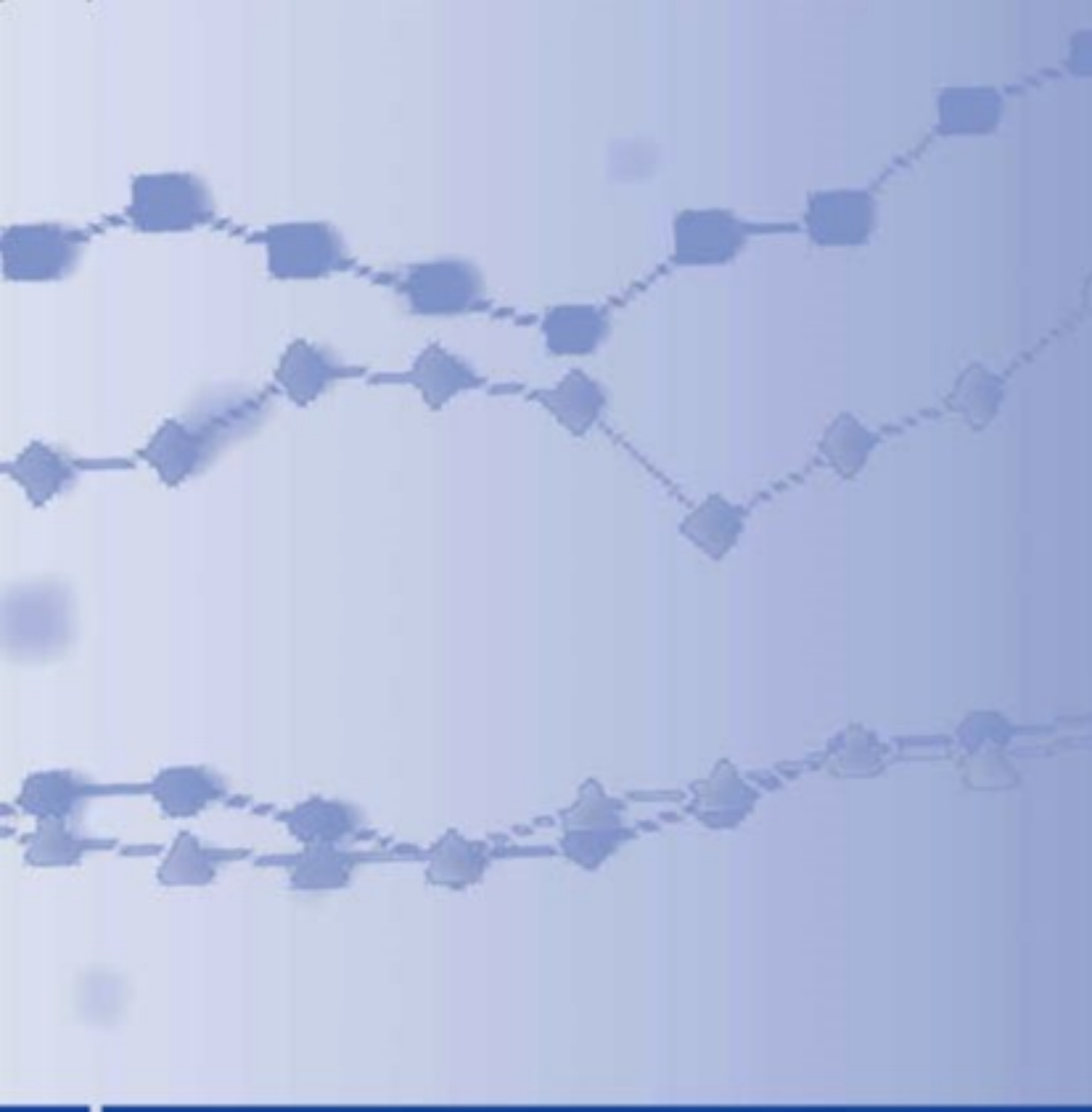

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Race, Ethnicity and Education in Globalised Times

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Race, Ethnicity and Education in Globalised Times

Foreword by Paul James

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Foreword

What is the specificity of contemporary racism? And what happens to questions of race in a context where multiculturalism is taken for granted. Few authors address these kinds of questions with subtlety. For the most part, questions of racism are treated either as self-evident or alternatively as self-evidenced.

The first approach, accentuated in everyday life, and played out in media exposés, is the tendency to treat racism as manifestly self-evident. We just know what racism is in principle, and we just know what it looks like when we see it in practice. Dualistic assumptions dominate this sense of identity relations – persons are racist or they are not; an act is racist or it is not. However, despite the obviousness of racism in contexts where different people have different seating arrangements on a bus, or somebody says "I am better than you because your skin-colour is different", this approach barely comes to terms with the depth of embodied politics and the elusiveness of structures of racism in the contemporary world.

The second approach, strong in some post-modern accounts of race and ethnicity, exposes this first approach as self-evidently naïve. It suggests alternatively that racism is built upon self-evidencing narratives of cultural difference. These narratives are said to have no foundation except in the specific narratives that racists tell themselves, and the broader narratives carried by a modernist culture that has arbitrarily pronounced "race" to be a basic category of the human condition. The first approach hardens racism into a sticks-and-stones phenomena; the second effectively dissolves it into ghostly imaginings – words that can only hurt if we accept them as real.

Ruth Arber's book attempts to get beyond both of these inadequate approaches. With a careful mix of passion and objective distance, she describes the way in which questions of race can disappear beneath the surface of narratives of identity and yet still remain part of the construction of a deeper imaginary.

There are strong arguments to suggest that we are seeing the development of new layers of racism in the post-colonial world, including places such as Australia, which in faltering ways maintain a dominant ideology of multiculturalism. The intensification of contemporary globalisation, particularly the renewed embodied globalisation of the post-World War II period brought with it a second great Age of Migrations. Populations from across the globe co-mingled in New and Old World places from Australia, Canada, and the United States to Britain and France. In the

case of the "New World" has overlaid the complexity of earlier generations of migrants that arrived in the nineteenth century. It was in this earlier period that the sense of natural order was becoming increasingly insecure, states began to busily count "their" populations, statistics and censuses had an increasing influence over policy, passports began to be used to control movement, and the concept of "race" was for the first time naturalised as part of the human condition. As we now look back upon that period it becomes all too easy to say that we have transcended that earlier form of racism that once proclaimed the hierarchy of the species and then lodged it in state policies.

Older forms of racism still continue in brutal ways, but this is not what Ruth Arber's book focuses upon. Her book is written in the context of a less visible structural racism across the course of the late twentieth century and into the present. The new racism is dominated not by assertions of essential biological hierarchy – that is, assertions of what might be called "traditional-modern" racism – but by the claim that *cultural* difference is insurmountable and gives rise to ethnic conflict, even violence. The rationale put forward by proponents of the new racism begins characteristically with the words "I am not a racist, but. . ." This contradictory (late modern) racism, legitimates itself by claiming to explain and offer solutions to the source of modern racist conduct: keep different cultures apart, control immigration, and allow the universalistic and progressive cultures – namely our own – to flourish. This has become intensified with the War on Terror: "I am not anti-Muslim, but can you really trust them?" A more subtle version of this position is one which argues for the liberal equality of all. It suggests that cultural difference is only legitimate in the privacy of one's home, and once on the street we all must partake of a single civic identity.

In response to these late modern racisms, but without a way of adequately articulating their opposition to it, an increasing number of people have tried to eschew the notion of "race" altogether. These include the teachers and parents described in this book. Such persons, in effect, try to live and talk as if cultural difference can be reduced to post-modern pluralism – hybridity that does not make a difference. The approach sometimes takes the form of a vain hope that if we do not personally recognise racism in our own contained worlds of the classroom or neighbourhood, and if we do not use the term, then racism does not exist. Such people are more comfortable to talk about multicultural or ethnic difference, and thus teaching practices centre on how to help "them" in the supposedly easy step of finding belonging as "one-of-us", the undefined category of normality.

How does a researcher go about understanding such a complex layering of social relations? Ruth Arber has set up a methodological approach which moves across several levels of analysis from the particular and relatively contingent to the general and patterned in a way that is truly novel. The three levels are vantage points for describing the complexity of ideas and practices. The book starts with *narrational practice* – what people talk about and do in the world of everyday life; individual experiences and stories; particular and seemingly *ad hoc* occasions or expressions of meaning. These expressions of personal experience are then understood as set within a *narrational field* of discourses and practices, including multiculturalism,

nationalism and racism, patterns of gender relations, home–school relations and processes of pedagogy. This second vantage point seeks to understand each of those fields in themselves. The third vantage point is to move the analysis to the level of *narrational maps*, allowing the author to consider the connection between these different ways of acting in and talking about the world. This is the level of social being and knowing – ontology and epistemology.

One of the effects of contemporary globalisation has been to intensify the layering process, bringing different cultural understandings and ontologies into the same space, linking the local and the global. Without such a method of analysis as presented in this book, the world just looks to be a dauntingly complex and swirling mess of detail. We see the intersection and sometimes the (ontological) clashing of the mass circulation of modern popular cultures, the post-modern excess of pastiche cultures, the oral memories of tribal cultures, and the written memories and codifications of traditional cultures. This is not the "clash of civilisations" as some would argue, however it is a matrix of ontological tensions that needs careful attention. It has consequences for increasing conflict in the world today as we construct others as barbarians or just as others. Ignoring this process will not make it go away. This makes it imperative that we attend both to the particular instances of such narratives of meaning and the narrational maps which frame the very way in which we think and know about the world.

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Contents

Chapter 1
Encountering Silent Noise

A childhood memory.
Hot sun hits housing commission flats, parched school ovals, tangle-haired children in wooden desk rows. The teacher's voice booms: "Hands up anyone born overseas".
The only hand up is mine.
Hardly yesterday.
Summer light shimmers over nearby factories, glints through windows set high over computer terminals. I move among students working at plastic-topped hexangles: Chen needs another book; Thao reading practice; Soheur spelling words. Micha banters sing-song to Hawa.
I silence him.

(Ruth Arber, 26/1/2006)

I was already asleep on the night of 11 September 2001 when my husband came in to tell me that the planes had flown into buildings in New York and Washington. For the rest of the night, I dreamed of people running and the Pentagon in flames. Nothing could have prepared me for the pictures that most Australians, less tired than I, had watched the night before. I watched them obsessively the next day, planes flying though clear blue skies, fires blazing from high windows, people jumping – and then again almost the same pictures. In coffee shops, news agencies, supermarkets and pubs, everywhere the same pictures and the agitated voices of newscasters speculating how it could have happened and how anything could be the same again. The front page of the newspaper was bordered in black.

On 10 September 2001, I moved between students in the same classroom I was to enter in such agitation the next day. After 6 months of teaching, I knew these students. The two students from West Africa, whose father had disappeared. With their mother, they had endured the terror of refugee camps and then the exigencies of travel to a new and very different country. They struggled to gain literacy skills never learned in an oral culture and in a disrupted education. Even after seven years in Australia, Bin was still unable to read. I discussed with my colleagues ways to overcome her reticence to even try. David, also from Africa, the son of a pastor, looked for me at recess to continue with the political arguments started in class. Although difficult for him, he chose to read books on American race politics and speculated on the ways that these notions played out in an Australian context. Only in the country for 3 months, Chen and Liang had set themselves the goal of reading a new book each week. And what, you might ask, about Chris, Massoud, Chantelle,

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Mario, Giovanna, Tim, Daniel, Mohamed, Miranda, Thao, George, Leanne... My plans to implement programmes for each student became difficult. Micha's banter across the room to Hawa, so like that of an American comedy, amused me, even as it was the last straw.

On the morning of 12 September in Australia, when those in America might finally have succumbed to sleep, I was standing in front of my Year Nine class, with newspaper in hand. Zhoa and Chen were listening avidly to Pierre as he retold the story. Christos was apprehensive. "Do you think that it could happen here, Miss?" Excited arguments went around the room. Everyone, it seemed, had an opinion. I must have said something too. I know that we had been briefed at the teachers' meeting that morning about what to say as part of just such discussions but I have quite forgotten their advice. What I do remember is Amid and Hannah sitting quietly, their usual boisterousness put aside. I remember too, wondering whether I should go to them afterwards and put them at their ease, and tell them that I understood that they were not culpable in such world events.

It is difficult to imagine the changes that have taken place in Australian classrooms. The wooden desks, inkwells and pens and blackboards of my school days have been replaced by whiteboards, photocopied sheets, computer technologies and DVD equipment. Austere rigidity has given way to fluidity of educational methodology: "whole language" approach, critical thinking and student-centred learning. The appearance of an almost-homogeneous Anglo-Australian presence has been replaced as increasing numbers migrate from Europe, the Middle East, Asia, South America, Africa, and the Pacific Islands. In today's world, parents, teachers, students and I are fellow travellers, journeying between places physically and virtually as tourists, workers and migrants, and through email, the Internet and television. Others – refugees, the impoverished – find their ability to move from place to place constrained. These are exciting but complex and dangerous times. Planes fly into buildings in New York, bombs collapse subways in Madrid and London, and students in Australian classrooms share the grief and horror as if they too were attacked. They participate in the events around the world seamlessly as if they were present.

This book examines the ways that race and ethnic relationships are discussed in these times of demographic and global transformation. This is not a simple matter. The terms and conditions of these relationships derive from deep-seated notions about the relationships between self and others, and the ways in which those who are one-of-us can define their identity through that which they-are-not. These are logics that remain in place even as, in a contemporary world transformed by global and technological changes, sentient selves negotiate between racial and ethnic identities in ways that seem unconstrained and fluid. To investigate discussions about race and ethnic relationships is to listen to conversations about day-to-day experiences and to engage with the discussions and debates that describe relationships between selves and others in Western contexts and in our time. It is to make explicit the terms and conditions of these discussions and to understand the normalised logics that shape and are shaped by them. It is to make transparent taken-for-granted ways of understanding and behaving in which I am also complicit and to consider ways that they could be made otherwise.

Most of us who are at home in communities and schools, if asked the question "How do people in such diverse and changing contexts 'get along'?", would answer "Very well". It is an argument supported by my most recent students: student-teachers at an Australian University. These almost-teachers approach discussions about race and ethnic relations with enthusiasm. Stories about restaurants, dancing, friendships, school camaraderie and reminiscences about travel, cultural exchanges, languages learned and forgotten fill the tutorial time. Exchanges about good teaching practice follow. Student-teachers emphasise the need for clarity of ideas and speech, the need to acknowledge and respect histories and cultures, and the importance of appropriate pastoral care. The topic of racism is approached differently – with surprise, and then often with intense anger. "This is not something that happens now", they tell me. "We have grown up in a different world. We are used to difference. There is no racism here – at least not between us." Such discussions, typically, move on. "It is really difficult", one student-teacher might explain. "Some refugee students have their education so disrupted. I need to help them to learn the most basic of tasks; to sit at their desks, to write their names." "I know very little about other cultures", another says sadly. "I taught at the same school that I attended as a child. We have no culture there." The last of my student-teachers is still angry. "You don't know what it is like to go to school with those students. The boys are so loud and disrespectful. They. . ." Her neighbour prods her and they turn to look at the olive-skinned boy sitting quietly at the other end of the room. "Not me." He breathes and continues abruptly. "I am. . ."

The enormity of the immigration programme instituted after World War II and the final dismantling of the White Australia policy at the beginning of the 1970s meant that, by the end of the twentieth century, most Australian schools had been irretrievably changed. For many, the opportunities for travel and increased contact with a diversity of cultures, national identities and languages form the basis of an exciting and vibrant cosmopolitan internationalism. Opportunities to try new food, experiment with languages, contact new cultures, visit new places are regarded as assets of great benefit to communities and schools. Teachers, particularly, have developed new and flexible skills and knowledge as they work with their students to provide appropriate educational outcomes. For some, these changes have been frightening. The consequence of multiculturalism is the dangerous prospect of intolerable difference, or worse, the destruction of the very social fabric of the nation. For most, the possibility that the condition "different" might itself have material consequences seems improbable.

Beneath these discussions is a logic concerned with who we are and how we can speak about ourselves. In his Australia Day speech, written on the same day as I mused over my school memories, Prime Minister John Howard commented:

> Some have questioned my optimism, especially in wake of the violence in Sydney earlier this summer.[1] These events brought shame on all involved. Australians, whatever their

[1] In December 2005, 5,000 young people descended onto Cronulla beach, in order, they argued, to reclaim the beach from "the Lebs". Bystanders of Middle Eastern appearance were attacked, as

> background, deserve to be treated with tolerance and respect. Racial intolerance is incompatible with the kind of society we are and want to be. Within limits, all Australians have the right to express their culture and beliefs and to participate freely in our national life. And all Australians have a civic responsibility to support the basic structures and values of Australian society which guarantee us our freedom and equality.[2]

Despite his antipathy to the notion, Howard's sanguine depiction of national well-being was fashioned by the trope of 30 years of multiculturalism. He was concerned about the two-pronged dilemma underlying multicultural debate: the liberty to practise particular cultures and beliefs, and setting boundaries for difference in its relation to national institutions and principles. Australia's dedication to these principles, he claimed, is worthy of particular praise. No other nation, he argued, has worked so well to take in so many people from so many different places and ways of life. The summer violence in Sydney disturbed Howard's optimistic image of a cosmopolitan community, united in its commitment to national good. These actions by a few, he was quick to explain, reflected "racial intolerance" and were "incompatible with the kind of society we are and want to be". At issue is the ability of Australians "to appreciate the enduring values of the national character that we proudly celebrate and preserve". The answer for Howard came in the form of the "renewal" of history teaching in our schools:

> Part of preparing young Australians to be informed and active citizens is to teach them the central currents of our nation's developments. The subject matter should include indigenous history as part of the whole national inheritance. It should also cover the great and enduring heritage of western civilisation, those nations which have become major tributaries of European settlement and in turn a sense of the original ways in which Australians from divided backgrounds have created our own distinct history.[3]

At stake is our ability to know who we are.

Ambiguity and confusion underlie discussions about race and ethnic relations. These are inherent within public controversies about the definition of a nation, its history and its people. They were at the root of my annoyed amusement as I quietened Micha's sing-song banter and the embarrassed silence that followed my student-teachers' gaze at their olive-skinned colleague across the room. At issue is the definition of who-they-are and therefore who-we-are and the ways that "they" can be allowed to live as part of "us". The fluidity of movement provided by global and technological changes means that these definitions are even harder to make. The attack on the twin towers on 11 September added a new and more terrifying dimension to the complexity of these discussions. Australians, seemingly so distant, received news synchronously of the attacks in New York and later Madrid and London, and along with that, fear of further violence. Those who attacked New York and Washington are of a group almost impossible to delineate. What is frightening is the realisation that the people who may be our enemies are not easily defined. We

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were police. This was followed over the next few days by retaliatory riots. See the conclusion for further discussion of these events.

[2] John Howard, *The Age*, Thursday 26 January 2006, p. 13.

[3] John Howard, *The Age*, Thursday 26 January 2006, p. 13.

are unsure who they are. They are in many ways part of us, could be any one of us. At the same time, they remain a different presence, out of our control.

These are confused debates in what appear dangerous times and in communities seemingly wracked by change. This book is concerned with the ways that race and ethnic relations have been spoken about in the midst of these changes. New ways of producing and distributing goods and services, sophisticated and integrated market and financial systems, transformed communications and technologies bring new ways of performing the most mundane day-to-day tasks. People, ideas, images, culture and money travel between countries ever faster, virtually and materially, integrating the local and global and redefining space and time. Notions of ethnicity and race, in earlier times so clearly defined by nationality, language, culture and colour, are confused; identity and difference become disconcertingly hybrid. Local social arrangements and institutional relationships, transformed by demands for accountability, productivity, responsiveness and innovation, are refabricated for a world stage with an immensity unimaginable a generation earlier. Arjun Appadurai (2000) argues that globalisation gives new order and intensity to the most mundane everyday discussions and interactions. The central feature of globalisation is not only changed ways of understanding economics, communications and technology but also changing "scapes" of imagination, as central enlightenment conceptions (particularly identity, time and space) no longer seem clearly defined.

The focus of this book is conversations about race and ethnic relations as they take place in everyday spaces – daily newspapers, public schools – in Melbourne, Australia. Raucous debates take place about a miscellany of issues: multiculturalism, citizenship, globalisation, internationalisation and demographic change. Other conversations, particularly those about racism and exclusion, are seldom heard; they are understood as unbalanced, irrelevant or as too dangerous to speak about. It is argued that, in recent times, notions of identity and difference are difficult to speak about because they require the contemplation of the presence of an "other" who cannot be quite known but who nevertheless defines the edges of our self-identity. This becomes difficult to do as the boundaries between identities, and between self and the other, become more difficult to define. This sense of danger is the re-emergence of an "other" identity, which seemed to have disappeared and which is no longer easily identifiable as inside or outside "who-we-are". That "they" could be any one of us, even as their presence as another is made concretely and terrifyingly real, adds a new and frightening layer to the discussion of contemporary race and ethnic relations.

At the base of these everyday discussions about our lives and the lives of others are notions that define who-we-are-not and therefore who-we-are. "They" debate the ways they can live with "us" and in doing so define how we ourselves belong and the ways we can participate within communities. The day-to-day events that make up the anecdotal and experiential rationale for these debates are noisy and contentious. The taken-for-granted understandings which define the terms and conditions of these debates are often left unquestioned and unexamined even as they provide validation for the ways that a tenuous and ephemeral "we" can live. Never singular and always changing, they nevertheless provide the languages that all-of-us can use to speak about others and selves. The remainder of this chapter is in three

sections. The next section, "A Considered Approach", describes my research experiences within a school similar to the one in which I had taught and learned. It concerns the realisation that such research cannot be properly understood without the development of a more comprehensive methodology for examining the discussion of relationships in schools. The second section, "The Terms of Race", defines the concepts and themes that underpin the discussions about race and ethnicity in this book. The third section, "A Whispering in My Heart", is concerned with the notion that research about race and ethnic relationships must be explored from the vantage point of everyday practice, the debates that seek to define these relationships and the normative notions that provide their site and subject.

1.1 A Considered Approach

This book explores the ways that race and ethnicity are spoken about in schools in contemporary Western contexts such as that of Melbourne, Australia. Its rationale is enmeshed within memories of a lone Jewish student with olive skin and dark hair sitting in the midst of an almost exclusively Anglo-Australian student population in the early 1960s. My more recent memories are of my return as a teacher in a Western suburbs State secondary school, when dark hair and olive skin were no longer strange. My students were from Greece and Italy. Their parents, shifted from their rural villages to the assembly lines of factories, were determined that their children would have the education they had been denied. Ten years later, I returned to teach at the same school. The children of migrants who had arrived a decade before sat alongside students recently arrived from an array of countries: Yugoslavia, Poland, Portugal, Philippines, Syria, Palestine, China and Vietnam. The school was also markedly changed. Amalgamated with the nearby technical school, we now taught a miscellany of subjects – physics, chemistry and English literature, but also motor mechanics, carpentry, graphic arts, health sciences and hospitality. During the last years of my secondary teaching career, I found the school in which I was teaching changed again. Students were competing to sit at the computers placed within the recesses of my classroom. We had a sister school in China and made arrangements for our students to confer over the Internet. Many of my students had shifted to Australia through other countries: Vietnam via Indonesia; Yugoslavia via Germany; the Pacific Islands via New Zealand; Belgium via France, England and America; Somalia via Kenya and South Africa.

In 1988, I began a research project to paint a picture of the ways race and ethnic relationships were understood and acted out in schools similar to those in which I had learned and taught. Basing my approach on the principles of "naturalistic inquiry"[4] and "grounded theory"[5], I interviewed nearly 30 teachers and parents in

[4] See, particularly, the work of Lincoln and Guba (1985), Guba and Lincoln (1999), Denzin (1989) and Denzin and Lincoln (1998).

[5] See, particularly, the work of Strauss (1989) and Strauss and Corbin (1998).

one Melbourne school. I pieced together descriptions of the multiplicity of day-to-day experiences that face a community caught in rapidly changing times: the parent reminiscing about the loss of his rural neighbourhood, the migrant remembering his home country, the teacher faced with changed class cultures and the principal instigating a new school programme.[6] The result was a disjointed, conflicting bundle of stories. My job as researcher was to find a means by which these could be placed together and interpreted.

The stories I collected fascinated me. Nevertheless, for many months, perhaps years, I stared at the piles of data that documented my conversations with teachers and parents. I worked endlessly with material that seemed at different times to be consistent and at other times contradictory, controversial and difficult to speak about. In order to explore conversations about race and ethnic relations, I had to rethink the ways that research into race and ethnic relations might be understood. The epistemological fields of the writings that underpinned my research enterprise were inconsistent with each other and often inconsistent within themselves. The descriptions of day-to-day activities provided by naturalistic inquiry were limited to the extent that they failed to consider the relation of these stories to each other or to their socio-historical contextual positioning. Writings about post-colonialism, Whiteness and cultural studies pertained to the taken-for-granted ways of knowing and being in the world that framed these relations. They were problematic to the extent that they did not spell out how these frames are in relation to individual practice and experience or institutional structures and debate. What was needed was a methodological frame that could work from each of three vantage points: the individual experiences and practice my respondents discussed with me in my research; the interconnectedness of those experiences and practices as they were discussed and argued about in newspapers and government documents; and the normalised ways of knowing and being in the world which both frame and are framed by those experiences and practices.

At the end of my data gathering, I had collected a large amount of material that spoke about race and ethnic relations in particular and often consistent ways. These noisy discussions formed the bulk of the conversations I had about race and ethnic relations. Their rationale appeared self-explanatory and uncontestable. Even so, I became increasingly aware of conversations that discussed these events in other ways, were contradictory or scarcely spoke about them at all. I collected large amounts of material about the ideas and the policies and programmes of multiculturalism, but little that discussed racism, or the structures that defined how race and ethnic relationships were defined and acted upon within the school. My respondents negotiated ways of dealing with different groups of people in contradictory ways without making explicit the relationships they were speaking about. Their conversations were profoundly concerned with conceptions of identity, belonging and not

[6] For a description of this kind of approach, see Denzin (1989), Denzin and Lincoln (1998), Guba and Lincoln (1989; 1999) and Lincoln and Guba (1985). For a criticism of this approach, see Crotty (1998).

belonging, and yet these crucial constructs were only reluctantly broached, coded in euphemisms or avoided altogether. An underlying task and the second theme for the research was to develop a methodological frame that could be used not only to interrogate what is said, but also to explore that which is not spoken about, spoken about reluctantly or spoken about in other ways.

Third, I needed to examine these relationships at a time when the everyday world in which we, my respondents and I, worked and lived was transformed. Teachers and parents spoke about their day-to-day experiences and practices in classrooms altered by demographic change. Moreover, in an increasingly globalised and post-modern world, these everyday stories about practice and experience seemed to be transformed by changes in technologies, capital labour markets and trade, the production of goods and services and the movements of teachers, students and services.[7] Albert Paolini (1997) explores the paradoxical ambit of these literatures of globalisation and change as they "theorise the nature and possibilities of the global process along normative and even utopian lines" and:

> . . . celebrate the possibilities unleashed by globalisation along less utopian lines and instead point to hybridity, multiple identities and indeterminacy as a condition of living in the late modern age.
>
> (Paolini 1997, p. 35)

His argument is that the changes brought about by globalising trends change individual experiences and redefine "the possibilities unleashed by globalisation". More particularly, they alter the ways the terms and conditions of the discussion are commonly understood. The transcendence of the relations between individuals, the nation-state and the international world put pressure on the taken-for-granted ways that we understand entities such as identity, difference, race, ethnicity and nation. They are paradoxical processes which not only transform everyday experiences and discussion about them, but also the epistemological notions which frame them. A further theme for the research was to develop a methodological frame to explore how ethnic and race relations are spoken about as the material and notional terms

[7] As I point out in Chapter 4, literatures of globalisation cover a number of different literatures. I am particularly drawn to discussions by Bauman (1990; 1997a; 1997b; 1998; 1999; 2001) and his vivid analysis of the paradoxical tension that exists between the fluid definitions that define identities in post-modern times and the reassertions of positionality that underpin contemporary processes of globalisation. I also find important: literatures which trace the relation between the commodification, culture and globalisation (see, for example, Jameson (1998), Featherstone (1995)), the relation between globalisation and the transformation of concept and imagination (see, for example, Appadurai (1996), McCarthy (1998)) and the ways in which the most taken-for-granted of boundaries between identities and machines (Haraway, 1991), identities and their genetic portraits (Haraway, 2000) and space and time (Virilio, 1993) become confused, conflated and differently used. I find interesting the work of Giddens (1990; 1999) and Beck (2000) who consider the notion of risk as the sense of the present becomes deferred to the future and also confused. Paolini (1997) and Ashcroft (2001) who are discussed here, importantly although in quite different ways, take the understandings that emerge within these literatures and relate them to the literatures of identity and hybridity. The articulation of the relation between identities as they change within an increasing globalised world makes up a central focus of my methodology.

and conditions of the most basic concepts – time, space and identity – seem changed, negotiated and about to fall apart.

The formulation of a more considered research methodology to explore race and ethnic relationships, and its subsequent use as an analytic frame to interrogate the research data, is a central focus of this book. Chapter 2, "Encountering Silent Narrations: Beginning the Research", describes the implementation of my research project. The chapter describes the sequence of events that unfold over periods of change, as I speak with teachers and parents about race and ethnic relations. The observations that emerge as the research continues – the avoidance of discussions about race and racism and the pervasiveness of discussions about multiculturalism – suggest that the method and methodologies which inform the research might need to be reconsidered. The final part of the chapter examines recent critical race theory and the insight that the almost silent and the noisy discussions about race and ethnic relationships need to be made transparent and interrogated. Chapter 3, "Beyond Silent Noise: Articulating Methodology", suggests a more comprehensive frame which can be used to explore the ways that people in school speak about ethnic and raced relationships. I argue that the multilayered complexity of these negotiated and changing relations can be more comprehensively interrogated from different analytic viewpoints: individual practice (which I have defined as "narrational practices"); fields of debate ("narrational fields"); and normalised ways of knowing and being in the world ("narrational maps").

1.2 The Terms of Race

The exploration of discussions about race and ethnic relationships demands, in the first instance, interrogation of the terms and conditions of race and ethnicity. The definition of these terms has been the subject of Australian government documents. A paper published by the Victorian Department of Education, *Guidelines for Managing Cultural and Linguistic Diversity in Schools*, defines "race" and "ethnicity" in the following terms:

> The term "race" is taken to include a person's colour, descent, ancestry, nationality, ethnicity and ethnic or national origin. It is often closely connected to visible or tangible cultural differences such as spoken language, skin colour, hairstyle, body language or clothing. It can also include intangible differences such as behaviour, eating habits, mannerisms and other characteristics that belong to, or are imputed to, a person of a particular race.
>
> The test is not biological, but rather is a socio-cultural construct. It relates to whether the relevant individuals or group regard themselves and are regarded by others in the community as having a particular racial or ethnic identity. (Victorian Department of Education, 2001, p. 3)

The document proposes that notions of "race", "ethnicity" and "culture" are not "biological" but rather "a socio-cultural construct". The central argument is that "cultural differences", as well as phenomenological differences such as colour, can be understood as precursors to "having a particular racial or ethnic identity". The document makes three points about this definition. First, that "race" and "ethnicity"

are not primordial and essential notions, which make some individuals different from others, but are rather social representations, which at a particular historical point of time, have come to define some people differently from others. Second, it suggests that individuals share a common humanity. Defined characteristics of humanity are constructed racially and are affixed differently to identities to make that person representative of a particular race or ethnicity. Third, a miscellany of attributes – colour, descent, ancestry, nationality, ethnicity, but also language, skin colour and eating habits – form the basis of such social constructions.

Stuart Hall (1996c), speaking of this way of defining "race" and "ethnicity" in British documents, examines the social constructedness of these terms.[8] He is concerned that the contingent and negotiated definitions these terms take on within the political debate often hide the fact that these constructions are tied to real positioning with material consequences. Moreover, the conflation of the terms "ethnic" and "raced" signals a shift within the politics of race. Earlier definitions of "race" described an "other" person, made essentially dissimilar by seemingly primordial, biologically differentiated traits. Ethnicity, which is often defined as socio-historical and cultural difference, was often used to define differences that appeared equally elemental and unchangeable. The politics of race, when viewed through the logic of these definitions, seemed to be conducted between dualistic, incompatibly differentiated and unequally empowered forces. Hall posits that since 1990 these politics seem to have changed. Definitions of "race" and "ethnicity" have become conflated. The definition of these terms appears as contingent, disjunctive, fluid and a matter of choice. Hall's point is that these changes do not necessarily mean that politics of race have disappeared but rather that they have been transformed. These politics are no longer about changing "the relations of representation" but "the politics of representation itself". In other words, the struggle to set out the terms and conditions of difference and inclusion has, in recent times, taken a second direction. They not only define the material circumstances of race and ethnic relations but also the ways these are spoken about.

The examination of the ways that "race" and "ethnicity" are represented within a contemporary Australian context is an important theme. In fact, it is very difficult to find Australian federal or Victorian documents written within the last decades that define the notions "race" and "ethnicity". The Australian *Racial Discrimination Act* of 1975 states that:

> It is unlawful for a person to do any act involving distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, colour, descent or national or ethnic origin. (Department, Attorney General, reprinted 31 October 1995, p. 6)

However, the difference between these terms is not defined. A second booklet *Understanding Racism in Australia*, distributed by the Human Rights and Equal

[8] I particularly like Hall's (1991, 1996b, 1996c, 1997b, 1997c) analysis as he articulates both the embeddedness of the politics of race and the disjunctive condition of these debates, as they are contingent within socio-historical time and place. Other texts that add valuable material to this definition include the work of Floya and Yuval (1982), Mac and Ghaill (1999), Goldberg (1994), Hall (1998), Miles (1989) and Pickering (2001).

Opportunity Commission (HREOC), expresses concern that no person should be denied access to Australian resources because of "race, culture or language". Race and ethnicity in these documents are considered self-evident. At the same time, their definition remains unclear. Concepts of race slide between those of colour, descent and national or ethnic origin.

In defining the notions "race" and "ethnicity", I am drawn to Goldberg's treatise *Racist Culture: Philosophy and the Politics of Meaning*. Whilst affirming that "race" and "ethnicity" are social constructions, Goldberg (1994, pp. 2, 76) argues that these terms remain fundamental in that they are used to naturalise the ways that identities are understood and positioned. "Race" and "ethnicity" are concerned with the various designations which, in modern times, are used to define peoples as part of boundaried groupings that share and are differentiated by common characteristics – mental, cultural, moral, aesthetic, kinship and linguistic. The concept "ethnic" emphasises the way cultural content – history, culture, social origins – shapes the terms and conditions of difference. The concept "race" suggests that commonalities of biology and descent provide the logic of such differentiation. The term "racialised" illustrates how these terms do not remain innocent of meaning but rather are conceptual and embody notions which come to "include any and all significance extended both explicitly and silently by racial reference over discursive expression and practice". The term "racist" is used to invoke "those exclusions prompted by racial reference or racialised significance, whether such exclusions are actual or intended, the effects or affects of racial or racialised expression". As such, "race" and "ethnic" define the conceptual and material domains, which categorise some groups as different in terms of their cultural or biological commonality. "Racialisation" is concerned with the taken-for-granted and normalised formulations that define the terms and conditions of being "raced" or "ethnic". It is concerned with the commonly understood logic that defines what it means to be designated as a member of a particular race or ethnic group. "Racism" examines the way these formulations, as they are commonly explored and debated, are given materiality and embodiment. That is, it is concerned with the conditions and consequences, both premeditated and unpremeditated, of racialisation.

The concern is the ways that these formulations are spoken about and implemented within contemporary Western societies such as that of Melbourne, Australia. The argument advanced by critical raced theory is that Western societies are structured in ways that are already inequitable in terms of race but that discussions about these formations and their contexts are subdued and marginalised. Tony Morrison in her seminal text, *Playing in the Dark*, examines the ways that race and ethnicity are spoken about in American literature. Her argument is that some people are able to define the terms and conditions of belonging within a community and that they do this through the conception and the embodiment of those people who do not belong. Her writing brings to mind two narratives so often defined as "silent" in post-colonial theory, cultural studies and writings on Whiteness.[9] Here, the person

[9] I develop my discussion of post-colonial literature through a large number of quite different writings including those by Fanon (1986; 1990), Said (1991), Spivak (1995), Bhabha (1994), Morrison (1992), Chow (1993; 1998), Brah (1996; 2000), Young (1995), Ghandi (1998) and Ashcroft (2001).

of the community defines himself or herself through the presence of others. As such, people within the community find it difficult to speak about themselves in other ways. The other, the person outside of the community, becomes understood only through the descriptions that delineate his or her difference; so spoken for that he or she is left with no place from which to speak independently. The task of the researcher is to make transparent the logic through which contemporary western selves are constructed.

Omi and Winant (1993, 1994) famously posit that the ideological conditions of race, as they change and negotiate the social and cultural conditions of community relationships, need to be properly understood, even as the epistemological limitations of these terms must be recognised. Their concern is the paradoxical processes whereby notions of race and ethnicity are contingent, negotiated and changing formulations; even as they have real application in the day-to-day lives of real people. To ignore the materiality of race definition is to deny the ways that race structures mediate the everyday activities of individuals and groups: the ways they can identify themselves and those they can participate within communities. To fail to interrogate the ontological conditions that frame the ways that race and ethnic identity are lived is to be confused by the particular and changing terms and conditions of raced discourse within a society. They argue that:

> To mount a viable challenge to the dominant paradigm of ethnicity... the sociohistorical process by which racial categories are created, inhabited, transformed and destroyed... [as] a process of historically situated projects in which human bodies and social structures are represented and organised [must be interrogated]. (Omi and Winant quoted in Ladson Billings and Tate, 2007, p. 4)

Further, Omi and Winant (1994, p. 56) link "racial formation to the evolution of hegemony, the way in which society is organised and ruled". Their analysis suggests that "race" is a matter of both social structure and cultural representation. To understand race is to understand a process in which the embodied activities of day-to-day lives are discussed and set in place within social structures and institutional organisations, and framed within historical and socio-cultural context. Real events take place within the lives of real people as they are configured by social and institutional structures and constructed by cultural representation. A critical analysis of race and ethnic identities in contemporary times is a matter of understanding the day-to-day identifications of ordinary people, the debates and structures that consolidate these ideas, and the socio-cultural and historical notions which shape them. It is, as Toni Morrison argues, a matter of untangling of the ambivalent stereotypes which make

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My Discussion of cultural studies emerges particularly from the work of Hall (1997b; 1997c), Grossberg (1996b; 1997) and Giroux (1994; 1997). My development of the concept Whiteness emerged through the several writings of, for instance, Frankenberg (1993; 1997), Dwyer (1997), Fine et al. (1997), hooks (1997) and Bonnett (2000). Recent writing by Hall (1992; 1996a; 1996b; 1996c; 1997a; 1997b; 1997c), Chow (1993; 1998), Brah (1996; 2000), Brah et al. (1999) and Minh-ha (1999), to mention a few, trace out the terms and conditions of this logic. Writings by Hage (1998), Papastergiadis (1998; 2000) and Ashcroft (2001) consider the ways that these concepts have been played out within contemporary Australian society.

up the narrations; the reversal of the gaze of these narrations so as to study the narrator self instead of others and the reconsideration of other stories which our "frail" hearts refuse. It is, as Lyn and Parker (2006) suggest, an interrogation of raced structures that are undeniably and inextricably present within western societies and which need to be uncovered.

This reassessment of the terms and conditions of race and ethnic relationships takes place at a time when globalisation refocuses and reshapes our most basic understandings of social organisation and cultural convention. As Hall so dramatically puts it, in recent times the conceptions of identity itself have come "under erasure". Hall (1992) argues that the concept of the human person as essentially formed, fully centred, unified and reasonable is more recently constructed as "post-modern", a "moveable feast" in which conceptions of identity are in process and at odds with themselves, as their conception is made and changed within the contingencies of socio-historical context. A crucial task has been to set out the ways that teachers, parents and I have used notions of "race" and "ethnicity" and described the relations between them. Moreover, it has been to examine these relations at a time when these concepts are subject to a changed politics of representation and when the notions that underpin them, especially those of identity, are changing. As Ulrich Beck (2000, p. 107) powerfully makes the case:

> To be sure, we are now faced not with a "class crisis" but with a "crisis" resulting from the unfamiliar and chaotic quality of world society. The issue ... is one of identity. Who am I? Where am I? Where and to whom do I belong? These are the key questions of the new modernity.
>
> In other words world society refers to a kind of *new world*, a kind of undiscovered continent, which is being revealed in the transnational no-man's land between national states and societies
>
> (Beck 2000, p. 107)

I am concerned about the ways other conditions, particularly those of class and gender, position people in contemporary societies. These conditions of thinking and being in the world dominate the politics of our time just as surely as those of race. Much of the literature which forms the basis of this book was written by women, and their insights are pertinent not only into the silences of race, but also into those of gender. The data collection and analysis were, of course, gendered. My perspective on race has, no doubt, been shaped in meaningful ways by my gender, as has my way of going about data collection and analysis. Discussions about "ethnic women" are implicit throughout the book. These discussions reflect the ways social structures and ideas are formed not only by the way we define others racially but also in the way they are gendered. A noise of multidimensionality positions identities in relation to their race–gender–class. Of interest are the ways that people speak of race, class and gender, the noisy debates but also the silences. Here I concur with Ladson Billings and Tate (accessed 2007) in that:

> The point we strive to make with this meta-proposition is not that class and gender are insignificant, but rather, as West suggests, that "race matters," and, as Smith insists, "blackness matters in more detailed ways."

This book is an interrogation of the ways that identity and difference are understood and spoken about in a contemporary Australian context transformed by technological, demographic and global changes. It is argued that race and ethnic relations are defined by deeply held and normalised notions that define the ways people belong within communities.[10] Noisy conversations are held in relation to almost-silent narrations negotiated within a complex interrelated world of unequally empowered discourse. The person who is textualised as not-one-of-us is too often left with no position from which to speak. The person who understands himself or herself through others in this way finds it difficult to understand himself except through the other. He has no need to speak of himself. What is needed is a way to listen to that which is not spoken about, or spoken about reluctantly or spoken about in other ways. The stark materiality of contemporary community relationships and their implications for belonging is constantly reinterpreted through conflicting themes of paradoxical and parallel narratives. This making and remaking is increasingly fraught as in contemporary times the essential definitions of identity come under pressure.

Chapter 4, "Raced and Ethnicity in Globalised Times", explores how conversations about race and ethnicity can be understood in contemporary Western societies such as Australia and the changing ways these have articulated over the decade of my research. It uses the methodological frame developed in the previous chapter to examine the ways that ethnic relations are spoken about in contemporary Australian society (particularly as they have been spoken about as multiculturalism rather than racism) and the ways such speaking has changed. The rest of the book examines the conversations I have with teachers and parents in a school in Melbourne, Australia when I speak with them about race and ethnic relationships. I trace out the categories and conditions that make up the logic of these conversations about race and ethnic relations.

1.3 Whispering in My Heart

In a recent book, *The Whispering in our Hearts*, Australian historian Henry Reynolds (1998) reflects on the diary of the colonist administrator, Windeyer. He adds, as he does so, his own commentary that:

> It was a sustained attack on both Aboriginal rights and on the humanitarians who upheld them. In a sweeping peroration Windeyer declared:
>
> The consideration of the rights of Aborigines to the enjoyment of their laws and customs, to the soil of the country, to its wild animals is done. The argument is sound; the chain of reasoning is complete.
>
> And yet that was not the final word. His powerful analysis had not satisfied his own conscience. "How is it our minds are not satisfied?" he asked. "What means this whispering in the bottom of our hearts?"
>
> (Reynolds, 1998, p. 21)

[10] See the work of hooks (1995), Lather (1991) and Morrison (1992).

Reynolds' concern is that discussions about Australia's Indigenous people can be understood from different viewpoints. Initially, debates about Aboriginal rights took place in the ways that represented the Indigenous person as primitive, almost animalistic and as tied to the soil. The reasoning within the argument seemed "complete". Within the ambit of this debate, there seemed no other logic. Yet there is still "a whispering in the bottom of our hearts" that all is not right. "Our minds are not satisfied". There is the feeling that debates about race and ethnicity need to be understood in other ways. Other recent literatures have also spoken about the unease that exists beneath contemporary Western discussions about race and ethnicity. Stratton, speaking of a contemporary Australian context, titles his text "Race daze", whilst Hage researches "white fantasies". Toni Morrison (1992) suggests that we are "playing in the dark".

My research began as a "whispering" that race and ethnic relations, as they are described in schools, need to be understood in other ways. It emerges from my increasing realisation that conversations about ethnic relations are contradictory and debated, often leave things out, say things in other ways and sometimes cannot be said at all. This book is in so many ways underpinned by my own story – my own journey if you like – to understand these conversations in more complex ways. It is by no means an easy journey. My project to understand relations between ethnic identities in schools is, as James Clifford (1997) argues, homework. It is the critical confrontation with almost invisible, taken-for-granted ways of meaning that not only shape the ideas of the teachers and parents with whom I converse, but also shape my own thinking. I negotiate my discussions with teachers and parents from different positions. Sometimes I find that I share with them similar ways of understanding the world of the school. Sometimes I come from outside of the form and content of their narration and I struggle to listen and understand the voices to which I listen. Over the decade, I share differently commonalities of age, education, class, race, Whiteness and gender. At other times, I share commonalities of migration experience and ethnic and religious identities. I already share with my respondents, commonalities in the way that I understand and speak about race and ethnic relations and the world of the school. I also share with many of them a "whispering in my heart" that the conversations that we have about race and ethnic relations do not properly explain what is happening within the school. It is only with some difficulty that I begin to think that these conversations need to be understood in other ways: that I need to listen to the things that teachers, parents and I speak about but also to the things said in other ways or hardly said at all. It is a complex journey as the terrain I map already provides the maps which ground my text. I am in a very real way indeed "playing in the dark" as a part of process of re-imagining whereby:

> For them, as for me imagining is not merely looking or looking at: nor is it taking oneself intact into the other. It is, for the purposes of the work, *becoming*.
>
> (Morrison, 1992, p. 4)

Under observation are the conversations that took place in one State secondary school in Melbourne, Australia, during two periods of transformation: as the school population became more diverse; and then as it was increasingly altered by

technological and population changes. They are the discussions I had with wonderful and committed teachers and dedicated parents. Their hard work to help their students and the policies and programmes they have implemented are chronicled here as examples of best practice in schools buffeted by demographic and global changes. Yet intertwined with these conversations are other logics that define the ways in which members of the school community belong differently. These noisy and silent narrations that speak of ethnic and raced relations do more than trace individual negotiations between raced and ethnicised identities and contingent and changing debates, particularly those about multiculturalism and racism. They include the taken-for-granted notions of self and other, as they are negotiated across shifting inequalities of power, which are the subject and the object of these conversations. The obsessive evasiveness that underpins the relationship between self and other comes to underpin the "noise", but also the 'silences', in these discussions.

