. However, a sense of belonging to a group such as whānau, hapū, or iwi is also very important in the development of a secure sense of Māori identity and ethnicity which involves not only acquisition of cultural knowledge and whakapapa, but also socialization within the norms and values of Māori society and the practice of roles and responsibilities within that context. The identity development process begins in childhood and adolescence, and continues into adulthood. The importance of adulthood as a period of potential change and growth was recognized by Maslow (1968). Once basic needs such as food and security are met, people then seek to gain self-respect and the respect of others, and finally self-actualisation, which means freedom for the fullest development of one's capacities and talents. Identity growth can involve loss, risk, and associated fear and anxiety; but the benefits of identity achievement are clear in terms of strength of character which is associated with ability to cope with stress, and educational and career success. The spiritual aspects of developing a stronger

Māori identity are also emphasized by experts on the well-being of Māori and mixed heritage Māori/Pākehā individuals (Pere, 1984: Durie, 1985a; Moeke-Maxwell, 2001).

The Research

My research project actually began in 1994 as an oral history recording project, supported by staff at the Oral History Centre of the Alexander Turnbull Library. In 1997 it attracted an Australian Sesquicentennial Gift Trust award in oral history of $5,000. Interview subjects (13 in total) all had a Māori and a Pākehā parent, and interviews were undertaken between October 1995 and August 1998. Participants were known mainly through my networks as a former journalist writing on Māori issues and events (in the 1980s); my involvement with the Canterbury University Māori Club (1979-1980); language courses at *Te Wānanga o Raukawa* in Ōtaki (1989/1990); our hapü of Ngāti Kikopiri (Ōhau, Levin); extended whānau (the Cook whānau, Ōtaki). Two people were approached as a result of awareness of their published writing, which reflected their mixed heritage experience. The thirteen interviewed for their life history narratives included both men and women, a range of ages, tribal affiliations, types of experience, and life choices. As my initial aim was to work towards producing a constructive publication of general interest, showing models of success, interviewees were all data-rich and possibly "atypically good" (Knight 2002, p. 123). They were able to articulate fully on the research topic, had extensive relevant personal experience, and appeared to be relatively successful in their careers and issue resolution. Hence the selected group may not have been a representative sample of mixed heritage Māori/Pākehā, and also may reflect my own background of relative privilege and higher education. In 2001 my proposal to develop a Master's thesis based on the narrative recordings was accepted under the Māori Studies department at Massey University.

The social and political context leading up to my thesis was the cultural and political renaissance of the 1970s and 1980s, which had a profound influence on my participants and myself. The earlier theories that Europeanization or assimilation of Māori would lead to greater equality had not worked. Despite urbanisation of Māori after World War II, Māori desire for cultural and social distinctiveness remained strong, and grew stronger. The renaissance of Māori cultural and political strength resulted in the definition of ourselves as Māori in contrast to non Māori, particularly Pākehā (New Zealanders of European descent), and a period of binary opposition between coloniser/colonized (Greenland, 1984). This was very positive in terms of the assertion of Māori cultural and political identity in the national sphere, and the establishment of the Waitangi Tribunal was one of the important outcomes of this renaissance or movement. In our iwi of Ngati Raukawa, Uncle Whatarangi Winiata's expression of Te Whakatipuranga Rua Mano, his vision for the year 2000 helped inspire my family to reconnect with our hapu and visit our marae for the first time, a connection which several of us cousins have maintained since then. This was not a time in which dual Māori/Pākehā identity was emphasized. Some Māori leaders, such as Donna Awatere at that time argued that Māori should marry Māori in order to rebuild cultural strength, and, indeed, Butterworth (1988) believed that the rate of Māori Pākehā intermarriage declined at this time. There were several models

which attempted to express the "essence" of being Māori (Durie, 1995a) to order to support and strengthen that identity. However, to some extent this emphasis on cultural difference, social division and political differentiation between Māori and Pākehā/ European was an artificial polarisation and an over-simplification (Greenland, 1984; Meredith, 1999). It was not until the mid 1990s, when Māori rights and identity were more firmly established, that Māori diversity and hybridity were more officially recognized, for example by (now Sir) Mason Durie (1995a, 1995b), as well as in the collection of ethnicity statistics.

Participants in my thesis were brought up with a range of levels of cultural exposure and involvement, but related that even periodic or occasional exposure was significant in promoting understanding and a sense of belonging. Growing up with awareness of both Māori and Pākehā/European norms and cultures can mean the individual faces a wider set of choices, aspirations and attitudes. Whereas some might see "choice", as an advantage, the act of choosing either racial heritage over the other necessarily can evoke feelings of disloyalty and incongruity (Bradshaw, 1992). Pressures vary at different times, with pressure to assimilate into Pākehā norms experienced at school and home during the first half of the 20ᵗʰ century, while the political and cultural renaissance of recent decades created pressures to build a more distinctive Māori identity; hence this was a time when asserting a dual Māori–Pākehā identity within a Māori context was more difficult. The complex task of integrating and stabilising a sense of belonging to two contrasting ethnic groups becomes more difficult when there is tension and conflict between them. The "face of the other" is also our own face.