Chapter 2
Encountering Silent Narrations: Beginning the Research

> He heard one day that Australia was being urged to accept more Africans and South Americans. Soon afterwards, thinking himself well prepared with two Indo-Chinese aides, he went to meet a new group of migrant teenagers and found himself in a room full of Ethiopians and Hispanics. This year's arrivals have added three new languages to the 40 already spoken at the school: Hakka (Chinese), Pushtu (Afganistan) and Tigre (Ethiopian). An overwhelming 93 percent of the school's 814 pupils come from ethnic backgrounds, nearly half of them Indo-Chinese and the school qualifies as disadvantaged in three ways: because of the number of migrant students, the recency of their arrival and their parents' low incomes. It would seem a volatile mix ... If the teachers didn't have a good attitude this would be the centre of racial tension in the state. No such tensions are evident in the schoolyard. The European boy who wants a go at basketball confidently joins the Asians who began the game, and the Muslim girl swathed in traditional veiling above her uniform causes no second glances as she crosses the yard. "We've got so many kids who look different that we don't know what different is. Nobody stands out in this school.
>
> (Kissane, 1988, p. 31)

The article is headed "Schools, a harmonious melting pot". The pictures are of smiling children who seem to come from everywhere. The two girls are of South-east Asian appearance, the three boys from somewhere in Africa. There are the veiled girl and her olive-skinned friend from somewhere around the Mediterranean. A school community so changed by immigration and where "no such tensions are evident" delights the writer. Karen Kissane's story has several parts. The first describes the suddenness of demographic change at the school. The changes are overwhelming. Now half of the students in the school are Indo-Chinese and the "school qualifies as disadvantaged". The volatility and racial tensions that could underlie such relations are avoided because of the "good attitude" of the teachers. Kissane's final comment is both a statement and a question. "We've got so many kids who look different that we don't know what different is."

Reading Kisssane's article today, I interrogate her comments: the students who get on so well; the racial tensions that do not occur; the large numbers of students who suddenly arrive. I note what she does not say or says indirectly or in euphemisms. I am intrigued with the "colour-blindedness" of Kissane's analyses; her adamancy that difference between students is something that "we don't know about" even as the difference between "so many kids" that "we've got" is the focus of the article. Following writings about critical theory and post-colonialism, I seek

R. Arber, *Race, Ethnicity and Education in Globalised Times*,

a more nuanced understanding of social relationships that accounts for the taken-for-granted thinking and silences that underpin the article as well as the institutional structures which shape them. Such a reading is concerned with the paradoxical and confusing juncture between the day-to-day experience of negotiating difference and the taken-for-granted understandings, which nevertheless position some people as the same as us and some as different. It is concerned with the exploration of the data from different vantage points: the stories which discuss an everyday world altered by increased and different migration patterns; the policy and practices put in place to deal with those changes and the taken-for-granted conceptions about identity and difference which underpin those debates. Moreover, it is concerned with the place of the researcher and of the respondents as we comment on the race and ethnic relationships which take place in the school and the ways that these same everyday assumptions structure our conversations.

Questions about "how" one can research ethnic and race relations in schools shadow my research project. My methodology, as it was implemented in 1988, emerged from my reading of "naturalistic research" and "interpretive" literatures.[1] In their text *Naturalistic Inquiry*, Yvonna Lincoln and Egon Guba (1985) set out what they define as the essential features of method for human inquiry. Following from a number of sometimes-disparate writings (Dilthey, Husserl, Heideger), their exploration begins from the proposition of "verstehen" or "interpretative understanding" whereby people understand the world around them through the meaning they give to their day-to-day actions. The notion describes the study of human action as a relation between the knower and the known as they both exist within the vagaries of a disjunctive, seemingly haphazard context.[2] Anselm Strauss' (1987) model of "grounded theory" and his attempt to "capture the complexity of reality" by grounding the analysis in an evolving interaction between data collection and the coding and the making of meaning gave direction to this kind of research. Nevertheless, by the end of my 1988 research, I became concerned that these methods did not explain these experiences as a relation to socio-historical context. The work of Anthony Giddens (1976) provided a pertinent reminder that meaningful social interaction is socially constructed and therefore needs to be understood as the socially structured and culturally patterned behaviour of groups and institutions. The work of critical theorists and post-colonial writers reminded me that my research enterprise was set within a gendered, raced unequally empowered world in which I, like my respondents, was implicated and which needed to be interrogated.

Guba and Lincoln's principles for method underpinned my research project in both 1988 and 1998.[3] Nevertheless, I became increasingly concerned that the assumptions underpinning these research methods needed to be questioned. In the next

[1] For ethnographic writings important to my study in 1988, see, in the first instance: Goetz and LeCompte (1984), Denzin (1989), Guba and Lincoln (1984), Strauss (1987), Guba and Lincoln (1989), Lincoln and Guba (1985), LeCompte and Goetz (1982) and Lofland (1974).

[2] See, for instance, Crotty (1998).

[3] For a description of these approaches in 1998 see, for example: Denzin and Lincoln (1998), Guba and Lincoln (1998) and Guba and Lincoln (1999). See also Appendix 1.

section of this chapter, "Setting Up the Research", I describe my research project as it was first set up in 1988. In the following section, "Re-Entering the Scene", I describe my return to the school 10 years later, the research project as I determined it that second time and the difficulties I faced as I tried to put this research in place. The third section, "Interrogation Muddles", examines the naturalistic and critical theories which informed the methods used within the research and notes the tensions and issues – the noises and silence – which mediated their operation. In the next chapter, "Beyond Silent Noise: Articulating Methodology", I develop an integrated and more coherent methodology through which the exploration of ethnic and race relationships can take place.

2.1 Setting up the Research

My first impressions of Southgate Secondary College in 1988 are recorded in my journal.

> I am far too early, so I drive slowly through lorry-packed streets through the industrial flatness of the middle suburbs of south-eastern Melbourne. The "New Start" migrant hostel, beautifully landscaped but uninhabited, catches my attention. For the past couple of years it has been closed because of its lack of cooking facilities. The migrants it housed have shifted to Merriton. Now, they are closing Merriton and shifting everyone back to "New Start". I drive on past Southmead High School. Grey prefabricated buildings in the Greyton mould, built for the children of the baby boom in the 1950s and 1960s, are positioned in long rows in the middle of large, flat, yellow fields. I pass on through Southmead shopping centre. Shops with Chinese and Vietnamese names overhang the bustle of busy streets. On Branxton Road, a few miles further on, Greek signs dominate the overhanging blinds of sixties style suburban shopfronts. Then I am back at Southgate Secondary College. Yellow buildings containing light industries surround roughly grassed school ovals. Overhead, giant metal pylons buzz with electric current. Greyton prefabricated buildings are placed among the more recent, higgledy-piggledy design of portable classrooms. It should be a desolate scene. However, the greetings at the office are warm and friendly. The atmosphere of the school is amiable and homely. These are the crucial characteristics of a school and the ones that will draw me back again.
>
> (Arber, 1988, unpublished journal)

In 1988, I was belatedly caught up in the movement of the social sciences towards qualitative methodology and a naturalistic approach. Methods were chosen to provide the responsiveness, adaptability and holistic emphasis necessary to adjust to the complex world of multiple constructions of reality suggested by Lincoln and Guba's (1985) most recent text *Naturalistic Inquiry*. Because I was painting such a broad picture of policy implementation, a wide variety of data collection methods became relevant. Document analyses, interview collection and observation were crucial methods in this study. Data collection for my school study began during the second week of the 1988 academic year. For the rest of that year, I spent most school days, and many evenings as well, as a "participant observer", working within the

school.[4] Although I did not work at the school, I "lived as much as possible with the individuals being investigated". The questions which focused my conversations with parents and teachers were particularly concerned with issues of multiculturalism, the implementation of those policies and practices and their consequence. Following from James Spradley's (1979) suggestion to use open-ended "grand tour" questions, I set up thematic guides at the beginning of the research and then allowed questions to become progressively more focused as the data collection continued. Following Strauss's (1987) proposition that the research analysis should be grounded within the research context, theories devised on the basis of collected data were taken back and verified within the school context.

Respondents included within the research were decided upon "purposively" to achieve "maximum variation" and "to generate the information upon which the emergent design and the grounded theory could be based".[5] My initial lists sought to interview teachers about their role as implementers of general school policy, as initiators of specific programmes and practices of multiculturalism, or as people who, as I defined it at the time, had "particular experiences" of immigration or racism or who defined their ethnicity as "non Anglo-Australian". As the study continued, decisions about whom I should include within my data snowballed as respondents told me about others who might be interesting to my research.[6] The literature left me troubled by the role I played as a participant researcher. My notes in 1988 consider that:

> I was a teacher returning to an environment that was extremely familiar to me. Being of similar age, education and background to teachers I was able to gain much information from casual conversations in the staffroom, playground and classrooms as well as from the more formal interview.
>
> (Arber, 1988, p. 42)

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[4] My 1988 analysis was particularly derived from the work of Lincoln and Guba (1985). See, for example, Denzin (1989), Guba and Lincoln (1984, 1989) and Goetz and LeCompte (1984).

[5] Ibid.

[6] In 1988, only 6 of the 18 teachers I interviewed were men, but all of these teachers held positions of responsibility within the school. In a brief questionnaire discussed within the interview, I asked the question "What do you consider to be your ethnic background?" Eight teachers identified themselves as Australian. Of these respondents, three simply said "Australian". Others replied that they were "Oz", "Australian for 200 years", "Anglo-Celtic Australian" and "White Australian". Alongside this, teachers replied that they were: "one-quarter Greek", "one-quarter Norwegian" and "bi-culturally Greek and Australian". One teacher replied that she was English, another Jewish and a further two that they were Greek. The two teacher aides identified themselves as Indian and as Chinese. One teacher and one aide refused to fill out the form. Meeting with parents seemed a more difficult task. Some of the parents had only a limited command of English and children were often given the task of translating. Finding convenient times to meet was not always easy as many parents worked extremely long hours and the schools often did not have direct contact with families. Parents identified themselves as coming from a miscellany of ethnic backgrounds. One parent identified himself as Australian, another as Irish/Scottish, two as Australian/Chinese, two as Greek, one each as Croatian, as Vietnamese, Yugoslav and Turkish. Of these 11 parents, 7 were women and 4 were men.

As a teacher returning to a school, I felt that my relationship with teachers was a comfortable one. I therefore feared that I might "go native", no longer able to separate my ways of thinking from those of the teaching community I observed.[7] On the other hand, I became increasingly concerned that my meetings with parents necessitated the negotiation of problematic and almost insurmountable cultural borders. My journal lists the conversations that I had with teachers and professionals to discuss correct ways of approaching parents. I reminisced about conversations in which I behaved impolitely or inappropriately. I was exultant that my meetings with parents were warm and pleasant and that I shared life experiences with them.

Following Strauss (1987), the research material was analysed in "successively evolving interpretations" as I moved back and forward between the data collection, its elaboration and its verification within the field. The data collected within my initial process of "generative questioning" were coded, verified and extended within the field in a process of inductive moves between the data collection and its theoretical framing. My task as a researcher was to portray the multiple constructions of the school world presented to me by my respondents. As the author of the study, I was the one "who orchestrates all the discourses in the written text".[8] Within this chorus, I would and could allow each of the individual voices within the research to be heard and their portrayals of reality to be produced as accurately as possible.

As the year drew to an end, I found the methodologies which underpinned these research techniques limited. The ad hoc and disjunctive conversations I collected from parents and teachers within schools could be related neither to the patterns of social meaning and practice discussed in government debate and academic documents, nor to the socio-historical context in which they took place.[9] Strauss's (1987) notion that these connections can be theorised without recourse to languages and structures already in existence in academic or government literatures seemed difficult, if not impossible. In my paper "Reification or relativity" (Arber, 1993c) written shortly after the completion of this first study, I considered how it was possible to bring together what I understood then as an impossible dualism: the reification of institutional structures and the relativity of individual experience.[10] The relation

[7] Lincoln and Guba (1985, p. 305) speak of going native as the following: "We wish to add a caveat against the danger of what anthropologists have referred to as "going native. . ." When an anthropologist has become so like the group he is studying, he ceases to consider himself as part of the progression – or ceases to consider either his cultural or professional subgroup as his dominant reference group. . .Identification with the "natives"; or co-optation, as a persistent problem of inquirer identification, has been part of the "warnings and advice" given to new participant observers for several decades. . .Moreover "prolonged direct participation" entails the risk that the researcher will lose his detached wonder and fail to discover certain phenomena the uninvolved researcher would discover. . .The longer the investigator is in the field, the more accepted he or she becomes, the more appreciative of local culture, the greater the likelihood that professional judgements will be influenced".

[8] See, for instance, Denzin and Lincoln (1998).

[9] See, for instance, Castles, Kalantzis, Cope, and Morrissey (1988), Foster and Stockley (1988) and Collins (1988b).

[10] See Arber, 1993.

between the "knower and the known" as it was described within the interpretive literature, was limited. I began to realise that identities were made and placed within schools in ways that were unequally empowered. The few respondents who spoke to me about their discomfort in schools remained isolated and unsupported. Debates about "going native" and the "triangulation of different sources" no longer seemed straightforward. In several papers written at the time, I repeated commonly-held notions that I might "go native", even as I felt that my relation to the research needed to be understood in a more complex way.[11] Finally, and most importantly, I became concerned that I could not explain my research data. My study of multicultural policy and practice showed that the implementation of these policies was inconsistent and controversial. It could not explain why teachers and parents strongly supported some of these policies and practices, while others were ignored or strongly contested. In particular, it was not possible to explain why racism was something hardly able to be discussed at all.[12]

2.2 Re-Entering the School

It was strange going back to Southgate a decade later. Across the road, the same factories still stared (drably). Somehow entering Southgate seemed like entering another and completely self-contained world. The buildings, although the same 1960s prefabricated buildings that were there before, had been refurbished and seemed bright and new. There was an immediate feeling of friendliness, excitement and happiness. Even as I walked into the entrance hall, two teachers who remembered me greeted me. Mary Navine, the Principal, came soon after and welcomed me warmly. There never seemed any doubt that I would return to the school.

Despite my warm welcome back to the school, my return in 1998 was by no means straightforward. In 1988, my research at the school and my conversations with community members were expressed as matters of multiculturalism. In 1988, my letter of request to study at the school explained that I was "studying the nature of multicultural policy and practice within post-primary schools":

> Over the last decade the Government has put forward several statements relating to a policy of multiculturalism. The academic literature has also suggested several scenarios that could occur in schools in relation to these policies. However, very little research has taken place in the environs of the school to understand what is actually taking place there. There would seem to be many reasons why the reality of the school situation can bear little resemblance to either suggested policy or academic theory.
>
> (Arber 1988, letter to Southgate Secondary College)

[11] In papers I wrote at the time, I continuously expressed concern that "as a teacher returning to the familiar environment of the secondary school I might: "go native" (Arber, 1988).

[12] In a paper, "A hidden racism: The failure of multiculturalism in schools" (Arber, 1993a), I suggest that the failure to implement multicultural policy and practice was due to the presence of a hidden racism in schools. However, I was not able to bring together a research methodology which could explore this proposition.

In 1988, it did not occur to me to talk about ethnic relations in any other way. It was the bicentennial year, a year when Australians celebrated unashamedly the second century of European occupation of the Australian continent. It was a year which culminated in the much-heralded and broadly acclaimed multicultural agenda statement. Reiterating remarks made by Geoffrey Blainey 4 years earlier, the then leader of the Australian opposition, John Howard, made comments condemning multiculturalism. However, these remarks seemed isolated and were disputed by Australian politicians and other public figures. Government reports and academic discussions about ethnic and race relations in schools spoke of these relationships as multicultural.[13] Most particularly, I was enamoured with Grassby's (1974) vision of a cosmopolitan country in which there could indeed be "difference in unity" and "a family of a nation".[14]

By 1998, I had begun to suspect that policies of multiculturalism were limited in the ways they understood and dealt with issues of ethnic relations. Public discussions about race, culture and migration had become increasingly pertinent issues after the publicity given to comments in a maiden speech by newly elected parliamentarian, Pauline Hanson. These debates meant that multicultural documents contemporary to 1998 questioned values that had seemed self-evident to most Australians in 1988. The "Stolen children report"[15], the "Royal Commission into Aboriginal deaths in custody"[16] and the "Australian Reconciliation Convention" held in 1998[17] problematised, in quite different ways, the nature of a European presence in Australia. Most importantly, I had come into contact with people and literatures which emphasised the need to think about matters of race and multiculturalism in other ways. The letter that I sent to the school in 1998 therefore describes my research differently, explaining that:

> Ten years ago I completed research . . . at your school where I looked at the way policies of multiculturalism were being understood, implemented and experienced in schools. Towards the beginning of 1998, I wish to initiate a second research project as part of the research for my doctoral degree. This study seeks to critically examine the various approaches to anti-racist education developed in Australia since 1978, in order to develop a more systematic and coherent theory. This second study at your school would provide the basis for a longitudinal view of the school and the progress it has made in institutionalising its commitment to multiculturalism.
>
> Racism has been a central construct throughout Australia's post-settler history. During the last 20 years a series of legal, political and educational approaches to anti-racism have been developed and implemented. Yet recent writings have suggested that these approaches have not fully realised their lofty aspirations, have serious theoretical limitations and most seriously, share many of the same understandings, which underpin the racist elements, about which they are concerned. Education particularly has been understood as a central strategy

[13] The exceptions here were migration and indigenous issues which were discussed quite separately. For an exploration of the policies of the time, see Foster (1988) and Rizvi (1985).

[14] The documents of the time express an excitement which I carried into my project development. See, for instance, documents by Zubrzycki (1982; 1979) and Grassby (1973; 1974).

[15] Bringing them Home: National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from their Families, Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, 1997.

[16] The Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody 1991.

[17] Australian Reconciliation Convention, World Congress Centre, Melbourne, 26–28 May, 1998.

> within these academic discussions. However little research has been undertaken within schools to trace out the history, form and consequences of these strategies. This project seeks to fill this void.

My 1998 letter contained two requests. Following from my 1988 research project, I sought to explore the ways that policies and practices of multiculturalism were understood and practised in the school. More importantly, I wanted to explore the ways that anti-racist policy and practice were understood and dealt with. At my first meeting, the Principal, Ms. Kokanakis, was most supportive of a study of multiculturalism. She suggested, however, that I change my research proposal to avoid terms such as "race", "racism" or "anti-racism". The real meaning behind this suggestion became clear when I outlined my research project at the next school council meeting. My research journal records:

> Went to Southgate Secondary College for council meeting. Had thought that I already had permission to enter the school. I had spoken to Ms Kokanakis and she had sounded positive (that my research could continue) provided that I changed the title of the research. I therefore planned a fairly normal speech i.e. introduction, focus, method, why the school. I already knew that racism was a sensitive topic – that is the focus of my present paper but I had not expected the vehemence that faced me . . .
>
> When it got to my turn I basically said that my research was looking at strategies, i.e. (those of) multiculturalism. I stopped there. I did not read the rest of my talk. The attack was intense. What was I calling the research? My mind went blank. I could not remember the new title but said that I was changing it. However, I did maintain that the nature of my research would remain (the same). Mr Cannes said then that my time was up but that he could see that I was already more sensitive to them (i.e. to the issues raised). I said that was unfair – I was well aware of their sensitivities.
>
> (Journal, Bk 5, 1998, p. 1)

The sensitivity of the school towards allusions to racism was not ill-conceived. Only some weeks earlier, senior bureaucrats within the then Victorian Department of Education called me in and asked me why I thought that particular schools were racist and how I would measure such racism. I explained then that the focus for my research was quite different; that I was concerned neither with defining some individuals as racist nor with measuring racism within schools; that rather I was concerned about ways that relationships between ethnic groups were spoken about in Australian schools. At the next council meeting, therefore, I tabled a second document, which discussed the background of the research, and explained what the research was about and, more particularly, what it was not about. I called the research project, "The way forward: Strategies for multicultural education in contemporary Australian schools". Nevertheless, I was not able to take my research project into the school for another 9 months. The letters sent to teachers and parents seeking their cooperation were now inscribed firmly within languages of multiculturalism:

> In 1988, I implemented a research project at your school that looked at the way multicultural policies were interpreted and implemented in schools. Ten years later, I want to carry out a second "follow up" research project as part of my studies towards a PhD. In this study I wish to examine the way you and your school have developed your thinking about multicultural education and the ways some of these policies and practices are now different. In this way this second study would become part of a longitudinal view of the school's practices in multiculturalism.

> Multiculturalism has provided a central focus for Australian strategies for good community relations for the last two decades. However, very little research has taken place to discover what form these policies and practices take, how they are implemented and the effects they have. The focus for this research is to study best practice within real schools as a first step towards building a new and more coherent approach to multicultural education.

My research project, as I understand it now, was to discuss ways that race and ethnic relations were spoken about in the school. In 1988, this focus, the questions that supported it and the conceptualisation of the study analysis were phrased in terms of multicultural policies and practices. Such conceptions of ethnic relations not only seemed useful, but also self-evident. In 1988, it did not occur to me (or to most of those to whom I spoke) that these relationships could be discussed in other ways. In 1998, however, I set out to discuss ethnic relations as they had come to be understood: not merely as the contention, implementation and experiencing of multicultural policy, but also in terms of anti-racist policy and practice. However, I found that despite my different understanding of these notions, it was even more difficult to speak about racism than it had been 10 years earlier.

The repercussions of these difficulties reverberated throughout my research project. There were several short-term implications. Because of the sensitivities that had been aroused, entering the school had become complicated. It was no longer possible to engage in the same long-term approach I had in place in my first study. Instead, my re-entry into the school was brief and concentrated on just two of the methods used in my 1988 study: the document study and the research interview. The method used to collect my interviews was in form similar to that which underpinned my data collection in 1988.[18] New teachers and parents were chosen "purposefully" using similar criteria to those used in my study in 1988. In addition, I was able to interview ten teaching staff and three parents who had been at the school the decade before.[19]

In 1998, my relationship to the parents I interviewed was different from 1988. Parents identified themselves as being from New Zealand, the Cook Islands and as South American, Vietnamese, Australian Cambodian and Indian. I re-interviewed

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[18] See Denzin and Lincoln (1998) and Guba and Lincoln (1999).

[19] When I asked teachers to tell me about their ethnic identity in 1998, they did not always answer me in the same way as they did a decade earlier. Two teachers identified themselves as Australian, two teachers as Australian Greek, whilst one teacher – who replied one quarter Greek in 1988 – now called herself English. One teacher who said he was Chinese in 1988 now wrote that he did not know what he was and two teachers' aides continued to identify as Indian and Chinese. A third aide again refused to fill out the form. Teachers new to the school identified themselves variously as Jewish, Australian-Chinese, Dutch, German, Serbian, Anglo-Australian and Chinese. Teachers and aides were understood differently in 1998 than they were in 1988. I became increasingly aware of the unequally empowered relationships that underpinned the very different access that teaching aides and teachers had in school decision-making. On the other hand, members of the school council were no longer necessarily parents or teachers and were often co-opted from the local business and academic community. The school principal and two of the assistant principals were now women. Of the teachers I had not interviewed previously, four were women and four were men. There were now more teachers of Non-English-Speaking Background (NESB) employed at the school and many of these held positions of responsibility within the school. The Principal saw herself as Greek–Australian, one Vice Principal as German and the head of the language unit as Serbian.

parents who identified themselves as Italian, Yugoslav and South American. Of the parents I had not interviewed earlier, three were men and five were women. My access to parents continued to be limited. It was difficult to meet parents who were not already involved within the school and it was still often necessary to ask students or school workers to translate interviews. Nevertheless, my access to parents seemed easier than it had been a decade earlier. The cultural barriers that so concerned me the decade before no longer seemed problematic. I no longer spoke with teachers about the best ways to talk to parents of other ethnic groups. Many of these respondents had come to Australia in the previous decade, but unlike my respondents a decade earlier, spoke English well, were often highly educated in business or professional employment and, in at least two cases, were undertaking research degrees themselves. This did not necessarily mean that the socio-economic class from which students came had changed but it did mean that the school was able to draw to its council a professional group of parents.

My questions to parents and teachers followed on from those I asked in 1988 and were, for the most part, about changes to the form, history and effects of multicultural programmes and policies within the school. Despite my good intentions, discussions about racism seldom took place. The one question contained within my list of focus questions was carefully worded and left till the end of the questionnaire. Under the heading "difference and its effects on relationships" it stated:

> When I was at the school last time teachers were unsure about how differences, especially cultural differences, had changed relationships at the school. On the one hand they felt that students got on well together and that there had been very little conflict within the school related to difference. On the other hand they were concerned that some groups were remaining separate from mainstream school life or were leaving others feeling excluded.
>
> What do you see as the effects of difference on relationships between students and between students and teachers at the school? Are there any other things that schools could do to help deal with this?

At the end of my 1988 research, the relationship between the individual practices of teachers and parents and their cultural and historical context were unexplained and the relationship between myself as knower and my respondents as known, unproblematic. Moreover, the observations I made remained anecdotal. In 1998, the method I used to collect and analyse these data followed a similar procedure to that followed in 1988. Following from Strauss (1987), and Strauss and Corbin (1998), I chose quotations to illustrate the patterns that I found in the data. I noted words and ways of understanding which were repeated so often that they could not be ignored. The collation of these patterns filled my notebooks and helped to formulate future research questions.[20] The data mosaic I put together suggested that relationships within the school took place in particular ways: the ethnic and racial groups who had arrived within the school; the relationships developed between them; the programmes and policies developed to deal with this diversity. Nevertheless, I was concerned that I had collected data that did not fit within the general model that

[20] My concerns can be found in the papers that I wrote at the time. See Arber (2000; 1999).

I built from my data analysis. A very few conversations suggested that the school community was a more comfortable place for some than for others. Most particularly, I was concerned that there were some questions that were difficult to ask at all.

2.3 Interrogation "Muddles"

I had, as Margaret Eisenhart described it, come across the "muddles" that underpin race and ethnic research:

> It seems clear that ethnographers should be thinking carefully about methods. But as I considered all this, I realised that whenever I think about new methods of ethnography I found myself in a muddle.
>
> (Eisenhart, 2001, p. 16)

The issue is that culture and biology, and the people who are understood as racially defined or ethnicised by such attributes, have material and notional meanings, even as these meanings are socially defined, changing, inconsistent and untidy. The very definition of diverse ethnic and race groups, and the acknowledgement of our social responsibilities towards those who are defined as different in this way, reveals the chasm that exists between the ways that people can behave within communities and towards one another and the ways that they are able to behave within and belong to those communities; and the culpability of all-of-us within such positioning discourses. This understanding impinges on the ways that social research into race and ethnic groups can take place. As Carol D. Lee explains it:

> Culture is never static and belief systems and practices associated with cultural groups are always under negotiation. . .How do we conceptualise in educational research the varied struggles faced by. . .and large proportions . . . who face persistent intergenerational poverty . . . How do we resist the simplistic assumptions about the meaning of groups and develop more nuanced and complex research agendas that work from a basic assumption that human beings always have agency, always have resources, make meaning from their experiences in varied ways.
>
> (Carol D. Lee, 2003, pp. 3–4)

In recent times, notions that define cultural identity have changed. Earlier conceptions of race and ethnicity assumed that the individuals who belonged to such groups were essentially different, defined by primordially and biologically defined traits. More recent understandings of identity represent the racially defined or ethnic person as a contingent, disjunctive, fluid entity shaped within the vagaries of a rapidly changing socio-cultural context. Nevertheless, membership of racial and ethnic groups continues to be associated with obstacles and struggles that have real meaning for the groups concerned. Increasingly, there has been a realisation that the definition of ethnic and racial identities is a changing, nuanced and negotiated definition which is at the same time tied to the notional and material terms and conditions of being a member of particular and different ethnic and racial groups.

The methodologies I had used were a useful but insufficient means to explain this complexity. In the introduction to their handbook for qualitative research methodologies, Denzin and Lincoln (1998) maintain that qualitative researchers have at

hand a multiplicity of methods from which they might choose. Such research is a set of interpretive practices that privileges no single methodology over another. For these writers, qualitative research is produced as "bricolage":

> And the researcher as bricoleur. . .A bricoleur is a 'jack-of-all' trades or a kind of professional do-it-yourself person. The bricoleur produces a bricolage, that is, a pieced- together, close-knot set of practices that provide solutions to a problem in a concrete situation.
> (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998, p. 3)

I delight in Denzin and Lincoln's redefinition of Levi-Strauss' term. I am indeed a bricoleur in the sense that I put together a miscellany of research methods as part of a considered attempt to unpick the conception and practice of race relations in schools. Nevertheless, I am concerned by their analogy. The issue, as Michelle Fine and Lois Weis (1998) point out, is that "methods are not passive strategies". In 1988, I used these tools to describe more adequately the multiple constructions that described one particular school context. By 1998, this interpretive frame no longer underpinned my analysis. Individual experiences and the ways each of my respondents described them continued to be important. However, I could not but be reminded of Dorothy Smith's (1987) position that these experiences need to be made problematic within the context of an unequally empowered day-to-day world.[21] That is, the subject's material and bodily existence needs to be located within an everyday world, where the relationships between that existence and the social conditions and material forms of this world of which they are part are made explicit.

The problem I faced was that the materials I collected from teachers and parents began with the everyday discussion of individual experience. However, the study of this day-to-day world is understood and acted upon as a relationship with the conceptual and material world in which these actions – those of my respondents and my own – are profoundly implicated. The insight of critical theorists is that it is this unequally empowered social world that must focus the research process.[22] Mainstream research methods, they argue, have largely produced stereotypical accounts of ethnic relations and, as such, served to uphold the *status quo*. For example, Richard Delgado (1995, p. xiv) argues that:

> Critical theory begins with a number of basic insights. One is that racism is normal, not aberrant in American society. Because racism is an ingrained feature in our landscape, it looks ordinary and natural to persons in the culture. Formal equal opportunity rules and laws that insist on treating blacks and whites (for example) alike, can thus remedy only the more extreme and shocking sorts of injustice, and ignore the ones that do not stand out. Formal equality can do little about the business as usual forms of racism that people of color confront everyday and that account for much misery, alienation and despair

The insight drawn from critical race theory is that racism is "a normal, daily fact of life" for those people othered within Western societies. Its ideologies and assumptions are taken-for-granted and implicated throughout Western social institutions

[21] For discussion of these issues see Smith (2001).

[22] See, for example, Troyna (1993), Troyna and Carrington (1993), Gillborn (1998) and Connolly (1998).

even as they remain almost unrecognised by those who are not marginalised in this way. The focus of critical scholarship is to challenge the normative standard of the non-marginalised, to listen to the stories and experiences of those who are silenced and to challenge and interrogate the social constructions that structure and maintain the borders between inclusion and exclusion in this way. It challenges the "White" notions which form the normative standard for the majority of those in Western societies such as the United States, United Kingdom and Australia. Finally, for many critical theorists, critical race theory attacks liberalism and the belief that the social norms, rules and understandings are "colorblind" and that all are equal before the law. (Lynn and Parker, (2006))

No longer a matter of placing together ideas and techniques as "bricolage" or as the disentangling and organisation of mere "muddles", critical race theorists insist that the exploration of matters of race matters is a radical act. It insists that I "out" myself as White, as Middle Class, Professional, as Woman, as Jewish and consider the implications of these positions to the ways that I can approach my research. It demands that race research not be done ingenuously but that (and as I argue in the next chapter), the structures and ideologies which underpin social relationships be identified, their terms and conditions made explicit, interrogated and listened to in other ways. Moreover, it insists that research has implications for action for education and schools. Critical race theory describes the nature of pedagogical practice that is grounded in the struggle to end racism and other forms of subordination. As qualitative data are "always open to alternative explanations", at best an ethnographer can persuade the reader to agree that the explanation is a plausible one, but not that it is the only plausible one. As David Gillborn (1998, p. 45) explains, the significance of class, gender and ethnic positioning is not always predictable but the researcher must remain sensitive to their possible consequences. Barry Troyna and Bruce Carrington (1993), simply ask, "Whose side are we on?" They argue that theory cannot be easily separated from practice and research and should be considered as a transformative process. They warn against allowing dualisms – Black/White, superiors/underdogs, us/them – to underpin any research. They maintain that the pre-eminent commitment of research must be to promote concepts of social justice, equality and participatory democracy.

For two decades, critical theories and critical race theories have influenced the direction of research studies[23]. However, few studies have been concerned with the discussion of ethnic and race relationships in Australian schools. Moreover, these

[23] There have been only a few recent texts that explore race and ethnic relations in Australian schools. Writings by Kalantzis, Cope, Noble, and Pointing (1990); Kalantzis, Cope, and Slade (1989), Lo Bianco (2000) have as their focus language curriculum as do Singh (1987; 1998), Luke and Luke (2000), Luke and Carrinngton (2000). Rizvi (1986; 1995) Rizvi and Kemmis (1987) Rizvi and Walsh (1998) and Gunew (1994) discuss the influence of race and ethnicity on curriculum generally. There has been far more material written in the United States and Britain, recent texts include writings by Mahalingam and McCarthy (2000), Cornbleth (2000), Sleeter and McLaren(1995), in relation to multicultural education and work by Stromquist and Monkman (2000) and Burbules and Torres (2000) in relation to globalisation. A most interesting text is Willinsky's (1998) *Learning to divide the world: Education at Empires end.*

discussions have had little impact on the ways that Australians speak about race and ethnic relations. Most Australians would agree with the sentiments expressed in Kissane's article that "we don't know what difference is". Although by the time I complete this book in 2007 Australians are somewhat more questioning of race relationships, most would nevertheless concur with Prime Minister John Howard's (2005) statement "I do not believe Australians are racist".[24] A central feature of this research is to uncover and interrogate the normative understandings and structures that contextualise teachers' conversations when they talk about relationships in their schools. It is concerned with "race talk" in conversations which, to both my respondents and me, seem devoid of race. In this way, the research is a rigorous cross-examination of my conversations as a White, middle-class teacher and academic (who is also a woman and Jewish and a mother of two children) with fellow teachers and with parents, and my realisation and subsequent acknowledgement that my research needs to be understood in other ways. It is the interrogation of conversations and understandings that follows long involvement with anti-racism and community work and the promotion of good multicultural policy and practice in schools. Nevertheless, neither these good intentions nor the theoretical frames provided by critical theorists could readily, or even appropriately, provide a framework for my research. After one particularly harrowing experience, for instance, I wrote in my diary:

> This is an instance of racism – not at the school but at my university – my institution. I am not a 'white knight' [who can] change the world. It is a misconstruction to sell myself that way. Just listening and believing is something but it is not enough. It is on your shoulders now. You cannot just listen to something that could be in your power to change and not change it especially as it is not within the school at all.
>
> (Journal Bk 5, 1998, p. 16)

Qualified as a teacher in India, Parisha was only able to get work as a science technician. The story she told, however, was not about herself but about her daughter. There seemed to her to be no logical reason for her daughter to get anything other than the usually high marks that she had achieved in her other courses at the university. Nevertheless, she was failing in her teaching subjects. I left Parisha with a confidence that something should be done to help change a most difficult situation. Taking action, however, was not a simple matter. Even when I was sure that I had command of the facts, I was not sure whether intervention on her daughter's behalf was within my power, sensible, or even ethical. How was it that I thought that I could deal with the situation more adequately than Parisha's daughter herself? Most particularly, neither Parisha nor I were sure that the events we described were racist. "I am not sure if this is racism or not", she told me as she began her story. Even were I able to choose "whose side I was on" working within such a paradigm of critical theory was not straightforward and difficult to implement. It was difficult to know

[24] These comments were made by Prime Minister Howard after riots in Sydney between "White surfers" and "Lebonese" beachgoers over ownership of neighbourhood beaches. For further discussion of these events see conclusion.

when racism had happened. Even when occurrences of racism were discussed, their status was strongly debated.

Critical theories provided tools to examine the relationship between the day-to-day experiences of individuals and the socio-historical context. However, these could not explain the relationships between the activities and their ontological context (or frame). In a sense, I could not know how I could help. I knew that I was on Parisha's side because I wanted to help, but I knew that I was not on her side because I was not an Indian-Australian. I was aware that to define Parisha as Indian was to describe her as different and "other". To ignore this reality and its consequences was to fail to hear her story. Together, we were not sure whether the events described were racist or not because we were not looking in the right direction. To do that would be to explore the terms and conditions that define what it is to be Indian within a contemporary Australian context.

In other words, work with race and ethnic relationships interrelates with tensions and issues involved with the contextualisation of very identities and the ways that they can live, work and belong within communities. It is concerned with the contingency of everyday experience and events; the historical ways that these have come to be delineated and continue to be delineated, structured and contained and the social and cultural terms and conditions that are used to define, rationalise and critique them. It deals with the sticky complexity of the tensions and issues that are brought to bear as identities define themselves through the socio-political and historical conditions of their time but also as they are defined by them. As Cameron McCarthy and Warren Crichlow (1993) have explained in their important introduction to this discussion:

> What we are saying is that racial difference is the product of human interests, needs, desires, strategies, capacities, forms of organization and forms of mobilization. And that these dynamic variables which articulate themselves in the form of grounded social constructions such as identity, inequality and so forth are subject to change, contradiction, variability and revision within historically specific and determinate contexts. We maintain that 'race' is a social, historical and variable category.
>
> (McCarthy and Crichlow, 1993, p. xv)

A crucial notion in recent educational literature is that race and ethnicity research needs to be rethought to "address what it means to understand individuals within their participation in ethnic cultural practices as well as within the broader social, economic and political relationships that are part of multiethnic democratic society" (Lee, 2003, pp. 3–4).[25] This knowledge is made more complex by the insight that epistemologies, and the ontological frame from which they emerge, are themselves the product of particular historical and cultural contexts.[26] The research epistemologies which support the research methodologies we use are intertwined with the social logics of their time and are often themselves racially biased. By not

[25] See, for instance, Gutierez and Rogoff (2003), Orellana and Bowman (2003), Nasir and Saxe (2003), Kaomea (2003), Eisenhart (2001).

[26] See Ladson-Billings (1998), James Scheurich and Michelle Young (1997) and Cynthia Tyson (1998).

being reflective about the epistemologies we use, racism is unwittingly promulgated. As Gloria Ladson-Billings has suggested:

> Epistemology is linked to worldview. Shujaa (1997) argues that worldviews and systems of knowledge are symbiotic – that is, how one views the world is influenced by what knowledge one possesses and what knowledge one is capable of possessing is influenced deeply by one's worldview. Thus the conditions under which people live and learn shape both their knowledge and their world-views.
>
> (Ladson-Billings, 1998, p. 258)

The way in which we come to understand the manner of the world around us has an internal logic and an external validity, which, like the world we study, is already formulated within a taken-for-granted world of form and meaning. Ladson-Billing's point is that research methods must consider not only what is said, but also the effect of "a dominant paradigm" upon the study. The epistemological frame of the research is set within the same ontological conditions that provide their underlying logic, and therefore reassert the same logics that underpin the condition "White" in the first place. With that in mind, the logics underpinning the form and purpose of the study come under scrutiny. With this in mind, I cannot but look again at what it means to return as a White, middle-class academic to an environment similar to the one in which I had been teaching for many years: what this means to the ways I already share taken-for-granted conceptions with my respondents; and how this changes the form and practice of my research methods.

Ruth Frankenberg (1993) in her groundbreaking study of White woman and race is concerned that the logics of race and difference play an integral part in the way these everyday experiences are understood by both the researcher and the researched. She argues that the inability to see racism is not about the disappearance of race difference in contemporary society, but implicit within what she calls the "double move between colour evasiveness and power evasiveness". Conversations which suggest that "everyone is the same under the skin" and that race difference and therefore racism are no longer of concern fail to realise ways that differences underpinned by race continue to be crucial. Race, she argues, is not something innocent but rather underpins every aspect of our society: the friends we make, the places we can go, the person we can become. In their article, "Writing the wrongs of Fieldwork: Confronting our own research", Fine and Weis comment in a slightly different vein that:

> Reading the narratives, it's hard to miss entrenched, raced patterns of daily life. Most white respondents *say* that they don't think much about race; most people of colour wish they weren't reminded of their race – via harassment, discrimination and on-the-street stares – quite so often. Many argue that race *shouldn't* make much of a difference. Yet the life stories as narrated are so thoroughly raced that readers of the transcript can't not know even an anonymous informant's racial group … Yes race *is* a social construction, but it's so deeply confounded with racism that it has enormous power in people's lives. We can't simply problematise it away as if it does not really exist.
>
> (Fine & Weis, 1998, p. 18)

Fine and Weis's point is that the ways we think about and negotiate matters of race are not only found within social structures but also within "entrenched, raced

patterns of daily life". Race is not something innocuous but rather underpins every aspect of our society: the friends we make, the places we can go, the person we can become. The ways that we think about and negotiate matters of race are not only found within social structures but within entrenched everyday patterns of life. Race and ethnicity make a difference because the day-to-day negotiations that make up their experience and practice take place in relation to the normalised frames that define who we are and how we understand others and ourselves in contemporary societies. These frames are taken-for-granted, barely thought of and seldom spoken about. The social world one inhabits as a researcher, the social world one examines and the logic of the research technologies one uses are embedded in the same taken-for-granted conceptions.

The logical consequence of the notion is that the researcher, bound within the research, describes what side one is on, but also the whole way one can understand and be on that side. Rey Chow (1993) took this analysis further, contending that the exploration of race by contemporary Western ethnographers is, in a sense, "essentially pornographic". Her argument is that in Western societies, we understand who-we-are, in relation to who-they-are. In the process, others become both the object of our obsessive gaze and an "other" who cannot quite be known and made visible. The ethnographer, with obsessive interest in what cannot be quite known, repeats and reinforces these contradictory concepts. The subject to be studied, viewed through the same ambivalent logics that underpin the ways by which racially defined difference is known and located, comes to our attention through what is too often a distorted lens. The respondent becomes native, becomes "other". The "sacred thing" that needs to be saved is the "bad thing" that needs to be replaced. The obsession of our focus is the thing we can barely discuss so that:

> 'Natives' are represented as defined images – that is the fact of our history. But must we represent them a second time by turning history 'upside down' giving them the sanctified status of the non-duped? Defilement and sanctification belong to the same order.
>
> (Chow, 1993, p. 54)

For Chow, the focus of the Western researcher is an "other" who is both faulty and wonderful. This other person marks the edges of who we are and as such is described as someone who is more than or less than we are ourselves: silenced by the focus of our attention. For Ellsworth (1997), the Western researcher cannot escape from the double-bind "White and other". The epistemological frame of the research is set within the same ontological conditions that provide their underlying logic, and therefore reassert the same logics that underpin the condition "White" in the first place. The unwary researcher of race and ethnic relations, already caught within the logics that underpin the conditions from which they have been made, simply reaffirms the terms and conditions that underpin the very logic she seeks to uncover.

There are three points, particularly, which I take from Chow's reminder. The one introduces the ontological frame I describe in the next chapter. Here, I argue that an unmarked "us" views itself through the others whom they are not. The second posits that race and ethnic relations must be understood as individual experience and as social structures but also in terms of the taken-for-granted ways of knowing and being

in the world which frame them. The third maintains that these ontological frames are not only site and subject of what is said but also of what is not said. Even as I go to work to understand ethnic relations and to work towards their disappearance, I find that I am already caught within the logics that underpin the conditions from which they have been made. Because of this, I realise that I do not always hear properly what people tell me. Moreover, because I am inclined to think through those same logics, I need to beware that I do not simply reaffirm them.

It is not simple to move between these disconnected yet tangled spaces. Ruth Behar pointed out that research into matters of race and ethnicity requires a sense of crossing boundaries where:

> . . . [i]t now seems impossible to imagine doing any kind of ethnography without a concept of the borderlands or of border crossings. The concept of borderlands, so poetically explored by Gloria Anzaldua, is rooted in the slippery social landscape created by international capitalism and migration.
>
> (Behar, 1993, p. 15)

Discussions about race and ethnicity are not only about moving from one form of ethnic identity to another but also about doing this in recent and increasingly globalised times when these terms have become increasingly difficult to define. As I move into the school, I find that the boundaries that define self from others do not work as I predict. I come to the research from a number of different positions.[27] It is a positioning that becomes increasingly complex as my own positioning changes over a decade. My increased responsibilities at the university, for instance, mean that I no longer understand my relation with teachers in quite the same way. The respondents who I reinterview from 1988 have also changed. Further, the teachers and parents I interview for the first time in 1998 often have quite different experiences. Parents, particularly, have often had quite different educational opportunities and experiences from those parents I had interviewed earlier. I find that I often share a common social position with parents in ways that I did not in 1988. The parent born in Cambodia who discusses with me the progress of his research degree is only one example of this.

Fine and Weis (1998) reminded us that research work needs to be considered as both a colonising process of the "other" and a crossing of the hyphen:

> [m]uch of qualitative research has reproduced, if contradiction-filled, a colonising discourse of the "other". This essay is an attempt to review how qualitative research projects have *Othered* and to examine an emergent set of activist and/or post-modern texts that interrupt *Othering*. First, I examine the hyphen at which self-other join in the politics of everyday life, that is, the hyphen that both separates and merges personal identities with our inventions of others. I then take up how qualitative researchers work this hyphen. . .through a messy series of questions about methods, ethics and epistemologies as we rethink how researchers have spoken "of" and "for" others while occluding ourselves and our own investments, burying the contradictions which percolate the self-other hyphen.
>
> (Fine and Weis, 1998, p. 15)

Qualitative research, as much as other activities within contemporary Western society, reproduces the logics of race in its concepts and its ways of action. Fine's

[27] See Chapter 1.

initial point is that the study of day-to-day contemporary life is already implicated in the same materialities and conceptions as the experiences it seeks to understand. Her second point is that even as these underlying conditions serve to normalise ways of understanding others and therefore selves, they are nevertheless based on contradictory logics. The interaction between identities of self and other is meaningful, yet is one which shifts and changes and falls apart. Nevertheless, and at the same time, it remains tied to the ontological understandings that define "who-is" and "who-is-not" and these change more slowly.

Globalisation in its various "scapes" deepens even as it disrupts these relationships.[28] Changes in communications, technologies, capital and labour markets, and the mass movement of people and services, change everyday practice and influence the ability of nation–states to structure the materialities of the day-to-day.[29] The transitory nature of relationships between individuals, the nation–state and the international world in recent times, has put pressure on the traditional ways these entities are understood.[30] The very commonly held notion of the human person as essentially formed, fully centred, unified and reasonable, comes "under erasure" and is reconstructed as "post-modern", a "moveable feast".[31] Conceptions of who-we-are appear as in-process and at odds-with-themselves. Nevertheless, identity as we know it remains tied to the ontological positions which continue to define who-we-can-be.

Clifford's (1997) notion of "homework", described earlier, attests to the inherent slipperiness, but profound meaning, of these relationships and their implications for methodology. Research is potentially a paradoxical process: both a process of colonising the "other" and a blurring of boundaries. Earlier research efforts where ethnographers were travellers who were adopted, learned the language and dug in for a while, need to be rethought so as to negotiate these discourses in an unequally

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[28] See Appadurai, 1996.

[29] Literatures of globalisation cover a number of different literatures, not all of which are relevant here, particularly those of Bauman (1997a; 1990; 1997b; 1998; 2001) and his vivid analysis of the paradoxical tension between the fluidity of definition and the reassertions of positionality that underpin contemporary processes of globalisation. Other important literatures which trace the relation between commodification, culture and globalisation (see for example: Jamison (1998) and Featherstone (1995); the relation between globalisation and the transformation of concept and imagination (Appadurai (1996), McCarthy (1998)), in which the most taken-for-granted of boundaries between identities and machines (Haraway (1991)), identities and their genetic portraits (Haraway (2000)) and space and time (Virilio (1993)) become confused, conflated and differently useful. See also the work of Giddens (1999, 1990) and Beck (2000) who consider the sense of risk as the sense of the present becomes deferred to the future and also confused. Paolini (1997) and Ashcroft (2001) importantly, although in quite different ways, take the understandings that emerge within these literatures and relate them to the literatures of identity and hybridity. The articulation of the relationships between identities as they change in an increasing globalised world makes up a central focus of this book.

[30] For discussions about globalisation and its relation to conceptions of time and space see particularly Virilio (1993), notions of cyborg identity see particularly Haraway (1991), as post-modern and a moveable feast see Hall (1996a).

[31] See Hall (1992).

empowered conceptual and material domain. Ethnography, Clifford argued, can no longer be understood as about outsiders visiting insiders or about leaving home where things are safely known to go out in the field somewhere else where things are different. As "homework", Clifford suggested, research has two meanings. In the first, it is a matter of shifting locations, a place of border crossing where the boundaries blur.[32] To enter a school is no longer a matter of outsiders visiting insiders, but an exploration of practices, identities and relationships articulated within histories, cultures and experiences, which I both share and do not share. It is about them and about me. It includes me, some of the time as insider and sometimes from outside. It is precisely at this point that the "worlding" of the research becomes imperative.[33] That is, it becomes absolutely pertinent that the research is caught within the contingent yet profoundly meaningful historical and political understandings and circumstances of which it is part.

Research includes an everyday world already located within the knower's consciousness and within the various and differentiated matrices of the researcher's own experiences.[34] It is a world where ways of knowing and being in the world intersect, change and matter differently. These conceptions of the everyday world are not always already there, nor are they discretely individual and necessarily differentiated responses within a disinterested context. Yet they are intricately interwoven within the ways that the world is made meaningful to experiencing subjects through shared language.[35] My research into ethnic relations is indeed a matter of "homework". It is a critical confrontation with the often taken-for-granted ways of meaning, which shape and make relationships between those who belong and those who do not. It looks not only at the ways that these relationships are embodied and enunciated by those to whom I speak but also at the ways in which I am also profoundly implicated. It is about what I can speak about and can hear and what I can hear only faintly.

However, it is something far more than this. Critical theorists emphasise that recognition and exploration of the noise and silences that underpin race and ethnic discussion and debate are insufficient. Doing critical research of race and ethnic relationships, the researcher is engaged within the dynamics of the social processes that delineate position and structure everyday lives in communities. It is about the interrogation of social and cultural structures and notions that historically position both researchers and the researched, and it is about their dismantling. It is about moving within and against parameters of comfortable research and moving towards "reflexivities of discomfort" (Pillow, 2007, p. 188). It is about coming to grips with the insight that:

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[32] See also Gupta and Ferguson (1999).

[33] See particularly Spivak (1996) and Pettman (1992).

[34] See particularly Smith (1987) as well as (Smith, 2001).

[35] For materials which explore social constructions of reality see Berger and Luckman (1976). For theories that the world is made meaningful through unequally empowered ways of meaning, consider, for instance, Gee (1996a) and Fairclough (1989). For theories which consider the relation between these ways of meaning and subjectivity consider, for example, Hall (1997b), Henriques, Holloway, Urwin, Venn, and Walkerdine (1984), Grossberg (1996b) and Weedon (1995).

> Whilst the fear of the incomplete and potentially elusive postcolonial subject drives the production of consumable images and discourses that attempt to contain the subject ... there are also possibilities – cracks, leaks – in these images and discourses that open spaces for rewriting and rethinking.
>
> (Pillow, 2007, p. 3)

The way in which ethnic and race relations are spoken about in Australian schools is, of course, the focus of this book. My initial observation was that although it was easy to debate some matters, others became increasingly difficult to broach. My reading of recent literatures of cultural studies and post-colonialism suggest that methods used in the research cannot be considered to be innocent. Instead, these writings suggest that discussions about ethnic relations in contemporary Western societies might not be just about hearing what people tell me but are also about listening to what is left unsaid: that is, about listening to noise but also to silence in a changing and increasingly globalised world.

Chapter 3
Beyond Silent Noise: Articulating Methodology

> *The first years of research . . . were wonderfully exciting . . . The picture that I was able to paint of the school and the individual, experiences which were occurring within it, was vibrant and glowing. It was full of exciting stories about the people I was meeting during my research. Why was the Chinese teacher having so much difficulty introducing a curriculum of Chinese studies within the school? Why was the ESL teacher at one school able to introduce a multicultural policy statement with so much ease and yet be so ineffectual in changing the actual activities of teachers within the school? Why was the new principal at a second school able to change the school curriculum so quickly without the benefit of such a statement? Most exciting of all, I was gathering stories about the lives of individuals and their experiences within an ethnically diverse school system. What was it like to be a new principal in a school that was suffering from increasing ethnic division? What was it like for the student who had narrowly escaped through the jungles of Cambodia and had never had time for an education before? What was it like for the Greek teacher who felt torn between the aspirations of his parents' compatriots and the demands of his professional peers? I felt like a detective as I doggedly tracked down the clues . . .*
>
> *And then everything came to a stop . . . The standstill came not because of the sheer immensity of the material although it was massive. In fact, the vast stores of data from which I could draw helped me to paint an ever-widening and more dynamic picture of what was happening within the schools. Rather, the problem was one of concept(ion).*
>
> *(Arber, 1993c, p. 1)*

Painstakingly, the transcribed words of my informants were placed together to form a vibrant mosaic. This miscellany of stories described the day-to-day life of a school community. The patterns that emerged from these data were similar to each other and to the research literature.[1] Multicultural policies and practices implemented were different from those suggested by governments and by the school's own documents. Teachers and parents were excited, even as they were taken aback, by these programmes. Race and ethnic relations were seldom discussed but generally described as good. A very few respondents were concerned that racism might exist

[1] See, for instance, Foster (1988).

R. Arber, *Race, Ethnicity and Education in Globalised Times*,

at the school. As the year progressed, however, I began to realise that the stories I collected were inconsistent with each other, *ad hoc* and changing. They spoke about policies and practices in the ways that seemed idiosyncratic and inconsistent. They included frequent and noisy conversations about some matters, while other matters were discussed only reluctantly or hardly mentioned at all. It became increasingly clear that the methodological frame through which I viewed the data was insufficient to allow me to deal with my data adequately.

For many years, I had worked in secondary school classrooms transformed by changed immigration patterns. Intrigued by the immensity of these changes, and their impact on school communities, I embarked on a long and often difficult journey to collect and understand these conversations. In 1988 and again in 1998, studies were instituted to explore how ethnic and racial relationships took place in schools, the policies implemented to work with them and the ways these were experienced. Working as a participant observer over two separate years a decade apart, I collected material from over 30 teachers and parents.

Literature about race and ethnic relations, particularly of critical race theory, Whiteness, post-colonialism and cultural studies, changed the way that I could understand the constructivist and interpretive research principles that underpinned my research method. These writings suggest that the logic that defines membership in communities is the province of some and not of others. It explores an austere world where some people define the terms and conditions of identity and the ways identities might live and belong within communities. In their terms, the nuanced, changing social relations take place within an unequally empowered world where some are able to demarcate the logic of the ways that the world can be thought about and therefore spoken about. It is this social world that needs to be understood in terms of the harshness described by post-colonial writing as well as the contingency theory which provides the focus for a constructivist approach. My fundamental task was to lay out these two different notions – the contiguity of identity, the demarcation of otherness – as they appear in the literature. A subsequent task was to explore the way the literature describes the relationship between these notions, their impact on people's day-to-day lives and their implications for my research.

My project was to define a framework that would enable me to describe the data more comprehensively: the conceptual and material relations of individual practice; the terms and conditions structuring these experiences and the normative conditions which frame and are framed by these relations. My task had three particular directions. First was to account for the ways that ethnic and racial identities are conceptualised and practiced and how they relate to each other in their changing context. Second was to explore the ways these identities and the relationships between them can be spoken or not spoken about and the ways these relationships might change. Third was to examine how these first two directions (the ways these relationships are understood and practiced and spoken about) are located within the particular and changing conditions of contemporary Western societies such as Australia.

This chapter explains the process of development of an integrated and coherent methodology through which the exploration of ethnic and race relationships can take place, in particular, the development of a framework that enables these complex relationships to be discussed.

3.1 Framing Narrations

My task in this research was to explore the ways teachers and parents spoke about race and ethnic relations. In 1988, I set out as an artist, a kind of photographer who came from outside to take a picture of an "instant-in-action". My goal was to take a snapshot of school experiences that were individual in their circumstance even as they were caught within contexts, which were fluid, and in a state of "mutual simultaneous shaping". As a portrait maker, apparently unimpeded by the world outside the school, I sought to understand the moving shadows contained within the discussion. It is not that I considered myself to be value free or that I could know the truth. My task was one of *verstehen*, of "interpretive understanding", of conceptualising both the nature of the activity and the meaning that individuals assigned to their actions.[2] Following from Yvonna Lincoln and Egon Guba (1985), I considered the voices of individuals as they attached multiple, constructed and holistic meaning to the experiences they met with in their everyday life.[3] It was a process from which I could not consider myself separate. I, the knower, and they, as known, were inseparable. The end point of such studies was the point of "saturation"; the culmination of a constant shuffling between social events within their pristine "natural setting" and the "grounded theory" which I as the researcher developed through this dialogue between conception and experience.[4]

As I have explained, my research model continues to depend on the tools suggested in Lincoln and Guba's *Naturalistic Inquiry* (1985). However, the ways that I understand these methodological practices and my role as a researcher have changed. I no longer imagine the world that I study is something that belongs to others but rather that it is a shared and lived world in which I am both active and positioned. The task is to reconstitute as problematic an everyday world already located within the knower's consciousness and within the various and differentiated matrices of my own experiences as researcher.[5] This is to uncover a world where ways of knowing and being in the world intersect, change and matter differently.

A central insight of Lincoln and Guba's naturalistic approach is their conception of the constructedness of reality where:

> Events, persons, objects are indeed tangible entities. The meanings and wholeness derived from or ascribed to these tangible phenomena in order to make sense of them, organise them or re-organise a belief system, however, are *constructed realities*.
>
> (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 84)

Their argument is that reality, were it to exist in itself, could not be recognised. Rather, the world that is "known" can only be known through the construction of

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[2] See Smith (1983) for an explanation of this approach as it underpinned my work in 1988.

[3] See also Guba and Lincoln's (1999) recent summary of this approach.

[4] For material, which conceptualises the inquiry as an instant in action see, for instance: Wilkes and Krebs (1988). For discussions about the nature of naturalistic inquiry as it informed my 1988 research see particularly: Lincoln and Guba (1985), but also, for instance, Polkinghorne (1983), Denzin (1989), Potter and Wetherall (1987) and Arber (1993b). For discussions of grounded theory see particularly Strauss (1987).

[5] See particularly Smith (1987) as well as Smith (2001).

beliefs about that reality. As there are multiple ways that individuals might construct reality, Lincoln and Guba argue that reality is multiply constructed and disjunctive. The individual in this approach is an experiencing, changing, unitary being who makes sense of the world in ways which can be considered rational but are nevertheless unpredictable as decisions are made individually and separably within changing places and times.

What is required is a research methodology that can account for the complexity of the context in which the day-to-day activities of a school take place. I need to develop a comprehensive research framework to understand data about race and racism, and to make explicit the tensions and complexities that underpin the complex interaction between individual conception and socio-cultural context. This is to interrogate the relation between day-to-day practice and the taken-for-granted "historical forever" that make up the "terrain of imagination" defined by Marion O'Callaghan as:

> The selecting out and rearrangement of "facts" in order to provide coherence, framework and seeming unity between ideas and action, or more precisely to provide a basis for the direction of social relationships and the social creation of categories. It is what is imagined that posits the "natural", that is, the normal, the fixed and unchanging. Seeming to exist in a historical forever, this is nevertheless framed by the present. To put it in another way, imagination is socially created in what follows, not precedes, the structure of social relations.
>
> (O'Callaghan, 1995, p. 22)

The notion of "imagination" accounts for the taken-for-granted ways of understanding the world that provide the frame within which everyday practice and social conditions are experienced. At the same time, it implies that these structures are socially created and emerge from these same relations. These are frameworks of meaning which underlie the universe of social knowledge: the ideas, facts and unities which formulate it and the normalised ways of understanding and being within it. Social relationships from this viewpoint seem self-evident and forever present, inviolate. Nevertheless, these ways of understanding and being in the world do not exist in themselves. The "terrain of the imagination" defines the "taken-for-granted" ways things are known about and done in the world and also the contingent link of these notions with their institutional and cultural context and with day-to-day experience and practice.[6]

This terrain that I describe is shifting and changing: unequally empowered ways of meaning are struggled over by experiencing individuals caught within these same ways of understanding. Atvah Brah (1996) in her particular imagination of diasporic space provided an important description of the multilayered complexity of these relations. She reminded us that these ways of meaning are not only notional but also are ones of materiality which, played across patterned fields of power, constitute and transform social relations and identities. Constructs such as ethnicity and race,

[6] This codification of the world as it is made and known and is caught in a formation of "linkage" has been described by Hall and by Grossberg as "articulation". For an in-depth discussion of articulation see Grossberg (1992, 1996a).

and ways of talking about them such as multiculturalism and racism, are produced and exercised through a myriad of economic, political and cultural practices. These come together in imagined spaces in which:

> [i]ndividuals and collectivities are simultaneously positioned in social relations constituted and performed across multiple dimensions of differentiation: that these categories always operate in articulation. Multi-axiality foregrounds the intersectionality of economic, political and cultural facets of power. It highlights that power does not inhabit the realm of macro structures alone, but is thoroughly implicated in the everyday of lived experience.
>
> (Brah, 1996, p. 242)

Brah's analysis expands the point. It is not just that individuals and social collectivities and normalised conception are linked. This "multiaxiality" is formed as an intersection between different facets of power. The terrain that the imagination considers is a never-reached, always-in-process construction of contingent and often-disjunctive ways of meaning and practice that make up the ways of knowing and being in the world within a socio-historical place and time. Moreover, the power of imagination does not remain as one of concept, but is material. Its logic, and the notional and structural conditions it engenders, shapes the relationships between day-to-day experiences and practices of individuals and their social world. It marks the different but always possible location of "real" positions and "real" people.

The terrain described here is a contingent one defined by a multiplicity of experiences and practices and shaped by competing, but unequally empowered discourses. To examine these relations in their intricacy is to develop a methodological structure that can direct the analytic process to view from different vantage points the conditions of multiaxiality defined by Brah. As a participant within these same imagined spaces, I analyse their narration from these three different, but integrated vantage points: the narrational practice, the narrational field and the narrational map.

From the vantage point provided by *narrational practice*, I examine the seemingly *ad hoc* nature of individual experiences and stories and the ways that experiencing individuals understand and participate in their day-to-day worlds. This point is exemplified by Lincoln and Guba's (1985) understanding of the multiple constructions of the reality of people caught within interacting, but not necessarily related, events and processes.

At the level of *narrational fields*, I explore the patterned yet contingent and often-disjunctive ways in which meaning and practice are related to a particular conceptual or practical domain. This includes discussions about discourse formations such as multiculturalism, nationalism and racism; situational structures such as the school and the home; and structural processes such as race, class and gender. The analysis of these discourses and their often-discordant links with each other and with socio-cultural place and time has been the subject of a number of methodological works.

The final vantage point, that of the *narrational map*, considers the interconnectedness of narrational fields as they determine the essential ways of knowing and being in the world. Recent writings about post-colonialism and Whiteness explore and problematise these taken-for-granted maps. Excerpts from Morrison's (1992) *Playing in the Dark*, discussed later in this chapter, provide one example of this

Table 3.1 Level of analysis

Methodological level	Methodological focus
Narrational practices	Considers individual experiences and stories
Narrational fields	Considers the interconnectedness of individual practices as contingent and often-disjunctive ways of meaning and practice related to a particular conceptual or practical domain
Narrational maps	Considers the interconnectedness of narrational fields which make up the normalised ways of knowing and being in the world

viewpoint. The different vantage points from which these levels of analysis are described are set out in Table 3.1.

The methodological framework developed here is concerned with a social world articulated from three levels.

- The first level is concerned with the individuality of experience as it is understood and talked about by people as they discuss their day-to-day practice. The stories of experience and practice that take up most of my interview conversations need to be given their proper place in the research analysis.
- The second level contemplates the proposition that these changing ways of knowing and being in the world are made and remade as fields of meaning by those who are both positioned by them and participate in their making. My conversations with my respondents revolved around the debates and negotiations of their time – the importance of language education, multiculturalism, race relations and globalisation for instance – and these needed to be made explicit.
- The third level emphasises the notion that these fields of meaning, however contingent, make up the world as it is known to the experiencing subjects who move within it. Recent post-colonial literatures and cultural studies writings describe identities as fragmenting, changing, contingent, "in process" entities, even as they consider these subjects as firmly positioned by ontological frameworks such as those that define race and ethnicity, gender and class.[7] These writings remind us that this interconnection between meaning and identity is not an innocent process but represents real struggles played out within the times and spaces of contemporary Western societies. These confrontations are to determine the most crucial of conditions: who one is, how one can belong and how one can speak. Such contestations define who can and who cannot belong within local communities such as schools.[8]

The definition of levels of narration as "narrational" refers to the creation of links between the different viewpoints previously outlined: those of practice, historical

[7] See, for example, Giroux (2000), Grossberg (1997), Brah (1996), Spivak (1996), Chow (1993), Minh-ha (1999), Bauman (1997a) and Hall (1997a).

[8] I am much indebted to Paul James' (1996) work on analytical abstraction from which this approach takes its inspiration and methodological parameters.

and political context, and normalised ways of being in and knowing the world.[9] This definition refers not only to the ways of viewing the research but also to those of speaking about it. These ways of narrating or speaking can also be analysed from those same three vantage points. "Storytelling" refers to what people do as they try in their day-to-day lives to explain themselves to themselves and to each other. It denotes the activity that my respondents take part in as they tell me of the day-to-day. "Historical patterning" is what people do as they relate the stories they tell to socio-historical circumstance when they talk about a particular conceptual or practical domain. It reflects what the analyst does as she describes how people bring together their ideas within the structures and debates of their time. "Mapping" is what people do as they attempt to define the already understood and taken-for-granted ways, of knowing and being in the world, which frame these stories and historical patterns. It describes the work of the analyst as she sets out to delineate these seemingly timeless framing notions.

The analysis of these levels of narration is a double hermeneutic process in which the analyst considers the subjects' accounts of their conduct and experience, the patterned conceptual domain and the ways of understanding that conceptualise that domain. However, even as the researcher considers these narratives and makes the effort of translation, she both remains framed by them and part of their re-conceptualisation.[10] The different ways that the world can be narrated or spoken about is described in Table 3.2.

3.2 Mapping Identity

In the development of a framework to analyse the relationships between identities and their context, a fundamental task is to account for the ways that ethnic and racially defined identities are understood and practiced. This is to contend with the vexed notion of identity and its complex relation with socio-historical context. In his treatise "Who needs identity?", Hall (1996a) considers the premise that contemporary Western notions of identity must be understood as contingent. He makes his point from three different theoretical directions. In the first part of his analysis, Hall re-conceptualises Foucault's theories of discourse formation to argue that social positions are constituted and reconstituted as individuals actively interpret the world and are themselves interpreted through the realisation of different versions of meaning. Identities themselves become re-imagined as conditional, transitory and fragmented, tied to the historical and socio-cultural trajectories in which they are participant and embodied. Hall's own story, as a member of a middle-class and ethnically mixed family in Jamaica (Hall claims African, East Indian, Portuguese

[9] The "levels of analysis" approach developed here emphasises practices, fields and maps of narration. However, this is not to imply that narration is the central or overriding practice of social life – only that is it central to my present argument.

[10] For a definition of the double hermeneutic process see, for example, Giddens (1984). For an explanation of Giddens' concept see Cohen (1986).

Table 3.2 Level of narration

Level of narration	Narration process	Analytical process
Storytelling	What people do with each other as they try in their day-to-day lives, and in ways relatively unreflexive of their practical consciousness, to explain themselves to themselves and each other	Re-telling the stories which people recount to each other as they try in their day-to-day lives, and relatively unreflexive of their practical consciousness, to explain themselves to themselves and each other
Historical patterning	What people do as they negotiate the contingent and disjunctive stories they tell in relation to socio-historical circumstance when they talk about a particular conceptual or practical domain	Describing the patterns which emerge when relating the negotiations between the stories people tell in relation to socio-historical circumstance when they talk about a particular conceptual or practical domain
Mapping	What people do as they make their stories from the already understood and taken-for-granted ways of knowing and being in the world which frame and are framed by these stories and historical patterns as they appear as being beyond time and beyond space	Tracing out the taken-for-granted ways of knowing and being in the world which frame these stories and historical patterns as they appear as being beyond time and beyond space

and Jewish antecedents) and his later life in England as an academic, provides a wonderful example of this notion.

The second theoretical direction of Hall's analysis is that of identity as a notion formulated through the eyes of others. Identity, no longer understood as integral, is formed in ambivalent relation with others. The image of the other is both desired and hated, studied but never quite known. The self is construed, not in its own selfness, but through its ambivalent relation to otherness.

> Hall's third theoretical direction is that of identity as an overdetermined and de-centring process. In accordance with Derrida's displacement of the sign, subjectivity comes under erasure and can no longer be thought of in old ways. Dualisms – Black/White, coloniser/colonised, self/other, racist/racially defined – are no longer understood as mutually exclusive notions. The polarities implied by these binary notions fall apart, are disrupted, double back on themselves as the relation between text and meaning is disrupted, leaving a trace, an unfolding, an over- or underdetermined "something left over"
>
> (Hall, 1996a, p. 3)

Identity politics in this sense is phantasmagorical. It is wrought in process as the identities of selves are made through representations of an "other". It is a production of the "I" through alterity, which is never finally made, as spaces between the making of identities and their text are never quite sufficient and never quite complete. Identity becomes notionally a place of never quite becoming. This last point calls to mind Homi Bhabha's (1994) concept of the never quite finished, always in-between subject never quite grounded in the enunciation of representation. Identities are

constructed as political objects that are "neither the one nor the other", as collections of complex and disjointed complexities properly "alienating our political expectations" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 25). Notions of self disintegrate as ambivalent representations, made through "sly civility", "mimicry" and the "signs" of others, disrupt not only the conception of self but also the terms and conditions of corporality.

In the confluence of these three approaches (discursive, psychoanalytic and deconstructive), identity becomes redefined as something fragmentary, changing, constructed, in process, struggled over, something that "we might become". The resources of history, language and culture become part of a "process of becoming" rather than something in "the process of being". The "other" remains an ambivalent figure, always just out of reach, delineating the end points of what we are not. Difference is not merely something oppositional, a series of dualisms reflecting margin and centre, but something that is never finished, something that is always deferred.

Beneath the quite different theories of Derrida, Lacan and Foucault is a lacuna. Connie Zwieg (1995), in her critique of post-modern theories, mourned the loss of the "good ol' self", so deconstructed that it has become transparent and leaves nothing else. Like so many others, I am concerned that post-modernist theories, even as they provide new insights into the nature of identity relations, have left the formulation of the central condition of identity empty. Nevertheless, it is this notion of identity as non-unitary, fragmented, contradictory and constructed that has proven most important to the emancipatory politics of our time.

The interweaving and struggling discourses that make up contemporary Western identities are not made in isolation but are linked within the socio-historical trajectories in which the day-to-day of the social world takes place. This argument is to consider not only the provisional relationships which are explored from the viewpoint of the narrational field but also the ways those often-discordant patterns are tied to seemingly essential ways of knowing and being in the world. It is these normalised ways of being and understanding, the ways they are made and defined and spoken about, that need to be clarified.

The different vantage points provided by my theoretical frame allow us to disentangle the complex relations implicit in this logic. The viewpoints of *narrational practice* consider the social conditions of experiencing, changing persons as they deal with others in ways that seem individual and therefore unpredictable. The literature of post-colonialism and cultural studies is concerned that these individual interactions are not arbitrary but patterned by and established within the socio-historical conditions in which they are situated. The viewpoint provided by the *narrational field* considers the embodiment of subjects as they are experienced through and practiced within contingent and interweaving patterns of meaning and practice. Difference is understood as patterned by the ways that subjects are positioned, if only contingently, as "us" and "not us". The relations between identities take place in the contingent ways that relations between people, made as "us" or "not us", can take place. The *narrational map* considers the person as a subject placed and called into the world through the "totality" of taken-for-granted ways of knowing and being in the world. Difference is defined in taken-for-granted ways which position subjects as "self" and "other", and relations between identities are defined by the

Table 3.3 Relations between persons

Methodological level	Methodological focus	Subjectivity	Difference	Relations between persons
Narrational practices (experience)	Considers individual practices and stories	As an experiencing, changing person	As a matter of dealing "nicely" or "badly" towards others	As matters of individual interaction
Narrational fields	Considers the often-disjunctive ways of meaning and practice related to a particular conceptual or practical domain For example: multiculturalism, nation, race	As patterned by the contingent and interweaving ways of meaning and practice in which the subject is both participant and defined	As patterned by the ways that subjects are positioned, if only contingently, as "us" and "not us"	As patterned by the contingent ways that relations between people made "us" or "not us" can take place
Narrational maps	Considers the interconnectedness of narrational fields that provide taken-for-granted ways of knowing and being in the world	As placed, and called into the world through the "totality" of taken-for-granted ways of knowing and being in the world	As defined in taken-for-granted ways which position subjects as "self" and "other"	As defined by the taken-for-granted ways that people are placed temporally and spatially in relation to others

taken-for-granted ways that people are placed temporally and spatially in relation to others. Table 3.3 above sets out the description of these three levels of analysis in relation to notions of subjectivity and difference and to the relations between persons.

The examination of definitions of identity from the different vantage points of the analytical frame explicates Hall's argument. Debates about the fluid nature of ethnic and race relationships and the ways to behave within and move between groups can be examined from the vantage point of narrational fields. From this vantage point, the connections become evident between individual experiences and practices related to identity making, and the often-disjunctive ways of meaning and practice related to particular ways of defining and working with identities. The second part of Hall's argument is that the interweaving discourses that define contemporary Western identities are not made in isolation. They are provisional relationships linked with the socio-historical trajectories in which the day-to-day of the social world takes place. From the vantage point of narrational maps, seemingly essential ways of knowing and being in the world, to which these often-discordant patterns are tied, become the focus. It is these taken-for-granted ways of being and understanding – the ways they are made and defined and spoken about – that need to be clarified.

3.3 Mapping the "Other"

An important notion within the framework is the contingent and changing nature of identification. A central focus of post-colonial analysis is that of the subject firmly tied to unequal positionings mapped out within a naturalised and "taken-for-granted" social world. In Frantz Fanon's (1986) work, the material realities of conflict within a colonial world are relentlessly portrayed to us, not as abstractions, but as unremitting pain and suffering. Although he was writing from the particular situation of the Algerian revolution, he detailed for us the horrors that policies and practices of colonialism have played out on the bodies of the colonised. Nevertheless, the ultimate terror that Fanon portrays is not the destruction of the bodies of the colonised but the reconfiguration of their imagination. It is a terror that is most ably summed up in Sartre's introduction to Fanon's treatise, *The Wretched of the Earth*:

> Not so very long ago, the earth numbered two thousand million inhabitants: five hundred million men, and one thousand five hundred million natives. The former had the word; the others had the use of it.
>
> (Sartre in Fanon, 1990, p. 7)

Words, Fanon's (1990) analysis suggests, are powerful weapons through which the terrors and violences of colonisation take place. The force of Fanon's arguments is that the spoken words of colonisers do not remain within the confines of the public arena. Colonialisation, for Fanon, is operationalised at both the material and the representational levels. Materially, it carries out its project of economic exploitation, and representationally, it seeks to control the discursive image of those it exploits. The normalisation of these ways of thinking naturalises the domination of colonisers

and hides the manner in which the colonised are remade as "other". The representation of the coloniser's exploitation becomes part of the same normalised ways of meaning through which the colonised view themselves. The colonised come to believe that the coloniser is the light to "lighten the darkness", "the loving mother who protects her child" and the colonised become the Blackness, the darkness, "the very categorisation of negritude". The central irony of the colonial condition is that the "lie of the colonial condition" is so normalised that it becomes, albeit in changing ways, the words through which the colonised intellectual must fight his own domination. The real terror of colonisation, for Fanon, is not the hold it has over the bodies of real men and women but the reconfiguration of their very psyche.

Fanon's project maps out the silences and mobilities faced by men and women who are the objects rather than the subjects of history. The stark situation he portrays emerges from his own particular historical and socio-economic trajectory. What is most terrible about this situation is the reconfiguration of the imagination of both the coloniser and the colonised. Fanon's argument is that the coloniser so normalises the conditions of the colonisation process that the colonised come to work within those same narrational maps and think that this is indeed how-the-world-is. The colonised come to take for granted the inscription of their own subordination.

For Said (1991), the horror of post-colonialism is contained in its representation of the material world. The West has made "the orient", given it its own imagery, traditions of thought and vocabulary, and through these made the orient "orientalised". Created through power and dominion, this body of theory and practice has come to be part of the investment that the West has made to maintain positional superiority. It is a relationship of power which is maintained through the unlikeliest of sources: not just the documents of politics and trade, but also those of literature, travel and academia. To understand the orient, therefore, is to examine these discourses of understanding and to dismantle their logic.

Said's work is arguably flawed in so far as he leaves no outside point from which it is possible to stand aside or to deconstruct orientalism. Even though Said suggested that he had been able to stand aside and differentiate the true from the truth, there seems to be no outside point from which he could consider the world as he has reconstructed it.[11] Nevertheless, Said's exploration of the ways that these mappings are made within the colonialist imagination of the colonised is essential. The methodological frame I present here is concerned with the exploration of the narrational maps that Said defines. The conception of "Whiteness" outlined below entails the ways of making others against one's own image, a process central to the taken-for-granted conceptions of who belongs and who does not within contemporary Western societies.

In her seminal work "Can the subaltern speak?", Gayatri Spivak (1995) explored the consequences of these psychological and social maps of the world. To Spivak, the violence of the colonial project lies in what she termed "epistemic violence", where the social text of the other is so erased that they are in a profound way

[11] Young (1990) gives a clear account of this debate.

annihilated. The question becomes one of whether the subaltern, the person of marginalised social position, can speak at all. Spivak argued that it is not that the subaltern does not talk or make an insurgent effort. Rather, the struggles of the subaltern are doomed to failure, as he or she remains trapped by the "epistemic violences", by the violently appropriative colonising practices, deeply ingrained within the colonisers' words.

In Spivak's example, the text of the colonised becomes so rewritten that the colonised person literally cannot speak; everyone else speaks for her. The gendered subaltern becomes speechless. This point of absolute silence is debated in post-colonial writings. Spivak argued that this condition is a notional one defined within the condition of subaltern itself. Were the subaltern to find a place from which to enunciate her position, Spivak iterated, then she would no longer be subaltern. By defining himself through that which he is not, the coloniser defines the colonised as "other". Those who are defined as not-of-the-community become no more than stories that define their lack of belonging. The colonised come to see themselves and the nature of their condition through the stories told about them by the colonisers. The ultimate consequence of this post-colonial condition is that the colonised is left, not only with no words to speak but also with no place from which to speak them. Thus, the ultimate condition of post-colonialism is the absolute silencing of the colonised.

It is the possibility of silence – the subaltern so colonised that he has no place to speak or words to say, save those suggested by the coloniser – that needs to be developed more adequately. The point is that the subaltern is not, strictly speaking, silent. He speaks all the time of the experiences and practices of day-to-day life and debates the ways these take place as institutional activity and socio-historical circumstance. He is silenced in so far as these words are mediated by the taken-for-granted ways of understanding and being in the world, which are their site and subject. The conversations of the subaltern, made as they are within positions of unequally empowered logics, leave the colonised person with no position from which to speak, at least none from which the coloniser would hear.

3.4 Mapping Relationships

Under examination is the relation between the ways that people experience everyday interactions with each other, the ways these are debated and lived and the normalised notions that, at any one time, define the world as it can be spoken about and lived within. In her seminal text *Playing in the Dark*, Toni Morrison (1992) investigates the enunciation and embodiment of identity and difference in American literature. Morrison argues that the "signs and bodies" of an "Africanist presence" shape narratives about American identity. The ethnic presence of the African is a "coded" and "restricted" narrative, omitted from day-to-day conversations and spoken of in coded languages and euphemistic forms. The discussion of the African American person is fearfully avoided, yet significant in its omission. The African is the focus of

attention, yet remains someone who is difficult to speak directly about. She remains a contradictory presence, both someone outside a "sense of American presence" and crucial to it.

Morrison's argument, discussed earlier, is that American identity is not developed through the acknowledgement of Whiteness, but through the encoding and embodiment of Blackness. Her work explores the possibility, broached in post-colonial and Whiteness literatures, that conceptions of selves in Western societies are made in relation to others who-we-are-not. The "other", in this case the African American person, becomes seen only in relation to the norm that defines a White American sense of self. As such, the African American person becomes defined as no more or less than the stereotype that comes to represent this otherness. It is not others but selves that are defined by this relation. These conditions are made silent, spoken about in "coded language"; with "racial disingenuousness" and with a "frailty of heart". White people do not speak of themselves, nor do they examine their relation to the African presence, which in a very real way defines them. They remain, as hooks (1995) suggested, "unaware", even as these representations spell out the extent of their privileged relation to Black people.

For the coloniser, the study of the other is both an obsession and that which ca not quite be looked at. Young (1995), in commenting on this suggestion, explained that "[i]n racial stereotyping the colonial power produces the colonised as a fixed reality, which is at once an 'other' and yet entirely visible and knowable". To define the other – to know the other – is not only to tell their story but also to make the other as it is to be represented. It is to locate the other so that it can be appropriated and controlled. These claims "to know" are made within the protocols of fantasy and desire, as the coloniser, unable to find the "other", represents her in a fluctuation between her consideration as one thing and its opposite. An impulse to control – disrupted, slipping and incomplete – is nevertheless tied to the project to locate and to know others. As Said put it:

> Orientalism is not a mere political subject matter or field which is reflected passively by culture, scholarship or institution . . . but also a whole series of "interests" which by such means as scholarly discovery, *philological* reconstruction, psychological analysis, landscape and sociological description, it not only creates but also maintains; it *is*, rather than expresses, a certain *will* or *intention* to understand, in some cases to control, manipulate, even to incorporate, what is a manifestly different (or alternative or novel) world; it is above all, a discourse . . . [that] is produced and exists in an uneven exchange with various kinds of power . . . Indeed, my real argument is that orientalism is and does not simply represent a considerable dimension of modern political–intellectual culture and as such has less to do with the Orient than it does with 'our' world.
>
> (Said, 1991, p. 12)

In this example, miscellaneous and unequally empowered individual and institutional practices and interests create and maintain what it is to be in "our" world. It is within the power of those speaking from a position of the "us" to define the dimensions of the map that structures the ways that day-to-day worlds in contemporary Western societies are understood.

This is to come face-to-face with the seeming emptiness of discourses of "Whiteness". Within this mapping process, Whiteness takes on the appearance of normalcy.

It comes to represent the universal condition of being and working within the world; comes to be seen as "that which is". That which "it is not" becomes that which is not-white. The privileges conferred by these mappings are taken for granted and are therefore in some way invisible. Whiteness becomes understood as "having no culture", about being accessible to everyone and as the condition of the normal. Because it is taken for granted, this Whiteness condition remains undefined. Thus, Whiteness seems to be nothing, even as it is in a sense everything.

In Richard Dwyer's (1997) analysis, narratives of White set out the normative conditions of what White people are, how White bodies are to be maintained and how they reproduce and interbreed. "Whiteness" has become synonymous with cleanliness, lightness and translucence and is placed in relational opposition to Blackness, darkness, opaqueness and dirtiness. Christian doctrine and motifs of being European interweave with these tropes that re-conceptualise White as commensurate to godliness, spirituality, purity, asexuality, rationality. They place it in contrast to the demonic and primordial and to that which is overly abundant, emotional and sensual. They define the ways that relationships can take place between White people and others. In a world that is material and not merely symbolic, they define the nature of the physical places and spaces, which can be inhabited, how and by whom. They shape the spaces we can and cannot inhabit, our physical landscapes, the schools we go to, the neighbourhoods in which we live, the friends we make and the occupations we pursue.

In contemporary Western societies, conversations about others remain focused on ambivalent discussions. In Australia, as in America, this is often to contemplate the unsettling presence of Blackness. It is to trace out the limitations of the unexamined norm, which conceptualises non-Blackness–Whiteness. In an Australian context, this is not predominantly about White and Black but about a certain kind of White against otherness; or as Ghassan Hage has it, of "woggieness". The definition of "White" in Australia has changed markedly as Italians, Jews, and other peoples from middle-eastern and southern Mediterranean countries have variously been classed as Black, Asian and not-white. The concept of Asian, and therefore of not-white, has been particularly fluid, including those from the Middle East, India, Southeast Asia, China and what was eastern USSR. The "other" who provides the focus of this discussion is contingent. Nevertheless, there remains a silent unmarked "us" against whom these others are made. What is at stake is the ways these definitions of otherness and therefore of Whiteness are made; and with what consequences.

Table 3.4 considers the conditions that underpin ethnic relations, as they exist as the embodiment and enunciation of persons within the lived formations of time and space. Theories of Whiteness and post-colonialism have focused on the normalised notions that define how identities and the relationships between them are embodied and enunciated. Of interest is the relationship between the day-to-day world as it is lived and spoken about and the world-as-it-is-possible-to-be. The parameters of this relationship can be understood from the different vantage points provided by my methodological frame. From the vantage point of narrational practice, embodiment appears to be something that is experienced individually. It is spoken about through a cacophony of differentiated voices, each positioned within its own changing

Table 3.4 Basic conditions of relations between persons

Methodological level	Embodiment	Enunciation	Time/space relation
Narrational practices	As experienced individually	As understood through a cacophony of voices	As understood within the time and space of individual actions and experiences
Narrational fields	As experienced through and practised within contingent and interweaving patterns of meaning and practice	As spoken and textualised through contingent and interweaving patterns of meaning and practice	As understood through historical trajectories of social and cultural formation which are the context and product of interweaving patterns of meaning
Narrational maps	As understood in terms of the basic and taken-for-granted categories of human existence	As it is to speak and to name or to be spoken and named within the basic categories of knowing or being within the world	As it is understood in terms of the basic categories of human existence differing across different lived formations

position of time and space. From the vantage point of narrational fields, embodiment is experienced through and practised within, and spoken and textualised through, conditional patterns of meaning and practice. As such, the embodiment of individuals is experienced as fragmented and inconsistent. The viewpoint provided by the narrational map suggests that these patterns are understood in day-to-day existence in terms of the basic and taken-for-granted categories of human existence as they are spoken and named within the basic categories of knowing or being within the world. Embodiment, as it is understood from this viewpoint, is relational, but the terms of this relationship seem absolute, normal and taken-for-granted.

People speak of their day-to-day experience but these conversations are experienced individually and are understood as a disharmony of voices. People experience and speak of these experiences in common as interweaving patterns of meaning and practice. However, these spoken experiences are understood within the basic categories in which, however temporarily, human existence is understood. In contemporary Western societies, the basic categories of human existence – namely time, space and subjectivity – are determined through narrational maps created by those who take for granted their power to define who they are not (and in consequence, who they are). Implied is the proposition that the definition and placement of people in Western societies is made by and through those who narrate their representation through their position as White. The consequence is that those speaking as Shite have the power to pronounce the parameters that shadow their existence, even as these seem normal, and in consequence become invisible, unspoken and silent. Those others who silhouette the condition of Whiteness are able to do no more than speak from the position made for them and therefore are made silent.

To dismantle these taken-for-granted mappings is to turn the spotlight away from the obsession of Western writing with stories of those who are other than "us" and to consider instead the terms and conditions of our own identity. Morrison describes her project as:

> . . . an effort to avert the critical gaze from the racial object to the racial subject; from the described and imagined to the describers and imaginers; from the serving to the served.
> (Morrison, 1992, p. 90)

3.5 Mapping Silence

The post-colonial world defined in the literature is one where some are able to define the world for others. It is a Black-and-White world mapped by some who have no need to speak and inhabited by others who are silenced. The central tenet of Morrison's position is that the taken-for-granted maps, which represent contemporary Western selves through the notional presence of others, need to be made explicit and their significance considered in other ways. She suggests that the analysis of contemporary American literature should take place in three stages: the untangling of the ambivalent stereotypes which make up the narrations; turning the gaze of these narrations onto the narrator self instead of the other; and the reconsideration of other stories which our "frail" hearts refuse.

I find these arguments important but an insufficient model to inform my developing frame. Morrison's strategy is premised by the notion of a world mapped completely by some and not by others. If the map provided by those who are White is indeed absolute, it makes the task which Morrison suggests impossible. The discussion of those who are White cannot take place. Although the borders of this condition are mapped out, its substance is so taken-for-granted that it is neither seen nor spoken. More particularly, it is impossible to hear those who speak from outside the territory. Iain Chambers illustrated this dilemma in his evocative discussion of the ambivalent spaces that map the contemporary city:

> The figure of the city, as both a real and an imaginary place, apparently provides a ready map for reading, interpretation and comprehension. Yet the very idea of a map, with its implicit dependence upon the survey of stable terrain, fixed referents and measurement, seems to contradict the palpable flux and fluidity of metropolitan life and cosmopolitan movement. You often need a map to get around a city, its subway system, its streets. Maps are full of references and indications, but they are not peopled . . . Beyond the edges of the map we enter the localities of the vibrant, everyday world and the disturbance of complexity.
> (Chambers, 1994, p. 92)

Chambers' analogy is of a city divided by those of the map and those who remain unmapped. It imagines a community grasping for the comfort of the day-to-day world that is framed within their own imagination and haunted by the disorientating, vibrant unreachable presence of the unmapped on the outside. The people who live beyond the map in Chambers' city are made completely by the map. They are literally outside the city, unseen and unheard. Ironically, even as Chambers vividly described the juncture between the narrational maps (White/not-white), he failed to

realise how his own ambivalent gaze remained fixed upon the vibrant and disturbing others outside his map.

The power of White is that it creates its own terms and conditions. Its privileges, its invisibility and its borders with others are created within its own terms. The questioning of those terms and conditions also takes place within the ambit of the languages of Whiteness. Elizabeth Ellsworth (1997) defined these power differentials as part of a double bind: White-and-other. Should those who are White be able to change themselves, speak about the condition of Whiteness and make it visible, that in turn becomes a dialogue formulated as White. Further, even as those who are White are concerned to define that which is outside and other to them, their discussion does not dismantle the silences of Whiteness, but merely reaffirms them.

Lather's (1991) suggestion brings to mind the messy world of the in-between which is often described in recent writings as a chaotic mixture of metaphors: of crossing borders (Anzaldua, 1987; Giroux, 1994), speaking from cracks, finding a third space, contemplating an alternative diaspora and pasting between the breaks. Gloria Anzaldua described herself as:

> Living on borders and in margins, keeping intact one's shifting and multiple identity and integrity, is like trying to swim in a new element, an "alien" element. There is an exhilaration in being a participant in the future evolution of humankind, in being 'worked' on . . . And yes, the 'alien' environment has become familiar – never comfortable, not with society's clamour to uphold the old, to rejoin the flock, to go with the herd. No not comfortable but home.
>
> (Anzaldua, 1987, p. 1)

The location of the in-between is an untidy one that is given no systematic status in post-colonial literatures. It is a methodologically uncomfortable one for many writers because they quite rightly say the terrain of the conversation, the borders which surround their ambit and the spaces between them are ill-defined and changing. Minh-ha (1999) argues that the in-between opens up a different space, with a different sound; a world which both shares the language and uses a lexicon of its own. It is a "soundless place of resonance", a noisy silence. People talk, but it is to see both sides of the matter, to say two things at the same time. For Anzaldua (1987), the world of the in-between reflects the inner life of the self, the struggle of the self as it faces adversity and violations of seemingly primordial shadow positionings. Anzaldua seeks to work in-between these borders by switching the language codes that define them. She achieves that by moving between one language and another and by developing a new language that is a mixture of these and which can speak about the silences.

It is useful to describe the impact of these propositions more comprehensively from the vantage points provided by my methodological frame. Anzaldua's speaking out of silence, moving between and beyond dualistic positions, conflates even as it shifts the discussion vertically between different viewpoints of narration. She discusses her own attempts to cross national borders, to switch between different language codes and to work and think within different cultural worlds. She negotiates the fiercely contested domain which conceives of the materiality and conception of this world as it "uphold[s] the old" and "go[es] with the herd". The almost indefinable taken-for-granted ways of knowing and being known in the world are

reconsidered so that the "alien environment" becomes the familiar, the "not comfortable but home". At the same time, Anzaldua's description suggests a second and horizontal negotiation of narrations that works across practices, across fields and across maps. She speaks one language as well as another and a new one between; she traverses borders even as she keeps "intact one's shifting and multiple identity and integrity". Her ability to move constantly between environments is nevertheless compromised as she navigates ontological border crossings, decentred by alienation and humiliation but also by exhilaration.

Bhabha's (1994) analysis usefully examines what I have defined as the second horizontal sense of in-between that is encapsulated in the "levels of narration" metaphor. At the level of narrational maps, dominant frames of temporality, spatiality and embodiment intersect. At the level of narrational fields, frames such as nation, state, gender, race and class intersect (and often contradict one another). These are the in-between spaces that Bhabha describes as the ones of hybridity. Bhabha does not propose hybridity to mean the simple blending of cultures suggested by contemporary theories of integration and multiculturalism. Rather, he argues that attempts by colonial discourses to totally appropriate the other are ceaselessly displaced. Bhabha's argument is that the places of in-between are the ones of ambivalence and instabilities of power. Hybrid strategies are strategies of resistance that open new spaces of negotiation. Ambivalences work within discourses of the coloniser, so that authority is undermined even as it is asserted. The "mimic man" becomes a person like the coloniser but not quite. The native remains only a partial creation of the coloniser, and the coloniser, seemingly unequivocal in his power, finds the native still there, fraught with menace. The coloniser's discourses, seemingly authoritative, reverse the very process of domination which they seek to replicate so that both coloniser and colonised remain locked into movements of destabilisation that neither of them can contain. The outcome of this ambivalent relation is that the other becomes *at the same time* the focus of the coloniser's obsession *and* the locus of its disavowal, in an attempt at mastery which is always asserted but at the same time slipping and never complete so that:

> . . . [t]he demand of identification – that is, to be *for* an Other – entails the representation of the subject in the differentiating order of otherness. Identification, as we inferred from the preceding illustrations, is always the return of an image of identity that bears the mark of splitting in the Other place from which it comes.
>
> (Bhabha, 1994, p. 45)

To discuss others, Bhabha argued, is to build a stereotypical fantasy of the other in relation to self. It is to build an identity of difference, which is always in excess, is more than or less than, leaves "no in-between". The production of the stereotype as a representation of the other contains within its logic its own demise. Any attempt at mastery is always incomplete and out of control as the other remains never quite known.