Some of the factors influencing choice are: appearance (skin colouring, etc.); how others treat and perceive you; political commitment; cultural knowledge; symbolic ties; name; relative status of the two groups; psychological identification with one parent more strongly than the other. Siblings in mixed heritage families often make a range of choices about cultural and ethnic identity, affecting (or being influenced by) their social groupings, career, partner, etc. One participant says she made a decision to be Māori when she was 12: "I got to an age where I could choose what I wanted to be, and that's the privilege (of being both). I could have been Pākehā all the way, but I chose to be Māori. I've always liked the Māori things." She suggested it was also the influence of being brought up by her Māori mother and grandmother (after her Pākehā father died), in a "Māori family" which led her to that choice. Some choose sole or predominant Māori ethnicity, and others describe themselves confidently as both Māori and Pākehā/ European. The critical development task for the bi-racial person is to embrace the right to define and conceptualize his or her own experience, as an insider, and to construct a racial identity defined as a whole, rather than by its parts (Bradshaw, 1992). Psychotherapy can sometimes assist this process, but support and acceptance from within the Māori community is also crucial.

Relationships with whanaunga (relations) were an important means of transmission of cultural knowledge and ethnic identity for most participants. For some, cultural and ethnic disconnection and dislocation had occurred as a result of particular adverse circumstances, such as negative experiences resulting in themselves or the Māori parent distancing themselves from their hapū/iwi. For example, the great-aunt of one participant

had ill-treated his mother as a child when she had come under her care: "My mother wanted to have nothing to do with our family and moved as far as she could away from them. She was abused physically, verbally and emotionally." He went on: "We didn't have anything to do with our family up there as we grew up ... I only went there once and that was to be christened." A Māori identity could, however, remain significant despite minimal early knowledge. Most mainstream primary and secondary schools attended by participants did not support or extend their Māori identities. Anti-Māori abuse and taunts affected participants' confidence in identifying publicly as Māori, but also strengthened their awareness of being Māori. Some participants also experienced difficulties in finding membership in Māori social groups for reasons including disbelief of their Māori ethnicity and discomfort due to poor socialisation.

This research demonstrated the ability of dual heritage Māori/Pākehā to explore and achieve a Māori ethnic identity in adolescence or adult life. The process was affected not only by intellectual and physical access to cultural and ethnic resources, but also by internal and external barriers, such as rejection, social exclusion and negative associations. Significant personal experiences, as well as access to cultural resources, need to be considered in examining the development of cultural and ethnic identity. For one participant, it was important to her that her hapū accepted her challenge to face up to the issue of sexual abuse in their community, to strengthen her sense of belonging there. She was supported in making a submission to the Royal Commission on Social Policy on the issue in 1988, identifying herself by her pepeha (as a member of hapu and iwi). The experience was a turning point in her life, towards stronger identification as Māori and towards greater emotional/spiritual/mental well-being. Participants interviewed were relatively advantaged in mainstream school contexts, and scholastic achievement and social acceptance amongst peers of various ethnicities were factors in enhancing positive self-esteem and resilience.

Learning the Māori language was considered important by nearly all participants in achieving socialisation and acceptance as Māori. This was an ongoing process throughout life, but could be interrupted, delayed or halted by experiences of rejection or non acceptance. Political commitment was also important, both in motivating participants to learn the reo and customs (including norms and values) but also in gaining social acceptance amongst Māori, particularly for fair Māori (Bevan, 2000). Bevan argued that, due to the level of racism and social division in Aotearoa New Zealand, and the fragility of the Māori identity in this country, a primary commitment to Māori ethnicity is necessary. Others (Gibson, 1999; McGregor, 2002) have argued that, provided there is sufficient support for the minority identity (e.g. identity maintenance strategies, a sense of belonging and social cohesion), a dual heritage identification can be maintained. Several of the participants and I myself chose consciously to make a primary commitment to Māori ethnicity, though also acknowledging our Pākehā/European heritage. For me, this choice was associated with a marriage break-up and consequent decline in income, plus a significant unpaid workload, so I could no longer afford to maintain both social spheres, and, so, for a time, I focused on a sole Māori identity. My current more "dual" identity has partly come about through an improved work/life situation.

Dual Ethnicity, Dual Heritage, and Marginality: Facing the "Other" Within

Dual ethnicity can be associated with marginality; in the United States of America the term "edge-walkers" (Krebs, 1999, p. 75) is sometimes used in reference to people of mixed racial and ethnic heritage. At least three participants in my thesis described experiencing such issues: they felt that, while they belonged to both, they were not fully assimilated members of either ethnic group. One felt different from both Pākehā and Māori traditional/conservative groups of relatives; and conflicted between wanting to be more fully accepted within her hapū, but thinking that, as an urban, university-educated and bi-sexual woman, she would not be well understood. Another felt conflicting loyalties when playing (as a schoolgirl) in a predominantly Pākehā/European sports team against a team of Māori girls, and, similarly, subsequently in other contexts. Erikson (1980) stated that internal conflicts and tensions are commonly experienced by many people (e.g. parental expectations versus internal ambitions) and can be seen as an impetus for growth. Being fair-skinned or non-phenotypically Māori in appearance has advantages in being able to pass as Pākehā/European and experiencing lower levels of racism from Pākehā/Europeans (Gibson, 1999), but carries particular stresses including disbelief; questioning and direct challenges; social exclusion; and negative prejudice from Māori (Moeke-Maxwell, 2001). Five participants in my thesis described these experiences. Declaring a Māori identity, using the Māori language, use of Māori forenames, and stating whakapapa are means of overcoming these barriers (Bevan, 2000).