Viewed from the vantage points of the methodological frame, Giroux's (2000) development of Bhabha's work augments the argument made here. For Giroux, the importance of Bhabha's insight is that power is produced and struggled over not only in terms of its domination but also in terms of its negation. The taken-for-granted

maps which articulate the ways in which social worlds are understood in Western societies are the ones of control, but they carry within them the space for resistance. Normalising narrations are read against themselves, so that they are disrupted and no longer certain. Bhabha considers in effect the disruption of the narrational map across *fields* in tension. He traces the ambivalences that appear between the cracks, studies resistances, breaks down the binaries between one field and another and between those inside and those outside of the narrational maps themselves. In his extended analysis of Bhabha's work, Giroux untangles these hybrid spaces to differentiate between them vertically as well as horizontally. He identifies these different aspects as the theoretical and the performative. He defines the performative as:

> . . . ways of mis/understanding' how demanding social issues are 'framed/acknowledged/and erased' within dominant and resistant ideologies. The pedagogical as performative in this work does not merely provide a set of representations/texts that imparts knowledge to others; it also becomes a form of cultural production in which one's own identity is constantly being rewritten, but always with an attentiveness to how culture functions as both a site of production and a site of contestation over power.
>
> (Giroux, 2000, p. 137)

In this reiteration of Bhabha's differentiation between the pedagogical (the process of identity constituted by historical sedimentation) and the performative (the loss of identity in the signifying process of cultural identification), Giroux explores the relations between the different levels examined by my methodological frame. Day-to-day events are affected in different ways as people act out their day-to-day lives within and between the signs of the national culture and within the terms of the contestation between dominant and resistant and unequally empowered ideologies. It is both a vertical relation and horizontal relation each in a process of tension, and each in tension with each other: of splitting between the totalising powers of social context on the one hand, and the more specific, contentious, unequal interests and identities of the population on the other.

Giroux' analysis provides a way of thinking about ethnic and race relations in both the vertical sense (between practices, fields and maps) and the horizontal sense suggested by my methodological frame. In its vertical sense, Giroux considers the formulations of these discourses as they are viewed from each of these levels. In the horizontal sense, these are debated and negotiated understandings that refuse the imposition of these frameworks. It is here that Giroux (and more particularly the work of Bhabha which was so influential to its making) speaks about the disruption of these knowledge and the refusal of the imposition of any shaping.

3.6 An Analytical Frame

My task project has been to build an analytical frame that can enable me to move beyond the methodological "muddles" that began this analysis: the relationship between identities and otherness and their implications for the practices I watch in the classroom. The focus for this examination is the relationship between the everyday world that I discuss with parents and teachers and its conceptualisation as

terrain of imagination. It is this always-in-process construction of shared meaning and practice which can be examined from the three different vantage points of: the individual practice and story; the fields of meaning and practice within a particular or practical domain and the normalised ways of knowing or being in the world. They are different points of view which are interrelated as we as individuals both participate in and become the site of these constructions.

These common understandings, which normalise the world as it is known, configure the conversations I have with teachers and parents. Such notions are not only conceptual but also material. These concepts are not arbitrary, but, as I have already suggested, they are articulated within the constraints that define relationships between those who belong as "us" and those who do not. As site and subject of communal attention, these concepts become normalised maps made through the dominance of some people as they understand themselves through those people who they are not. They are configured by two silences: the silences of those who draw the maps, whose ways of understanding and being are so normalised they do not have to speak; and the silences of those who are so thoroughly mapped by the words of others they are left with no position from which to speak.

Hall's (1996a) concept of articulation, described earlier in this chapter, explores this multilayered complexity as he argues that:

> . . . [a]n effective suturing of the subject to a subject positioning requires, not only that the subject is 'hailed', but that the subject invests in the position, meaning that suturing has to be thought of as an *articulation* rather than a one-sided process.
>
> (Hall, 1996a, p. 6)

Hall's position is that notions of identity need to be understood from two different but linked positions: the different "discourses and practices" with which people relate as they negotiate their place within the day-to-day life of societies; and the processes which produce subjectivities, and which make us into subjects which can be spoken. His insight brings together in process the three social formations under consideration: the experiences and practices of people, the negotiations that surround the process of taking an identity and the normalised ways of being that identity. Atvah Brah (1996) develops a similar concept. She defines "diaspora space" as "the locatedness of social explanation", positioned in simultaneous processes of identity and difference, as they articulated across multiple and different relations of power. At the same time, Brah, Hickman, and Mac an Ghaill. (1999) describe the "deconstruction of the very process whereby the collectivity is constituted and positioned in relation to other groups". These are different vantage points through which to view "the terrain of the imagination" whereby three notions (individual practice, the material and conceptual domain, and ontological positioning) conceptualise a social world which is complex, in process, and unequally empowered, so that:

> . . . [o]ne way to conceptualise responses to the complex interplay of changing processes of racialisation and wider socio-economic change is to view them as a set of narratives of self-production that are dispersed through a multiplicity of power relations . . . By theoretically shifting from a focus on product to process both minority and majority ethnic groups can be seen to be actively involved in the making and remaking of cultural identities. An aspect of conceptualising ethnic identity formations is to be spatially and temporally sensitive to

> the complex politics of their location, culturally contextualising them within local institutional sites.
>
> (Brah et al., 1999, p. 4)

In setting out the analytical frame, it is important to examine the whole of the complexity which makes up this imaginary terrain. In particular, it is important to listen to the stories of the teachers and parents who have worked within the school in changing and increasingly complex times. The taken-for-granted sociocultural world which positions these experiences is important only as it is understood through their voices. Though over a decade old, Dorothy Smith's manual, *The Everyday World as Problematic*, best distils this relationship between structures and practices. She is concerned about finding a "way of seeing from where we actually live, into the powers, processes and relations that organise and determine the everyday context of that seeing". No longer one of mere portraiture, the task is to look for the ordinary features, the order and disorder, contingencies and conditions, which underpin the everyday of what the world has come to be; and then to make the conceptualisation of that everyday world problematic in order to reflect its real complexity. Smith's reminder is that first one must locate oneself within that existence:

> Locating the subject in one's everyday world means locating oneself in one's bodily and material existence. The everyday world is not an abstracted formal 'setting' transposed by the sociologist's conceptual work to an abstracted formal existence. It is an actual material setting, an actual local and particular place in the world. Its formal and generalised properties are generated as such by the social organisation and the material forms produced to accomplish its formal and generaliserable properties.
>
> (Smith, 1987, p. 97)

The experiences I discuss with teachers and parents underpin this study. The way I listen to these stories cannot be understood in isolation from the common ways of understanding and being within the world which shape our conversations. My journal entries trace the ways that I sometimes share and sometimes do not understand. The differences that I explore in my relations with teachers and parents reflect not only their very different relationship to me, but also the ways that I understand these interactions to take place. These interchanges are not arbitrary, but, as I have already suggested, are articulated within the constraints that define relationships between those who belong as "us" and those who do not. The identification of people as ethnic or as White and not-white does not, in itself, explain how these definitions change the ways that people are understood and live within the day-to-day activities of a school. The interweaving of ethnic identifications with those of class and gender mean that these positionings become complex, so that people are placed on the inside even as they are replaced on the outside. My project was to understand these relationships. In this chapter, I have presented an analytical frame that can deal with this complexity. In the next chapters, I use this frame to examine the ways that these relationships are spoken about in a school.

Chapter 4
Race and Ethnicity in Globalised Times

> *What sort of Australia will we be in the 21st century?. . . The question can provoke alien-filled nightmares or inspire visions of a culturally diverse and colourblind nation.*
>
> *Walk down Victoria Street in Richmond, an inner-Melbourne suburb, and the future is an energy-filled maze of supermarkets, restaurants, jewellery stores and neon signs winking exhortations in Chinese and Vietnamese. Feel the force of people building a new life. Most of us do not suffer nightmares, nor are we inspired by visions. Our responses are a mixture of ordinary hopes, vague concerns and puzzling contradictions . . .*
>
> *It is an astounding story. Since 1946, almost 4.5 million migrants and refugees have settled in Australia. Today, about 40 percent of Australians were either born overseas or have parents who were born overseas. Hidden within our national story are millions of individual sagas of transformation, of people painfully and sometimes joyously remaking themselves. Along the way, the rest of us too have been remade*
>
> *(Gawenda, 1988, p. 8)*

In 1988, Gawenda wrote enthusiastically about the creation of "a culturally diverse and colourblind nation" and the "astounding story" of the settlement of 4.5 million migrants and refugees in a rapidly changing country. It is an understated heroic saga underpinned by hardship and by painful and sometimes joyous change as people each undergo their "individual sagas of transformation". This is the story of an "energy-filled maze of supermarkets" and "neon signs winking exhortations in Chinese and Vietnamese". More than this, it is a story about "most of us" who "do not suffer nightmares" about the "rest of us" who have "been remade", and those people who are "painfully and sometimes joyously remaking themselves".

Fifteen years later, the way "we" in Australia understand ourselves, has changed.

> "Politicians and government officials constantly talking about security threats from international terrorism were contributing to a climate of fear in the community and damaging aviation and tourism", industry leaders warned. . . ."You might increase the risk to the public by actually informing the public and that's a difficult thing for politicians", she told *The Sunday Age*. "In making these statements, you are actually making it harder to make the system secure and keep people safe. We are in a period of fear. We want information, but when information is provided it actually increases the challenge of making us secure and it increases the costs of making us secure".
>
> ("Curb the talk of terrorism", *The Sunday Age*, 17 August 2003, p. 1).

R. Arber, *Race, Ethnicity and Education in Globalised Times*,

Fifteen years after Gawenda's article was written, "we" are in "a period of fear", a time of "threat", a place where "you might increase the risk", one from which we must "make the system secure and keep people safe". The source of our trepidation is the "international terrorist" and yet we know very little about him or her. To even name such a person is dangerous. "When information is provided it actually increases the challenge of making us secure." Yet, the focus of the conversation is the tourist, at a time when fear of terrorism has reduced international travel, affecting businesses in Australian towns reliant on the tourist dollar.

Zygmunt Bauman (2004) described the contemporary world as divided between those who are part of "the triumphant progress of modernisation" and those who are its "outcasts":

> Once modernity turned, as it was intended and bound to, into the universal condition of humankind, the effects of its planetary dominion have come to roost. As the triumphant progress of modernisation has reached the furthest lands of the planet and practically the totality of human production has become money and market mediated, and the processes of the commodification, commercialisation and monetisation of human livelihoods have penetrated every nook and cranny of the globe, global solutions to locally produced problems or global outlets for local excesses are no longer available. Just the contrary is the case: all localities (including, most notably, the highly modernised ones) have to bear the consequences of modernity's global triumph. They are now faced with the need to seek (in vain it seems) local solutions to globally produced problems.
>
> (Bauman, 2004, p. 6)

The social world described by Gawenda in 1988 was vibrant with the excitement of new ideas and changed lives. Its spirit of rebirth and transformation is in ironic contrast with Bauman's more recent vision of "wasted lives", fear and depression. The exoticism that surrounded the notion of tourist, immigrant or refugee in earlier times is changed, as underlying processes – commodification, commercialisation, monetarism – transform the ways that day-to-day lives are practised and understood. Perceptions of today's world are fraught with mounting disquiet: about security, overpopulation, asylum seekers. Everyone is promised everything, even as "rising numbers of human beings" are left bereft of even the minimum means of survival. In such times, the very notions of identity are put under pressure. They are global concerns with consequences throughout the world but with local expression. In a globalised world, who-we-are appears as a multiple and changing concept as we move from place to place, and between cultures, nationalities, languages. Moreover, a confused and increasingly malevolent notion of who-they-are continues to haunt us.

What became evident as my research continued was that racial and ethnic relations were discussed in some ways and not in others. An important task became to develop a framework that would allow me to investigate voices that were difficult to assess or could hardly be heard at all, as well as the noisy conversations that monopolise public attention. Following from literature about critical race theory, post-colonialism and race, I have argued that conversations about race and ethnic relationships need to be understood more complexly and in ways which describe everyday events, the public debates which structure and define them and the

taken-for-granted ways of being and knowing which provide substance and normality to the discussion. That is, explorations of the individual stories of practice and experience described from the vantage point of narrational practices and the often-disjunctive ways of meaning and practice related to a particular conceptual or practical domain – multiculturalism, nationalism, racism, citizenship – described from the vantage point of narrational fields, do not properly illuminate the discussion. The basic and taken-for-granted categories of the narrational maps which define human existence as it is lived across different formations of time and space must also be clarified and the terms and conditions that make up their logic interrogated.

This chapter examines the ways that race and ethnic relations have been discussed in Western contexts and particularly in Australia. Concepts of national identities expressed in the press and in government policy documents reflect what was happening in society during the time I was conducting my research, and re-image what was occurring in the social microcosm of the school at that time. Although few of the newspaper articles discuss race and ethnic relationships directly, a host of articles discuss the nature of community identity and belonging: the nature of Australian citizenship, the kind of person an Australian is, the ways that people can become Australian, the different kinds of Australians who live within the Australian community and the ways that they can participate in Australian society. The analysis of these discussions from the vantage point of the normative understanding described by narrational maps shifts the focus of analysis from the immediacy of these contingent debates to others which define community identity and belonging. This analysis re-examines the nature of race and ethnic relationships from the perspective of differentiated identities such as those alluded to in Gawenda's article "those who do not suffer nightmares"; those who "are building a new life"; and a third as yet unmentioned group who were there before the time of European settlement.

It is the delineation and interrogation of these taken-for-granted understandings, rather than the description of the dramatic incidents and debates that more often dominate historical reviews, which provide the context for my research into how race and ethnic relationships are spoken about in contemporary Western contexts such as those in schools in Melbourne, Australia.

4.1 Imagining Communities

Benedict Anderson (1991) conceived the nation as a "particular kind" of imagined entity where the socio-cultural condition of contemporary communities is not only a matter of physical presence but also one of conception. It existed, as Richard White suggests:

> . . . pre-eminently as an idea. While it has a real existence as a geographical space within defined boundaries, and as a political entity, a nation state organised for the pursuit of political power, "Australia" for the most part is something that we carry around in our heads.
>
> (White, 1997, p. 13)

National communities have "real" existence, but are also a cultural product emergent through the collective imaginations of citizens who may never meet. What we call nation – who belongs and who does not belong, its rules of behaviour, its places of habitation and work – not only has material manifestation but is also a matter of conception. The social and political ambit of the nation is defined by notional boundaries that determine who can be part of the nation and in what ways, even as material space is delineated by its geographical borders. There is, as Robert Young (1990) explained, an interrelation between representations of the notional and the real. The materiality of communities is manifest through the ways of "meaning" and "being" that are provided by language. Simultaneously conceptual and material, they are spaces of imagination which are more than "matters of words". They exist in the mind, even as they provide the context and are the product of the lives of actual people in a material world.

In contemporary Western societies, these underlying and taken-for-granted notions are, as Phil Cohen evocatively wrote, the possible conditions of "home space". The hearth, within the centre of the home, Cohen reminded us, represents the most safe, private and comfortable of places. This nostalgic dream place of childhood memories and settled old age forms the centrepiece of a primordial landscape of life and pictures, an Eden-like existence where everyone obeys the rules and knows their place. The object of these dreams, Cohen (1993) pointed out, is not their warm, nostalgic comfort but the ever-present threat of the stranger:

> The elision between hearth and heath, inside and outside, native and nature, is produced through a succession of homely images, the fond memories of happy childhoods blurring into the nostalgic reminiscences of old age, an organic image of life and landscape now threatened by the alien presence.
>
> (Cohen, 1993, p. 5)

Cohen's contention is that the much-wished-for safety of home space centres contemporary notions of nation and community. For Ghassan Hage (1998), an Australian sense of communal identity is a "White fantasy" in which those who are White seek to make and maintain their own particular relation between self and territory. What is at stake, he argues, is a sense of national space and the definition of the identities who belong to these spaces. The privileged position of those identities and spaces is made against the definition of others, described by Hage as:

> . . . agents imagining themselves to occupy a privileged position within national space such that they perceive themselves to be the enactors of the national will within the nation. . .The hand that tears off the scarf is a hand that is orientated by an image of the kind of national space it wants to construct with the removal of this scarf. In the negative "I don't want this scarf in my nation" communicated by the act of tearing, there is a positive statement: "I want my nation to be 'like this' ".
>
> (Hage, 1998, p. 47)

Central to conceptions of Australian identity, Hage suggested, is the desire of "agents imagining themselves to occupy a privileged position" to be home, to feel at home. To be in control of the nation is to be in control of who can and cannot be allowed to enter the home. It is to construct oneself as a spatially empowered subject capable of controlling the nature of belonging and of living within one's territory.

Hage argues that in Australia these notions are defined by those deemed as White, who have the power to say to others "I want my nation to be 'like this' ".

The notion of home space is an ambiguous one. It is, as Cohen suggested, a never-reached fantasy, shadowed by the threatening presence of strangers. The stranger, according to Bauman (1997b, pp. 10–11), "shatters the rock on which the security of daily life rests", "comes from afar", "does not share the local assumptions". It is "the dirt that needs to be swept away". It does "not fit the cognitive, moral, or aesthetic map of these worlds".[1] The presence of strangers re-conceptualises the most basic of understandings about belonging, taste, class, social order and sexuality. The presence of strangers places nostalgic imaginings of home space out of our control. The most basic actions and conceptions no longer happen as expected. These are ambivalent conversations whose boundaries Homi Bhabha (1990, p. 4) described as "janus faced" caught within "a process of hybridity" and "producing unnamed sites of political antagonism, and unpredictable forces for political representation". They are contradictory spaces mediated within unequally empowered and disjunctive conversations that notionally and materially define who-we-are, through the ascription of who-we-are-not. The terms and conditions of these conversations that never seem to quite work are always changing, conflict, never quite fit, are more-than or less-than. What makes the definition of the stranger, and through that ourselves, most difficult, is that this other person always remains not-quite-known and ill-defined.

More recently in Australia, notions of identity appear less clear-cut as they are formulated amidst the "turbulence of migration":

> The borderline between different cultures in the diasporic context is not necessarily clear-cut, and the tension is not just oppositional. In such cases, the necessary decisiveness of judgement that relativism glosses, and the prescriptive distantiation that holism maintains, would neither address the complexities of the interactions that occur, nor provide an adequate basis for cross-cultural judgement.
>
> (Papastergiadis, 2000, p. 151)

Notions of cultural and national identity, never a straightforward concept, have become increasingly blurred as people move from one place to another and negotiate socio-historical and cultural contexts differently. In Australia, these concepts have seemed particularly complicated as people negotiate different languages, cultures and nationalities formulated within processes of post-war immigration and the changing nature of identity and alterity. This has meant that "we" in Australia, often ambiguous about our own cultural identities, find it difficult to describe who other identities are. Even as we in Australia seek to define and control our home spaces, the boundary between conceptions of the nation and its "others" is disrupted by the condition of their hybridity. Notions that appeared a simple binary – our

[1] I am drawn in this instance to Bauman's (1990; 1997a; 1998) most evocative analysis of the process of change that underpins the globalisation process. However, other writers have concerned themselves with similar themes. Chow (1998), for instance, writes of "the fascist in our midst", Bhabha (1990) of the "heimlich pleasures of the hearth and the unheimlich terror of the space or race of the other", of the division between the "genuinely" and the "falsely" national, and Chambers (1994) the "ghost that shadows" every discourse.

nation/other, ourselves/strangers – blur together in ways that are multiple, complex, inconsistent and incomplete. The borders between who-we-are and who-they-are change constantly. People make their decisions in different times and under different conditions, are not one thing or the other, change from one place to another, negotiate different identity positions.

These already-contradictory notions appear even more unclear as local communities become involved in global culture, exacerbating the provisional and fluid condition of what seemed primordial and inherited national boundaries. Global systems of cultural and capital exchange extend into every part of the globe, mediating and negotiating the ways people move and interact in new and ever more complex directions. The involvement of communities and identities in global culture is double-sided. On the one hand, the involvement of communities in global culture changes the ways the most taken-for-granted of concepts – the provisionality of inherited boundaries and the fluidity of the concept "home" – can be understood. In this process of mixing, of "hybridisation", the shifting relation between the local and the global gives way to the messiness of a "global melange" (Pieterse, 2000). At the same time, conflicting forces mean that notions – particularly those of identity, race and culture – are polarised and come to "cannibalise" each other (Appadurai, 2000). Older markers of identity and difference remain entrenched and are implemented in new ways. They are recapitulated on a global scale in local communities throughout the world.

In recent times, the shifting paradoxical notions that define who-they-are, and consequently, who-we-are, appear changed and ever more complicated. Even the solid, durable sense of time–space becomes threatened as people travel ever faster, both virtually and in reality. The merely local home space becomes interwoven within the international and the global as the internet, radios and television beam the world of the outside into our innermost home spaces. In such multiple worlds, some people feel that they have access to an increasing number of spaces, experiences and identities, coming and going in what seems everywhere. Others find their world shrinking as it becomes even more difficult to move outside the location of the place-they-are now. In this post-modern world, the solidity of what was and is becomes increasingly confusing. Not only does the presence of the stranger haunt the safety of the known but also the borders between self and the other fall apart altogether, and become unknown. In this ever faster, ever-in-process world, the stranger is neither on the outside nor on the inside, is neither another nor oneself. Yet, he or she remains as an obsession, both the focus of desire and the source of nightmares.

4.2 Snapshots: The Press

4.2.1 1989

The Australian, a Murdoch publication, is one of the three major news publications in Melbourne. It espouses moderately conservative social and economic

philosophies, aims at a more educated audience than its tabloid stable mate, *The Herald Sun*, and has nationwide circulation. Even a cursory reading of one day's newspaper uncovers articles which expose a miscellany of issues relating to ethnic relations. These include struggles to decide who can (and cannot) claim ownership of Australian territory; who can (and cannot) enter and stay in Australia and under what conditions; who can use (or abuse) Australian resources and should be allowed to use them in future; whose behaviour is acceptable and whose behaviour is to be tolerated; and whose history should be told and whose history should not be told. The resultant bricolage provides a backdrop for an examination of contemporary conversations about race and ethnic relations in Melbourne, Australia.

In 1988, the relationship between British and Australian nationality took on particular importance with the bicentenary of British settlement of Australia. *The Sun* newspaper recorded the event with a picture of "Prince Charles in a slouch hat" and a flotilla of sailing ships entering Sydney Harbour. The article contended that it is:

> An honour to be an Australian: What a day. There was pomp and ceremony and the moving majesty of the first fleet re-enactment as they entered Sydney Harbour. There were simple pleasures too as ordinary people across the nation expressed their feelings about being Australian.
>
> (*The Sun*, 27 January 1988, p. 1)

The report raises the issue of the settlement of Australia and the relationship between that historic memory and Australian identity. The article outlines how British ancestry and history premise the ways people belong as Australian. Under the slogan "living together", the event was the precursor to a series of activities intended to portray the British as well as non-British origins of Australia's settler communities. The picture of Prince Charles, the first fleet pageantry, and the pride of "ordinary people" in being Australian capture the relation between Britishness, the British settlement story and concepts of Australianness. Juxtaposed with "ordinary people" who "expressed their feelings about being Australian" are those people who are not ordinary, not part-of-us and who do not properly share in the British Australian story. In the same article, Australians of non-British origin celebrated Bicentennial Day in a number of different ways. Indigenous leaders labelled Bicentennial Day "a day of shame".[2]

I began my search just a few months later (and 4 months after my school research) on 29 April 1989. I did not find articles that spoke directly about racism, prejudice or discrimination. Nor, despite the enthusiastic support for multiculturalism at the time, did any of the articles refer to any of these ideas or programmes. Nevertheless, I found articles which outlined the ways that people could or could not be Australian. The first article, discussing the relationship between Englishness and Australianness, was found in the book review section of the 1989 *The Australian*. The article explored what it meant to be one of us: this time through language. Headed "The

[2] Stratton (1998) comments in Race Daze that this was a turning point in the way that the relationship between multiculturalism and Australia's British roots was understood.

inexhaustible joys of English", the article was concerned with the way Australian words found their way into the English dictionary. The writer reflected that:

> . . . the Oxford Dictionary is both the ultimate guide to the meanings and usages of English words and the supreme portrayal of English as it has developed over the past thousand years.
> ("The inexhaustible joys of English" *The Australian Weekend*, 29–30 April 1989, p. 12)

The article noted the length of time that the English language had taken to develop and the importance of the Oxford Dictionary as a repository, "the ultimate guide", to portray its correct usage.[3] The link between the English language, its correct usage and meaning and Australian national identity becomes clear as the article continues:

> The OED above all else provides a detailed picture of the common picture of the common core of the language. . .it is. . .the headquarters of English, the place where the language is deposited and kept for the use of all. At the same time, the modern and regional variants of English aren't simply dialects feeding into the common pool along that one channel. . .Australian English has contributed its own scientific words. . .It has brought its own wealth of foreign words, since we have to regard Aboriginal words as foreign not to Australia but to English when it first met them.
> ("The inexhaustible joys of English", *The Australian Weekend*, 29–30 April 1989, p. 12)

In this article, the English dictionary is a kind of "headquarters", a "common" picture, of a "common core" kept for the use of all. The universal importance of English as represented in the dictionary is taken for granted. At the same time, its underlying logic is that regional variations are more fluid. The article's focus is a new and composite form of language, Australian English, and its place in formalising new words not originally part of a British English dictionary. Of particular interest are new words, often of Aboriginal Australian origin. These Indigenous Australian words, the article contends, are "foreign" yet no longer foreign to us; are not quite Australian but quintessentially Australian at the same time. The Australian language is importantly of England, but is also hybrid and changing. New words are made that are neither English nor something else.

The tense relationship between Australian and British identity and the silent place of Australia's Indigenous people within this relationship underpinned another newspaper article. Under the heading "A pioneer feared by crazed cameleers", a middle-aged man is pictured sitting on a veranda reading. His seat overlooks a rather foreign-looking countryside of palm trees and open spaces. The "not quite rightness" of the man's position in the picture is reflected in the ambiguity of his story:

> A journal kept by one of Australia's pioneer explorers at the turn of the century graphically details the revenge killings of Aborigines, the shooting of a crazed Afghan cameleer and desperation as starving and thirsty explorers searched in vain for gold in the Gibson

[3] Alastair Pennycook (1994, 1998) notes the linked relation between the place of the English dictionary and the cultural politics of the English language in projects of colonialism. The particular importance of his insight to Australian ethnic relations is that the English language is crucial to formulations of Australian national identity. The importance placed on English language programmes within multicultural policy development is just one example of this. See, for example: Kalantzis (1989) and Lo Bianco (2000).

> desert . . .Using the journal, the student. . .wish[es] to retrace some of the steps of the explorer. . .and to apologise to the Aborigines for his behaviour.
>
> ("A pioneer feared by crazed cameleers", *The Australian Weekend*, 29–30 April 1989, p. 5)

Notions of who we are as Australian identities are understood as a relationship between British settler history, an Australian Indigenous presence and the land itself. The historic and heroic tale is of the British Australian pioneer who settled in Australia despite enormous odds and the disruptive presence of Indigenous peoples who, in defiance of their threatened annihilation, remain disturbingly present. Australia's history is described not only as one of "revenge killings" and "crazed Afghan cameleers" but also as of "starving and thirsty explorers". It is a complex story, in which the protagonist wants both to "retrace . . . the steps" of his past and to "apologise" for it.[4]

The issues of who we are, and how we belong as Australians within the land, in relation to an Indigenous presence, are at the centre of the debate in the next two articles. The first is headed "Aborigines to vote on land council split":

> A plebiscite of traditional Aborigines in south-east Arnhem Land was authorised by the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, M. Hand, yesterday to gauge support for rebels who want to split from the powerful Northern Land Council (NLC). But the poll of about 1600 Aborigines will not go ahead until the boundaries of the 28,000sq km area are determined by an independent anthropologist – a process that could take months. . .It is understood that the Department of Aboriginal Affairs has drawn up a short list of four candidates who have gained the necessary experience for working for the Northern Territory Land Commissioner.
>
> ("Aborigines to vote on land council split", *The Australian Weekend*, 29–30 April 1989, p. 10)

The article describes a long-running debate about the implementation of Aboriginal self-management programmes. By 1988, the Fraser Government's (1975–1983) proposals for Aboriginal self-management and the Hawke Government's (1983–1996) proposals to approve Indigenous rights had been, for the most part, circumscribed by a political backlash from the States, mining interests and elements of public opinion.[5] Moreover, policies of protection for Aborigines (and their underlying premise that Indigenous peoples would die out could not look properly after themselves and needed specific policies to look after them) had been in place in some States since the late 1830s. The debate explored the ways Australian Aborigines could be allowed to own land. The underlying focus was on the terms and conditions that define Australianness and the place of the Indigenous person. Its logic suggested that we, our *g*overnments and our academics knew Indigenous peoples better than they did themselves and that we could define the borders of their identities (as they

[4] See, for example: Markus (1994), Lippman (1996) Reynolds (1982). Such readings speak of histories of slaughter, shifting to those of more subtle forms of exclusion (and annihilation). Such practices (the integration of Blacks and Whites by "pepper potting", housing Blacks next to Whites in country towns, the removal of children, particularly those with some White antecedents, the issuing of exemption tickets for Indigenous peoples living outside legislative control) continued until the late 1950s and in some forms still continues today.

[5] See particularly Hollinsworth (1998) and Lippman (1996).

exist both conceptually and materially) with an expertise which Aboriginal peoples could not command.

Indigenous identity had come to describe that which is representative of who-we-are and what-we-might-become and that which is childlike, in need of our help, and stealing from us. Those of Irish descent played a different and important part in the history of Australian political decision-making and in the formation of an Australian identity.[6] In discussing the film *Da*, the paper suggested that it contained "much that will appeal to any Australian viewer of recent Irish descent". Entitled the "Pleasing touch of the Irish", the writer argues enthusiastically that:

> We are treated to numerous picture postcard shots of Dalkey, which to anyone who has their roots in Ireland is one of the most beautiful little towns in the world. If green is your favourite colour you will love this film.
>
> ("The pleasing touch of the Irish", *The Australian Weekend – Arts*, 29–30 April 1989, p. 11)

The ambiguous identification of the Irish-Australian person is mapped by the change of pronoun "we" and "you". The article is for Australians of Irish descent. "We" share with the film maker the beauty of the shots of Dalkey. Nevertheless, we do not quite share this identity in the same way. Not all of us have our roots in Ireland or have green as our favourite colour.

When I read the newspaper articles in this single day's paper in 1989, I found few, if any, articles which touched on the concepts with which I was most concerned: race, ethnicity, nation, multiculturalism. Nevertheless I found that these conceptions provided the logic of the discussion within many of these articles. The articles covered several seemingly unrelated fields of discussion: the Oxford Dictionary, Australia's settlement history, the negotiation of Aboriginal land rights and the distribution of an Irish documentary. These miscellaneous debates normalised conceptions of who was and who was not part of the community in unproblematic ways. The stories described an essentially British–Australian identity made through its relationships with an Indigenous other inside, and the foreign other outside. In 1989, the conditions of the national entities which made up the debate seemed easily defined. People were Irish and Australian, Indigenous and Australian, British and Australian. These essentially different kinds of identities were nevertheless multi-faceted and contradictory. The British pioneer, the descendent of the first fleet, who so marks who we are, is uncomfortable in his new land, and unsure about his relation with the Indigenous people who came before. The Indigenous Australian is central to the formation of an Australian language and to the conception of who-we-are. Nevertheless, the Indigenous person is a disturbing presence who is in need of looking after and in competition for our resources. The Irish Australian is representative of our general sense of nostalgia but not-quite-one-of-us.

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[6] Despite the enormous impact of the Irish migration in the ways that Australian politics were played out, the effect of an Irish presence on the development of Australian ethnic relations is not always discussed. An example of one of the few texts that does so is Collins (1998b).

4.2.2 1999

A decade later, I again picked up the daily newspaper. Once again discussions about race and ethnic relations seldom took place directly. Nevertheless, I found articles concerned with the definition of Australian identity. The Australian Indigenous presence is a site of three quite different debates. The battle was waged, not only over land and resources, but also over the representation of the issues in the media and public discussion.[7] We are told that:

> The National Gallery of Australia's prized collection of 200 Aboriginal hollow log coffins will travel overseas for the first time next month to feature in a European tour of contemporary Australian Indigenous art. The artworks, known as the Aboriginal memorial, were commissioned for the bicentenary in 1988 and represent a war cemetery commemorating the Indigenous Australians who died defending their land against white settlers.
>
> ("Cemetery art reflects living culture", *The Australian*, Friday, 30 April1999, p. 10)

The pioneering story told a decade before has now been joined by a commemoration of the Indigenous Australians who were killed as a result of that settlement process. In the process, the 1988 bicentennial celebrations of Australian nationhood that provided the original funding for the programme were disrupted.[8] The history of European incursions into Aboriginal lands was reinterpreted and Indigenous ownership of and defence of those territories accounted for. This remembering of history was ambiguous and should be noted against Prime Minister Howard's unwillingness on page one of this newspaper to "bow to opposition demands to include a reference to prior Aboriginal custodianship of Australia" in a proposed changed Australian constitution.[9] His reticence followed his already strong criticism of more recent and liberal interpretations of Aboriginal land rights and interpretations of Indigenous histories.[10] Even the redefinition of Indigenous Australians as "custodians" that John Howard refuses to endorse defines Australian Indigenous peoples as people in waiting, ancient predecessors to a new nation that now looks after the land. These are interpretations articulated with comments by Federal Senator Ross Lightfoot that:

> ATSIC provided a loan of $2.2 million and a grant of $50,000 to the corporation, which was buying into the business in a scheme to provide employment for up to 50 Aboriginal people. News of the collapse brought an "astounded" response from West Australian senator Ross Lightfoot, who told ABC radio that he was "staggered that so much money could be lost so quickly". "ATSIC, in terms of commercial dealings, is incompetent. . .and they should not be allowed to handle taxpayers" funds by themselves'.
>
> ("Preamble a war of words", *The Australian*, Friday, 30 April 1999, p. 1)

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[7] A summary of Hall's (1996c) discussion of this can be found in the introduction to this book.

[8] 1998 marked the bicentennial celebration of the arrival of the "First Fleet" of the settlement from Britain to Botany Bay in NSW. The year was marked by huge celebrations and funding for community projects, including this one for Aboriginal artworks.

[9] "Preamble a war of words", The Australian, Friday, 30 April 1999, p. 1.

[10] For reference to the changed debates to which Howard was reacting, see Butt (1998), Manne (1998b), Attwood (1996), Read (1997), as well as Reynolds (1982, 1998).

Ross Lightfoot's comments, so debated in 1999, resemble the government comments made in 1989. They suggest that ATSIC (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission), the umbrella body for Australia's Indigenous peoples at the time, should no longer be allowed to control their own funds. They re-articulate Australia's Indigenous peoples as non-technical, not quite in possession of the land and incompetent.[11] Debates about the ways of representing Australia's Indigenous peoples have also become crucial. The notions linked to these seemingly quite disparate domains of discussion (possession of land, control over funding, rights to self-government) mark out the relationship between an Aboriginal presence and conceptions of Australian identity. However, the form of the representation, the way that these stories describe these relations, becomes the domain of debate.

In the day's cartoon, "big business" asks a diminutive Prime Minister Howard, "Ah John. . .There you are. Why do I get the feeling you don't like our views on immigration?"[12] In 1999, John Howard's government severely cut the size of Australia's immigration programme; particularly the size of the component that would have reunited recently arrived (and possibly Southeast Asian) families. This debate followed a long tradition in which the demands of Australian business for cheap labour and a viable consumer base influenced Australian population policies.[13] Encoded in this story, but not specifically mentioned, was the place that non-White migration has had generally in Australia's immigration history.[14] The size of this immigration and the unspoken implication that it was Asian immigration which most needed cutting underpinned both the "Blainey" and the "Hanson" Debates.[15] Linked to the domain of who can and cannot arrive in Australia was a second story,

[11] See, for example, Hall (1998), Hollinsworth (1998), Lippmann (1996), Manne (1998a), Markus (2001) and Pettman (1992). These events were interwoven with several major events going on at this time: several important reports which delved sympathetically into Indigenous issues (*Bringing them Home*, National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from their Families; the *Deaths in Custody Report* (1997); a series of landmark court cases into land distribution (the Mabo (1992) and Wik (1996) High Court decisions, the Native Title Act (1993) and the Government's response to these in 1998). Also, the achievement and subsequent failure of the Australian Reconciliation Convention, particularly John Howard's response to this on 26–28 May 1997. A recent analysis of Australian racial politics explores grievance and resentment as petit bourgeois ideologies, intent on the moral failings of individuals, and suggesting that "I have done all I can, but forces of people beyond me are undermining my efforts, depleting my savings, robbing me of what is rightfully mine." (Brett, 1997, p. 10).

[12] Nicholson, *The Australian*, Friday, 30 April 1999, p. 14.

[13] See, for example, Castles, Kalantzis, Cope, and Morrissey (1998).

[14] See, for instance, Yarwood (1968), Webb and Enstice (1998), Markus (1994) and Hollinsworth (1998). The competitiveness of cheap "coolie" labour and presence of large numbers of efficient and mostly male Chinese miners on the goldfields during the mid-nineteenth century were made rationales for vicious pogroms and fantastic propaganda. The federation of Australian states saw the promulgation of systematised legislation to maintain Australian Whiteness and to keep others, particularly Asians, out. It was a White Australia policy that was not finally dismantled legislatively until the installation of the Whitlam Government in 1972 and the subsequent acceptance of large numbers of Asian refugees by the incoming Fraser Government. See, for example, Markus (1994) and Hollinsworth (1998).

[15] See Stratton (1998).

which defined who was Australian and who was not and how one could come to be defined as such.

These near-silent debates about the right kind of migrant underpin the next newspaper article. Under the heading "Migrant family wins the "lottery", the paper described migration as a "lifelong dream" undertaken by a young couple who are White, British, heterosexual, married with children and self-supporting:

> For English couple Louise and Michael Grayson, emigrating to Australia had been a lifelong dream. The couple and their 17 month daughter, Lorna, were greeted at Perth airport yesterday by relatives, who had made the journey nine years before and were now sponsoring the young family's new life.
>
> ("Migrant family wins the 'lottery' ", *The Australian*, 30 April 1999, p. 2)

A decade earlier, conceptions of Britishness were central conceptions of Australian national identity. In this day's newspaper, discussions about migration appear more general and stories about Britain are not included. Attempts during the first half of the century to bring only British migrants to Australia had gradually changed to allow immigration from other countries. Despite all these, the picture taken for this day's paper features a British couple.[16] Even as immigration patterns changed, conceptions of Britishness continued to dominate the ways that an Australian newspaper discussed ethnic relations. The place of the British migrant was nevertheless ambiguous. The English couple were just one of many young families who came to Australia to start a new life. Despite the fact that their presence is foregrounded, they are nevertheless not yet Australian or one-of-us.

The contradiction that underpinned the immigration debate was made clear as the newspaper editorial presented the ways that "Yearly quotas stifle debate on migration". The writer stated that:

> One in four Australians was born overseas. So it is curious that most politicians are reluctant to enter wholeheartedly into the immigration debate. True, some research has indicated that recent migrants themselves are among the most critical of suggestions that Australia lift its migrant intake. This may reflect an irrational fear that the benefits of living in Australia might be reduced if more people were allowed in, but the view should not predominate in discussion of the benefits of migration. . .Australia has been built on migration. It is now one of the most polyglot countries in the world. We need to be far more accepting of *migration's* benefits for our country.
>
> ("Yearly quotas stifle debate on migration", *The Australian*, 30 April 1999, p. 14)

The author pleaded with the Australian Prime Minister to allow more migrants into Australia and suggested that selection should not discriminate on the basis of national or racial origins. However, even as the article considered migrants, both past

[16] The history of immigration to Australia is well documented. As the concept of the acceptable migrant changed, policies for dealing with new migrants also changed. Histories of Australian migration trace the ways that migrants were shown to be almost like us – almost like British Australians. Pictures of new migrants emphasised their fairness, their almost-Britishness and their pioneering spirit. Later conceptualisations emphasised the ways that these new Australians, even if different, could be enabled to assimilate, or at least integrate, with a quintessentially Australian norm. See, for example, Castles et al. (1998, 2001).

and present, as part of the Australian community, we find that such migrants were not quite Australian enough, part of a "most polyglot" community, who, more than other real Australians, had succumbed to fears about the influx of "others". This relationship between an Australian nation and that which is not quite Australian is signified at the same time as a relationship of identification and desire and as a politics of resentment. Even as he is desired,[17] as a necessity, the migrant is understood as someone irrational, someone not accepting of the real benefits that other "real" Australians understand migration will bring. The point of the conversation is no longer the foreigner who exists only on the outside and who can be absolutely excluded. Instead the foreigner is not a foreigner, but one-of-us, even as in the very act of saying so he or she is made one-of-them again. In 1999, the foreigner who was so comfortably on the outside in 1989 moves between being on the inside and the outside.

The last of the articles to be discussed from this day's paper demonstrates the material as well as the notional complexity that underpins discussions about race and ethnic relations. In this story, our community interweaves hazardous, intersecting worlds where "others" are omnipresent, "out of this world" and yet dedicated and committed in ways that "we" are not. Here, "Victorian police fear international terrorist Osama Bin Laden is recruiting Melbourne Muslims to fight in a holy war".[18] The "other" is, notionally and materially, completely beyond the borders of sensible behaviour: a shadowy, evil and committed other whose identity is both part of our own and dedicated to our destruction. Now, fear has intruded into the innermost sanctum of our very homes. Nation and race, and the discourse of inter-ethnic relations, is no longer something merely local, as the international spans the local terrain. The comfortable "natural" relationship between culture and geographical and social territories, nation and state, ethnicity and culture, has been disrupted, deterritorialised, phantasmagoric. It has become a bizarre and frightening world, where groups of sinister others wage terrifying wars against all of us.

In 1999, I found an absence of debate about race, ethnicity, nation and multiculturalism, similar to that demonstrated a decade earlier. Nevertheless, as in 1989, I found articles that outlined the ways that different groups of people could be part of the national community and how they could behave. Discussions about Australia's settlement history, the negotiation of Aboriginal rights and conditions of migration into Australia provided the focus of the newspaper conversations. In 1999, however, these discussions have taken on a new layer of complexity. In addition to the debate about these conflicts and changes, there was increasing concern with the politics of representation. The negotiation of Aboriginal rights had become a war of words: a debate about who has the land and a deliberation about how this conversation could be carried out. Debates about race and ethnic relations took place as debates about immigration, settlement policies and multiculturalism. The definitions of the terms

[17] See Rizvi's (1996), most pertinent discussion of the ambivalence which underpins the ways that Australians understand Asian migration and their relationship with Asia generally.
[18] "Terrorists 'recruiting for holy war' ", *The Australian*, 30 April 1999, p. 3.

that underpin these debates appeared increasingly contradictory, as it no longer seemed so clear who-they-are and who-we-are; who was inside and who was outside of the community.

4.2.3 2003

In 2003, newspaper articles discussed similar themes in changed and increasingly paradoxical ways. In an obituary to the "Father of Woolmark", the subheading explained that William Archer Gunn was a "rural power broker" born in Goondiwindi, Queensland. The accompanying picture is of a young boy wrestling a sheep. The underlying caption proclaims that "after fighting a shearers strike Gunn set about transforming the marketing of Australian wool". The narrative described a man who pioneered the land, even as he fought and won against the Shearers Union. His work to sell Australian wool by repackaging it under the Woolmark brand brought this traditional Australian tale into a new world, where concepts were represented differently to compete on a new, more complex, world stage. We were told of a man with:

> ... the feisty spirit of a rural powerbroker who transformed the marketing of Australian wool and beef following World War II. Father of the now famous Woolmark brand Gunn was a mountain of a man and perhaps the most influential farmer of his time ... He came to represent a certain spirit of the bush even being parodied on the stage ... Dogmatic in style, Gunn was often unpopular but respected by allies and detractors and he remained unpretentious and philosophical about his life.
>
> (*The Australian*, 30 April 2003, p. 15)

This is an Australian tale of the man on the land – tough, "feisty", unafraid – who represents "a certain spirit of the bush". Notions of mateship and the common man that often underpin these conversations come together with the laconic pioneer of a different mould "dogmatic", "unpretentious", "respected", "philosophical about his life" and prepared to get on with what needed to be done. The lacuna between the iconic existence that this man's life represented and the very different lives that most Australians lived in cities meant that his story was something often "parodied on stage". His feat, reviving the flagging wool trade internationally, modernised this Australian pioneering saga, now set in an increasingly urbanised and globalised world, yet at the same time imbuing it with nostalgia.

The battle over the nation's Indigenous past continued to be waged with increasing ferocity. More than ever, these were struggles with real-world consequences. Australian Aboriginal peoples continued to be disadvantaged on almost all economic indicators. Janet Albrechtsen's (2003) feature article "False history acts as a barrier to reconciliation" suggested that these battles were now concerned to a much greater extent with the ways these issues were represented.[19] Her view was that:

> Keith Windschuttle uncovers the truth in his groundbreaking first volume of *The Fabrication of Aboriginal History*. Trawling though original documents he finds that what historian Henry Reynolds called the Risdon massacre is, instead, the perfect case study for how conflicts between Aboriginal and settlers have been fabricated and exaggerated. "It was not a

> slaughter of up to 50 innocent men, women and children", concludes Windschuttle. It was a defensive action by the colonists in which three Aborigines were shot dead. . .Distorting white sins and sanitising Aboriginal culture are natural allies in the battle to distort the truth. Commemorating the bicentenary of British settlement at Risdon Cove offers a unique opportunity to reinstate truth in history – a necessary first step towards genuine reconciliation.
>
> (*The Australian*, 30 April 2003, p. 13)

In his volumes *The Fabrication of Aboriginal History*, Keith Windschuttle (2002) set out to rewrite the history of Australian settlement and its consequences for Australia's Indigenous peoples. His argument suggested that "Aborigines" in Tasmania were "primitive", "maladaptive " and "disfunctional" people who had survived more by luck than by good management and who set the conditions of their own swift demise on the arrival of British settlement. The injustice of this revisionist and quite vindictive account of Australian history was strongly contended by other academics and some public figures. Important intellectuals such as Robert Manne (2004) interrogated the inaccuracies of Windschuttle's case, his reconstruction of figures and facts and his lack of substantive research. Nevertheless, Windschuttle's denial of European settler complicity in what has been otherwise widely recorded as a massacre of the virtual totality of Tasmania's indigenous population was well recorded in the press. Albrechstein's argument that "White sins have been distorted", "Aboriginal culture sanitised" as she wrote in support of Windschuttle's attempt to "uncover the truth" is just one example of this kind of writing.

Manne's concern was not just with the inaccuracy of Windschuttle's arguments but their complicity with a more general trend to rewrite Australian history. This trend followed a "series of cultural battles" about a number of issues related to race and ethnic history and relationships. The election of John Howard as Prime Minister marked "a counter-revolution in sensibility" (Manne, 2005, pp. 308–309) whereby Australia moved away from a "black armband approach" and began to rewrite history to suggest a more kindly account of European settlement in Australia. Such attempts to re-chronicle the past, and the increasing personalisation of the debate, were problematic enough. Of most concern were the ways such battles to "reinstate truth in history" redefined the ontological and normalised understandings which underpinned the debate and transformed its practical terrain. Increasingly, the representation of history and the ways it has shaped the interpretation and direction of social events became central in a series of "culture wars".