Issues relating to abuse, either for the individual or a parent, were significant in cases in which breakdown occurred during the identity development process. Early negative experiences make individuals more vulnerable to mental/emotional/spiritual health problems in later life, even if they apparently coped well with them initially (Lapsley, Nikora & Black 2002). Vulnerability is also associated with certain phases of the ethnic identity exploration and achievement process, particularly for those with earlier negative associations. This thesis included two examples of individuals who experienced periods of mental/emotional/spiritual ill-health when their coping strategies were overwhelmed. Accessing cultural resources and developing whanaungatanga links were important aspects of the recovery process. Hence, while ethnic identity development can be associated with vulnerability during certain phases, these painful periods can be part of a constructive process which ultimately leads to greater strength and well-being. Participants who were brought up in a sufficiently nurturing environment with positive exposure to and involvement with their tribal or local Māori community were more able to successfully integrate the two cultural/ethnic aspects most easily over time.

Whether it built on Māori cultural/ethnic exposure in childhood or not, the process of developing and internalizing a Māori ethnic identity as an adolescent or adult was profound, permanently embedded in the psyche, with wide-reaching effects on participants' lives. Several participants in this research found that retaining identity strength as Māori and serving the Māori community required such extensive commitment that it became their predominant identity, though they also continued to acknowledge their Pākehā/European (in one case Celtic) heritage and identity. Most participants found ways to translate their commitment to Māori ethnicity into both their personal

and working lives. In this way their sense of belonging was affirmed, their ethnic identity secured, and their self-esteem strengthened. Their social and cultural affiliations were wide and varied, and included both Māori and non Māori, as is common amongst contemporary Māori (Durie, 1995a). By exploring and strengthening their Māori ethnicity (in addition to their Pākehā/European ethnicity) participants were able to relate to and integrate the heritage of both parents; to satisfy their own need for continuity/self-esteem/distinctiveness (Breakwell, 1986); to enrich their experience and understanding; and were better able to contribute more fully to society, drawing on the resources and strengths of both socio-cultural streams. Hence my thesis argued that attaining confident bi-cultural ambidexterity or dual Māori/Pākehā ethnicity is an achievement which has been poorly understood, under-recognized, and under-valued in our society.

My hope is that the psychotherapy community is one which supports this understanding and recognition, as the invitations to keynote speaker Dr Tess Moeke-Maxwell (see article in this issue, pp. 149-164), and myself to contribute to this conference has indicated. The influence of He Waka Oranga in the organising of the conference, its structure and speakers, was felt strongly and ensured we felt culturally safe. Having Dr Tess Moeke-Maxwell as keynote speaker on a topic relating to Māori identity was also much appreciated, and the networking which occurred at the conference supported our professional development.

For me the process of gathering the korero and reflecting that back to myself and others for the thesis was a form of therapy, complimenting my moves towards reconnecting with wider whānau and hapū, and a pathway towards gaining identity strength as Māori.

He pukepuke maunga, e pikitia e te tangata; he pukepuke moana e ekeina e te waka. A steep mountain can be climbed; a choppy sea can be navigated.

Tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā ra koutou katoa.

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Acknowledgement

Hēni Collins (Ngāti Raukawa, Ngāti Haumia, Te Arawa, Pākehā) is a former journalist, has a BA in Sociology, and has followed a spiritual journey towards exploring her own identity and that of others' through her Master's thesis on the topic of this article. She has also undertaken editing work *Mihipeka, Karanga a te Kuia* (Steele Roberts, 2007) and historical research, completing a new version of the Te Rauparaha story, *Ka Mate, Ka Ora — The Spirit of Te Rauparaha* (Steele Roberts, 2010). Recent contract work has related to Māori health workforce development, a series of seminars organised by the Manu Ao Academy, and Treaty claim research relating to the central and lower North Island. She enjoys speaking publicly on the topics of her tribal history involving her tupuna rangatira Te Rauparaha and also Māori/Pākehā identity issues. Deciding to take the moko kauae alongside a "soul sister" at a marae in the Rangitikei region in 2009 was a profound experience, which she is also happy to share. Hēni is considering undertaking a PhD on a topic related to multiple ethnicity for Māori and how to disseminate the knowledge base developed by various Māori researchers to date. She lives in Wellington with her son, now a university student, and also has a daughter completing university studies. Hēni is an active member of Ngāti Kikopiri ki Muhunoa, Ohau, Horowhenua and Te Taitoa Māori o Te Awahou, Foxton. Contact details: henimc@clear.net.nz