Engaging with both the conceptual dimensions of the debate and its material outcome also provided the theme for Phillip Adams's (2003) article "Keep out Kim and his legacy" discussing former Labor leader Kim Beazley. Under the subheading: "Labor can't return to a deeply conservative loser", Phillip Adams argued that:

> Beazley lost them – lost me – because of his small target approach to politics. Far from running for office he seemed to be running away from it: either avoiding confrontation entirely or opposing Howard sotto voce. Remember his pusillanimous response to the mandatory detention of Aboriginal children in Darwin's prisons?. . .It was the same in regard to the mandatory detention of asylum seekers in Woomera and Villawood. Before Tampa, Beazley was sounding the retreat. After Tampa? There he was, trying to outbid the Prime Minister in blustering about border security.
>
> (*The Australian*, 30 April 2003, p. 13)

The terrible treatment of refugees in Australia referred to by Adams has in many ways become worse since 1989. The imprisonment of uninvited immigrants had begun under the Hawke and Keating Labour governments. However, John Howard's Liberal Government increased the scope of these programmes, particularly those requiring the mandatory detention of asylum seekers in places such as Woomera and Villawood. A series of events, particularly the refusal to accept refugees marooned and picked up by the Norwegian ship, the Tampa, made incontrovertibly real the government's attempts to demarcate who cannot, and therefore who can, enter Australia. The silenced condition of these refugees, kept far-away, walled-off and spoken-for, was demonstrated in a series of incidents including the "children-overboard affair" and the "lip-sewing affair". In a truly material sense, these people were silenced and separated. More significantly, they were unheard, represented only through the voices of others and placed literally in no-man's land; the identity of the refugee became in every way ephemeral. Horrified as Adams was at Australia's treatment of refugees and of its Indigenous peoples, his major concern was with representation. He continued:

> In one of our few long conversations, I tried to remind Beazley that he was alienating people for whom politics isn't the one-day of an election year but a lifetime of involvement. To my astonishment. . .Kim Beazley. . .dismissed them as the "chattering classes" using that contemptuous and contemptible expression beloved of Paddy McGuiness.
>
> (*The Australian*, 30 April 2003, p. 13)

Adams' interest was not only in the ways that refugees and Indigenous peoples have been treated in Australia, but also with the consequences of these behaviours for the ways that Australians understand and portray themselves. The attempt by both sides of the Federal Parliament to limit the numbers of refugees coming to Australia was underpinned by their agenda to attract the supporters of populist Pauline Hanson's One Nation Party, which had as one of its major policy proposals a massive reduction in immigration. Whilst the major party policies were framed as being about preventing "people smuggling" and maintaining the right of Australian governments to determine who might enter Australia, it also marked a change in the ways that these issues were to be discussed.

The re-interpretation of the notions that lie beneath Australian political debate has been remarked on by academic Judith Brett (2005, p. 90). Her argument is that John Howard becoming Australia's longest-serving Prime Minister has been achieved through his ability to use widely shared symbols of Australian mythology to evoke:

> . . . widely shared symbols of the Australian legend, the symbols of mateship, easy-going informality, and a fair go, to present himself as the protector of the national culture against the social engineering of the left-wing elites who'd got their hands on state power. And as Prime Minister he has ostentatiously identified himself with that most potent bearer of his nation's past: its military history.
>
> (Brett 2005, p. 90)

By making himself representative of all-that-we-want-to-be and by presenting his opponents as unrepresentative cultural elites, John Howard has been able to shift

the terrain of debate and the ways that it is possible to work within in it. Wedge politics, where opponents are dismissed as "chattering classes" – politically correct elites who "despise ordinary Australians" as discussed in Adams' article – is one example of restructuring the debate. The "culture" and "history wars" alluded to in Albrechtsen's article with its references to a "black armband approach" and the revision of the "truth" and of "history" is another. The concern here is not just that the words have changed. The changed logics that structure the debate transform the ways that conceptions about these events are understood and acted on. They alter the ways that individual identities are defined and their participation in the community ascribed. Most particularly, the reformulation of the notions that underlie the debate change the ways that people can speak about these issues. In these examples, the focus of the discussion – the asylum seeker, the Indigenous person – is almost completely silenced, both literally and conceptually, as even the words used in their defence take on new meaning.

The polarisation of the quintessential Australian who belongs and the other who does not is ably illustrated in another article from the day's newspaper in 2003. Under the heading "Diggers on Bagdad beat" is a picture entitled "Comrades: Senator Hill, left, and Mr Rumsfeld arrive for their meeting in Doha". The commentary explained that "Australian troops have taken a policing role in the streets of Bagdad after being caught up in a fire fight with Iraqi looters". The notion of "digger" harks back to the saga of the Australian common man, tough, resourceful, stoic, proudly participant in the action of World War I. The other, the Iraqi, is not only outside of Australia literally but also morally, as Iraqis are caught looting, presumably from their own community. The perception of Australia's entry on the world stage is encapsulated in the picture of the Australian senator side by side, a comrade, with the American, Mr Rumsfeld. It is a moment that captures an Australian dream of ourselves as new and powerful world players, even as it demonstrates our nightmares as we desperately try to pacify others who are never quite known and beyond our control.

4.2.4 Merging Boundaries

In an examination of even one day's newspaper, I found sites that explored the ways that identities were constituted within an Australian context. These newspaper articles were concerned with relationships between ethnic and racial groups. However, for the most part, the narrational field defined by these articles did not discuss these interactions directly. Rather they described a miscellany of other subjects, such as a fight between an English prime minister and a British Queen, a review of the Oxford English Dictionary, discussion of an Irish film, a pioneer's journal found in a grandson's home, the distribution of resources to Indigenous groups, new legislation concerning the sale of land to foreigners, the reduction of migration programmes, threats of Islamic terrorism. These debates discussed the ways that Australians have attempted to understand and deal with a number of practical and

conceptual concerns: ways to control land and resources, ways to define what the nation was and who belonged and did not belong to it, and ways to protect the nation from dangers within and outside itself. Contained within these arguments were matters of taken-for-granted conception explored from the viewpoint of narrational maps. Earlier articles discussed conceptions of an Australian–British identity made through its relationships on the inside with the Indigenous persons who had preceded them, and on the outside, against the essentially "other" person beyond its borders. More recently, and as the world has become increasingly globalised, the notion "Australian" seems less clear. Paradoxical trends that define cultural and national identity swing between melange and difference as, in a confusing and conflictual moment, everyone appears to be increasingly the same, even as some are increasingly other and frightening. Those others on the inside seem in need of "protection" even as they fight back and remain out of control. Others from the outside seem to disappear on the inside even as they continue to be different. Those who seem safely kept outside now merge dangerously and threaten us on the inside. The boundary between those who belong and those who do not breaks down completely, even as the borders between that which is inside and that which is outside seem even more stringently defined.

4.3 Snapshots: Policy Documents

4.3.1 1989

A second area of public debate is concerned with the policies and programmes that should be developed to deal with racial and ethnic relations. For the past four decades, these discussions have focused on policies and programmes of multiculturalism. This section examines the particular ways that these programmes and policies were discussed in Australia in each of the years 1989, 1999 and 2003 and interrogates the everyday and taken-for-granted assumptions that provide their normative logic.

In July 1989, in the midst of much emotion and media attention, Prime Minister Hawke released the *National Agenda for a Multicultural Australia*:

> The launch took place before about 700 invited guests. . .For Australia it was an historic occasion and for a great many people in the audience, it was a very moving experience.
>
> (*Highlights of the Launch: National Agenda for a Multicultural Australia*, July 26, 1989, Darling Harbour, Sydney, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, Office of Multicultural Affairs, p. 2)

It was the outcome of a year of national contemplation, festivity and (re)direction. It followed the bicentennial celebration of British settlement in Australia and was the culmination of "over two years of consultation, research and development" to plan Australia's future and multicultural identity. Set against this celebration of Anglo-Australian remembrances and emergent nationhood, the *Agenda* stated

as its purpose the need to develop policies and practices "to establish a truly multicultural agenda":

> In which all Australians, irrespective of background, are able to participate fully in national life; in which community resources are fairly available to all; and in which the skills and abilities of all Australians can be harnessed without barriers of discrimination and prejudice.
> (*Highlights of the Launch: National Agenda for a Multicultural Australia*, Darling Harbour, Sydney, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, Office of Multicultural Affairs, 1989, p. 2)

The Hawke government's agenda document contained a utopian vision that reflected both the excitement and the difficulties involved in formulating policies on two aspects of multiculturalism: the normative and the prescriptive. Normatively, multiculturalism defined the ethnic and cultural diversity that was understood as already part of contemporary Australia. Prescriptively, it defined this diversity as having three dimensions: the preservation "within carefully defined limits" of cultural identity; social justice for all Australians regardless of race, ethnicity, culture, gender or place of birth; and the maintenance, development and utilisation of the skills and talents of all Australians (Commonwealth of Australia, 2003). These basic principles were placed in relation to: an overriding and unifying commitment to Australia; acceptance of the basic structures and principles of Australian society; and the acceptance of the rights of others to freedom of expression.

The discussion paper that pre-dated the agenda statement, *Towards a National Agenda for a Multicultural Australia*, spelt out the thinking behind this agenda document. Australia, it was argued, had always been multicultural; ideologies advocating monoculturalism and Anglo-Australianism were something of the past; Australia's "ethnic mix" was always changing, "a fact of life" and an area where Australians could no longer "turn back the clock". It was an achievement, "a fact" which, according to the report, was in itself enormous. The real achievement of multiculturalism, the discussion paper maintained, was the management of diversity. Let there be no mistake, the discussion paper announced:

> Our achievement has been enormous. Australia has absorbed a huge number of people from a wide range of countries. They have brought different cultures. They practise different religions. A considerable number – some one in eight Australians today – speak a language other than English at home. Yet their integration into Australian society has been achieved with remarkably little social disruption.
> (*Towards a National Agenda for a Multicultural Australia*, Advisory Council on Multicultural Affairs, 1988, p. 2)

The crucial message of these agenda documents was that earlier strategies – monoculturalism, assimilation and then integration – had not worked. They did not manage diversity properly, encouraged unnatural conformities, and were costly both to Australian society and to individuals. The outcomes of these former programmes and policies were devastating: people were denied identity and self-esteem, a wedge was driven between children and their parents, and creativity stunted. Worse still, communities were turned inwards, ethnic separatism perpetuated and a category of second-class, not-quite-Australian Australians created. Multiculturalism, despite the Labor Party's earlier opposition, was seen as indicative of a new and exciting

era, whereby the exoticism and excitement of difference – different cultures, religions, languages and national origin – was evidenced and could be maintained and addressed with little social disruption. The differences maintained by these communities were seen as essential to the groups to which individuals belonged. The achievement of multiculturalism was that it provided a way that such different groups could be tolerated and which could allow them to take part in Australian society despite their differences. The scale of this achievement needed to be appreciated but nevertheless properly constrained. Although ethnic difference had been integrated into an Australian society, the threat of conflict was always there. The fact that conflict had not materialised was remarkable.

4.3.2 1999

Under the conservative leadership of the Liberal opposition leader John Howard, an alternative draft policy *One Australia – From Many Cultures and Many Nations* redefined the logic of this debate. The argument here, for a commitment to an Australian rather than a "multicultural" identity, took the Liberal Party through the 1990 and 1993 elections. The Liberal Party finally won office in 1996 and was determined to move away from multicultural policies, which it was argued were subverting Australian identity. John Howard's re-election in 2001, helped by the way that he was able to take the impetus away from rebel politician Pauline Hanson's "One Nation" political campaign, refocused the debate in a series of moves. These included restrictions on the settlement of refugees and immigrants in Australia, the redirection of negotiation with Australia's Indigenous peoples and the reconstruction of the debate about multiculturalism. Defeating multiculturalism was an immense ideological task involving the continuation of a "culture war", a "frontier conflict".

Nevertheless, towards the end of the 1990s, the Howard Government put out its own agenda for multiculturalism. Its contradictory nature was reflected in the press release to the working paper *Multicultural Australia: The Way Forward*:

> Some media reaction to the issues paper suggests that its context and purpose might not have been clearly understood. As its name indicates, the paper is meant to canvass a wide range of issues, not to reach final conclusions. It is not the report the Council is required to produce for the Government, but an essential step in the process of developing that report. It is an intentionally brief document written in layman's language so that it can be easily understood by experts and the general public alike.
>
> (Press release accompanying the release of *Multicultural Australia: The Way Forward*, Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs, National Multicultural Advisory Council, December 1997)

By 1997, Federal Government policy documents portrayed multiculturalism as a contentious vision, potentially divisive and supported by intellectuals, but not necessarily by ordinary Australians. Multicultural policy and practice *were* portrayed as threatening; something to "be uneasy about"; a destabilising force promoting an unacceptable separateness and divisiveness. Diversity, far from being exciting, now threatened "traditional" Australian values and, more particularly, altered the

manner in which these could be decided. Quintessentially Australian notions of cohesion, harmony and "a fair go" were understood as existing despite, rather than through, multiculturalism. The changed conception of these matters as private rather than public, and the shift of resources and market decisions away from governments, rendered structural change advocated by multicultural policy increasingly controversial.

The National Multicultural Advisory Council's second report in 1999 proclaimed support for multiculturalism even as it redirected its guiding principles:

> . . . a united and harmonious Australia, built on the foundations of our democracy, and developing its continually evolving nationhood by recognising, embracing, valuing and investing in its heritage and cultural diversity.
>
> (National Multicultural Advisory Council, 1999, p. 4)

The notion of cultural identity as essentially defined and unchanging, and as defined by group membership, was accompanied by another quite different and mutually opposed set of definitions. Now, individuals who shared a universal sameness could take on, or choose, additional ethnic and cultural differences. The notion that these choices were private was held alongside the somewhat contradictory notion that all people were the same. The principles of multicultural policy upheld the "civic duty" of all Australians to support the basic structures and principles of Australian society; the right, subject to the law, of all Australians to "cultural respect"; "social equity" in the way all Australians had the opportunity to contribute to Australian social, political and economic life, and the maximisation of the "productive diversity" of all Australians for the benefit of all Australians.

4.3.3 2003

In the lead up to the 2004 election, the notion of multiculturalism continued to be contentious, with Prime Minister John Howard and then Opposition Leader Mark Latham both rebutting the policy. Nevertheless, in 2003, the Howard Government put out another policy statement to signify the government's "strong and enduring" commitment to a multicultural policy. The policy, *Multicultural Australia: United in Diversity – Updating the 1999 New Agenda for Multicultural Australia: Strategic Directions for 2003–2006* (May 2003), reaffirmed the Government's support for, but also its suspicion of, multiculturalism.

Cultural identity, the choice to express and share cultural values, is placed in tension with a mutual obligation to the communal body of the nation:

> The freedom of all Australians to express and share their cultural values is dependent on their abiding by mutual civic obligations. All Australians are expected to have an abiding loyalty to Australia and its people, and to respect the basic structures and principles underwriting our democratic society. These are the constitution, Parliamentary democracy, freedom of speech and religion, English as the native language, the rule of law, acceptance and equality.
>
> (Australian multicultural policy, http.immi.gov.au/multicultural/Australian, p. 1 updated 23 March 2004)

Crucially, this paragraph speaks to "All Australians" and their right to "express and share their cultural values". The term "difference", which formally described the characteristics of group identities, now describes the ways that people choose to be different. The distinction between private and public difference is no longer stated. People take on certain values regardless of their other choices and affiliations. Cultural values describe particular qualities. The province of everyone, cultural values are to be expressed and shared, but are to be sublimated to the mutual civil obligations of nation. The commitment to the betterment of a common Australia now requires that choices about cultures be 'strategic'; have a 'specific emphasis on community harmony; and make a contribution to the common good'. The freedom of all Australians to express and share their cultural values is dependent on their commitment to mutual civic obligations, their loyalty to Australia and its people, and their respect for the basic structures and principles of a democratic society. (http.immi.gov.au/multicultural/Australian, p. 1, updated 23 March 2004).

Although notions of "difference" appear to be within the province of "all Australians", notions of all-of-us and the ways that one might be included as one-of-us continue to be problematic. This paradox becomes visible in discussions of the first of the agenda's strategic directions: that of the promotion of "community harmony". The following media release advertising "harmony day" explained that:

> "Harmony Day is part of the Commonwealth Government's Living in Harmony program, and has been growing strongly since it began in 1999," Mr Hardgrave said. Each year more businesses, community groups, government agencies and individuals participate in community events to mark the day. Some of Australia's largest companies, including the Ford Motor Company, AMP, Coca Cola Amatil, Cadbury Schweppes, Drake, Microsoft, McDonalds, Telstra and Woolworths are Harmony Day 2002 corporate partners. "These companies value the different backgrounds, languages and skills in their workforce and will use their networks to express support for Australian multiculturalism," Mr Hardgrave said. "These companies have recognised that productive diversity makes good business sense. . .[and] emphasise people from different heritages working together for common goals and drawing strength through diversity," the Minister said.

Within this latest incarnation of multicultural policy, Australia's commitment to harmony makes "good business sense", and provides "strength through diversity". Sponsorship for "harmony day" came from a number of companies, most of which could be considered as aligned to the United States rather than Australia. The slogan "You and me + Us" is reminiscent of a theme critics argue has been associated with Australian multiculturalism since its inception: what is "us" and "our community" consists of a self and an other which needs be made part-of-us. Those who are "us" are made up of individuals who are the same but who bring together the social, economic and cultural benefits of different backgrounds. Yet "community harmony", a panacea so easily found as people accept each other and treat each others as equals on harmony day, is threatened as it is:

> . . . tested as we face current challenges in strength and resilience. The terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 and 12 October 2002 and the consequences of these events, have had a significant impact on community relations in Australia. Innocent Australians are being wrongfully blamed by association, are being threatened or isolated, have been hurt or had property damaged. Australians now see themselves as directly threatened by terrorists.

> In this context, community harmony and social cohesion are pivotal elements in enabling Australia to contribute to the international effort to combat terrorism and in safeguarding Australian elements domestically. The Government believes firmly that Australian multicultural policy provides a framework of national unity and a coherent ethos for a diverse Australia at a time of conflict as well as in times of peace. National security begins with domestic community harmony.
>
> (Multicultural Australia: United in Diversity, pp. 7–8)

The international terrorist challenges domestic community harmony and social cohesion. The proposition that difference is insubstantial, chosen and easily accommodated by strategies as simple as a yearly "harmony day" is threatened by the proposition that some individuals may choose to cause harm to us. There are those others who might be terrorists and those others who choose not to be as "some terrorists claim religious sanction for their actions despite there being no religious or cultural basis for terrorism". Moreover, it is difficult to know the terrorist, of whom we have to be afraid, as such people cannot be simply identified as having one identity or another, or as being inside or outside the nation.

4.4 The State of Victoria

To understand the context of the research into schools, it is important to consider the ways these ideas were discussed in relation to education, and in the State of Victoria in particular. The 1986 State policy document "Education in, and for, a multicultural Victoria" argued that:

> Education in, and for, a multicultural society is built on two basic principles: it accepts that past and present diversity is a significant influence on Australia's development, and it demonstrates a commitment to fostering linguistic and cultural diversity within a cohesive society. A multicultural society is built on shared values including acknowledgment of the democratic process as the means of resolving conflict and acknowledgment of English as the major language of communication between all Australians. At the same time, such a society accepts that there are many different expressions of similar needs and values
>
> (Ministry of Education, Victoria, 1986, p. 6).

This document explored conceptual and practical ways to maintain a balance between a united and single culture and the acknowledgement, even celebration, of difference. Education had particular importance for multicultural policy and practice in that it "improves and values the out-of-school experiences, life-chances and options of all students" (Ministry of Education, Victoria, 1986, p. 6). In practice, multiculturalism had several strands: multicultural perspectives across the curriculum, Languages other than English (LOTE), English as a Second Language (ESL), parental involvement, access and equity, and cultural retention. Racism was not discussed in these documents.

Unlike Federal Government discussion papers published concurrently, the 1997 Victorian policy document, "Multicultural policy for Victorian schools", reaffirmed multicultural policy as being one that:

> . . . promotes respect by all cultures for all cultures, one that allows Australians the freedom to maintain and celebrate their languages and cultures within a socially cohesive framework of shared values, including respect for democratic processes and institutions, the rule of law and acknowledgment that English is the nation's common language. It respects the rights of people to form or join groups and to have targeted services provided as they are needed. It does not accept the sort of cultural separatism that confines minorities to ethno-specific structures.
>
> (Education Department, Victoria, 1997, p. 8)

Despite changes in ways that multiculturalism was understood and implemented in schools during these years, Victorian Government documents, unlike those in the Federal sphere, continued to define multicultural policies and practices as being about respect for difference (cultural difference and the provision of separate delivery structures), brought about through the maintenance of commonly agreed on "cohesive" and "shared" values. Nevertheless, these principles were changed in form. Notions of culture no longer pertained to essential difference but were contingent and dynamic. The accommodation of difference, understood in a 1986 document as being about accommodating "unity in diversity", straddles a number of dualisms: structural/cultural, public/private and welfare/performance-based economies. The right to form or join groups and to access dedicated services was in tense relation with strictures to prevent "the sort of cultural separatism that confined minorities to ethno-specific structures". The guidelines for practice in the 1997 document cited above continued to support programmes that encouraged: "proficiency in English", "competency in a language or languages other than English" and "in-depth knowledge and awareness of their own and other cultures". However, multicultural policy statements also demanded new proficiencies: "skills and understandings to interact competently in intercultural settings"; "an awareness of the reality of the global village and national independence in areas of trade, finance, labour, politics and communications" and "the development of international understanding and cooperation".

As in the Federal arena, Victorian public and policy debates about working with racial and ethnic relations are constructed as multiculturalism. Reference to racism is made only rarely in Australian policy documents and then in the most vague of terms. Earlier documents alluded to racism as a matter of misunderstanding and misinformation. Its mitigation was a matter of teaching better and more "critical" thinking, and about implementing multicultural programmes. In this 1986 document, for instance, it was explained that:

> There is much prejudice, misunderstanding and misinformation to be overcome. Schools and communities have a vital role to play in equipping students to think critically and to better participate in this multicultural society
>
> (Ministry of Education, 1986, p. 6).

In 1988, the possibility of racism was discussed only peripherally as prejudice, misunderstanding and misinformation. More recently, the possibility of racism was still mentioned only briefly. Its eradication remained a matter of good education and the implementation of proper multicultural policy. A Victorian Education document argued that:

> Schools play a very important role in the development of attitudes, values and critical thinking. The role of education in the implementation of a multicultural policy is to ensure that racism and prejudice do not develop to hinder an individual's participation and that all students are assisted to develop the understandings and skills that will enable them to achieve their full potential and to participate effectively and successfully in a multicultural society.
> (Education Department, Victoria, 1997, p. 8)

Fighting racism was now about ensuring that students were not hindered by prejudice and misunderstanding from achieving their full potential. The argument was made euphemistically. One curriculum document for combating racism, produced by the Victorian Government, suggested that care be taken "where units with negative titles such as 'racism' or 'stereotyping' are used", as if even speaking about racism would bring it into existence (Education, Victoria, 1997, p. 6). The taskforce set up in 1994 to discuss the possibility of an "anti-racism", and then a "counter-racism" policy statement for schools was dismantled at least three times. A statement was only finally released 7 years later under the thoroughly culturalised title: "Guidelines for managing cultural and linguistic diversity for schools". A website titled "Racism No Way: Anti-Racism Education for Australian Schools" ("www.racismnoway.com.au") produced in New South Wales but backed by the Victorian Education system (Department of Education and Training) demonstrated a similar preference for discussions about multicultural programmes and thought, and an avoidance of matters to do with racism and anti-racism. Even as the website unequivocally stated the need to fight racism it argued that:

> Understanding and valuing cultural diversity are the keys to countering racism. All individuals must feel free to explore the uniqueness of their culture and identity while developing understandings of the cultural diversity that exists in the world around them.
> (http://racismnoway.com.au/library/understanding/index-The.html, p. 1)

Once again, it was argued that the key to better ethnic relations comes through better education. However, good educational practice was not directed towards addressing misunderstanding. Understanding and valuing diversity itself was the key to better ethnic relations. The topic of racism was barely mentioned.

It is important to understand the particular trajectory public and policy debates about these relationships have taken in Australia. Australian multiculturalism is part of a top-down political strategy, a centrepiece of official government policy, implemented by those in power precisely to advance the inclusion of ethnic minorities within Australian culture. As such, Australian multiculturalism has become a crucial concept through which the national imagination is made manifest. Far more than a policy for dealing with immigrants, it is in effect a national cultural policy. It is a way of imagining the nation which is practised and argued not only officially, but also in the community.

Furthermore, discussions about Australian multiculturalism have failed to address debates which took place in Britain and the United States, particularly those exploring the difference between anti-racism and multicultural policies. Australian theorists in the 1980s and early 1990s debated the ways that culturalist views omitted the need for structuralist change, but they side-stepped any consideration about ways Australian society might be racially divided. Definitions of multiculturalism

specifically excluded discussion of the two major sites of Australian national identity: issues relating to migration and issues relating to Indigenous peoples. Other interventions by government into Australian race relations were similarly evasive. The *Racial Hatred Act* defines racism in terms of only the most basic human rights making the act of "distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference" of any person based on "race, colour, descent, national or ethnic origin" unlawful. More recent attempts to extend this legislation has had only minimal success federally and within the State of Victoria, in spite of the introduction of legislation against racial vilification in some states. More often, discussions about episodes of racism are avoided altogether or referred to only as problems to be addressed through more knowledgeable and more tolerant culturalism.

4.5 Concepts of Multiculturalism

The argument I am making has implications for discussions about race and ethnic relationships in Western contexts outside Australia. The experiences and practices that describe the day-to-to-day events of people's lives as they are viewed from the vantage points of narrational practice and the narrational fields that view the debates and conversations that structure and examine them need to be acknowledged and understood contingently. The taken-for-granted ways of understanding and behaving explored from the vantage point of narrational maps must also be delineated and interrogated. The contradictory and changing ways that multiculturalism has been understood and implemented have been often noted. Kincheloe and Steinberg's (1997) work in the United States significantly examined the different ideological foci that have shaped the field of discussion. They differentiate between conservative multiculturalism/monoculturalism (the belief in the superiority of Western White patriarchal culture and, by extension, the demand that such cultures remain central); liberal multiculturalism (the belief that individuals from diverse race, class and gender groups share a natural equality and a common humanity, so that all people may compete equally for resources in a capitalist economy); and pluralist multiculturalism (a subset of liberal pluralism whereby a focus on difference suggests that human diversity should be celebrated, and all groups should be provided with equal opportunity). Debates in Australia have shown similar changes in political motivation. Documents by the Howard Liberal governments (National Multicultural Advisory Council, 1999, p. 9) reflect the change of emphasis of Australian multiculturalism towards the first of these positions.

Similarly, the interpretations of what culture means in "multicultural" are manifold. Nira Yuval-Davis (1997) complained that notions of culture had come to mean "a general process of intellectual, spiritual and aesthetic development"; "the works and practices of intellectual and artistic ability" and "a particular way of life" of a people, period or group. The concept "multiculturalism" conflates these meanings and interweaves them with notions of nation and difference. In Australia, anthropological definitions of culture as unchanging, given and essential remain in much

common parlance. Much of the academic debate about multiculturalism, particularly during the 1980s and 1990s, took on neo-Marxist logic that defined culture as produced and reproduced within institutional practice. Most recently, post-modern theory has described culture as changing, fragmented and superficial. In Australia, it is a shift that has come to the attention of those arguing against multiculturalism and for a common and unequivocally Australian culture. Galligan and Roberts (2004, p. xvi), for instance, argue for new programmes that would bring about "good citizenship" and move away from the divisiveness and confusion they argue is contained within multicultural policies. Their call for a return to what is in many ways a new kind of assimilationist policy regards multiculturalism as undesirable, an "anti-heroic" way of thinking which prevents ordinary citizens from participating in an enriched, shared "civil" and "respectful" way of life.

Also, evident have been the different logics contained within discussions of multiculturalism. Frankenberg's (1993) analysis, sited in the United States, is particularly relevant here. Her argument is that multiculturalism contains a persistent logic structured by three different moments of identity-making: two of alterity (that of "essentialism" and that of "race cognisance"), and one of universalism (or as Frankenberg terms it "colour-blindness"). Her point is that moments of multiculturalism, occurring as they do within conditions of Whiteness, place people within and outside communities. The notion "colour-blind" is particularly fraught as everyone is described as being the same, even as some people are understood as being different and as needing to be made undifferentiated. Such thinking glosses over the reality that many community members are not treated the same way in the material world of their everyday lives. The most taken-for-granted places and spaces are racially defined in the day-to-day of contemporary societies, and languages of multiculturalism too often work to maintain this ironic contradiction as the person who is seen by "us" as being just like us, is nevertheless perceived as different. Hage (1998), examining Australian conditions through the frame of post-colonial theory, extended this analysis. He examined the notion whereby the ordinary cloth of the headscarf became the thing that needed to be interrogated and removed. Even as those of "us" who consider that colour, non-Whiteness, "woggie-ness" (Hage, 1998, p. 11) do not matter, they return to matter, as they remain caught within the essential power and race differences to which these understandings are tied.

The advent of globalisation has particularly influenced the ways that multiculturalism has been interpreted. Jameson's (1998) argument is that globalisation describes matters of communication, but its consequence has been to change the ways economics, cultures and identities are understood. The expansion of economic activity from the local and national to the global and the international, and the massive bureaucratisation of everyday life that has accompanied this development, change the ways those economies can be understood. Relationships within and between nation and states have become increasingly vulnerable as the organisation of labour, finance and technology is restructured and recontextualised. Traditional cultures have given way to new waves of cultural universalisms, as consumer and culture industries take root. (Featherstone, pp. 7–8) Normalised notions of working, but also of understanding and being part of the global economy, have become "McDonaldised".

This, along with new mechanisms for cultural transmission, the impact of English as an international language, and changed conditions of travel and cultural interchange, have resulted in what Appadurai (1996) described as the absolute re-imagining of the local and the global.

In Australia, the ontological base of tropes of multiculturalism have changed as, in an increasingly globalised world, these conversations intersect with notions of cosmopolitanism. At its simplest, cosmopolitanism is what happens as the flow on effect of market, financial and cultural interchange, as well as population movements, alter the definition of populations, the relationships within them and the ways these relationships are framed. Szerszynski and Urry (2002, p. 370) describe cosmopolitanism as the condition within the modern world where some people have the ability to travel extensively, corporally and imaginatively and virtually. People have the capacity to consume en-route, indulge their curiosity, take a risk, map out cultures and identities and interpret and appreciate the world of others. For Lu (2000, p. 40), these global changes call for more complex definitions that follow a "universalistic morality that eschews parochial, especially national limitations or prejudices". Like multiculturalism, she argues, cosmopolitan notions are contradictory, the individual difference of persons and groups understood in paradoxical relation to the common humanity of the many and "unable to account for deep difference" (Lu, 2000, p. 257). Such changes to the ways notions of identity and community identity are spoken about must be understood at an interpersonal and an institutional level and in relation to the strategic imperatives of globalisation (Mitchell 2003, p. 268). The neo-liberal agenda, with its focus on the reduction of public costs, market choice and accountability and the creation of "hierarchically conditioned, globally orientated state subjects", means that foci related to multicultural thought (cultural relativism, harmonious interchange, individual interchange and community solidarity) are no longer of immediate importance. Rather, "new strategic cosmopolitan" has become the "foot-soldier" for a renewed emphasis on national patriotism and international capitalism (Mitchell, 2003, p. 399). Schools have been part of this capitalist involvement within the globalisation process and have had to increasingly market their product. This has been reflected in a reshaping of conversations about communities and identities, as competition and accountability become crucial indicators of the academic enterprise.[19]

A more complex and multilayered view of cosmopolitanism accounts for the activities of individuals concerned with a modern world influenced by their changed ability to travel and to interact both virtually and materially. The lives of people in local communities across the globe are affected as demands of industry and capital interchange make new demands on labour, education and social behaviour. These altered conditions introduce new tensions and debates that transform conceptions of community relations, including debates about marketing, internationalisation and cultural interchange, but also about terrorism, refugees and illegal workers. In a

[19] See, for instance, Whitehead (2005), Matthews (2002), Singh (2001), Purdie (1999) and Dooley (2001).

globalised world, some people are mobile in ways unimaginable in past times. Others remain tied to place, caught in space and time in new and old ways; the non-traveller who in modern interchange is put in place, left in place, able to move only in certain ways (Bauman, 2004). At stake is the difficulty of finding a trope to discuss relationships in the midst of such confusion. For Beck (2002, p. 18), such understanding demands the additional perspective concerned with:

> ... the dialogic imagination. By this I mean the clash of cultures and rationalities within one's own life, the internalised other. The dialogic imagination corresponds to the coexistence of rival ways of life in the individual experience which makes it a matter of fate to compete, reflect, criticise, understand, combine contradictory certainties.

This co-existence negates a "monologic imagination" which excludes the otherness of the "other" (Beck, 2002, p. 19) for a perspective which includes the "otherness of the other".

The examination of multicultural policy and practice leads to the debates that define the way policy and practice relate to the discussion of race and ethnic relations. This has been particularly important in an Australian context where these notions have become the major focus of dialogue aimed at defining national and cultural identities and the relationships between them. Such notions also provide the rational and political impetus for the contention that top-down programmes and policies are necessary to provide strategies to manage these interactions. It is not only that conversations about race and ethnic relations but also about multicultural policies and practice take place. Discussions about concepts of multiculturalism redefine the ways we think about and work with these ideas. Conversations about these policies and programmes come to provide the language for the material and notional conception of ideas and programmes to do with race and ethnic relationships. They come to be the way that ideas about national identity and racial difference can be spoken about and sets them against that which cannot be said. They become "code words" that:

> ... are used to give selective and exclusory meaning to notions such as national identity, national spirit, citizenship and social political values in order to discuss and justify efforts to marginalise Australians of Asian, indigenous and some other migrant backgrounds.
>
> (Singh, 1998, p. 13)

The trope of multiculturalism has come to be the language through which discussions about ethnic and race relations – who those raced and ethnicised people are and how they can be dealt with – can be understood and spoken about. It has become the vernacular whereby those who understand themselves as Australian map out safe "home spaces" and block out the ambivalent strangeness of others. It provides, Sneja Gunew (1994) added, the language and ways of thinking which frame national imaginings, proscribe practice and maintain relationships between margin and centre as they are textualised within an Australian context. It provides the limit, the framing that sets out that which is intrinsic and that which is extrinsic to us and the definition of others: "the motley collection of outsiders" who enter the inside and yet remain on the outside to shadow the ways in which we understand ourselves.

Multiculturalism, Bauman (1999) contended, is often seen as a panacea for the problems diversity might bring; it embeds the notions of difference and the terms and conditions under which those who are different can belong. At its most definitive, the concept of multiculturalism defines cultural communities in totalising terms, which delineate some individuals as community members and some as essentially different and excluded. Even the notion of a multicultural society as one that tolerates cultural difference, the free flow of cultural propositions, and freedom of cultural choices, assumes the attribution of cultural identity as an entity separate from that of citizenship and community:

> Public debates about the ways and the means to alleviate the sorry state of local affairs focus on the "foreigners in our midst", on the best method of spotting them, rounding them up and deporting them to "where they've come from" while coming nowhere near the true source of the trouble
>
> (Bauman, 1999, p. 193).

These convoluted and paradoxical debates about the foreigners in our midst and the ways they can be dealt with are at issue here. The terms and conditions that make up these conversations about race and ethnic relations need to be made transparent. In Australia, this insight is demonstrated by the paradoxical situation whereby national identity is envisaged as constituted by universal, atomistic, self-possessed, equally empowered individuals who differ only by privately made choices to maintain experiences and practices marked as different. At the same time, groups are positioned, both conceptually and practically, as being primordially, essentially and inalienably different. Cahill (2001) explained that:

> The others who become "strangers in our midst" or "the intruders" into our ideal community, the mythical Anglo-Saxon Australia, are perceived as preventing the state from accomplishing its true task, namely to look after the well being of its "owners" (Wimmer 1997). Advocates of a multicultural society and a perceived divided society are thus *seen* as traitors to the common national cause of looking after Anglo-Australia.
>
> (Cahill, 2001, p. 51)

The problem is that in a fluid world where cultural identity appears as superficial, changing and chosen, the "other" is both real and almost completely elusive. Bauman's (2004) work encapsulates the contradictory relationship between recent trends towards globalisation and conceptions of identity and difference as race and ethnic relations. In recent times, people move between places as never before. At the same time, concepts of identity and the clear notions of who-they-are and who-we-are are increasingly blurred.

Discussions of Australian race and ethnic relations contain a noisy silence. Noisy arguments about multiculturalism and the attributes of ethnicity and culture are accompanied by a silence about the material and ontological terms and conditions through which these differences are understood and played out. Multiculturalism itself becomes a trope through which parameters of these differences and their consequences can be defined and maintained. Attempts to carry on these policy debates as a discussion of racism are not pursued and in some cases expressly forbidden. The conceptual and material domain of "multiculturalism" has become a place for debate

whereby conversations about who-we-are and who-we-are-not can take place, even as that of "racism" has come to *delineate* areas of concern which are difficult to discuss or cannot be discussed at all.

An uneasy relationship exists between the ways in which people are spoken about and understood as different and the ways in which these identities and differences are called into play. These discussions have taken place in relation to numerous and seemingly unrelated events and ideas, and particularly as policies and programmes of multiculturalism. The terms and conditions of these discussions are present in the form of a second logic, which defines ways that people can belong within the community. Inherent within multicultural policy and practice is a paradoxical interpretation of this logic, whereby those-who-are-different are made part-of-us, even as their status as different is reaffirmed. Formulations of the terms and conditions of difference within policies and programmes of multiculturalism have changed over recent decades. Nevertheless, the logic that structures multicultural debate marks out the ways that some people are defined as different and the ways they can be allowed to participate within the community. Moreover, even as multicultural debates, programmes and policies encode debates about race and ethnic relations, these debates are accompanied by a near silence. Debates about those who belonged and those who did not, who they were and how they could live in Australia took place, but in ways quite oblivious to the debates about race and ethnic relationships that formed their subtext. Debates about racism which broach the notion that some might be included within the community differently from others are ignored and contested. It is these silences, as well as the noisy discussion about multicultural ideas, policies and practices, which need to be researched and analysed.

Chapter 5
Changing Identities in a Local School

> *At the end of my patient reconstruction, I have before me a kind of lesser library made up of fragments, quotations, unfinished sentences, amputated stumps of books. The more I reread this list the more I am convinced it is the result of chance and it contains no message. But then the incomplete pages have accompanied me through all the life that has been left to me to live since then: I have often consulted them like an oracle, and I have almost had the impression that what I have written on these pages, which you will now read, unknown reader is only a canto, a figured hymn, an immense acrostic that says and repeats nothing but what those fragments have suggested to me, nor do I know whether thus far I have been speaking of them, or they have spoken through my mouth. But whatever of the two possibilities may be correct, the more I repeat to myself the story that has emerged from them, the less I manage to understand whether in it there is a design that goes beyond the natural sequence of the events and the times that connect them. And it is a hard thing for this old monk, on the threshold of death, not to know whether the letter he had written contains some hidden meaning, or more than one, or many, or none at all.*
>
> *(Eco, 1983, pp. 500–501)*

In his medieval detective story, *The Name of the Rose*, Umberto Eco explores medieval, modern and post-modern philosophic traditions and their relevance for describing day-to-day experiences and ideas. In the above segment, Eco's monk detective reconstructs the burnt remnants of pages retrieved from the ruins of a monastery library and the history that emerges from them. In a moment of dramatic irony, Eco's protagonist explores the possible histories that might be patterned from these fragments and their possible relation to a design which goes beyond the sequence of events, and gives them connection, form and meaning.

Like Eco's protagonist, I describe the incomplete and fragmented tales I collected over a decade. The several dozen tapes I gathered from the teachers and parents I interviewed contain myriad stories: the new principal and her exciting plans as she starts a new school; the teacher as he debates the most appropriate curriculum for a school which appears increasingly diverse; the parent and her plans for her child. These fragmented, debated, changing stories document the different ways that teachers and parents understand their identities, the place of the school as it seems safe or dangerous, and the haunting, barely contemplated tales

R. Arber, *Race, Ethnicity and Education in Globalised Times*,

that explore belonging within a community or remaining "other". Following from Strauss's (1998) suggestion, I work through these fragmented tales to record and code their patterns, and to ground my assumptions back within the field of the research. Like Eco's protagonist, I piece together a history from these fragmented tales that is well supported by my everyday experience and the stories I heard. Nevertheless, as I continue my project, I am concerned about the conversations that do not quite fit my analysis and suggest that I need to think about my work in other ways.

My purpose in these next three chapters is to retell the stories I collect and the histories I pattern from them and then, and following suggestions by Toni Morrison (1992) and Patti Lather (1991), reconsider these patterns problematically to disrupt their logic. Of increasing concern are the tense almost-silences that underlie the material and the stories that do not seem to fit. Examination of the data from the third vantage point of analysis, that of the narrational map, identifies other and taken-for-granted notions and ways of being that provide an underlying focus for the conversation.

This chapter describes my discussions with teachers and parents about their practices and experiences in schools, and my attempt to place them together and formulate generalities about the ways these practices are understood and dealt with. To do this, I examine the data through the first two vantage points described by my analytic frame: narrational practices and narrational fields.

5.1 1988

5.1.1 Changing Demographics

In 1988, the common understanding is that Southgate is "a traditional school" where things change little. Some teachers have been at the school for very long periods. Commitment to notions of communal and shared decision-making means the formation of large committees and complex and often unwieldy processes to allow each school member to have their say. Nevertheless, things are changing.[1] The huge increases in education funding set in place by the Whitlam Labor government

[1] For a description of the impact of these changes on Australian schools see, for example: Foster (1988), Cahill (1984) and Arber (1993b). Since the end of Second World War, Australia had sought large numbers of migrants as a means to either "populate or perish". The Whitlam Labor Government only finally introduced official policies for non-discriminatory immigration policy into Australia in 1972. Both the Fraser Liberal Government of 1975–1983 and the Hawke/Keating Labor Government's of 1983–1996 continued to encourage a significant and unprecedented increase in the number of non-British migrants allowed to enter the country. A large number of these immigrants had come to live in particular areas of Melbourne and Sydney so that by the time I carried out my pilot study of Melbourne schools. There were very few metropolitan schools that had not become increasingly cosmopolitan. The proximity of a migrant hostel near Southgate, particularly, meant that large numbers of recently arrived migrants had entered the school.

(1972–75) have been reduced by subsequent governments. Important funding programmes, such as the Disadvantaged Schools Funding Programme and the Participation and Equity Programme, have been dismantled. Teachers, particularly, are concerned as essential programmes are increasingly hard fought for or cut out altogether. School curricula also change frequently and schools with smaller enrolments are forced to amalgamate, or even worse, to close.

In particular, teachers and parents feel overwhelmed by demographic change. When I first came to the school in 1988, Vice Principal, Stephen Barrows, produced the statistics that define these changes:

> Looking at it by year levels the number of Greeks in junior levels is very low. The number of Greeks in senior levels is higher. It's just that the migrants that came here 20 years ago are moving through the school. The new migrants are a different racial group, so the Greeks have declined. The Italians, which I haven't even got listed here any more because they're down to 17, have also virtually disappeared. They're the migrants of the 60s. The blue one here, the Vietnamese, you can see have rocketed up to 167 I think it is this year and they're by far our largest racial group. But there's a stats difficulty here. The Chinese Vietnamese have been classified as Vietnamese this year and I think last year they were classified as Chinese. Chinese numbers appear to have dropped from 100 to ... so the Vietnamese increase might not be as great as it seems – but certainly Vietnamese is an area that is increasing. Chinese to the best of my knowledge would be about stable ... The European migrants continue to be a very small group. I think we've got 19 Turks; we've got 24 of all varieties of Yugoslavs; we've got 11 Poles – they're a small group but significant – they remain about level.
>
> Q. And the Spanish?
>
> A. The Spanish are rising rapidly. The last few months in particular most of the people coming have been Spanish. The ones you notice are the ones that arrive and move on pretty quickly [they] tend to be the Spanish people ... That's last year's broad language groups – shows 45 percent were Asian, 36 percent European, 5 percent central west Asian and 14 percent English. In fact the Asian group has increased and now is just under 50 percent. Not shown here is a significant group coming from Cook Islands, Timor Islands in the South Pacific that would make up a few percent of the school now.
>
> (Barrows, 1988, ll. pp. 103–148)

Following Government regulations, these statistics show the number of students present at the school by country of origin and language spoken in the home. By 1988, the number of students identified as Greek has fallen. The number of Italian students has become too small to be counted and has virtually disappeared. Student populations from Vietnam and other South-East Asian countries have risen markedly. European students remain but as "very small groups" including Turks, Yugoslavs and Poles. As well, the school has numbers of students of Spanish origin as well as from the Cook Islands and East Timor.

The language used to describe these figures conveys the trepidation felt about the immensity of the changes. Greeks and then Vietnamese are a different "racial group"; Italians have "virtually disappeared"; and the numbers of Vietnamese have "rocketed up". The Spanish are "the ones you notice", are "rising rapidly" and "move on pretty quickly". These statistics measure the number of new, different and other racial and migrant groups who suddenly arrive at the school. Europeans

are "a very small group". The listing, "Anglo-Australian" students, encodes as 14% those students who speak "English" as their first language at home.

It is Tom Paterson, parent and member of the school council, who best describes the effect of these changes. Now in his fifties, he reminisces about his arrival at Southgate 30 years ago and the changes that have taken place since then:

> I think when you've been in an area as you said – I come down here because of the rural atmosphere. There was tea tree. It was a beautiful underlay ... It was like an English scene. We'd go for a walk on a Sunday afternoon down a lane. It's a lane opposite just like an English lane. There was foxes. There was snakes. We had snakes in our back garden. We had foxes come and take our fowls. It was like a real country atmosphere. It was country down here ... You know all this sort of went on but it was great it was a lovely atmosphere. Now it's all gone to what it was.
>
> Q. So the population must have changed a lot too?
>
> A. It's just unbelievable ... I would say it's, how many years would it be, it's going back, I would say the last fifteen years ... It started from that point on. We've been here for thirty-one years. I would say half the time it started to change then. I think when the Enterprise hostel opened. When that opened that sort of created a lot of sorts of people living in this area. Probably the first place they come to in Australia. And then they looked around and I think you will find, you know, Southgate area particularly. It's amazing. Particularly when all the Asians came, they thought this is all right and they all started to buy a house or live around the area. And gradually it's even got bigger and bigger and now down in Southgate the actual population ....
>
> (Paterson, 1988, ll. pp. 12–53)

In 1988, Paterson remembers from 31 years ago an Eden, an English scene, a country aspect, a rural atmosphere, beautiful, idyllic. There were snakes and foxes in the garden, but they barely affected the lovely atmosphere, the sense of neighbourhood. It was a paradise, Paterson reminisces mournfully, which is gone, "all gone to what it was". Change came as something "amazing", came with the opening of the Enterprise migrant hostel. Change came when "all the Asians came", when "they thought this is alright" and "started to buy a house or live around the area". Since change came Southgate has "got even bigger and bigger".

There is a feeling amongst teachers and parents that change, particularly demographic change, is enormously significant; that it signals the arrival of people who are quite "other" and that since "all the Asians came" things would never be the same again. In my conversations with parents and teachers, we are preoccupied with expressions of shock; the sense of upheaval and confusion; the intimation that things are happening too fast and that there is no turning back. Many, like Tom Paterson, remembered earlier and Edenesque times when "it was an English scene", and "it was a lovely atmosphere". The focus of their astonishment is the changed situation when "it" started and when it changed. The source of their concern is closely linked to the changes that have occurred to "us" and "our" spaces as they were before "it" began. The first paragraph is concerned with a nostalgic hearthland where "we'd go for a walk on a Sunday afternoon down a lane", "like an English lane". The second is concerned with the manner that this Eden has changed when "they" came, when "all the Asians came".

5.1.2 Dealing with Demographic Change

My conversations about demographic change move inexorably to the programmes and practices put in place to deal with this transformation and the implications of these for pedagogies of multiculturalism. Notions of multiculturalism were the inspiration for my initial study in 1988 and monopolised my discussions with teachers and parents in both years of my field research. Multicultural ways of thinking were profoundly implicated in the way that ethnic and race relations were spoken about in Australia. I chose Southgate Secondary College as the site for my research, because it was well known as an example of best practice of multicultural policy and programmes. Nevertheless, my initial observations suggest that multicultural policy and practice is a changing, fiercely contested policy, strongly contested in its intention and inconsistent in its implementation. A focus for my reassessment of my research findings was that the controversial and paradoxical manner in which these policies and practices were implemented was difficult to explain.

In fact, teachers and parents argued that government policies were irrelevant and of little assistance to their work within the school. In 1988, multiculturalism was something "accepted by the Government but nothing much is done about it"; something Sandra Papandos, social sciences teacher, has once written a university paper about but which "wouldn't mean much to us, because they wouldn't be able to tell us much about that sort of thing". Multiculturalism in the school was "something of practice rather than theory"; "something concrete rather than abstract"; government policy contained "a hidden curriculum" with little relevance to the general life of the school.

My respondents devised principles for good practice at a time when ethnic demographics markedly changed. While they were sceptical of the multicultural programmes suggested by government documents, the teachers devised policies and practices that were nevertheless similar and included: Language other than English (LOTE), English as a Second Language (ESL), Access and Equity and multicultural perspectives across the curriculum. I consider these patterns as they relate to three of these kinds of narratives: the discussion of multicultural weeks and days; ESL and LOTE Programmes. These selected examples are not meant to produce a complete description and analysis of ways multiculturalism took place within a school. Even were such picture-making possible, this would not serve my purpose. Nor does it suggest that these policies were necessarily the most important, or the most innovative. The school's bilingual programme, which I do not discuss here, was both innovative and broad reaching and provides an important example of forward thinking in ways language teaching can take place in schools. My purpose is to understand these multicultural practices, which took up so much time during conversations with teachers and parents, and to trace out the understandings and materialities that underpinned them. They provide a wonderful example of best practice for a school caught in the midst of demographic change.

5.1.3 Multicultural Weeks

Teacher Amanda Winters, Coordinator of multicultural week in 1988, explains:

> It depends on what people really want at this stage. I think it is good to see that we have a lot of new staff on the Multicultural Committee, although I would like to see parents, other than the communication aides, who are working for the same school, on those things too. It takes time to do all that. I think there are plenty more things to be done, but everyone has got a different approach to things. I think there are plenty more things to be done. When there were divisions between people and people knew very little about each other, they got to know each other. Even if it was to do food, dancing, crafts.
>
> (Winters, 1988, pp. 17–18)

In 1988, programmes of multicultural weeks and days have a central place in the multicultural curriculum of Southgate Secondary College. A large multicultural committee organises annual events around particular themes. Dance groups are invited, parents and the cooking department help make food, and artists, academics and parents talk about ethnic arts and crafts and cultures. As time goes on, multicultural weeks become re-instituted as International and Australian weeks, and then as days. During the Australian week, teachers make damper and introduce Australian artists, Aboriginal weapons and bush dances.

Despite the success of these weeks and days, Amanda Winters speaks about the ambivalent support they receive. They are large-scale, well-coordinated events and a source of great pride to the school. A multicultural committee of 20 members is collected together. The Greek coordinator, the Indian science technician, and various communication aides provide hours of their time and culturally authentic material and activities. Nevertheless, teachers and parents are tired and doubtful whether they can continue to run these activities. Moreover, some teachers feel that these days are "a bit of a sham", "a bit hollow", "a bit like playing lip-service". Carl Davies, a humanities teacher, argues that multiculturalism should be about allowing "kids to be exposed to different cultures" and allowing school communities greater familiarity with the school, and these should be central, rather than one-off aspects of the school curriculum.

I become increasingly aware that a paradox underlies the discussion of these programmes. Amanda is proud because multicultural days do "what people really want". The notion of "people" changes throughout the passage. "Already we have a lot of new staff on the multicultural committee". Parents need to be brought in to help, because "everyone has a different approach to things". The concept of "everyone" is not quite the same as the people, who are working together as a committee. "Everyone" applies to the many different people within the school. The "people" referred to by Amanda Winter at the end of the paragraph cited above are a different people. They are the people in the school who are different from us, have divisions between them and who know "very little about each other". The rationale for multicultural weeks, Amanda explains, is defined by "plenty more things to be done" "when there were divisions between people". It is, so many respondents explain, about "breaking down the barriers", "being friends with them" and "bringing them together". Beneath these arguments, I note a second logic. Teachers and parents

are fearful that the others who have entered the school might remain divided both from each other and from the school community as a whole. Multicultural weeks are necessary to make other people more aware of each other and of the community. Such events also allow members of the community to view and understand them.

5.1.4 Teaching English

Barry Houston, Coordinator of the ESL programme at Southgate, explains some of the difficulties of teaching ESL without enough ESL teachers:

> Students from New Start ... cannot, yet, go to Branxton, because it's full. A few weeks ago, we got thirty-eight students here. They had no English and we had to make a course for them. I put twenty-two of them into a course of thirty periods of their own. We had extra teachers. One was revolving and one was having a baby. They were not ESL teachers. I have spent most of the year just working it out. A few ESL teachers take them for a period here and there. Had them doing History, Geography, Home Eco, Sport, etc. Probably next term they will go in. They are really marking time. The teachers taking them have no ESL experience.
>
> (Houston, 1988, pp. 12–13)

The major programming accomplishment of the school is the English programme for new arrivals. With the reopening of the New Start migrant hostel, the number of new arrivals rises steadily. The number of students at Southgate waiting to get into the 6-month intensive English programme provided for by government language policy doubles to 65, putting the enrolment of the school up to 843 pupils. Submissions have been made to the ministry to fund the school as a language centre. Meanwhile, the school has hired four extended emergency teachers to teach newly arrived students until they can be accommodated in an official English language centre nearby.

Teachers and parents feel that they must work to enable students who lack the most essential linguistic and often socio-cultural skills to access their school system. Their debates about these programmes deal with concepts of social justice, the mainstreaming of government services and the professionalism of ESL teachers. Susan Siddons, the English coordinator, advocates that "ESL kids" "be mainstreamed as much as possible and English and ESL be brought closer together". However, this cannot be done until they "have some kind of capability". Barry Houston, Coordinator of the ESL programme, maintains that students would learn better if they mixed more with local students and got a better understanding of spoken English. He is concerned that programmes that withdraw students from mainstream classes leave some students buried in "black-holes" and separate them from the school community "for the rest of their school life".

The concerns voiced by Houston reflect the dilemma described by most parents and teachers. "We got thirty-eight students." "They had no English." "We had to make a course for them." The concern for teachers (and for parents) is to find a way to help the students who arrive into the school take up the language and cultural understanding they need to work within the school. The problem is contained in

the dualism "them" and "we", in the challenge – "they came" – "what do we do". The rest of the above paragraph describes Barry's attempt to resolve this quandary, to regain control as he "spent most of the rest of the year just working it out". His deliberations explore the ways he can work with them: how the relationship with them should be negotiated by these services, and with what consequences.

5.1.5 Teaching Languages Other than English

Carl Davies describes the difficulties teacher Mary Wu faced when she tried to introduce Chinese LOTE into the school:

> We discussed it a number of times at the curriculum committee . . . There was a fair degree of opposition to it . . . In the first place because it was decided that we could be opening a bit of a Pandora's box. Once you decide to introduce something like Chinese you might have to introduce all the other Indo-Chinese languages. But it would be difficult to assess the kids because they have come into the programme with different backgrounds. There are three different styles of speaking and writing Chinese . . . Would there be anybody capable of taking it over? Would other subjects lose out because there was a new subject being introduced? So there were some definite problems. But the opposition became quite entrenched and I think in Mary's eyes and in the eyes of a couple of other people on the committee it almost bordered on racism. I don't know whether it actually is or was or not, but it struck us as odd that there should be such trenchant opposition to this particular subject when there was a crying need for it in the school – 40 or 50 percent of the kids in our school.
>
> (Davies, 1988, p. 1)

The introduction of languages into a school is a political process. Until recently, Southgate had provided Italian, French, German and Latin language teaching. Greek was introduced in 1975 on the suggestion of Mr Kalidis, a Greek teacher on the staff. Mr Greg, the Principal at the time, was supportive. Greek language teaching was introduced at all levels of the school. By 1988, Mr Kalidis is about to retire. Now there are four or five other teachers who can teach Greek, and Greek language classes are entrenched at every level of the school.

After discussions with parents, Mary Wu, a Chinese-speaking teacher at the school, introduced Chinese language as a middle-school elective for both beginner- and non-beginner-level students. Attempts to get funding for the programme and to extend this teaching into the senior years of the school meet with resistance. For Helen Brown and Susan Siddons, such language debates are only the beginning of "a problem". They fear that the school is about to "have a whole plethora of languages". This is not only a problem of immediate practicalities – "something else is going to have to go" – but also as Helen Brown argues something subversive, divisive and unfair. Besides this, they argue, language learning is a private concern and not something which should be paid for by Government at public schools. Moreover, Siddons and Brown argue that students should be "learning to survive in our society and to get through our education system", not learning other languages. Parents, on the other hand, are "pretty disappointed" that more languages are not provided at the school. They send their children to language schools, often at great expense.

The issue of Languages Other Than English (LOTE) provision is fiercely contested. The provision of public rather than private services, the practicalities of implementing school curricula for small numbers of students and the difficulty of accessing different cultural and linguistic systems reflect seemingly different concerns. A closer analysis of these debates suggests a paradoxical logic. In the introductory quotation to this section, Carl Davies watches the debate between Mary Wu and other school members. Although he is sympathetic to Wu's suggestion to introduce other languages into the school, he slips easily between different conceptions of who "we" are and as such who belongs and who does not. Although his initial discussion includes Wu, as we see from the comment "we discussed a number of times" he nevertheless believes that "we could be opening a bit of a Pandora's box" were we to expand the number of languages taught at the school. "We" is now someone different from Mary. Rather, "we" infers membership of a community who can objectively decide whether or not other languages should be implemented. From this vantage point, Davies muses at the way Wu's overtures might be understood within the school. Davies remains unsure whether these difficulties are matters of race politics. His support for Wu at the end of his quote, as the effect of the debate "struck us", suggests that the subject is not for us but is being introduced only for those "40–50 percent of the kids in our school".

At the end of 1998, teachers particularly, but also parents, speak to me about programmes and policies of multiculturalism. Teachers and parents argue about public and private responsibility for educational provision, social justice concerns and the professional demands made on teachers. In particular, they are concerned about how they can best work with large numbers of students with very different linguistic and socio-cultural skills. They debate curriculum measures to enable students who have recently arrived into their community to access essential language skills, to learn about each other and to maintain their language. Parents and teachers are supportive of multicultural policies and practices, but are often concerned about their definition and reluctant to put them into action. Other discussions focus on the ways that teachers and parents deal with the arrival of students coming from outside their community. These debates differentiate between those who are one-of-them and those who are one-of-us. They negotiate the ways that are best to work with "them". Multicultural days are concerned with breaking down the barriers between "them", and helping them to learn about us and each other. ESL classes are about coping with large numbers of students who cannot access our system and about preventing them from forming separate groups. LOTE is about how and whether to allow students to preserve their language and culture, without "opening a Pandora's box" to their demands.

5.1.6 Experiencing it

Narratives about multicultural policy and practice pervade the conversations I have with my respondents and provide structures that pattern my analysis. The interpretation of these data provides a description of a school community working

well together to provide good pedagogy for their students in times of immense demographic and then global change. Nevertheless, a few stories suggest that this interpretation of the data is insufficient and that some of my respondents experience belonging within the community differently from others. When I ask teachers and parents directly how ethnic relations take place in the school, every one of my respondents emphasises that ethnic relations at the school are good. Further, they stress that there is no racism at the school, in part because of the programmes and policies of multiculturalism they have put in place. Racism is not a word that is often used and when it is used its meaning is strongly contested. The story of my entry into the school demonstrates how difficult it was to talk about these conceptions in either year of my research project.

In 1988, I asked questions about race and ethnic relations only in the most general of terms. I would ask "how students got along" or whether ethnic relations were good at the school. I only asked teachers and parents who identified themselves as other than Anglo-Australian whether they faced racism at the school. In reply, teachers and parents argued that racism is something that they "haven't noticed", something about which they "haven't had any problems" as they "get along together wonderfully". There has been, as Amanda Winters points out, racism in the past, and racist acts perpetuated by others outside the school, but at this time most tell me, "they get along wonderfully", "there's no problem". "There are good and bad Australians", Tom Paterson says. "They are nice people. It's really nice walking around and speaking to them", Sally Williams tells me. "I have taught them. I have found out how nice they are – at least most of them", Bill Kelly explains. "I don't have any prejudice", Kelly tells me. "Racial comments don't happen at the school", Williams argues. It was this conversation with Sally Williams that suggests the complex logic that underpins these conversations:

> But the only sort of racial comments we've ever had was we went to this school camp and we came back and the train stopped at Warrigal and a girl got on and she shoved her bag in the face of one of the students and I got really upset and I said, "Do you mind?" "Move on." "Get away from these students" and the other kids sort of sobbing a bit and they said, "We wish we were back at Southgate. Everyone accepts us there we're just normal."
>
> Q. So racism came from someone outside the school?
>
> A. That's the only time I'd ever heard it. When we'd go with our kids because our badminton and volleyball are really great and I've got sucked in to doing table tennis a couple of times . . . The kids absolutely go like this when they hear . . . but we never hear anything and the kids don't seem to feel it. They don't sense it at all which is good.
>
> Q. But you sense it from outside.
>
> (Williams, 1988, ll. pp. 598–612)

Beneath the conversations I have with teachers and parents, I find subtexts that suggest that some community members are included differently from others. Here Williams discusses the incidence of "racial comments". However, even as she argues that these are dialogues to be understood on the outside, conceptions of inside and outside, belonging and not belonging, change. At the beginning of my discussion with Williams, the community includes both Williams and her students – as "we" travel back together from school camp. She differentiates her school from those outside the school who do not know how to behave with her students. The condition

"we" changes as the passage continues. These students are the students who belong to the school community. They are "our" students and there is no racism at the school. In a sense, Williams owns these students and ensures that nothing happens to them. Her words are an acknowledgement that some are other and do not belong. Yet even as Williams (as I do) reaffirms her position with her students, the actual relation is barely stated. "The kids ... don't sense it at all" Sally Williams says. "But you sense it from outside", I reply. The definition of *it* is not stated. It is the unmentionable thing that does not happen, that the kids "don't feel" but which nevertheless can be seen and sensed. It is the racism which she has witnessed only once but which we nevertheless note from the outside.

Other assertions in my discussions with teachers and parents disturb me. My respondents are concerned that students might remain separate from each other or dislike each other. "I hear comments about Asian ghettos and so forth" and I "dislike it intensely" when students have brought parental prejudices out with them. There are "so many different nationalities", "different varieties", their "own groups", "different groups" and "other groups", different varieties of ethnic children and it is surprising that there are not more problems between them. The first mixing of people came when the Asians and the South Americans were forced together in class and many of them found it very difficult, "because they didn't like each other", Amanda Winters explains. "Kids don't mix", there is very little mixing in the lower levels, but "in Year 12 it is very good and they mix in a very nice way", Barry Houston tells me. "I don't think that human beings are tolerant". "I think that there is always going to be non-acceptance", Susan Siddons argues. I can understand that sometimes "there is a significant amount of prejudice", Carl Davies continues, "on account of the way these people live". The "Italian boy associating with the Greek or the Australian girl", the "differently racially mixed" boy friends and girl friends are sources of immense speculation. Amanda Winters continues expressing her surprise that so many students of different groups are friends. The presence of an Asian and White couple is to her almost inexplicable:

> I think there is a lot of work to be done on this still. I am sure that there are old prejudices to some extent that people have come and become friends where you wouldn't have thought it possible and of course I don't know how you would interpret this but you do see the Asian boys walking round the school with their white girlfriends and I am not quite sure what that means but there is a lot of that at the moment.
>
> (Winters, 1988 p. 16)

Amanda's concern about her students' relationships brings to mind the almost unmentionable condition of miscegenation. The others, those "people" who "have come", are problematic in their relationships with each other and with the community. The task of making sure that these relationships work out falls on Winter's shoulders. The consequences of the task are unpredictable and strange. The work is still "to be done on this", she tells me. "I don't know how you would interpret this"; "there is a lot of that at the moment". The meaning of "this" or "that" remains almost unspoken. It crosses sexual and racially defined conceptions, which are ancient "prejudices" but are also deeply held, taken-for-granted and she is "not quite sure what that means".

5.1.7 Disruptive Fragments

Besides these discussions, there are other and fragmented tales that suggest that some teachers and parents find the community of the school a less comfortable place than others. Integral within these stories are other and less frequently voiced debates about whether racism happens, and indeed whether racism has happened to them. I retell four of these narratives.

Aruna—

> Here, they are very nice, but actually the school has improved a lot. There is good and bad actually. In the beginning school is very good. When I started here in '73 I felt that school is just like my home. I used to enjoy working. I can do anything for this school. Then after a couple of years there are new people coming in. This changed a little bit you know. And they showed a little bit of feelings, which hurt me a little bit. But I ignored somehow you know. Then I feel fed up. Why should I do things, you know, all this time I thought it is my home. Then I just do what I should and ignore other things . . . They had a different way of talking, a different way of treating. It hurt me . . . I hold a lot of things in my heart. Now things have changed. I can openly talk but then I couldn't. I suffered a lot actually. I suffered and my children suffered and my husband suffered for all those things, which I couldn't express to anybody. Somehow I talked and things got better . . . People started to treat me nice afterwards. I think the answer is that you be nice no matter what. You be nice to them and one day they realise. I think that really worked actually . . . the people who treated me badly. Somehow things changed which is nice actually . . . So now I am happy. People are very good and very friendly now.
>
> (Sandra, 1988, ll. pp. 268–282)

Trained as a teacher in India, Aruna Sandra works in the school as an aide. Throughout her story, Aruna Sandra describes both "good and bad" experiences. In 1988, she tells me that "here they are very nice", "the school has improved a lot". Sandra cannot take niceness for granted. When she arrived, the school was "very good". However, this changed when new people came into the school. At times, "they showed a little bit of feelings which hurt me a little bit". "They had a different way of talking, a different way of treating, it hurt me". After she became more confident and went out of her way to talk about her feelings, people "started to treat me nice". Certainly, "People are very good and very friendly now." Moreover, she is better able to take control in the relationship, "Now things have changed", now "I can openly talk but then I couldn't".

Sandra describes a relationship where there is always the potential that people may or may not treat her badly. There are nice people and people who are not nice, good people and bad people, people who treat one well and people who make things difficult and treat one badly. Her defence is to be nice to everyone regardless of how they treat her. Despite her analysis of her condition, the relationship itself remains unnamed. "Things" have changed, she tells me. "Somehow things changed which is nice actually."

Linda—

> Well I would say that everywhere you will find nice people and rude people everywhere, as long as you can take it and manage and face it. If you take it as serious matter then you will upset yourself very much but if you take it, that is like people everywhere and take it . . . You will think that there are more important things to do . . . Oh you wouldn't believe,

> some others say, some people perhaps because they were born here. Luckily they have no experience about how to become a foreign person and they don't know, the foreign person how they feel in a different country. They have to accept such a lot of different cultural things and you know, to fight for it too and I can say that sometimes they even look down at us. But the first few years I was really depressed about that but now once you get used to it then you think, you think about why we have to look down ourselves. I mean if you look down yourself, no-one else can put you up . . . So I sometimes said to myself, I don't put down myself, I'm proud of myself . . . I mean I don't belong to a particular teachers' group but I don't mind, but I don't care much about that. As long as you have got your own group of people who understand and the people who like you – You can rely on them . . . You know sometimes they use you as a slave – a servant.
>
> (Chan, 1988, ll. pp. 412–429)

Linda Chan, a communication aide, is used to the idea that she is seen as different within the school. It is difficult as some people "have no experience about how to become a foreign person and they don't know . . . how they feel in a different country". You have to "accept such a lot of different cultural things" and "fight for it too". You "don't mind" that you "don't belong to a particular teachers group" as long as "you have your own group of people who understand and the people who like you". What Chan finds difficult are the people who do not like her. Like Sandra, she worries about whether people are "nice" or "rude". These other people say things. They use you like "a slave – a servant". Chan tries not to let these things upset her because "If you take it as serious matter then you will upset yourself very much." Instead, she insists on reasserting control. "As long as you can take it and manage and face it", she tells me, they cannot put her down. "I don't put down myself", she tells us. "I am proud of myself." Once again, the nature of the relation itself, the thing that happens, remains unspecified as "it" – something that you can or cannot take, you can fight, get depressed about or you can get used to. "Everywhere – you will find nice people and rude people – everywhere", "As long as you can take it and manage and face it".

> Peter—
>
> I think this year, one student said . . . Look Mr Lee are you picking on me, implying that I'm a racist or something. I said I'm not picking on you. I pick on any student that's out of uniform. He tried to complain but they know that I have been fairly just. The fact is that you have to be seen to be fair to all groups. Because one thing I notice in this sort of school is that you can't be unfair because you got that racial problem straight away – and being non-Anglo-Saxon myself is another. Just because I'm Asian it's believed I can work better. That's absolutely wrong. In fact I am perceived more by every group to see how I go.
>
> Q. Why do you think that is?
>
> A. Because firstly are you favouring them or the Asians will think that gee you might be favouring the whites more than you do us. I don't think I get an easier time because I'm Asian. I get an equally difficult time, but the things . . . I've got one philosophy and that's it. I think because I can manage that I can be seen to be just and all the groups give me equal respect . . . I think it goes, for either, the colleagues looks upon you as such because they are different and so far they can see that.
>
> Q. So you're always representative.
>
> A. I don't like to be seen as such. There are a lot of things to be done. Things to be done by somebody.
>
> Q. Have you got time perhaps to tell me a bit what . . . ?
>
> A. As a colleague.

Q. As being representative Asian?

A. I don't see it as that. That's the first thing. If you think about that I'll say it's a wrong concept. There is one staff member that said, "You're year 11 Coordinator because there are a lot of Asians here" . . . Yes that is a very nasty thing to say – not talking about ability but skin colour – I object to that. I did not mention that to her. I was so shocked.

Q. Because I mean that implies that you would've never done it otherwise.

A. But again though I know everyone knows it is ability. Regardless of what everyone says, whether they've been fair. I think you are judged on your performance, not on what comes before, regardless of what else is the performance, which everyone can see, not what is in the interviews, so I'm not worried about it. I know where I stand. That's not a very nice thing to say but in the person's mind, I think the person is being sincere, but the person I don't respect that much. Let's put it this way. In any profession you still have a normal distribution of people – the good, the bad, the darn right lazy and the hopeless.

(Lee, 1988, ll. pp. 280–309)

Peter Lee is a successful teacher within the school. He has it in his power to behave in different ways towards his students. Nevertheless, he finds this ability already complicated, as his behaviour is not judged in the same way as that of other teachers. He is not quite one of "them". He cannot but describe himself as "non Anglo-Saxon". No matter what he does, he is seen as "favouring the Whites", or favouring "Asians". The frustration for Lee is that he feels that everyone should be the same. However, he is constantly made to feel as if he is somehow different and does not properly belong within the community. The repercussions of this are unpredictable: his students complain that he sides against them because he is Asian; teachers suggest that he is promoted because of his Asian background and not because of his actual merit. Yet, when I suggest that he is being made into a "representative Asian", he emphasises that it is not that: "it" is a "wrong concept". Even as Lee argues that race is immaterial, that all people are the same and should be judged on their merits, he finds himself made something other. His final comment also speaks of people as good and bad. However, unlike Sandra and Chan, these discussions are not used to explain ways people behave towards him. Peter Lee has the power to respect others.

The ability of Lee and myself to name the terms of the relationship about which we speak is particularly complicated here. On the one hand, Lee is quite clearly discussing matters of race. He speaks of "that racial problem", of not favouring one race rather than another, and of understanding all people as the same. Nevertheless, he explains that he is constantly understood as different because he is Asian and "non Anglo-Saxon". The knowledge that he is treated differently is placed against a denial of its reality. When his colleague suggests that he might have been promoted because of his colour, he is doubly shocked. First that she should suggest that he had not properly deserved his promotion. Second because the relational dualism (Asian/Anglo-Saxon), which he argues is non-existent, is constantly made manifest.

Kim—

Q. What about at the school? Have some of the other students been racist at the school?

A. Not really.

Q. The students are usually friendly at the school – and what about the teachers? Are the teachers friendly to the parents?

> A. Most of the teachers are very nice they're nice to everyone. I don't know about other schools but this school is.
>
> (Kim, 1988, ll. pp. 205–210)

If I find only fragments of data about racism in my conversations with teachers and professional staff, I have collected almost no material from parents. Parents often answer such questions in monosyllables and do not elaborate further. I ask questions and do not follow through answers. Ng Wu Kim's son interprets my conversation for his father. Even as the words are out of my mouth, he is telling them to his mother. Things happen, I am told. At work, Europeans are treated differently from Asians. My questions about the school, however, are met with a brief "not really". Students are "not really" racist at the school. "Most" of the teachers are "very nice". As I look back in time at this interview with Kim, I find myself coming up against the inconclusiveness of the words "not really".

At the end of 1988, my analysis of the data is, for the most part, concerned with the description and analysis of multicultural policies and the ways that they have been implemented within the school. Discussions with teachers and parents attest to the effectiveness of these policies and the constitution of good ethnic and race relationships at the school. Nevertheless, further analysis suggests that this reading of the data is not sufficient. Teachers and parents explain that relationships are good at the school even as they describe some people as being included differently from others in the community. A few of my respondents explain similarly that they sometimes feel excluded from the community. Integral to these discussions is the allusive and mysterious "it" that needs to be analysed further. "It" is something that some need to "take" and "manage and face", the "things" that have changed, a "wrong concept". It is the understandings that underpin the answer "not really" that need to be explored further.

5.2 1998

5.2.1 Changing Demographics

In 1998, schools are reeling under the impact of the organisational, technological, curricular and social changes begun a decade before.[2] New policy documents such as the 1992 document, *Schools of the Future*, discuss ways schools are to incorporate and run as businesses. Schools are given global budgets and expected to live within their means. Funding arrangements continue to frame ways teachers can run programmes. Now they become an essential component of the decision-making process. Far from being a community affair, administration and the delegation of responsibility are now matters of accountability and finance. Foundational notions have become changed and entrenched; they are spoken about as globalisation, com-

[2] For a discussion of these changes as they affected schools in 1998 see, for instance, Marginson (1997) and Taylor, Rizvi, Lingard, and Henry (1997).

modification, entrepreneurship, fiscal responsibility, educational utility. To survive financially, schools need to sell themselves as a product bought not only in Australia but overseas as well.

Although the numbers of international students within the school are small, the different needs of these students and their changed requirements have altered the ways teachers understand their work and their relationships with parents and students. Technologies have also changed. Worlds of communication, ways of travelling, pedagogy and production seem to have suddenly taken giant leaps forward. Teachers and students struggle with computer technologies. Parents seek to provide their children with computers, the Victorian Government promises to place all teachers "online" and classrooms are provided with computers and word processing facilities. At Southgate Secondary College, forward-thinking projects to use these technologies are put into place, such as school-based web pages and internet connections with sister schools overseas.

Finally, changes to school curriculum and pedagogy have taken place – the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE), the Curriculum and Standards Framework (CSF) documents – announced in 1988, are firmly in place. Although many teachers and parents are excited by these changes, others feel that educational levels are undermined by these new pedagogic measures. Further, many are concerned by the lack of priority given to English grammar and spelling, and the introduction of a process approach used to teach writing. The move to teach other, less traditional academic subjects such as drama, physical education and health sciences, and the increased emphasis on Vocational Education Training (VET), are controversial issues within the school.

Teachers and parents continue to be concerned about demographic change. Immigration patterns have changed. When I ask Stephen Barrows, who remains at the school as Vice Principal, to describe the school population, he explains:

> A. An increase, in numbers, I would guess. Actually that there has been an increase in the numbers being born in Australia or their parents were born in Australia . . .
>
> Q. Second generation. What about the kinds of places that they were coming from?
>
> A. Well that's, pretty much, a big reflection of the changes to the immigration . . . For a while there, we had very large numbers of Chinese and Vietnamese and those groups are, quickly, declining in number. We're getting more African, Islander and a small amount of refugees. That's all. The Asian, Vietnamese, Chinese group are, definitely, in decline.
>
> Q. Yes. Because they're going to Green Hills or because they're moving out of the area?
>
> A. That's hard to know, probably because there's not so many coming into the area, because they were the last ones to leave the migrant hostel. That's been the big change and nowadays, migrants go wherever they can have a sponsor. So they're more . . . I guess if you looked at migration over the years and see . . . these migrants is less than it used to be. So Southgate's really just reflecting the demography of immigration. I don't know the current, largest groups of migrants . . . Looking at Southgate, you would assume a larger number from Africa and the Pacific Island groups.
>
> (Barrows, 1998, ll. pp. 1–21)

The classifications for ethnic groups that define difference remain similar to those used earlier and focus on country of origin and language spoken in the home. The number of students born in Australia, or whose parents were born in Australia, has

increased. Now the school is receiving larger numbers of students from the Pacific Islands and from Africa. The condition described by these statistics is in some ways changed. First, the groups measured by these figures are no longer necessarily made absolutely different by race or by migration. These classifications seem more slippery as students are born inside and outside Australia. Second, teachers and parents use more measured terms to describe these figures. There are no longer "large numbers" of Chinese and Vietnamese; their numbers are "in decline". The "largest groups" are from Africa and the Pacific Islands. Descriptors used a decade ago – they "rocketed up", "came out of the blue", "are rising rapidly" – now take on more controlled proportions as "we had very large numbers", "we're getting more".

The altered manner in which demographic change is discussed is illustrated in the following interview segment. Bill Kelly, now a senior teacher at the school, explains that:

> It's one of the hard things, I think always to ... When you're in the school, even if it's twenty years, it just doesn't seem like twenty years and because the change doesn't happen too much as a rapid change. It's a gradual change over periods of time ... One of the things that we used to have and don't have any more is, the number of new arrivals, kids that were straight from, as in, they'd come in as refugees and more or less come into the classroom that, usually, were fairly skilled and perhaps, a little bit older. Now we seem to have a lot more kids of an Asian background. They were either, born in Australia, worked their way through the Australian system. It seems to me now that, perhaps, that ambition that those kids had had earlier on has been diluted.
>
> (Kelly, 1988, ll. pp. 1–26)

For Kelly, the concept of change no longer seems problematic. Nothing much seems to have happened over the past 20 years. What has changed remains the presence of others within a community. However, the explication of this logic has changed. In 1988, teachers wondered how they could cope with the number of newly arrived students coming into the classroom. Now Kelly remembers these students as unusually skilled and hardworking and is dismayed at ways that these qualities have become "diluted". Further, he is no longer bewildered by these changes. In 1988, "change came" when "the Asians came". Now, Kelly is nonchalant about these changed demographic patterns. "We used to have ... new arrivals" he tells me. "Now we seem to have a lot more kids of an Asian background". These different groups no longer change community spaces in uncontrolled ways. "They" came here and now "we have ... kids of an Asian background", and "they ... (have) worked their way through the Australian system".

Gillian Mulhauser was not at the school when I came to the school 10 years ago. Her comments explore this second, more controlled notion of change:

> We used to get, like 30 would come in at the beginning of every term, if not more and there'd be people on waiting lists and we'd be, they'd be going through the language centre and we'd be pushing them through trying to get them into the school, so the school had heaps and heaps of new arrivals. The language centre had the new arrivals and a lot of the students were older too. There were a lot more refugees ... and older ones. You know ones that had missed out on education completely. When I came in 1989 the Salvadorans were just coming so there were heaps of those here, later on the Chinese from the Tiananmen Square incident ... I think for a time we didn't get a lot of Cambodians but then they

> allowed them too, so we got a whole lot of Cambodians ... coming in and, I suppose a lot of family reunions. Now we've got the full fee-paying students and I don't know what's actually happening in the language centre but now we seem to, at the moment, I think we've got eighteen full fee-paying students in the College as a whole so the emphasis is moving away from the new arrivals, refugees, to full fee-paying students. Now we've got a lot of Cook Islanders ....
>
> (Mulhauser, 1998, ll. pp. 123–137)

Australian immigration patterns have begun to change. My conversations at the school reflect these changes. Moreover, the demographic categories used to describe these changes have become harder to define. The kind of Asian student has changed from the middle-class and educated students who arrived 15 years earlier. The school receives numbers of students whose skills are not in demand, which has left them as long-term residents of refugee camps. Students arrive from other countries, particularly from Africa and the Cook Islands. Finally, the school is beginning to receive "full fee-paying students" who enter the school with specific and quite different educational goals and future plans to stay in Australia. In 1988, whole communal settings changed when "they" came. Now Mulhauser controls these changes as they relate to her teaching work. She is one of those who "used to get", who are "pushing them through", who got "a whole lot". They' are now the ones to whom things happen; the ones who are "on waiting lists" and who are "going through the language centre". Concepts of "having" and of "pushing through" reflect a notion of control not present in the 1988 discussion. Nevertheless, a sense of incredulity remains at the numbers of "them" entering the school. There are "more" of them, "a lot" of them, "heaps and heaps" in fact, entering the school.

Throughout the research, teachers and parents describe how the demography of the school has changed over the preceding decade. Government statistics in both these years measure the extent of the population shifts involved. In 1988, these changes seemed almost too difficult to cope with. Now, these changes appear more benign. The composure evinced by teachers and parents is precarious. Demographic change seems both less problematic and a central source of concern. The measured comparison provided by statistics allows the respondents to define ethnic and racial groups in seemingly unproblematic ways. A closer analysis of these statistics suggests that these concepts (demographic change and the notions used to define it) need to be problematised.[3] In earlier times, those being measured were those others who came into our community. More recently, the identities being measured seem fragmented and changing. Previously, they measured irretrievable change ushered in by the sudden arrival of immense numbers of different groups of students. Now, these changes seem commonplace. The concept of demographic change is also fraught. Demographic change was frightening during my earlier research. More recently, teachers and parents are less concerned about these changes. Nevertheless, they continue to explore ways to deal with them.

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[3] Goldberg (1997) traces the problematic and inconsistent ways these measures have been used to measure groups in America. Singh (1998) notes the presence of similar logics within statistics used in Australia.

By 1998, multiculturalism is an official policy of the school. Nevertheless, teachers and parents remain inconsistent in their support for this policy and argue that government policies are irrelevant and of little assistance to their work within the school. Southgate Secondary College has developed its own official statement of multicultural policy and practice but parents and teachers are not necessarily concerned by these documents. "I know that it was updated last year but I didn't see it until it went to council", Bottomley explains. "I think it's basically in the filing cabinet." "It's not something that's at the forefront of people's thinking." "Varvara will kill me", Pieterse tells me, because "there probably is a policy". It is not something that is "referred to and considered when you are making decisions". Multiculturalism is about being "aware of the cultural background of these kids", about "the importance of role models", "about getting teachers here who speak another language, who can understand the children and their parents and about changing the leadership team profile". It is about having Chinese, Cambodians and Malaysians in the student population and on the staff. What is different is that "we've got a lot of knowledge here that we just assume everybody else knows too" and that "we're really surprised when people don't know it and don't take it into account".

5.2.2 Dealing with Demographic Change

The policies and practices put into place at Southgate Secondary College continue to be different from those suggested by governments. The programmes put into place to deal with the changed demographics within the school are similar, but nevertheless not the same and include multiculturalism, ESL Programmes, and LOTE Programmes. By 1998, multicultural weeks have become days and new programmes have been put in place to internationalise school curriculum and practice.

5.2.3 Multicultural Days

Gilliam Mulhauser, ESL teacher and Coordinator, talks about a multicultural day in 1998:

> Pacific Island Concert where they organised the kids ... it was a fundraising concert ... the kids practised and Nga Rim rehearsed and did all the stuff, did all the organisation, and we had a fantastic Pacific Island Concert where they raised lots and lots of money for the trip. And I also notice that Saturdays or Sundays or whenever they would have a community meeting, and I went along to the community meeting as well, where everybody would talk about the trip and what the arrangements were going to be and talked about the difficulties. And I just really noticed the difference in, I mean there is a cultural difference, and a language difference too because I've noticed, to a degree, too how they prefer to speak in Cook Island Maori. And the whole meeting was usually Cook Island Maori and someone would, you know, tell me what was going on.
>
> (Mulhauser, 1998, ll. pp. 297–401)

By 1998, multicultural weeks have become multicultural days and their conceptualisation and implementation are fundamentally changed. Activities put on by the school are now far more professional. Concerts are held at Monash University rather than at the school, attract many more people, are "by invitation or you buy tickets", and are funded by the "multicultural programme". Food days, where "the different backgrounds sell their food", are now run by the various LOTE departments rather than by multicultural committees and aides. A Pacific Islander concert has been organised by the Pacific Islanders with the specific purpose of fund-raising to send students on a trip to the Cook Islands.

These ways of implementing a multicultural curriculum reflect changed school practice. Schools are now made to be self-funding, and decision-making is more accountable and more centralised.[4] At the same time, discussions about multicultural days reflect the very different control some community members feel that they have over these days. In the above quote, Gillian Mulhauser discusses a multicultural concert, which "they organised"; so "they" could raise lots of money for their trip. Even as Mulhauser is excited by the prospect of these days she is nevertheless not part of the organising committee and visits it as a guest. Committee meetings often use Cook Island Maori and she has to rely on someone telling her "what was going on". Several teachers remark upon this changed control of these curricula, often in more negative terms. Stephen Barrows is concerned that these days have become about gaining access to resources rather than about showing and sharing cultures, customs and ideas. Sally Williams is concerned that the ownership she felt of multicultural programmes in 1988 is no longer there. Multicultural days, she explains, used to be "by a whole committee", by "everybody". Now, they were something organised by an increasingly "ginormous" LOTE department and by "particular cultural groups". The principle behind multicultural days has changed. It is no longer about breaking down the barriers between them and us. Instead, they have become their days. Maria Huitendez, a parent, speaks about how much she enjoys the days as they are now. Her ownership of the days is reflected in her discussion of the concert that "we have" as:

> The children participate in the concert we have ... They do it at Monash and ... there, if you're doing something special, where you are from, your traditional dance or your dress, they have traditional music. You show what sort of background, you're from.
>
> (Huitendez, 1998, ll. pp. 472–476)

5.2.4 Teaching English

Peter Lee, Coordinator of the maths programme at Southgate, reflects:

> You see I've got a student who doesn't understand and he works hard, but language problems, you see this is not apparent. They just go back, go back, go back and go back, even if they get through that, he'll be dead in Year 12. Or the next exam will knock him off

[4] See Marginson (1997).

> completely. He can't even read the things properly. That is sad, that is sad, because it is very hard for the person to catch up, unless the person has the knowledge, themselves, that look I've got something missing, I'd better start from zero.
>
> (Lee, 1998, ll. pp. 376–394)

A language centre has been set up at the school, to provide students with intensive training in English for 6 months before they enter the school. Older students who have knowledge and educational skills easily transferable into English are offered a pre-VCE course. Students in younger classes continue to be withdrawn from English classes, so they can participate in more intensive "English as a Second Language" programmes.

Despite the successful nature of these programmes their funding remains precarious. Of the programmes introduced in addition to English class teaching in 1988, only the conversation practices sessions organised with University student volunteers continue to run. Between intermittent opening and closings of the nearby migrant hostel, and marked changes to Australia's immigrant policies, the histories and needs of student participants in ESL programmes fluctuate. The recent arrival of 14 fee-paying students who have come to Australia specifically to be eligible to attend Australian tertiary institutions is the most important of these changes.

By now, teachers feel more in control as they implement supportive programming, particularly in ESL. In the above quotation, Peter Lee worries about one of his students who is having difficulties. The student's language problems are difficult to define. They are "not apparent". Nevertheless, they prevent him from understanding and make it difficult for him "to catch up". The difficulties faced by the student no longer affect the school in quite the same way. It is up to the student to work hard and to say, "look I've got something missing, I'd better start from ground zero". The situation is described as evidence of a lack in one particular student. At the same time, the problem is generalised as a reflection of what "they" need to do. "They" describes a group of uniform identities who, regardless of their own history, experience or motivation, behave in particular ways. The "person" who needs to catch up is one of this group who "just go back, go back and go back".

5.2.5 Learning Languages Other than English

Mary Navine, Principal of Southgate, explains how LOTE teaching at the school has changed:

> When I came here, in 1988, there was one unit of Chinese being run by Mary. That ... went from Years 7–12 and then Vietnamese and Cambodian. They were just asked for by the community, so as we saw them, we put them into place. Then the Ministry asked me to put in the Spanish language for this area, because of the Spanish-speaking people in, a lot of them were working in the ... area at the time ... So we've introduced that one. We, actually, got primary schools to go in with us, that Spanish language program, so they came in with us. We got Grasston South, Grassvale West. Now recently, last year, we were looking at Southpark Primary School to join us. They didn't go in with it to start with. Then ... people asked us for Japanese, because it was a business language, so we introduced that one. Then there was German, which was introduced because of the Bosnian kids who came

> and they have an understanding of German. A lot of people left that conflict area. Let's say that's what it was.
>
> (Kokinakis, 1998, pp. 122–142)

When Mary Navine took up her post as Principal of Southgate towards the end of 1988, "Language Other Than English" (LOTE) became more properly consolidated in the school curriculum. By 1998, ten languages were taught from years 7 to 10 at the school: European languages (Spanish, Modern Greek, Italian, French and German); Arabic; and Asian languages (Japanese, Cambodian, Chinese and Vietnamese).

For Kokinakis, language learning is a fundamental focus for multicultural practice. In a school that contains a diversity of cultures, language teaching is a way of providing for the political and cultural aspirations of community groups. The translation of these aspirations into school programming is central to her administrative effort. It is a way of carrying out government policy initiatives, the achievement of community aims and the internationalisation of the school community. Kokinakis's intervention within the multicultural programme of the school and the LOTE programme, particularly, is of huge significance. These programmes become an important vehicle to demonstrate the importance language teaching has for individual students and for the community generally. Nevertheless, teachers discuss how these programmes remain contested within the school. Barry Houston argues that "Language Other Than English" learning cannot replace the need for good programmes in English. Students, Houston argues, need more help in English and cannot waste time learning other languages. Danny Miller is similarly concerned that such language teaching might cause divisions between different language and cultural groups within the school. He fears that dividing students into language blocks could have problematic consequences. "I think it is dangerous. I think it is dangerous, this separation", Bernard Pieterse tells me. "I think that works against the interests of the school."

The fear evinced by teachers and parents in regard to LOTE teaching reflects their concern that the relationships between other groups and themselves might become out of control. This notion of difference and lack of control should not necessarily be considered as negative. In the quote above, Kokinakis is in control. The community asked for the programmes to be put in place, but she has absolute control over their implementation. The community, however, is not "us". "We put them into place" because "they were just asked for by the community". "We saw them" and "we've introduced that one". Nor is the dualism between "they" and "we" straightforward here. Other secondary schools in the area are not enthusiastic about joining in the programme. Similarly, the clients of her programmes are not necessarily only one of them. "People asked us for Japanese", she tells me. "People" here refers to people generally within the community. Houston, Miller and Pieterse, on the other hand, are concerned. They fear that LOTE allows for the formation of separate and other groups that remain out of their control.

The notion of control takes a different form when these men speak of the relationships between multiculturalism, internationalisation and technological change.

5.2.6 Internationalising Strategies

Danny Miller, Associate Principal, discusses Southgate's hosting of a "virtual domain" for a Cook Island School:

> I could spin you out, even further, in terms of . . . We were the first Australian school to go to the Cook Islands at Easter Time. We've come back, from there, having set up a few things and now we're, actually, organising to be . . . We're going to host a 'virtual domain' for the Cook Island School, Aarurua College, so that we'll, actually, have all their files and stuff on our file server. They'll access that, they will be able to upload what they want, on to their part of it and then . . . so . . . we'll walk over to the 'Virtual Domain' and they'll want it and so they don't have to have all the expensive file server and stuff over there, it's all here.
>
> (Miller 1998, p. 3)

> Trying to find a balance in . . . the images, so that there are African, there are Vietnamese, there are Cambodian, there are . . . Anglos, Europeans, here as well. We're just trying to say, 'Well, look at us, because we're diverse.' The shots are, that's what I was doing this morning, with that photographer, for a promotion of our 35 years.
>
> (Miller, 1998, p. 4)

In earlier research, teachers and parents were both shocked and excited by the extent of the demographic change that had taken place in the school. These discussions took place as being about multiculturalism. Strategies to internationalise the school, and concurrent understandings about the ways these strategies are established within new technologies and in an increasingly globalised world, were not discussed. But now, information technology provides a new and exciting "virtual domain", something that will "spin me out". A web page has been set up at both the secondary school and at the language centre. Virtual communication has been set up with a series of sister schools. Most teachers have internet and email access. These are not just changes in technology; they are changes in whole worlds as the school experiments not only with "new tools" such as "video and audio conferencing" but also with whole "other dimensions". Southgate is on the "cutting edge of technology", and is using technology in ways unimagined by those at most other schools. "The boundaries of the school are being redesigned", Bernard Pieterse explains. The "fence that surrounds the school" "has shifted" and no longer defines when "you are out of bounds".

The experience of technological and globalising change which underpins internationalising strategies is not only virtual but also material. The school organises relationships with sister schools in at least seven different countries. Students, as well as parents and teachers, visit a variety of countries as part of their in-school experiences. The school has links with sister schools in Shanghai, Paris, Osaka and the Pacific islands. School programmes obtain grants, which allow students to communicate with and often to visit countries outside Australia. The Art and Language Faculties have received grants to work in Asian art, buy books and CDs about Asia, and to take excursions to China, Italy, Spain and Greece. The year before, a group of students and their parents visited their home in the Cook Islands, taking several of their teachers with them. Most recently, these two types of travel, the virtual and

the real, came together, as the school provided access and expertise for communities in the Cook Islands to use the internet.

Teachers particularly are excited at the new ways that globalising technologies allow them to integrate multicultural policies into the school. Students and teachers not only read about other cultures but also can visit them both materially and virtually. These services are a way of helping other groups. Now, however, the other group is over there. "They can have it", Danny Miller explains earlier in the interview. "We can have it over there". "They'll access that". "They'll want it". "It's all here". The changed relationship between them and us is more than material. In the virtual world, Danny can showcase the school as multicultural, as containing others, in ways which are absolutely under his control. The images of the Vietnamese, Cambodians, Anglos and Europeans are easily made as part of them and one of us with the simple click of the mouse. It is a way of saying "look at us, because we are diverse".

In contrast to my initial time at the school, the focus of my second visit is to understand how racism, as well as multiculturalism, is understood within the school. Nevertheless, discussions about multiculturalism monopolise my interview time. These discussions are often controversial. Multicultural weeks, widely supported in 1988, are both more successful and more contentious in 1998. ESL programmes continue to provide students with essential linguistic and cultural skills to access school institutional structures. Even so, funding remains precarious in both years. The size and diversity of the LOTE programmes has become an important model of best practice in this field. Nevertheless, the implementation of these programmes is more controversial than ever within the school. Finally, increasing internationalisation of the school programme and changed technologies of communication and travel provide a different emphasis for multicultural policy provision.

In 1988, teachers and parents felt out of control as large numbers of different groups suddenly entered their school. By 1998, teachers and parents feel more in control as they have the policies and practices to deal with these changed demographics. These multicultural measures are controversial and changing; a site of struggle through which discussions about identity and difference and the relationships between them take place. Concepts, particularly those of culture, language and globalisation, allow school community members and myself to discuss how these relationships might happen, and yet never mention them in relation to debates about race and ethnicity. Instead, the notions of different languages, different cultures, allow discussions about race and ethnic difference, their meaning and who controls the relationships, to take place without these topics being openly discussed. Moreover, discussions about internationalising strategies and the way they are embedded within developing notions of technical change and globalisation, provide new ways of understanding racially defined and ethnic identities, the relationships between community members, and the ways that differing ethnic and racial groups can be discussed.

Throughout the research, discussions about multicultural policies and practices provide particular sites from which debates about ethnic and race relations could take place without mentioning these notions. Discussions that refer to racism remain

constrained. In 1998, I ask all respondents questions about racism but am not always able to ask questions about this directly. My questions are therefore often similar to those I had asked in 1988. Despite the paucity of my questioning, I find my conversations with teachers and parents explore a nebulous and almost unmentionable "it". These conversations are concerned about the terms, conditions and the consequences of the relationship that is established between those within the community and those others outside it.

5.2.7 Experiencing it

In 1998, as in 1988, teachers and parents agree that "they've had enough of" talking about "it" and that discussions about racism are not relevant at the school. There are, they explain "no racial intolerances" here, "no problems if they have to interact". It is explained that "you don't have that in classes here", "there is really nothing there". Still, teachers and parents express unease about possible conflict in ways that they did not in 1988. "Occasional conflicts occur", Stephen Barrows says, "but they are based on particular incidents. You couldn't put it down to general racial intolerance". "I don't think that that's because the other kids are ostracising them", Bill Kelly explains. "They just don't interact", "they don't mix", "they are not antagonistic towards each other", "there's nothing overt". Things happen between students all the time, and are normal interactions between teenagers. Most particularly, teachers and parents argue that diversity itself is the reason why ethnic relations at the school are good. Southgate is understood by teachers particularly as "somewhere safe", "comfortable", more "relaxed", "because everyone's different". The reason kids like being here is "because they've got so many people who are in the same position".

Humanities teacher Bill Kelly suggests the notion that Southgate is different from most other places:

> Things you read about in other schools, seems to be . . . It doesn't happen within the school. It's lovely to come to this school. It's got the most wonderful atmosphere, really, like, I can't remember. It's ten years ago, this famous comment, that came from one kid that's gone around, about what they did in the holidays and, why they seemed to be glad to get to school and they said. "Well, holidays are boring, because all we do is stay around Southgate and stay around home." "Why don't you go out and go to, go into the city?" And they say, "Well, in Southgate no one calls us names." So, they're very happy to be in Southgate, but it's boring, because there's not the diversity and stuff they want. To get diversity, they've got to go out, Even though they're born in Australia they get called names. It's safer, easier or it's pleasant to hang around in Southgate and not get called names. When they venture out, they have to put up with abuse.
>
> (Kelly, 1998, ll. pp. 332–423)

The school has "the most wonderful atmosphere". It is different from elsewhere in that students do not get called names, "it's pleasant" and "it's safer, easier". Students are "very happy" to be here but staying at home in Southgate during holidays is "boring". Yet elsewhere is frightening. When students "venture out", they have to "put up with abuse". The actuality of what is out there is not quite mentioned. It

is the "things you read about in other schools" that do not happen here. "It doesn't happen within the school." The scariness on the outside is the very diversity that has made the school safer on the inside. They, the students, remain within the school where they feel safe in their difference, both critiqued and too frightened to mix with others on the outside.

I examine this quotation again so that the word "diversity" becomes the focus of analysis. Diversity is spoken about as something that belongs to "them": "it's safer, easier" or "it's pleasant" for them. It is the exciting thing which stops the outside from being boring and which makes the school the comfortable place it is. There is a second conception of what difference means, but these things are almost unsayable. Those are the other things, which happen to them but which do not happen at this school. Outside the school, they get called names and are abused. They are glad to get back to the school where they are at home. These are the almost, not quite mentionable things that do not "happen" here. "It" is something that happens elsewhere so that it is safer and more pleasant at the school. However, despite the perception that the school is a safe place, with a wonderful atmosphere, the differentiations between others and selves remain. The school is exciting because of its diversity, safe because the underlying differences implied by diversity are comfortably dealt with. Diversity is implicated in the "wonderful atmosphere" but also problematic and potentially dangerous both for the students who put up with abuse if they "venture out" and to the school where "the things you read about in other schools, seems to be . . . it doesn't happen".

5.2.8 Disruptive Fragments

In both 1988 and 1998, the narratives I collect from respondents agree that there is no racism in the school. Despite the pervasiveness of these comments, I once again find disruptive fragments of data showing concern that it happens. In 1988, if and when it happens, it is a matter of good people or bad people making good or bad things happen. In 1998, what "it" is and when it happens seems far more confusing.

> Aruna
>
> It's a very nice school, actually. I am very happy. Like I say, people are very good and I feel like this is my second home actually. In Melbourne, there are so many different types of people here and everybody's very nice, actually. So we can work better.
>
> (Sandra, 1998, ll. pp. 92–94)

In Aruna Sandra's second story, Southgate Secondary College is different. Her increased capacity to feel comfortable within the school is reflected in her last sentence where "we" can work better. There are "different types of people here", and "everybody's very nice" '. Southgate is a place that is comfortable, a "second home actually", a "nice school", a place where she is "very happy". Southgate continues to be a place where there are good people. Like other community members, she argues that now the school is good because there are so many other different people. Nevertheless, Sandra continues to be troubled that she might be treated differently.

In 1998, as in 1988, this is because some people are good people and some are bad. Now, however, the school itself is different – a "nice school", "a second home" – in a world where everybody is not nice.

> Linda
>
> Q. How do you find people get on with each other? Not just with you but generally.
>
> A. I, really, don't know and I don't want to try to find out, because I'm too afraid it will start. If I start to test people to see the reaction, it's just like I'm banging my head onto the rock.
>
> I'd rather just leave it, you know, calm everything, as usual, because if you try and find out something, when the fact comes to you, you will be very disappointed and you will be upsetting and working. You know . . . You don't know, how people see you, but you would rather the fact that you would rather not to know, so you can still keep in your mind peaceful in the area . . . The Australian attitude is very hurting.
>
> (Chan, 1998, ll. pp. 530–566)

For Linda Chan, the borders which mark the safeness of being inside and the dangerousness of being outside the school are unclear. Like Aruna Sandra, Chan is concerned that the precariousness of the relationship between herself and others within the school generally is more complex than ever. She fears that people might hurt her. In 1998, she is able to give those people a name. "The Australian attitude is very hurting", she tells me. On the other hand, she is no longer sure who those people are. Unlike in earlier discussions where there were most definitely "good people" and "bad people", now she does not really know who these people are or "how people see you", "would rather not know". She is "too afraid it will start" should she really try to find out what people think. The terms and conditions of the relationship between herself and people is one that is both critical and hardly mentionable. She is scared that things could be too upsetting if she really found out. "To test people to see the reaction" would be like "banging" one's "head onto the rock".

> Peter
>
> Q. Do you find that it's changed your experiences of . . . everyday racism?
>
> A. I become more conscious when I speak to a white person that they are genuine or not. Once upon a time, I grow up with an Aussie girl. In fact I've grown up with, but you understand it in terms of girl friends and so forth. No, I think my way of life, the way I conduct myself, is more Aussie than anything. But I've been asked to, forced to think about my actions . . . That's why I say, sometimes, you have a feeling about, you know. Before you talk to white person, you going to think – Are they genuine or not, or are they, basically, hating you or something like that.
>
> (Lee, 1998, ll. pp. 722–729)

In 1998, Peter Lee, Chan Wu, Danny Lui, Navin Rajee are agreed. The emergence of Pauline Hanson's One Nation Party and public debates about ways Asians can be allowed to enter Australia have changed the ways Peter feels at home within the school. Like Chan, he does not see the school as a buffer between himself and the consequences of these other ways of understanding relationships. Rather, he explains how these have impacted on the way he is able to participate within the Australian community generally and with White people particularly. The first part of the paragraph considers his credentials as someone who is part of the Australian

community. Like Chan, he names the community from which he feels excluded. He grew up with an "Aussie girl" and sees himself as more "Aussie than anything". His emphasis on his ability to maintain cross-cultural skills and relationships accentuates his wish to be the same and the knowledge that he is positioned as essentially different. His dream in 1988, that everyone is the same, has been destroyed. He is now suspicious of the motives of any White person. He finds that he is never quite Australian enough, that he is suspicious of White Australians. The uncertainty which accompanies this realisation is that he is now never quite sure about what other people think of him, or whether "they [are] basically hating you or something like that".

> Navin
>
> The country town of Blackmore is, sort of, very conservative . . . not very conservative-conservative compared with Southgate and at times you – if you are a different background – you are looked down upon . . . You have a bonus skin and you are, sort of, looked down upon. But they don't say that, all that, because it is illegal. But you can see. When I came here I found it very, completely different . . . Because of the set up and because of the principal and then you are new to this and . . . the Multicultural . . . I found everything very different.
>
> (Rajee, 1998, ll. pp. 73–105)

As was the case in 1988, I am only able to contact parents who are already very involved within the school. Respondents are often very well educated and have been able to speak English before their arrival in Australia. Like Aruna Sandra, Navin Rajee, a parent, is not able to work in his chosen profession. Rajee's children, like those of Sandra, have attained considerable educational success but are frustrated in the pursuit of their careers. Rajee and Sandra are clear that Southgate is different. The safety provided by the school is ephemeral. Outside the school, people are "very conservative" and "if you are a different background – you are looked down upon". Rajee describes the condition of his difference but stumbles as he does not have the right words to use. You have a "bonus skin", regardless of where you are, he tells me, which means "you are sort of looked down upon". However, knowing about this is very difficult, because "they don't say that, all that". Once again what "that" is, is not described because "it is illegal".

After Rajee's comments, I find few other scraps of data about the ways that racism might take place in schools. The response given by Fuxin Tang, a highly educated man, firmly entrenched within the community life of the school and of the Indo-Chinese community, is typical of the response to my questions by most parents:

> Q. So, your children, don't feel then that there's . . ..that there's any kind of racism, or anything, at the school, because of them being Cambodian?
>
> A. No, no.
>
> (Fuxin, 1998, ll. pp. 380–385)

5.3 Beyond Practices and Fields

This chapter has described the historic patterns I formulated from the stories I gathered from parents and teachers at Southgate Secondary College over a decade. Following from Guba and Lincoln's (1999) approach, I ascribed data about day-to-day practices discussed by teachers and parents into categories. From the second vantage point of the narrational field, I examined a composite of a school which was demographically diverse and which was at the forefront in the provision of multicultural programmes and policies that dealt with this diversity. This analysis records the common understanding that racism was non-existent at the school and that community members got along well. Nevertheless, I found conversations which were not adequately explained by this interpretation of the data. These discussions often took place indirectly and were concerned with the notion of "it". For some, "it" was something that was not to be spoken about, that others experienced or that some people just could not understand. For a few of my respondents, "it" was something that happened to them. In 1988, it was something unspeakable but clearly bordered. By 1998, what it was appeared to be far more confusing.

Following from my reading of the post-colonial and Whiteness literatures, I extended the analysis beyond its examination of narrational practices and fields to consider the data from the vantage point of the narrational maps. This third level of analysis allowed me to move beyond those historic patternings to describe the ontological notions to which these narrational fields and practices were tied. This new examination suggested that the conversations and patterns I had analysed were underpinned by other logics that defined how some people belonged differently from others within the community. In the next chapters, "Mapping the "Other" and "Mapping Ourselves", I examine the categories, conditions and logics that make up the analysis as it can be understood from this other vantage point.

Chapter 6
Mapping the "Other"

> *As the first-born-successfully-white-man-in-the-family-line I woke to a terrible pressure, particularly upon my nose and forehead, and thought I was blind. In fact, the truth was there was nothing to see, except – right in front of my eyes – a whiteness which was surface only, with no depth, and very little variation.*
>
> *(Kim Scott, Benang: From the Heart, 1999, p. 11)*

In his novel, *Benang*, Kim Scott examines his identity. The "first-born-successfully-White-man-in-the-family-line", Scott documents day-to-day decisions made by Australian governments and public officials and places them in relation to his particular experience as an Aboriginal Australian. Scott's "Whiteness" becomes a metaphor, which he interprets from three levels. In the first, the mirrored image of his almost-White face shows nothing of the horrible pressure of the life lived behind it. In the second, his White persona shows nothing of his identity as an Indigenous person. In the third, this "Whiteness" is surface only, has no depth, leaves nothing to see, but as he goes on to explain in the book, comes to mean everything.

In the previous chapter, I described the conversations I had with teachers and parents about ethnic relations at their school. The motifs emerging from the data described the rapidity and extent of demographic change and the attitudes towards programmes and policies of multiculturalism put into place to deal with those changes. The study of these motifs from the vantage points within my narrational frame provided the following perspectives. The view from narrational practice explored the widely differing experiences and opinions teachers and parents described when speaking about ethnic and race relations. The view from the vantage point of narrational fields explored the ways the conceptual and material domains of multiculturalism and racism were negotiated and spoken about within the school. The vantage point of the narrational map provided a third direction for exploring the data. This way of looking considers the interconnectedness of narrational fields that provide taken-for-granted ways of knowing and being in the world. It focuses attention on the normalised logic that underpins discussions of day-to-day experiences and the debate that informs school programmes, policy and practice. Post-colonial and Whiteness writings suggest that in contemporary Western societies an omnipresent and unmarked "us" locates and knows its own identity against the always-out-of-reach and not-quite-known "other" who we-are-not. Ghasson Hage's (1998) writing, in particular, explores how others and selves are made visible and located within

R. Arber, *Race, Ethnicity and Education in Globalised Times*,

Australian national spaces. Patti Lather (1991) and Toni Morrison (1992) postulated that it is these normalised ways of understanding and behaving that must be spelt out: the structures of its argument made clear; the conditions of its terms defined and the conceptual organisation of its representation located and problematised. In this chapter, I re-examine these stories to spell out the structure of its argument, the conditions of terms and the logic of its conceptual organisation.

6.1 Speaking About "Other" Groups

The relationships between ethnic groups were understood differently in 1988 and 1998. In 1988, teachers and parents believed that people belonged to essentially different groups separated by almost impenetrable barriers. At the same time, they argued that all people share a universal and common humanity. In 1998, people were considered as able to change and to choose between different ethnic identities. Even so, people were included within the school community differently. I have suggested that beneath conversations about multiculturalism is a deep-seated irony where liberal notions that subjects share a common and unitary humanity are juxtaposed with notions that groups are essentially different from one another.[1] This relationship in an Australian situation was described by Sneja Gunew (1994):

> Multicultural policy constructs communities in terms of an ethnic absolutism which results in separate and homogeneous entities. Within a social justice framework, participation is often reduced to those activists who speak on its behalf. In turn, the community comes to signify a motley collection of outsiders.
>
> (Gunew, 1994, p. 22)

Gunew's point is that thinking about multiculturalism shifts between notions of alterity and universalism. The corollary of her argument is that ethnic groups are considered as other and as outside the community regardless of how identities are understood as diverse. The result is that multiculturalism claims to bring people together, even as it signifies some as "a motley collection of outsiders".

I trace a similar contradiction between universalism and alterity. In 1988, these narratives describe almost inalienably different others. Even so, these differences can be overcome, sometimes painstakingly, sometimes by something as simple as a smile. In 1998, differences seem superficial, a matter of choice and easily changed. Negotiating this becomes increasingly complex as definitions of identity change over the decade. Stuart Hall describes how identities are defined differently in recent times.[2] The subject of the "enlightenment" (centred, reasoned, autonomous and continuous within itself); or of "sociology" (essentially the same but made different by the addition of cultural or biological difference); has, in recent times, appeared as "post-modern", fluid and changeable and a matter of choice.

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[1] See Chapter 4.

[2] See Chapter 3.

In 1988, Susan Siddons, an English Language Coordinator, speaks of the barriers that stand between those like herself and those others who are essentially and biologically different. She wonders whether she can work with people quite so alien. Although she notes that students do often work together, she is doubtful that the barriers between different groups can ever really be broken down:

> It's really quite incredible... the acceptance and the cooperation, the working together and not necessarily being racist, of wanting to be with that person or that person because their eyes are different and all that sort of thing. And it never ceases to fascinate me at all. I guess to my way of thinking... it should in theory produce a great deal of tolerance... but I just don't know whether human beings are tolerant... I just don't know whether the barriers can ever really be broken down. I think that there is always going to be that non-acceptance and really if you're white Caucasian or southern European or something there is a chance there that coming out of a different, a very different culture and you look different if you are Asian but you smell different. All of those sort of things. Whether it is going to work into a melting pot I don't know. But I believe that there will always be pockets of racism. I wouldn't necessarily object...
>
> Q. So do you think that multiculturalism will work...?
>
> A. Maybe it will. One would hope that it would. It may be the answer to so many problems. I don't know whether you can ever break down the barriers completely.
>
> (Siddons, 1988, ll. pp. 479–500)

Siddons observes the relationship between students from different ethnic backgrounds with incredulous fascination. "It's really quite incredible", she tells me. "It" refers to the relationship between ethnic groups. It is a relationship that she cannot quite come to terms with. No amount of "wanting to be" or tolerating or accepting can ever "break down the barriers completely". "It" is a relation that "never ceases to fascinate" Siddons. The source of Siddons's consternation begins from the definition of identity itself. Ethnic and racially defined groups are essentially and primordially alien, made almost absolutely different by biological as well as cultural conditions. "If you are Asian" you "look different" and "you smell different". Siddons thinks there will "always be pockets of racism". Tolerance of difference is possible, but it takes a great deal of perseverance and is probably not sensible. A multicultural society "may be the answer to so many problems", but this seems unlikely.

For Helen Brown, a Health Studies teacher, alterity is not so much a matter of biology, as of essential values. She finds herself walking a tightrope as she tries to teach her students proper moral and ethical principles. Her students live fraught lives: men treat their women badly, families fall apart and children are being bashed. Working within such a demographically complex school requires that teachers help save students from such dangerous situations and provide them with correct values so that:

> Those boys will leave those classes with more respect for women's rights and the girls will have more understanding of why their brothers and fathers and uncles sometimes appear to be playing the heavy-handed persona because they think that it is their right. In this case we will, hopefully, have less marriage breakdowns. We will have less children bashed. We will have less problems amongst families and if only one family does something that saves their family and saves them a break up, that is all you can look for.
>
> (Brown, 1988, ll. pp. 252–258)

Despite her pessimism, Brown does not share Siddons's contention that barriers between ethnic groups are absolute and impenetrable. Over time and with help intergenerational change can occur. "Boys will leave those classes with more respect," "girls will have more understanding". Her despairing final aside emphasises the limited nature of this possibility. "All you can look for" is to somehow prevent families from breaking up altogether. People are able to change, but presently they behave very differently from those who belong within her community. Moreover, the ethnic groups described here are quite definitely not one of us. They are "those boys", "their brothers and fathers and uncles".

Tracy Cunningham, the Student Welfare Officer, also believes that ethnic difference is defined by cultural norms. She gazes with me at students who are desperately in need of her help. These children lack discipline, are unable to work properly at school because they lack "background" and are not provided with the proper support at home. They provide an enormous "load" that she has taken up against her better sense:

> It is an enormous load... One of the heartaches is when you get the kids like the one wandering up and down at the moment, and his shirt hanging out and his tight jeans and he should be in class. Once again, he has wangled his way out of class. He is here without his parents, with older brothers who just can't cope with their own families. A kid without supervision getting into things he shouldn't. He has got a conscience, because he is all the time telling me just by his look that he is at school but he is going to do his own thing and invariably gets into trouble and he makes promises but he has no way of maintaining promises because he hasn't any background. He has no habit of knowing how to maintain discipline and that they're the ones you really get upset about, because you can get them here and you can talk them into doing the right thing, but they've no staying power and they've no back up. I am powerless to change the home.
>
> (Cunningham, 1988, ll. pp. 132–145)

Cunningham focuses her comments on a particular boy that she sees while talking with me. She then generalises to "the kids" who are like him. The particular boy comes to represent the characteristics of whole group. From Cunningham's point of view, these are students who just cannot cope because of their home life, which "hasn't any background" in study habits or discipline. The collective difference that this boy represents is reiterated at the end of the passage as "he" turns to "they" in phrases such as "they've no staying power", "they've no backup". Cunningham sees her relationship with students like this one as a burden she carries. "It is an enormous load", Cunningham tells me, "one of the heartaches". The essence of the relationship she describes is one in which she is responsible for changing others who are not only different, but also deficient and problematic. Her despairing, "I am powerless to change the home" is more pessimistic than Helen Brown's conceptions that she might save some of her students. Cunningham's conception of difference is essentially social, rather than biological. Change, however, remains almost impossible.

Helen Brown and Tracy Cunningham do not share Susan Siddons's contention that multiculturalism is unworkable and that barriers between groups probably cannot be broken down. For these teachers, ethnic differences are of social origin and therefore can be altered. That these differences are often understood to be of cultural rather than of biological origin has only a limited effect on the way such alterity is

flexible. Ethnic differences are deeply entrenched and almost beyond their ability to mediate. The study of these narrational fields from the vantage point of the narrational map reaffirms the dualistic structure of this relationship. Teachers set out to help their students even as they reaffirm the us/them dualism they seek to mitigate. Their despair that these students are almost beyond their help reaffirms the barriers they believe stand between students and their teachers.

Such notions of absolute difference contradict others which suggest that everyone is the same. School President and parent Tom Paterson argues that ethnic groups are essentially and measurably different. At the same time, the differences between these groups can be overcome simply by a smile, an interest in gardening, friendship, a bunch of roses, etc. It is a matter of negotiating barriers between those "sad case(s)", wanting only to be friends:

> That's where the barriers are broken down. If there's going to be racial barriers that's where it's going to be sort of broken down... I think it's a sad case sometimes. They want to be friends but people won't sort of accept them. When I'm out in the garden, the rose garden... I speak to everyone that goes past and smile to them... and it's remarkable the smile you get back. One day I saw some of them... I went outside and gave them a bunch of roses. They thought that was great. It's just trying to break down that barrier. I think that they're so acceptable to that. My wife was out weeding the other day and she had four or five little ones, I'd say they would be about four years old or six, and they helped her weed that garden. They thought that was great.
>
> (Paterson, 1998, ll. pp. 106–124)

The notion of a school community forced to deal with groups of people who are essentially different contrasts with a second that considers that all people share a common humanity. The barriers between groups can be broken down by the simplest of means by: talking to each other, eating each other's food and taking part in each other's projects. Paterson believes himself to be an agent of change in this regard. "I speak to everyone", he tells me: "I think they're so acceptable to that". Throughout Paterson's conversation, those on the other side of racial barriers remain as "they". They "want to be friends", look at his roses, "thought that was great" to help his wife. The "four or five little ones" shyly cross barriers as "they" help weed the garden. The distinction between others and self remains. Paterson declares all people are the same, indulgently smiles at them, gives them roses and considers how difficult it is for them to be accepted into our community . At the same time, Paterson continues to understand members of ethnic groups as essentially different and as desperately in need of his help. "That's where the barriers are broken down", he tells me. "If there's going to be racial barriers, that's where it's going to be sort of broken down". The "that" and the "it" of this unspoken relationship stand at the juncture where everyone could be the same, even as ethnicity remains a marker of almost absolute difference.

The previous chapter describes the sudden arrival of different ethnic groups at the school. The practical difficulties of dealing with such large numbers of new students (the provision of classrooms, teachers, English classes, etc.) are compounded by the difficulty of coping with people who are essentially different. The nature of difference found behind the "barriers" defined in 1988 changes, as notions of

identity change from those of biology to those of culture. For Susan Siddons, breaking down barriers is an almost impossible task. Those on the other side of the barriers are absolutely different and have different smells, colour and cultures. For Tracy Cunningham and Helen Brown, others are made different by almost equally rigid cultural and social conditions. At the same time, these notions of alterity are in contradiction with conceptions of a common and universal humanity. Paterson continues to see his neighbours as essentially different even as he believes barriers between such different groups can be broken down by the simplest of means. The following discussion with Bill Kelly, a history teacher, shows the increasingly contradictory ways that these logics are defined. Kelly considers the sameness of all peoples and finds himself caught within interchanges fraught with endless contradiction. The people down the road are "very good neighbours", he tells me needlessly if everyone is the same:

> There are good people and bad people. I have more troubles with Australians than I would've with the ethnic population. I've had Greek neighbours on one side now and behind us we used to have French and Poles. We haven't had any Asians. At the moment we've got Mauritians but we get on very well. There's no problem. We've got Sri Lankans the other side of the road very good neighbours. We're all working together, neighbourhood sort of style. It's very good. There are bad people... there's bad Australians too.
>
> (Kelly, 1988, ll. pp. 398–310)

Kelly believes that ethnic differences do not matter and "we get on very well", "we're all working together" and there are always "good people and bad people". The notion of commonality is problematical. Kelly lists the different ethnic populations who live in his street: the French, Poles, Greeks, Mauritians and Sri Lankans. A dualism is set up between "Australians" and the "ethnic population". Ethnic populations are discussed as the people that we have had. We "used to have French and Poles": "we haven't had any Asians". The notion that "we get on well" and "we are working together" is placed against the people "I've had", that "we've had". The shift that takes place in the conception of the word "we" is made clear in the last part of the paragraph. "There are bad people", Kelly tells me. "People" does not include everyone. "There's bad Australians too."

Australian, thinking on multiculturalism, like most Western thinking, is paradoxical as it defines and categorises alterity, and yet reaffirms liberal notions that subjectivity is universal, centred, rational and self-motivated. Teachers and parents understand that some people belong to different ethnic groups and therefore belong differently within the school community. The parameters of belonging to ethnic groups are defined by essentially different biological and cultural traits. The boundaries between those groups are understood not only as almost impermeable, but also as easily traversed as people share a common humanity. Analysis of these narrational fields from the vantage point of the narrational maps suggests that a self/other dualism continues to structure narratives about multiculturalism. Susan Siddons, Helen Brown and Tracy Cunningham are certain that some ethnic groups do not belong to the community in the same way as others. Tom Paterson and Bill Kelly argue that differences are immense but also easily accommodated. Nevertheless,

they too continue to assert that some groups do not belong within the community in the same way as others.

Like Cunningham in 1988, Sally Williams, a Social Science teacher, suggests in 1998 that members of ethnic groups are essentially different and need particular help if they are to work well within the school. Sally Williams tells me about Cook Islander students:

> Well, to begin with, they were constantly out of uniform. It came from that. They don't wear shoes in the Cook Islands, so they went out and bought a whole lot of second-hand shoes from Clarke's and things. Just ways that we could best help by having class sets suited to a particular year level, so that we could train them. It sounds really demeaning, but train them that equipment is important and that they could borrow the equipment from us. So that with them coming to school unprepared we would still say, "Well, here's a pen, here's a paper. Get stuck in and here's a book that you may use now and I'll photocopy these pages for you to take home." So that they didn't have a broken... a lot of them, as I said, don't live with their mum and dad. They might go and live with their uncle for two weeks and then their clothes will literally be at their uncle's and their school bag will be at some other house. So to minimise that sort of disruption in their lives and we'll probably add strategies that we ask teachers to do this or take this in with them.
>
> (Williams, 1998, ll. pp. 957–967)

In 1998, Cook Islander students are problematic. They are not used to the simplest everyday practices: wearing shoes, living in one location, bringing the correct items to school, etc. Their integration into the school demands carefully formulated "strategies that we ask teachers to do". It means that "we" need to "train them" how to work within the school. The analysis of these discussions from the vantage point of narrational maps reaffirms the self/other distinction delineated in the last section. Williams' conversation lists the things we need to do, such as "we could train them". What has changed in 1998 is Williams' confidence that she now knows what to do. They need strategies to change their behaviour: they leave their work at home, shift from house to house, need shoes. "We'll probably add strategies", Sally Williams tells me, which will "minimise that sort of disruption in their lives".

Nevertheless, the distinction between being in one ethnic group and in another is less clear in 1998. Gillian Mulhauser, English as a Second Language teacher, speaks about multiculturalism as being about valuing differences that people choose to keep or refrain from keeping:

> I think direct Multicultural policies, you know, direct sensible policies in the school just direct action at the school. The way things are it's basically valuing other peoples, it's the valuing of the language and it's a valuing of the cultural and it's the understanding that it's different that people don't often feel comfortable about coming to the school because they're in a new country and because they're – And I think it's about people, about making sure that people know that they can always come to the school and the importance... other languages so that they feel comfortable about coming here and I mean you know those basic things that...
>
> (Mulhauser, 1998, ll. pp. 652–666)

Mulhauser is concerned that people do not feel comfortable because they are new to the country and do not understand the language. "It's about people", she tells me,

"about making sure that people know they can always come". The notion of people is interesting. "People don't often feel comfortable coming to the school". "People", however, means "other peoples". They are the "other peoples" who feel comfortable because the school values their "other languages" and cultures. The relationship between other people and selves is about valuing what those other people bring. The self who sits back and values others in this way is present but remains unnamed. The notion of identity is also changed. People are different because they bring different languages and cultures. The addition of difference makes some people members of other groups even as everyone shares in a universal and common people-hood. Her point is that "people know that they can always come to the school". Difference and sameness remain in contradiction but are nevertheless placed in a paradoxical relationship within the same human entity. Mulhauser's argument cannot but maintain the dualistic relations between selves and others. The people who are not quite comfortable are those other different people who are new to the country and bring other languages and culture. Good relations depend on the way "we" value them. Despite the complex ways that ethnic identities are understood, and good intentions, they remain as one-of-them and not quite as one-of-us.

For Bernard Pieterse, a Technology teacher, difference is something that everyone has. At the same time, he finds difference hard to pin down because:

> It is very hard to pin ethnic tags on people. It is a lot harder to say you are Khmer, ethnic or the like. If I told you I was born in Australia and I was born in Shepparton on a dairy farm, I mean you would probably put me in a classification. But if I was to say to you I can speak Dutch and I didn't start speaking English until I was 6 years old... Got you because it will flexible my ethnic background... It is very difficult to place those ethnic labels on people, to say, "You are Italian", "You are Greek". It is a little bit more healthy say to pick on the language because often that defines the ethnic boundaries but they open enough to realise – even Scotland/Gaelic, Wales/Welsh – have different backgrounds and cultures to draw upon.
>
> (Pieterse, 1998, p. 5)

Pieterse's notion of ethnic identity falls apart in a post-modern and "moveable feast" of choices.[3] Ethnic tags become unworkable as people move from place to place, mix in different ways and relate to people differently. People have many identities, as Australian, Dutch, Greek and Italian. Pieterse did not speak English until he was six. His "ethnic background" is "flexible". It is, he says, "very difficult to place those ethnic labels on people". The view of this analysis from the vantage point of narrational maps suggests a different logic. These tags continue to define some people as other. The terms are slippery but nevertheless Pieterse immediately defines ethnic groups as different; as demonstrating that "you are Italian, you are Greek". "It is a little bit more healthy to say pick on the language" but that is "because that often defines the ethnic boundaries". "Even... Welsh – have different backgrounds and cultures to draw upon". Even as Pieterse argues that it is difficult to define people ethnically and that such categories should be avoided, he cannot argue his case without assuming the existence of such groupings. Pieterse is most careful not

[3] See Hall (1992, p. 275).

to differentiate between groups. Yet, his argument defines what is different between himself and others and re-positions the differences between them. The conceptual shuffle required in order not to speak of others, even as this is exactly what one needs to do, is made clear in Pieterse's next comment:

> Why should I impose my western culture and stereotype them? It is real dog eat dog competitive. You have got to learn to survive about yourself here. Don't look at the person next to you. Your racial background may tell you that you operate and talk and make a bit of socialising with a friend and then work on the problem and here I am imposing my ideas on them.
>
> (Pieterse, 1998, p. 5)

Pieterse is concerned that he might "impose" his "Western culture and stereotype them"; "imposing" his "ideas on them". A dualistic relation is set up between "them" and his Western self, even as he seeks to demolish it. Ethnicity is understood as a matter of race and presumably biology. At the same time, it is a matter of something added on and cultural; a matter of how you "operate and talk", "socialising with a friend", "work on the problem". Pieterse argues that these added on differences are things ethnic groups keep that he chooses not to change. That he believes that he could choose to change them reaffirms the differently empowered relations which stand between himself and other ethnic groups.

In this "moveable feast" of the "post-modern identity", the categories, which seemed so easily attributed in 1988, fall apart. Within the 1998 world of hypertext, email and user names, people seem no more than images, their difference no more than different names, faces and colours. Diversity becomes little more than the variety of the text, the colourful picture. Difference becomes no more than imaginary and therefore seems irrelevant. Ethnic groups exhibit differences that spin out into almost never-ending variations. More and more languages, more and more dialects of Maori, more and different places where students who seem to be the same can come so that:

> The publicity is merely just to handle... trying to promote, let people understand that we... that we really are quite diverse, and we're not all Cambodian, we're not all Vietnamese. People say, "Southgate, that's next to Southgate South, they're all Vietnamese aren't they." No, no.
>
> Trying to find a balance in the... the images so that there are African, there are Vietnamese, there are Cambodian... there are Anglos, Europeans... here as well. We're just trying to say, "Well, look at us, because we're diverse." The shots are, that's what I was doing this morning, with that photographer, for a promotion of our 35 years.
>
> (Miller, 1998, p. 4)

The contradictory ideas that underpin the ways that teachers and parents understand these shifting images become increasingly complex as multicultural ways of dealing with ethnic groups interweave with the impact that globalisation and technological changes has on ways of understanding culture and identity. Danny Miller, a Senior Teacher, markets the diversity of his students and promotes conceptions of multiculturalism virtually to people anywhere. Images of Southgate say "look at us, because we're diverse", "the publicity... let people understand... that we really are quite diverse". Even as the borders between identities seem to have disappeared,

and conceptions of self and other made irrelevant, the other remains enigmatically there. Far from negating difference, these conversations about selling multiculturalism begin with the conceptualisation of some groups as different and as other. "There are African, there are Vietnamese, there are Cambodian. . . there are Anglos, Europeans". Miller takes his digitised images, and makes all of them, whatever their difference, part of a shared difference. He celebrates their difference. It is an image of all-of-us as different. At the same time, they remain as a reminder of all that is different and other than ourselves.

In 1998, teachers and parents continue to describe ethnic identities as being quite different from each other and yet as sharing a common humanity. This becomes more complex as notions of identity change. The essential categories used to name ethnic entities in 1988 continue to be used in 1998 but now these definitions seem far more slippery. Identity becomes understood as twofold; as entities in common, with something different added. Gillian Mulhauser describes new migrants as people who are more comfortable with their different culture and language. Danny Miller understands ethnic identity as absolutely flexible. The impact of new technologies and ways of communication mean that the most basic ways of understanding these concepts seem lost.

Crisscrossed by the material and conceptual notions that underpin global marketing and post-modernism, identity appears indefinite and fluid; an almost meaningless concept. The materiality of Cook Islanderness becomes conflated as photographs of generic, exotic difference are sent everywhere and anywhere on the net. Nevertheless, Miller reasserts the same dualistic relation between others and ourselves. The Cook Islanders on the net remain Cook Islanders; and as people other than ourselves.

6.2 Of Great Love and Immense Hate

In this second section, I take up Lather's second suggestion and explore the ways teachers and parents describe the condition of being different in terms of race and ethnicity. Identities are described as exhibiting characteristics that seem contradictory and extreme. Such people are better or worse, more acceptable or less acceptable, more wonderful or more dreadful than us. In 1988, Asians are both brilliant and impossibly inept, Spanish are both bohemian and hopelessly lazy, ethnic families are impossibly pathological. There seems, as one teacher says in 1988, to be no in-between. In 1998, commonly held definitions of identity have in some ways changed. The notion that members of ethnic groups are different becomes more difficult to demonstrate as the terms and conditions of defining identity seem fragmented, changing and open to choice. Nevertheless, parents and teachers continue to describe ethnic groups in paradoxical and excessive terms. Now, however, these contradictions are understood as the province of single identities.

Writers about post-colonialism argue that the representation of identities as ethnic in Western societies is profoundly ambivalent. As Homi Bhabha (1994)

explained it, otherness emerges in relation to selfness.[4] As such, it is made in a process of splitting, caught as it is in that place of demand and desire:

> The demand of identification – that is, to be *for* an Other– entails the representation of the subject in the differentiating order of otherness. Identification, as we inferred from the preceding illustrations, is always the return of an image that bears the mark of splitting in the Other place from which it comes.
>
> (Bhabha, 1994, p. 45)

The definition of difference, Bhabha argues, is a stereotypical fantasy of the other in relation to self. The difference becomes represented as identities about which there is always excess, more than or less than. The "in-between" spaces that provide the terrain of selfhood are not only sites of collaboration but also of overlap and displacement (Bhabha, 1994, p. 1). The production of the stereotype as a representation of the other person contains within its logic its own demise. Attempts at mastery are always slipping, displaced and incomplete, as the other remains never quite known. I find that the stories teachers and parents tell me contain ambivalent expressions of otherness, even as they tentatively explore the complex interstices in-between.

In 1988, I asked Carol Saunders, a Coordinator, to describe her students:

> The kids – as far as I am concerned, the kids are the "working class ethnics" and to me they are terrific kids. . . ninety percent of the Asian kids are happy kids, marvellous kids to teach. They really want to get on with their work. They really are fantastic. The other 10 percent are really the bottom rung. There is no in-between.
>
> Greeks, southern Europeans. . . parents often have too high expectations. . . The Asians are harder working, whereas the Greek and Italian are more peasanty types. Asians tend to work harder to get somewhere. The "working class" Europeans have come to the lucky country but Asians are prepared to work hard.
>
> (Saunders, 1988, p. 3)

For Saunders, Greek and Italian students are "peasanty types", their parents unrealistic in their "too high expectations". The "working-class ethnics" are "terrific kids". Asian students are "harder working", "happy kids", "marvellous kids to teach"; or at least "ninety percent" of them are. Asian kids, Saunders explains, are either "fantastic" or "the bottom rung". There is, she argues, "no in-between".

The concept of "no-in-between" underpins the conversations I had with teachers and parents in 1988. Carl Davies, a teacher, describes Slavic (Yugoslav) students as taller, far nicer, more sensible and more hardworking than all the other students in the school:

> The Slavic kids. There are quite a few of those. They are very noticeable because they can be much bigger than all the other kids in the school. . . Usually the tallest kids in the school will be the Slavs. . . and they are obviously blond and pale complexioned and blue eyed – which you will find some Greek kids are – but not many and they are usually quite nice kids too. They are usually quite sensible and hard-working. It may be because they are not slack. It might be because they are from a particular socio-economic background. I don't

[4] See Chapter 3.

> know what it is but. . . they fit in really well. . . They look Australian for a start. I mean you can pick a Slav kid pretty easily but here they happen to look quite Australian.
>
> (Davies, 1988, ll. pp. 591–603)

Slav students are middle-class, sensible and hardworking students who tend to do well in their schoolwork. Further, these students are whiter than White, "obviously blond", "pale complexioned", "blue eyed". Their almost superhuman tallness, their extreme Whiteness and their goodness is emphasised in Davies's brief aside. Blond Greek students can also be considered "nice". These students easily "fit in" because they "look Australian". In these stories, Slavic students come to embody heroic proportions. Like Australians, they are better than Australian, taller, brighter and whiter; they suggest something almost superhuman, a thing of White mythology. At the same time, they are not quite Australian. Davies's final comment, that "you can pick a Slav kid pretty easily", even though "they happen to look quite Australian" reasserts the notion that they remain different even as they look almost the same.

Spanish students are "trouble and more than the others". At the same time, they have an "enjoyment of life", are "often very happy and well adjusted sort of kids":

> I think they have just crawled out of the primeval slime. It's a real – I think they must have – Perhaps their experiences are burying their whole attitude. They sort of – very – of any particular ethnic group, I put a question mark on them. They are lazy and they are trouble and more than the others.
>
> (Siddons, 1988, ll. pp. 375–379)

> Spanish kids are just lively. I think that I probably speak on behalf of a few of the staff when I say that the Spanish kids are often very happy and well adjusted sort of kids – very chauvinistic – very sexist but it doesn't let them interfere with their enjoyment of life but – yeah they are very pleasant kids.
>
> (Davies, 1988, ll. pp. 529–531)

The stories that parents and teachers tell me about Spanish students suggest two very different conditions: that of unrestrained and innocent enjoyment and that of laziness and primitiveness.[5] To some, Spanish kids "have just crawled out of the primeval slime", are lazy and troublesome. To others, these same students are happy and very pleasant kids, enjoy life, well adjusted and lively. These students do not work hard; value pastimes other than those that underpin academic success. This lack of work hardness is both idyllic and terrible. For Carl Davies, the Spanish student is less hardworking but enjoys life and is more relaxed than us. For Susan Siddons, these students are lazy and the worst of all students. Puritan notions of hard work mix with conceptions of the bohemian good life, making the same student either enviable or despicable beyond belief: happy, well adjusted, bohemian; or peasanty, primeval slime.

The trope of ethnic groups as being other, different and problematic is repeated in different forms and in relation to different ethnic groups. A common description of Greekness is that:

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[5] Western ambivalence about the "other" as both the noble savage and the savage has often been noted in post-colonial literatures. See, for instance, Hall (1997b), Young (1995) and Chow (1998).

> The first-born boys will really be quite spoilt... I think that is pretty common for the Greek kids especially for the boys. There are quite a few Greek girls complaining that they are made sort of second-rate citizens at home. They can carry quite a chip on their shoulder. They're in a different society here a lot of the Greek migrants carry their prejudices with them... into Australia and our kids realise that girls are equal... Over the years I have spoken to quite a few Greek girls who have lots of problems with their parents. They are not allowed to go out. Their parents watch their every move. They are expected to do heaps and heaps at home. There is a lot of sibling rivalry.
>
> (Davies, 1988, ll. pp. 542–568)

A central theme is that of the dysfunctional Greek home. Boys and girls are treated differently. First-born boys "will really be quite spoilt". Girls have "lots of problems with their parents"; are repressed and over-protected and are expected to help a lot around the home. "They are made sort of second-rate citizens at home" and "carry quite a chip on their shoulder". The pathological condition of Greek home life is placed in relation to "our kids" who "realise that girls are equal". From Carl Davies' conversations with these students, he has come to realise that although "they're in a different society here", they "carry their prejudices with them". Davies final sentence, "there is a lot of sibling rivalry" indicates the insidious nature of the stereotype. The quintessential dilemma that inhabits the family lives of so many us is used to define the dysfunctional home lives of all of them.

Stories of others as pathological and as unable to know how to treat their women, look after their families and bring up their children are repeated again and again. In Helen Brown's story, the field of narration is that of Greek, Turkish and Middle Eastern girls:

> Yes, if they wear provocative clothing and get into trouble, nobody is going to protect them. A lot of Greek and Turkish, Middle Eastern girls, behave with a great deal more, sexually provocative actions, because they believe that nobody is going to, particularly if they have older brothers, no one is going to rape them, or molest them. And they look at life, as all sugar and almonds and white brides and they write in a Mills and Boonish type way.
>
> (Brown, 1988, ll. pp. 285–303)

Helen Brown complains about the ways that Turkish, Greek and Middle Eastern women and men behave. Girls "wear provocative clothing" and are sexually provocative in their actions. Their place as temptress is both purposeful (they know "they have older brothers" to protect them) and naïve, as "they look at life as all sugar and almonds". About the boys she explains that:

> The boys will be, particularly certain types of ethnic boys who believe that males can do as they please and the females... those boys will leave those classes with more respect for women's rights and the girls will have more understanding of why their brothers and fathers and uncles, sometimes, appear to be playing the heavy-handed personae, because they think that it is their right.
>
> (Brown, 1988, ll. pp. 230–258)

The girls suffer the discipline of their "heavy-handed" brothers, fathers and uncles without really understanding what happens to them. Brothers, fathers and uncles are "heavy handed personae" who are not only disrespectful of women's rights but abusive of them. Their right to do so is enshrined in points of view which allow

ethnic boys to believe that "males can do as they please" with "females". The ethnic woman is also contemptible; the repressed victim of male violence and authority. Daughters strut around irresponsible, sexually provocative, repressed and yet quite unaware that their task is to protect themselves.

The notion of ethnic groups as dysfunctional is particularly persistent in discussions about the Muslim woman. Once again the narration begins with a description of the pathological condition of the ethnic home. Bill Kelly tells me:

> I have noticed in some of the other groups who are coming out now. I must say that some of the Muslim boys that we are getting, the Afghans and so on are different in terms of, I think again it is probably the society that they come from. In terms of their attitudes in terms of. . . and they have to be dealt with in a special way and that's fine.
>
> Q. Can you extend on that?
>
> A. Sure – Just – It is not entirely – It's more specific – We haven't got enough of them. There's about – the few that we have got out here – I can give you one example with a guy and his sister and I have been to India and Kashmir where I have seen Muslim society where the females are pushed terribly into the background and everything is kind of the male side of the family and he has just got his freedom and it was just noticeable and the female was in the background and the male was extremely pushy and demanding.
>
> Q. And you can see that happening here?
>
> A. This is this case here and I won't generalise from the case where this was taken, but it would be nice if it isn't going to be the case. Because as I said, I don't think that is the way that Australian society is to go – that sort of importance of people and so on but we will wait and see what happens as more of these people come out.
>
> (Kelly, 1988, ll. pp. 411–433)

The ethnic woman, this time the Muslim woman, now the woman from India, Pakistan and Afghanistan is pushed to the background, by the pushy, demanding ethnic, this time the Muslim man. These "other groups" are arrogant in their difference. They "have to be dealt with in a special way". The terms "female", "male" and "these people" further separate them from the civilisation and humanity of the Australian society that should not go this way. The contrast of their behaviour to the way in which we would behave is reflected in the last part of my conversation with Kelly. "You can see that happening here?", I ask. "We will wait and see what happens as more of these people come out", Kelly replies.

The contradictory nature of these descriptions becomes most noticeable when I speak with my respondents about what it means to be "Asian". Tracy Cunningham describes to me the dysfunctional nature of the Asian home:

> We have one Year 11 student, Tam. She is here with her father. Her three younger sisters have moved out of the area, but stay with the school, because they know friends and teachers – security – travel a long way to school which is actually out of character, because the Indo-Chinese do not like travelling to work or school, they like to live nearby.
>
> Tam went through the school, getting straight As, but is also mother to her sisters, housewife to father etc. Father had been in the army and imprisoned, by Communists, and beaten and when he got out of the army he tried at least half a dozen times to escape. Lost everything in bribes of gold, bargain not fulfilled. Finally could only get half the family out. . . Mother and older sister still there. I have helped write letters, re Sponsorship.
>
> The motivation is just remarkable. You could eat your dinner off the floor in their house. The house and the garden are lovely. The father had a job and lost it. He helps, but there

> are traditional things that men wouldn't do. We actually took Tam with the family, sailing – don't usually take students, but Tam is special. You have to be very careful about taking students.
>
> (Cunningham, 1988, ll. pp. 150–171)

Tam is "out of character". Her story is made in opposition to the ways most Indo-Chinese behave, to the ways "they like to live". Cunningham finds her taken-for-granted notions of Asianness put in question. Tam is the perfect "housewife": "you could eat your dinner off the floor", and "the house and the garden are lovely". Nevertheless, her mother is absent, and her father ineffectual: he does not have a job and he does not help properly in the house. His ineptitude is a product of his traumatic past and because "there are traditional things that men wouldn't do". Despite her problematic home life "Tam is special". She is "getting straight A's" and her "motivation is just remarkable". Tracy's narration shifts from the specific story of Tam, to notions about these students generally who are usually not like that. "You have to be very careful about taking students" she tells me.

A second and common story chronicles the disturbing presence of the Asian gang. Carl Davies describes the dangers he knows about because:

> I had a boy in the other day who was saying he had a few problems and one of them was that he was being hassled by a gang of Vietnamese kids and he was saying... He was Greek... and he was saying that a lot of the kids don't – I was going to say don't like – but I should say are a bit wary of Indo-Chinese kids because they feel that if you cross one of them they will gang up on you. Now I don't know if that is true but that certainly was what he believed and he knew that there was a group of Indo-Chinese kids led by one kid who was from a different school who was after him and he knew that one day they would catch up with him and bash him. He wasn't particularly worried about it. Yeah they certainly do have their – what those other cultures are capable of doing and how they are going to react to contact.
>
> (Davies, 1988, ll. pp. 370–393)

Davies does not quite know if there are Asian gangs but he has his information from one of his students... The narration shifts from the story he has heard from "a boy in the other day" to his own perceptions "of what I should say". His final remarks shift his story, to the general "they certainly do have" their gangs. Gang members become superhuman. "The gang of Vietnamese kids" becomes the "Indo-Chinese kids" you have to be "wary of", were often "after him" and "one day they would catch up with him and bash him". By the end of the paragraph, they are "those other cultures" generally who are extraordinarily dangerous as one never knows what they "are capable of doing and how they are going to react".

An alternative account describes "Asians" as passive. "Asians", Tom Paterson explains, are a quiet shy race, grateful for small things, not very able to help themselves. It is, he reminisces:

> A real shame... feel sorry for them because they're really genuine... There's others like Indians that have been very good you know taken everything in. It's very hard but I think with the Asians, I just feel that there are, just that little bit of language barriers that keeps them from speaking. Also I think they're a very shy race. I feel it's going to take them a long while to ever get to a stage where they can get up and really speak with authority, confidence because I think they're still very frightened people but they're very nice people the ones I've spoken to I've always gone up and spoken to them and try to make them feel

> at home. This is the whole thing to try and build their confidence. I've had a friend recently, he saw this car break down just down the side of the school. In a car and he stopped... He said, "Are you alright?" He said, "I've run out of petrol". My friend said, "Look come on. I'll take you down and get you some". So he took him down to Southgate and got him petrol and brought him back. And that man was basically crying. He said, "You are the first person that's ever spoken to me or treated me like a human".
>
> (Paterson, 1988, ll. pp. 24–35)

Paterson differentiates himself from many others who do not behave well towards Asians. He himself has "always gone up and spoken to them and tri[ed] to make them feel at home". What he does is "try and build their confidence". Paterson explains that he "feels sorry for" Asians. He thinks that they are "very nice", "really genuine". However, they are generally "a very shy race", "very frightened people", unable to speak for themselves and silenced by their lack of language. These cultural, perhaps even biological, inhibitions prevent them "from speaking". Paterson's role is exemplified by his friend's act of kindness. "The man was basically crying" as a consequence. "You are the first person that's ever spoken to me" or who has "treated me like a human" his friend is told. Paterson's friend stands out as an exemplary case within a society where most might see Asians as subhuman. His achievement throws into relief the difficulties most of us who are "at home" experience even speaking to such a "shy" and "frightened" people. In direct contrast to the ferocity of the Asian gang member, the Asian here is ineffectual and quite dysfunctional without help.

Juxtaposed with these images of the Asian as pathological and dangerous, timid and ineffectual is the conceptual image of the brilliant Asian student. As ESL teacher, Barry Houston explains:

> They work extremely hard. Like this Cambodian boy, at the end of last year, who had no schooling in Cambodia. After 3 years, he did HSC and got into Medicine, under special consideration. The Chinese and the Vietnamese, even more so than Cambodians... they work very hard... Mostly Cambodians, Vietnamese, Chinese at present. Mostly work hard, old-fashionedness, politeness – teachers love them. Our past principal was delighted, because our HSC results were out of sight. Get straight A's in Math and Science, because of Vietnamese boys. Look at Dux Board. The names for the last two years are of Chinese students.
>
> (Houston, 1988, pp. 16–17)[6]

A common narrative is that of the Asian student who works "extremely hard", is "old fashioned" and "polite" and who achieves almost against the odds. They are the perfect students, quiet, hardworking, obedient and high achieving especially in areas of maths education. These accomplishments have positive consequences for the school community generally. Houston remarks cynically that "teachers love

[6] The Year 12 examination, the Higher School Certificate (HSC) was sat for by all students at the end of their secondary schooling. The results from this examination were used to define a student's tertiary placement. By 1998, these examinations had been replaced by examinations in Years 11 and 12 as part of the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE). Students could sit this examination for entry to University of take other study pathways such as that provided by the more technical Vocational Education Training (VET).

them" and "our past principal was delighted". "Our HSC results" are "out of sight" "because of Vietnamese boys". The aptitude of the Asian student is nevertheless pathological. Their achievement, and the hard work they put in to accomplish this, is not normal and not quite sensible:

> Asians are more methodical, very structured. If they go away from the straight line, they get lost. Europeans tend to be more creative. All kids including Australians like to be spoon-fed but if you ask the Asians to create something, they are lost – except for the art field. Can be creative in the art field but not so much language wise, even if they speak good English. All types of artwork, some fantastic students in art ie. painting, but language wise... are very structured. This is why they are very good at science. Not just a language thing being good at maths/science. Wonder when Asians become more integrated, whether they will become creative writers.
>
> (Saunders, 1988, ll. pp. 108–120)

Asian students are indeed doing well, but their achievement is a narrow one and a reflection of a lack on their part. They are "methodological", "structured" and even more than Australian kids "like to be spoon-fed". They can speak good English and can be good at art, but only in very specific ways. Asian students, as Carol Saunders explains to me, are not creative, cannot think for themselves. Their hard work is to repeat and to regurgitate what they have been given in school. Their thinking lacks flexibility. There is a difference in the form that this image of "Asian" takes. Whereas in other portrayals of ethnic groups my conversations shift from the individual case to the general, here teachers, parents and I confidently discuss the way these students are. "They work extremely hard", Houston tells me. "Asians are more methodical". "Europeans tend to be more creative", Saunders says.

Descriptions of Asian students are contradictory: they have problematic pasts and difficult home lives; are dangerous and timid; brilliant students but lacking in creativity. There is little in-between here, Greek teacher, Dimitrious Kalidis explains:

> I separate particularly the Asians into two groups – the very bright and the very dumb – That is how I see them. Those who are dumb – they are dumb – You can't do anything with them. Those who are bright – even if they are not – those who are really willing to become somebody – They try they try and unbelievably how much they try. They spend hours and hours to study and to overcome their difficulties.
>
> (Kalidis,1988, ll. pp. 435–453)

In 1988, distinctions are clear. Asians come in "two groups", the "very dumb", or the "very bright". Kalidis' omniscience is almost absolute: he can "separate" them, can "see them"; and he can try but often cannot "do anything with them". Those others, in this case Asian students, are clearly one thing or the other: very bright, hard working, respectful, high achieving; or very dumb, difficult and impossible to help. There does indeed seem to be no-in-between.

In 1998, I no longer hear stories about Spanish, Greek or Slavic students. Instead teachers, parents and I speak about Cook Islander students. Varvara Kokanakis tells me her opinion of the Cook Islanders:

> With the Cook Islanders you ask them to do something, it's much more relaxed, more understated and yet I'm sure there's a whole lot of hierarchy going on there as well. With the Cook Islanders, mainly, respect seems to be with the older people, so that's what I'm saying

> about being in tune. How people do this, every society – It needn't be cultural. It's different ways that they either show respect for people or they encourage people or whatever.
>
> (Kokanakis, 1998, ll. pp. 494–500)

Bernard Pieterse is similarly impressed with the Eden-like existence of the Cook Islander student:

> In the Cook Island community, where the kids were walking around barefoot and singing songs, playing guitar with a flower in the ear. And why should I take the guitar from them and tell them to put the flower away because it is not part of the school uniform – impose silence bans as they are working quietly on individual projects.
>
> (Pieterse, 1998, p. 5)

The description of the Cook Islander remains in dualistic relation between the exotic and the mundane, the primitive and the modern. They are described as much more relaxed, in tune with their environment from a place of "walking round barefoot", "singing songs", of "playing guitar" and "walking around with a flower in the ear". The existence of the Cook Island student is both noble and idyllic and totally at odds with all that Pieterse finds appropriate in the material, sensible world of the Australian classroom. In the modern world of the school, Cook Islanders need to think otherwise, put away their guitar and work quietly on "individual projects". In the real world of the Australian school, teachers face students who need to wear school uniform, obey "silence bans" and work "quietly on individual projects". The quandary for Pieterse is that the consequences of these differences – the way they should be described, and what should be done about them – have become unsayable. How "should I take the guitar from them"? How can I "tell them to put the flower away"? he asks. Nevertheless, the dimensions of these differences remain within his conversation: a chasm found between the kids "walking around barefoot and singing songs" and the kids "working quietly on individual projects".

The story of the Asian student, well used to hard work, polite, respectful and achieving good results, is repeated in 1998 but in a slightly different form. Asian students still want "to achieve". Nevertheless, the utopian classroom peopled by perfect Asian students is something of the past. Teachers and parents are concerned that other Asian students, the Refugee-Asian student and the second-generation Asian student have somehow taken over. For Bill Kelly, the perfect Asian student is:

> One of the things that we used to have and don't have any more is, the number of new arrivals, kids that were straight from, as in, they'd come in as refugees, as refugees and more or less into the classroom that, usually, were fairly skilled and perhaps, a little bit older. Now we seem to have a lot more kids of an Asian background. They were either born in Australia, or worked their way through the Australian system. It seems to me now that, perhaps, that ambition that those kids had had earlier on, has been diluted, somewhat, and to different extents and growing up and moving through the system, their... Whereas the other kids were refugees from an Asian country, that came into Australia and were fairly interested in education. These kids are, a lot, more like, perhaps you might think one of the... kids who have just come through the education system. They're still wanting to achieve, but it's not an ambition...
>
> (Kelly, 1998, ll. pp. 15–26)

For Kelly speaking in 1998, the kinds of Asian found within the school have changed. The Asian students who come here still go through the motions of "wanting to achieve", "but it's not an ambition". Today's Asian student is a pale replica of the perfect student of earlier times. "That... has been diluted". The Asian of past times forms the model against which today's students are judged: provides a proper example of hard work for the Australian student; and is an exemplar to other groups who arrive in Australia. They are "one of the things that we used to have". The analysis of the concept "things" is of interest. The Asian student of the past has become an object against which today's students can be measured. The Asian student in today's classroom is also not quite one-of-us. Their very contact with us has not been useful. Instead contact with us has rubbed away some of the nobility of their own culture, contaminated them with the worst of ourselves. In this way, these hybrid students, neither one-of-them nor one-of-us, remain nevertheless "other". Our ability to speak about them is never in doubt. "We seem to have a lot more kids of an Asian background", Kelly tells me.

The narrational maps that shape the trope "ethnicity" take a different slant as teachers and parents discuss the Muslim student. Now stories of the pathological ethnic home merge with notions of the dangerous fundamentalism of Islam:

> Oh one of the things about multiculturalism, this is my own opinion, I think with the school. Like some certain things, where... in their culture, I don't think, should be approved in Australia. Like, if it's going to hurt a child, like what happens with Muslim girls in Africa or something, then I don't think they should be approved in Australia... if you come to Australia you should respect culture, you should also respect way of life, so it doesn't mean you can have five wives or four wives...
>
> Also this is private, I can't discuss it, but you have child abuse. You have children who are beaten up, by their parents, because of their culture. They can't report or they can't say it. That's not to me Multiculturalism. It's abuse.
>
> (Vadra, 1998, ll. pp. 694–715)

Central to tropes about Islam are terrible things that can hardly be said. "This is private", Violeta Vadra tells me: "I can't discuss it"; "they can't report... it"; "they can't say it". The "it", the "certain things" refer to that which is going "to hurt a child", the thing "what happens with Muslim girls", it is "child abuse". The loathsomeness of "five wives or four", or "children who are beaten up", pales in significance. The real horribleness is that of female circumcision. This concept is fundamental to our conversation, without ever quite being mentioned. It is something which "happens", which is "abuse", which "hurt". No longer simply pathological in their family lives, the Muslim family is shadowy, evil, macabre and absolutely depraved. My conversation with Gillian Mulhauser exhibits similar and paradoxical shuffling between the unspeakable practices of others and our understanding that the very labelling of some as other is wrong:

> Yes, and there's also... got students who have corpor... it's more than corporal punishment it's violence and the main part, the cultural and the role of women in some of these cultures.
>
> Q. So what do you do in those kind of situations?
>
> A. Well, because it's... sometimes it relates to individuals who can't be... who can't be expected to... just have to work around it. But I think people need to know about it in general terms. It's not something that you get up... You don't want to do it in a negative way,

you don't want to get... to do with people, there's a lot of domestic violence or whatever or they treat their women badly.

Q. Because then, of course, you're doing something quite else and when you're trying to...

A. Yes, and you don't want it to be negative and you don't want people to get more negative feelings than they, may, have about it.

Q. And then on the other hand you want them to understand that if the girl comes and she's...upset?

A. You've also got to look at... well you know maybe there are things that the kids don't want everybody to know so you've got to talk about in... general terms, I sometimes don't think that general terms actually...

Q. Expresses enough to do with anything?

A. Yes.

Q. It's a thin line isn't it between trying to help people understand and all... typing people, or invading people's privacy and such?

A. Yes, because you don't want to say, "Well alright some of the African girls have had female circumcision." You don't want to get up there and say that because it might...

Q. Then they'll say that all of them have and that they're primitive and...

A. Or else they might say something in class that is totally inappropriate and I think the other thing people have to learn about, myself included too...

Q. I mean I know all that... and that's the worst of all of this because you sit and you talk and you think God I'm stupid sometimes.

A. Yes, about what's appropriate and what's inappropriate and it takes a lot of learning.

(Mulhauser, 1998, ll. pp. 861–888)

From the beginning Gillian Mulhauser is barely able to say what she is speaking about. Her sentences remain unfinished. We speak of an almost unsayable "it", which is "more than corporal punishment, it's violence". "It" looms enormous as something you "just have to work around". Nevertheless both of us (Mulhauser and myself) are absolutely certain about what we are speaking about. Nor is the truth of our assumptions about what it is ever in doubt. There is no need to say more, we both know exactly what we mean. The loathsome story of the Muslim woman literally becomes the unspeakable. Behind coded stories of the African woman, her home life, her threatened sexual castration, are coded knowingnesses. At the same time, we are ashamed. We are aware that in noting these behaviours we are "typing people" and we are concerned about the implications of doing this. The focus of our frustration is the nature of the relation in-between. We know to be careful not to "type people", to put them into categories. Yet we have already learnt about them, we already know who they are. We have already made them despicably and frighteningly other.

By 1998, the definiteness with which my respondents and I describe the-way-how-other-people-are becomes fragmented, changing and complex. Nevertheless, beneath these changing patterns, I map out ambivalent stories about others shaped along the tortuous continuum between orientalism and nativism speculated upon in post-colonial writings.[7] The uncaring, violent/idyllic, loving vision of the Cook Islander home and the bohemian, joyful/lazy, primitive, absolutely hopeless attitude

[7] See for instance Chow (1993, 1998).

of the Spanish student reconstructs (albeit with a different focus) the no-in-between of 10 years earlier. The Asian, now also the fee-paying student, the new arrival, the ESL student, is the bright, not bright, good student and problematic. The Asian who has been in Australia for some time remains in a space between "usness" and "themness", a new kind of "themness", neither them, nor us, who nevertheless remains certainly not a member of "us". The Muslim, the African and the Southern Asian are represented within complex stories of the unspeakable. The very silence underlying these tales encodes something already known which seems even more horrendous in its lack of telling. The Muslim man, no longer man but male, is not only chauvinistic and rough, but breaks the most hallowed of Australian values and institutions. The Muslim female, no longer merely complicit in her subservience, performs her own circumcision. The silent awfulness of these stories is the substantiality of the difference ascribed to these persons, even as the notion "identity" now seems disjunctive, slippery and fluid.

6.3 Safe Spaces/Dangerous Places

Teachers and parents spoke differently about ethnic and race relations in 1988 from the way they spoke in 1998. The pattern of this argument was both repeated and changed over the decade. In 1988, respondents understood ethnic identities as essentially different and as separate from us. At the same time, these barriers were easily crossed by small acts of kindness, tolerance and good will. In 1998, ethnic identities were harder to differentiate, even as the differences between them were maintained. The condition of being within an ethnic group was understood in contradictory and extreme terms in both these years. In 1998, definitions of the condition "ethnic" seemed slippery, even as these identities continued to be described as absolutely different from us.

Lather's (1991) third suggestion is that the conceptual organisation of these arguments be located and problematised. In 1988, teachers and parents sought to know about and locate the ethnic groups who had entered their community. Their conversations were pervaded by a sense of shock and their inability to know how to deal with groups that seemed so different. In 1998, their efforts to do this continued to be fraught. On the one hand, my respondents felt more confident that they knew about the ethnic groups in their community. On the other hand, their ability to know and locate these groups became increasingly confused. Boundaries that defined the most taken-for-granted ways of being in the world – identity, place and time – seemed to fall apart. A particular focus of the literatures of the Whiteness and post-colonial writings discussed earlier is the position that an unmarked "White", or in the case of post-colonial literature a "coloniser", self defines its being though the embodiment and enunciation of what is other-than-itself. Bhabha argued that this psychosis by which others are made through the fantastical desire of the self is pornographic. The "other" becomes both the focus of the self's obsession to know, and that which remains out of its reach and not quite in its control:

> The fetish or stereotype gives access to an "identity" which is predicated as much on mastery and pleasure as it is on anxiety and defence, for it is a form of multiple and contradictory belief in its recognition of difference and disavowal of it.
>
> (Bhabha, 1983, p. 202)

There are three strands to Bhabha's theoretical claim. The first can be understood in terms of Said's orientalising condition. Here the "White" and "colonialising" self traces out its own condition through the understanding of what it-is-not. Contained within this condition is the obsessive desire to make that which is outside the self entirely visible and knowable. The second strand is consistent with Lacan's insight that the desire to know and locate the other is bound to fail. The impulse to control is disrupted, slipping, and incomplete, as the "other", who is the obsession of their desire to know, remains out of their gaze and not quite knowable. The third strand of Bhabha's analysis introduces the concept of the fetish, whereby the other who is so much on our mind becomes not only not quite known, but also not quite able to be spoken about.

Recent writings examine how Edward Said's logic of orientalism, as it relates to the knowledge and control of others, is played out within contemporary Western communities. Ghasson Hage's analysis traces this logic as part of the Australian national condition. These logics are not mere matters of the mind but are material in their manifestation. As Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson (1999) put it, space itself is not "a neutral grid on which cultural difference, historical memory and societal organisation is inscribed". These relations are made in the most taken-for-granted material as well as conceptual spaces. In 1988, teachers and parents feel uncomfortable, as they are unsure about how to deal with the presence of ethnic groups whom they do not quite understand and cannot quite place within their school community. In 1998, teachers and parents feel that the school is a safe place and that they know about and can locate the ethnic groups in their school community. Even so, they remain frightened about the presence of ethnic groups who remain not-quite-one-of-our-community, who are not-quite-located-in-our-community and who are not-quite-known-within-the-school.

Cited in the previous chapter, Tom Paterson spoke of Southgate as an Eden "all gone to what it was". Beneath his story are metaphors of home and hearth disturbed by the presence of strangers. It is an image played out again and again but in different ways. For Helen Brown, the arrival of such different ethnic groups is an invasion of her most immediate home spaces. She recounts:

> People come out... The streets we live in have a mixture of people... Our shopping centres have signs: Vietnamese–Chinese is spoken here. I expect to be able to go to the bottom of my street and when I speak to the – they understand what I want – but I am finding, more and more, that the shopkeeper doesn't speak enough English for me to buy what is in their shop. This is in an area that would be regarded as Anglo-Saxon background. My favourite deli – the people only speak Spanish. My chicken shop – it is only Vietnamese that is spoken – and so I am finding that I am not able to communicate with the people, in my own area. To buy cheese etc. – I don't mind people going in there that speak that language – but I think that the shopkeeper should be able to communicate with me.
>
> (Brown, 1988, p. 9)

Brown is concerned about the people who "come out", the "mixture of people" who have entered "my own area", who now own "my favourite deli" and "my chicken-shop". Brown expects to be able to go to the shops in her street and when "I speak" the shopkeeper should "understand what I want". Her concern is that "I am not able to communicate", that they "should be able to communicate with me". Embattled by the impact of so many others, Brown finds herself under siege, unable to communicate within her own neighbourhood or to carry out the most mundane of her day-to-day tasks. Her Anglo-Saxon background is under threat as Greeks, Vietnamese and Spanish people congregate in the street she lives, take over her shopping centre and change the familiar sameness of the demographic character of the community in which she lives. Their inability to speak English limits the ways she is able to communicate her most basic needs. Her agency to carry out her most taken-for-granted day-to-day activities is compromised. She feels that her ability to negotiate her day-to-day life is impinged upon in the vicinity of her most immediate communal spaces. Her sense that she is out of control of her most intimate affairs resounds in her final aside, "I don't mind" if they speak that language between themselves, but they "should be able to communicate with me".

Susan Siddons walks around the playground and wonders at the intrusion of other groups with similar surprise:

> On Tuesday when I was out on duty and I was looking round and I saw a number of kids engaged in some kind of activity and you've got a great bunch of nationalities and they are getting on splendidly and maybe there is whole in that – certainly I think that it has enlarged the horizons of the original inhabitants – there are some original inhabitants who simply don't want it – not at all – you know – traditionalists conservatives and so on, and the one thing that concerns me is our treatment of our own – our treatment of our Aborigines is abysmal beyond words. I don't know what the future holds for some of these kids, you know, whether there will be acceptance. I guess there has got to be because there are so many – there are so many indeed but I think that feelings die hard and you think of what has been going on in the US and what goes on in England as well too, and whether there will ever be acceptance, true acceptance – who would know. . .
>
> (Siddons, 1988, p. 9)

At first, Siddons speaks as one confident in her place within the school community. Her duties as teacher demand that she watches and controls the space of the playground. "I was out on duty", she tells me. "I was looking around". "I saw a number of kids". Her conversation shifts from the playground to the general. The kids she watches become "a great bunch of nationalities". They "have enlarged the horizons of the original inhabitants". That she is one of those "original inhabitants" is made clear in the next sentence. The Aborigines, far from being in control of the land, are "our Aborigines" one of "our own" whom we treat well or badly. Like Australia's Indigenous people, ethnic groups "getting on splendidly" provide the exotic backdrop to social scenery in which she is the protagonist and over which she has control. Nevertheless, she is frightened. She does not quite know what her students are doing. The "great bunch of nationalities" she watches are busily engaged in "some kind of activity". She "wonders what the future holds for some of these kids". "There are so many, there are so many". She understands the feeling of some other of the "original inhabitants who simply don't want it". She fears what

will happen as "you think of what has been going on in the USA and what goes on in England". What "it" is, is not directly stated. Its implied meaning suggests that the relationship between us and those other kids is potentially problematic, that "what has been going on" elsewhere might happen here.

Emma Hampton, parent, considers the spaces of the playground as ones where each ethnic group has a place:

> Q. Do your kids find that the different groups in the school, do they tend to group together into different groups?
>
> A. Yes I think they've said they do. Because Andrew doesn't always go with the boys that he likes at the school because he said they all mix with the Wogs as they say. Now I don't know who is in the Wogs but the Wogs and the Asians probably stay together. I think they do.
>
> Q. So he doesn't go with some Australian kids because they mix?
>
> A. No he just goes to one section of the school and I don't know who actually stays there – but his mate I think David that goes and because he's a bit sporty maybe he goes where the Wogs are. I don't know but I know that I think they do sort of segregate themselves a bit. But then Melanie's right in the middle of all of them so I don't know.
>
> (Hampton, 1988. p. 8)

Hampton is clear that school spaces are divided into appropriated places made different by the relation between where the "Skips" and "Wogs" are. These spaces matter. Andrew does not go into those spaces, even to be with "the boys that he likes" "because he said they all mix with the Wogs". The notion of who is a Wog is unclear. It is not necessarily Asian. Asians are also other, and they "probably stay together" with the Wogs. The students Andrew likes are not Wogs or Asians. In my aside, I assume the kids he likes are "Australian" and Hampton accepts this. His mate David is interesting. He crosses the playground and "goes where the Wogs are". Andrew does not go with David but "just goes to one section of the school". Melanie has chosen to be "right in the middle of all of them". The spaces within the playground mark separations between where they are located and where we are located. It is a process which Hampton is almost sure she understands. However, her sense of control is not quite complete. She is not quite sure of the meaning of Melanie's freedom to choose in this way as "they do sort of segregate themselves a bit".

Bill Kelly is also concerned that ethnic groups have in some way invaded his spaces. He does not need to be worried about these groups in that:

> I have never seemed to have any great prejudice or any – It's something that has happened in Australia and up to me – in terms of a teacher I don't see any advantage in it. I hear the comments that come out about Asian ghettoes and so forth and they shouldn't be there and I don't have any feeling about it at all – I have – and it is probably because I have taught them – found out how nice they are. I mean again in any group there are people that you would rather not associate with but that is fine. It's a word that – perhaps the only thing that I have come up against in students that I have disliked intensely is students that have brought parents' prejudices out with them.
>
> (Kelly, 1988, ll. pp. 398–310)

Kelly's contention is that he "never seem(s) to have any great prejudice". "In any group there are people that you would rather not associate with". He knows they are

alright, however, "because I have taught them" and "found out how nice they are". Despite their niceness, members of some groups belong as one-of-them. They have been foisted onto him. "It's something that has happened in Australia" and if it is "up to me" "I don't see any advantage in it". The "it" refers to the numbers of ethnic identities, particularly Asians, who have entered his community in ways which were beyond his control. As he knows these people, he does not "have any feeling about it at all". Like Helen Brown and Susan Siddons, Kelly maintains that he has the right to choose how he will behave towards members of ethnic groups. He is concerned about the numbers of ethnic groups who have entered his school community and is frustrated that he has been unable to influence this decision making. As it is he has decided that they are acceptable. This acceptance is limited by his ability to know and locate ethnic groups once they have happened to Australia. His acceptance remains provisional. He hears comments about "Asian ghettos" and he "dislikes (it) intensely" if students "have brought parents' prejudices out with them".

When Barry Houston speaks to me in 1998, he still remembers the frustration that he felt when he didn't know how to work with the different students who entered the school:

> I remember I just got to be Co-ordinator and I was told thirty students had arrived and that they were in room 30 or something. I picked up two MEA's [Multicultural Education Aides] a Chinese and Cambodian MEA, that's our main group, walked down to the room and got met with a room full of Africans and Hispanics. That was the sort of change, that quickly, just boom! I just. . . And I suddenly got hit by this change and. . . they would have been and we didn't do nearly enough of finding out what that meant. You know, different learning styles, different. . . In this case they were new arrivals and we didn't have any new arrival programs.
>
> (Houston, 1998, ll. pp. 258–281)

Houston is speaking here with the benefit of hindsight. He reminisces ten years later that "we didn't do nearly enough". His description of the shock of this "change" in demographics on the school is one that was repeated by many teachers in 1988. Teachers and parents, faced with the arrival of large numbers of ethnic groups into their school, no longer knew how to understand their students or how to locate them within their community. It is "boom!" and "I suddenly got hit by this change". What "we didn't do nearly enough of" is "finding out what that meant". The "that" is the relationship implied in the negotiation of that which is "different". It is about negotiating "their different learning styles, different. . ." The following conversation with Carl Davies illustrates how each of us struggle to know what "that" meant. Here, Davies instructs me how to approach students of different ethnic groups.

> Q. My story – the first time I met May I was speaking slowly and loudly.
>
> A. I have noticed a few people on the staff talking to her like that – I know May – I know her socially and she is very intelligent, very well spoken and I mentioned to her that this particular person – do they annoy you when they speak to you slowly, you know, and she said "Well you get used to it, but it is a bit annoying". . .
>
> Q. It just annoys me how ignorant I am too.
>
> A. About things that you don't know – Have you spoken to many kids?
>
> Q. No, that is what I want to start next week. I haven't spoken to any kids.

> A. Did you speak to some of the people like Quong and May about how you approach the kids?
>
> Q. That wouldn't have been a stupid idea to have done that.
>
> A. They would have told you things like – If they don't look at you in the eye... and crossing your legs and keeping your legs out straight and things like that. They are supposed to be signs of rudeness... I mean you will speak to a kid and he won't give you eye contact. They don't look at you and you think that it is rudeness.
>
> (Davies 1988, ll. pp. 289–319)

Davies and I consider how we can come to know people from other ethnic groups. The focus of our conversation is how best to approach "people like Quong and May". I am ashamed and frustrated. My ability to speak to these aides or their students (and therefore to write about them) seems beyond my reach without Davies's guidance. Davies is more experienced. He is the one who is able to tell me "about the things" I "don't know". He "know(s) May": he knows her "socially"; that she comes from a "good background", "is very intelligent". You do not need to speak "slowly" to her. The "things" I do not know take on extreme importance. Without them proper contact cannot take place, they may be construed as "rudeness".

In 1998, Southgate is understood by teachers particularly as "somewhere safe", "comfortable", "more relaxed", "because everyone's different". "One of the major things and one of the reasons why kids like being here is because they've got so many people who are in the same position". Students are travelling from the other side of Melbourne because they feel that the school is providing a safe environment. They travel long distances to come to Southgate, because they feel safe and secure, they like the environment and the feel of the place. Students come to the school from the dangerous world that is outside. "The kids say" Danny Miller explains, that "the school is so much safer" because here "we don't get shot, when we go down the street, like we did at home". It is a school world, which is safer than the world from which students came but also than the Australian world outside the school. As parent aide, Violeta Vadra tells me:

> There was a lot of bullying because they are different. We are providing a lot of students, travelling from really far distances, from the other side of Melbourne, because the covered girls, Muslim girls, say that they feel like school is providing a safe environment. Daughter was being bullied in another school because she was different. So here everybody looks different, so nobody's different, everybody's different.
>
> (Vadra, 1998, ll. pp. 628–643)

What is different in 1998 is difference itself. The comfortableness of Southgate Secondary School is embedded in the ways "everybody looks different", and "nobody's different" and in the manner that everyone accepts that. Difference is not, however, something that has disappeared. The school is providing a safe environment for those people who are different: "the covered girls", the girl bullied elsewhere because "she was different". In other schools, these students are bullied because other students are not different. Difference ceases to be a problem here only in that most of the students here would be considered different elsewhere. The analysis of the word difference itself becomes crucial. The school locates those students who are

"different", and as such not quite part of the not-different community. The school itself is safe because "we are providing" a safe environment for them.

Many teachers and parents suggest that those outside the school may not realise this accomplishment. Parents Gail Dreske and Julie Pink explain that Southgate is a safe place for their children but that other parents do not understand:

> When Caroline was going to Southgate, I know of two people that said, "Sending her to Southgate? That's a crummy school, you don't want to send her there" sort of thing. "There are a lot of drugs there and you don't really want to mix with some of the students there."
>
> Guns and knives and...
>
> This is it...
>
> My boy.
>
> And they're utterly untrue.
>
> Definitely.
>
> It's not there, not on the inside...
>
> But we know that this is what's stopping people.
>
> Someone saying to you, that if you send your kid there, you are being, somehow, irresponsible...
>
> It's very annoying, when you find out, in actual fact, that it's got a very... It's got all these things that they wouldn't have got.
>
> It makes it difficult and it's stupid.
>
> (Dreske & Pink, 1998, ll. pp. 832–875)

Dreske and Pink differentiate themselves from the parents on the outside, who do not understand what students within the school are really like. What's stopping people is their belief that there are drugs at the school, and that you "don't really want to mix with some of the students there". As members of the community "on the inside", these parents know these comments to be "utterly untrue". They remain concerned about the people on the outside; worry who will consider them "irresponsible" "if you send your kid there". Dreske and Pink compare the amorphous parent on the outside to their own more tolerant understanding of the real nature of the school. If the parent on the outside did know how to work within the school then they would realise that "it's not there". The real import of their comments is contained in the definition of "it". Once they know the students within the school, they know that the terrible things that could happen have not occurred. Further, their own children have learned something from working with these other students and learning more about them. "It's got all these things that they wouldn't have got." It is contained within the very presence of other race and ethnic groups. Not only it is not there, but also students are also learning how to work with other ethnic groups in ways that they would not if they went to school elsewhere.

Danny Miller also considers that Southgate is special in the way that it is a safe place for its students, but that people outside the school simply do not understand:

> When I go to the Southmeadow committee, which is one of the City of Southton's local area committees, they are very Anglo and, whilst they... their committee consists of a whole range of people, the real power brokers in the group are WASPs [White Anglo Saxon Protestants] and they don't like our school. It's probably a defamatory statement, but they don't... So we're fighting all the way. The committee has given money for the pergola to be built and a new barbecue and they have given us funds. There's always this statement about the community's not having real access to the community centre, which is down

> there... which is a joint project between ourselves and the City of Southton. What they're really saying is that no one from our cultural group's getting access because it's used all the time on the weekends by another group and by other groups in the community. The Cook Islanders have their church down there; we've got various Asian groups that use it.
>
> (Miller, 1998, p. 5)

Miller is frustrated by the difficulties he faces when he works with local area committees. The problem he explains is that "they are very Anglo" and "the real power brokers", and those WASPs "don't like our school". The obstacles put in place by "their committee" mean that "we're fighting all the way". The conception "we" is interesting. Miller is speaking as school representative to a network of community organisations, the Southmeadow Area Committee. The focus of the argument revolves around the word "community". Those on the committee are always making "this statement about the community's not having real access to the community centre". "Our cultural groups" do not get access because the centre is "used all the time". The term "our cultural groups" is interesting. The paragraph ends in a series of confusions as to which groups are part of the school community and belong to us and which belong to the community generally, but are different. The definition of the "us" who owns these various ethnic groups is separate again from "ourselves" who deal with the city of Southton and "our cultural groups" who need to be given access. Later in the conversation, while Miller defends the rights of community groups to locate their activities at the school, he maintains a difference between other community groups who are from the community but not part of us and the cultural groups who are part of our community but who belong to us.

What is most different at Southgate is that the teachers know how to work with ethnic students in ways that others outside the school do not. Gillian Mulhauser, for instance, explains:

> I think that's one of the major things and I think one of the reasons why the kids like being here is because they've got so many people who are in the same position and... they can talk to people who understand them and know their backgrounds and know their lives and they've just got that understanding when they say things, and I'm not just talking about Cambodians but when they say things you know what you're talking about.
>
> (Mulhauser, 1998, ll. pp. 684–688)

Unlike teachers and parents who worked at the school in 1988, or the teachers and parents outside the school, Southgate is a safe place because teachers here know how to work with difference. Mulhauser explains that "kids like being here" because they are all different and "they've got so many people who are in the same position". Most particularly, "kids like being here" because teachers know how to work with them. The teacher's knowledge of "the kids" is almost all-embracing. Teachers "understand them", "know their backgrounds", "know their lives", and know how to "talk to people" and how to behave with them. Other parents and teachers express similar confidence that they know how to work with different groups within the school. Violeta Vadra knows about Cook Islander culture because:

> My brother married a Cook Island girl, so I had personal interest in studying language and I wanted to see the country. It's completely different from our culture and... I have to learn what the people... rather than making our decisions we should know a bit about culture in

> order to... have an opinion. Yes I went to the Cook Islands, because it's a different way of lifestyle, laid back people, very friendly, very sport orientated. Different, completely different culture, not European. Academic achievement is not that important, sport achievement is much more, way of life.
>
> (Vadra, 1998, ll. pp. 307–313)

Their culture is "completely different from our culture" and she has had "to learn". She has studied their language, seen their country, and her brother is married to a Cook Islander girl. Now, Vadra feels literate in Cook Islander culture. Cook Islanders, she now knows, are "laidback", "friendly", "sports orientated" and not particularly interested in academic achievement. The following comment made by Sally Williams also reflects the increased confidence that teachers and parents feel when they talk about ethnic groups. Sally knows better than before what Cook Islanders are about: their character, their culture, their country and the reasons why Cook Islander students find the school so difficult. The nature of their difference has now been properly explained to her. She is:

> Generalising madly... but the Cook Island kids would, we had a few staff, Professional Development Meetings, where some of our staff... We've had a guy in. He's at Monash doing Social Work and he gave a talk on – There is no work ethic, because you don't work at the College you go to the trees and pick your food and it's... and they're coming here for a new start, but they're constantly late...
>
> If you wanted to get work from them, to assess or just to say: this is an indication of their standard, you had to take it off them; you couldn't let them take it home. I think they're the worst group I've ever had in my life... Most of their aspirations are to become a motor mechanic or work at Buttercup because they employ them with their uncles.
>
> (Williams, 1998, ll. pp. 320–357)

Williams knows about the Cook Islander students through a talk given by a social worker. His talk gives her discussion legitimacy. However, almost immediately her discussion shifts to the general. Williams already knows her students. "There is no work ethic", she tells me. "There is no work ethic, because you don't work". "You go to the trees and pick your food and it's... and they're coming here for a new start, but they're constantly late..." Now she understands why "most of their aspirations are to become a motor mechanic or work at Buttercup". Having learnt the lessons of the Cook Islander social worker, Williams knows her students even better than before, knows why these students are "the worst group" she has "ever had in her life".

Teachers and parents become more confident that they understand their students when they go to the Cook Islands. This changed way of knowing also applies to people who did not go to the Cook Islands. Now I understand these people, I understand the way they do things, Gail Dreske tells me:

> I understand, why the Cook Islanders hang around under the shed, now... because that's what they seem to do. They have those, sort of open, sort of shed things and they seem to do their thing in that. You see at school, a lot of the Cook Islanders hang around down at the bottom there, at the shelter. That's what I was looking at, the shed, not the shelter. Now, the teachers can understand that, because it's what they do, back home. Everything seems to get done, under the shelter and they hang around and talk and play music, do what they like. Yes!
>
> (Dreske, 1998, ll. pp. 626–631)

"Now the teachers can understand", Dreske tells me, why the Cook Islanders "hang around under the shed" and "talk and play music". The relation between the "that" of what they do at home and "that" which they do "at school" explains Cook Islander behaviour. Students are known and located quite literally within the school. They can be found "under the shelter" where "everything seems to get done". Their behaviour is also predictable. Students behave in particular ways "because it's what they do back home". The sense of control which Gail feels is repeated throughout the paragraph. Now "I understand", "I was looking at" them. Now "you see". What she sees is what "they seem to do" both in the Cook Islands and in Australia.

In 1998, teachers and parents feel confident that they can know and locate the ethnic students within the school. Nevertheless, members of ethnic groups belong to the community differently and appear not known and not quite within our control. Sally Williams laments her loss of control as the language faculty gets bigger and bigger. She no longer feels that she is in the position to make decisions within the school in the same way as she could ten years earlier. Now:

> The whole size of the faculty... It's just...
>
> Huge?
>
> Yes and, I think, that's the ownership thing, in there. Before it was a committee that you all wanted to be on and... So now it's...
>
> (Williams 1998, p. 11)

Not only is the LOTE department huge but also there is the "ownership thing". The "thing" referred to here is the way in which she has been able to take control of the way curriculum works within the school. However, it also refers to the social relations to which these curricula relate. The programmes Sally Williams refers to are the very multicultural programmes set up to help different groups learn more about each other 10 years earlier. Programmes run to deal with others, and to know who they are, are no longer owned by the community itself, but now, by the ethnic and language groups that these programmes were set up to deal with. Bernard Pieterse also finds he does not quite know his students, even as he believes himself to be most in control:

> Another one too that I picked up as different, the Cook Island community. In terms of my policies and practices – Cook Island students would act a little bit hostile to the way that I would work in the computer class – and it took me a while to click that there was a real culture difference. A lot of Asian students are very quiet and say, "yes" to any questions. So now I have to focus my questions to draw out more than "yes–no" answers so I can tell if they have done the work, if they understand it. Cook Island students were a bit different. They were hostile to me actually making them sit behind individual computers... I wanted them to do their work. I didn't want them to share their work and work off each other.
>
> (Pieterse, 1998, p. 5)

Pieterse knows his students. It took him a while, but he now realises that the reason for the hostility of the Cook Islander students was because he made them "sit behind individual computers" whereas they preferred to share their work and "work off each other". Nevertheless, his ability to know and locate his students is limited. The Asian kids sit there quietly inscrutable and "say 'yes' to any questions". The Cook Islander students sit behind their computers, "hostile".

6.4 Other Narrations

Alongside representations of the data as I envisage it from vantage points of practices and fields, I explore another that describes a school community shocked by the presence of different and other groups and desperate to find ways to cope with them. The focus of these observations is the bid by some to know and locate those people who do not properly belong within the community. Not knowing what is being said, or how it is that others behave, is the source of unease. In 1988, such conversations described essentially other people caught behind almost insurmountable and unchangeable biological, cultural and social barriers. At the same time, these barriers were dismantled by the simplest of gestures. By 1998, the essential notions that categorised identities seemed fluid. Nevertheless, parents and teachers continued to discuss how ethnic identities belonged differently within the school community. It is an argument mediated by the terms and conditions of what it meant to be "ethnic". In 1988, ethnic groups were described in terms that appeared extreme and contradictory. Ethnic groups were described as being more than and less than us in ways which leave "no in-between". By 1998, race and ethnic groups continued to be described paradoxically. However, these contradictions became more difficult as they were juxtaposed within individual identities.

The logics which structure these arguments were made as parents and teachers came to know and locate raced and ethnic groups within school community spaces. In 1988, parents and teachers felt out of control as groups of people whom they did not know could not be located in older mappings of community relational structures. Ten years later, parents and teachers were more confident that they knew about different groups in their schools: knew who they were and how they were positioned. Moreover, teachers and parents believed that ethnic difference was something that everyone had and therefore was of little importance. Even so, the presence of different ethnic groups remained a concern, as those other groups who seemed safely known and located, also appeared dangerously unknown, out of position and out of control. The comfortable safeness of the school seemed nevertheless unsafe, uncomfortable and uncertain.

A contradictory logic structures the conceptual organisation of the materials I collected from teachers and parents. Behind stories of inconsistencies in the implementation and support for multicultural programmes was the issue of the relationships between ethnic groups and the school community and the terms and conditions of what it meant to be ethnic. In spite of the differences found between the years of my study, racial and ethnic groups continued to be discussed in contradictory ways. While teachers and parents became more comfortable with difference, the presence of different ethnic groups remained of concern. The dualistic logic of self and other did not disappear. Moreover, as Whiteness and post-colonial writings have documented, an unselfconscious "us" mapped out not only the other, but a silhouette of the self. In the next chapter, I turn the spotlight towards the silent yet omnipresent self who formulates these logics.

Chapter 7
Mapping Ourselves

> *Having established with a few discrete and apparently humdrum questions that I had not come as the bearer of bad tidings, we went to the hall and telephoned my aunt to tell her of my arrival. And once again Charlotte surprised me by the ease with which she spoke to this woman, who was so different from her. Her voice, the same voice which a moment ago had been softly crooning an old French song, took on a slightly rough accent and in a few words she managed to explain everything, arrange everything, putting my escapade on a level with our regular summit reunion.*
>
> *"She is trying to mimic us", I thought, as I listened to her talking. "She's parodying us". Charlotte's calm and that very Russian voice only served to exacerbate my bitterness.*
>
> *(Andrei Makine, Le Testament Francais, 1997, p. 199)*

Well able to write in the French language, Andrei Makine's books remain unpublished until they have been translated from Russian. Charlotte faces a similar dilemma. Neither quite one-of-us nor one-of-those-others, her very presence is an irritant. Her control of the Russian language, her ability to accommodate not only the words but also the very timbre of Russian speech, is understood as an act of resilience but also as one of parody and mimicry. The bitter sweetness which this accomplishment inspires is reflected in the ambivalence Makine's Russian protagonist feels towards his French-born grandmother.

Post-colonial writers argue that conditions of "Whiteness" have become normalised within contemporary Western conversation as universal and confluent with the human condition. An unspoken and "White" *us* is able to write the text of its selfness through the text of its others. This suggests the theoretical possibility of two silences. The first is "our" silence, where those who belong find it difficult to speak about themselves and do not have to do so. The second is the silence that develops when some are defined as other than self and in the process so retextualised that they literally cannot speak.[1] A possible consequence of this perspective is that policies and programmes of multiculturalism provide the codes that define how others can be known and located within our community. Following from this literature, Lather's (1991) interest was to examine these conversations and to turn the spotlight onto the

[1] See Chapter 3.

R. Arber, *Race, Ethnicity and Education in Globalised Times*,

speaker who defines groups as "other" in this way, to provide a space where those who have not been heard can be listened to.

This chapter turns the focus of analysis away from stories about others and considers instead the omnipresent self who makes these stories.

7.1 Speaking of us

Edward Said's (1991) condition of "orientalism" described how in Western contemporary societies an omnipresent and omnipotent self considers itself through the textualised conditions of that which it is not.[2] Patti Lather's (1991) suggestion was that these stories about others should not remain as the central focus of the argument. Rather, this orientalising gaze needs to be averted and refocused upon those persons who narrate the conditions of being other. In this section, I examine the terms and conditions that structure what it is to be one-of-us. My attempt to turn the spotlight simply from others to selves is frustrating. The possibility of two epistemological silences (that of the noisy silence of the self who textualises the other, and the other so retextualised that he or she is left with no place from which to speak) seems both possible and too simple a notion. Stuart Hall's (1996a) insight is that identities – our own and those of others – are made at the point of suture between the discourses and practices which "interpellate" or hail us into place as the social subjects of particular discourses and the processes, which construct us as subjects that can be "spoken". Hall's position examines the juncture between the ways in which we define our identities within the various conceptual or practical domains available to us and the ontological processes that shape the ways that we are able to do this. The nexus between those two processes, the negotiation of the identity one calls oneself and the conditions which mediate how this identification can be lived, must be made clear. Like Makine's Charlotte, my respondents and I work through slippery interchanges between the identities we understand ourselves to be and the ways that we are able to be those identities within communities.

In 1988, I do not find material that discusses what it means to be one-of-us. It does not occur to me to ask the question. Nor do teachers and parents think to discuss their self-identity. Instead, and as I have noted in the previous chapter, I have collected large amounts of material where teachers and parents describe other ethnic and racial groups. There are only a very few stories where teachers and parents tell me that they are not properly included within the school community.

In 1998, I too stumble as I ask Bill Kelly to describe his identity:

I was wondering, whether you could tell me a bit about your own . . . How you see your own sense of identity?

Kelly's answer represents a common response:

I have no trouble, at all. I don't . . . I'm more than happy with Asian kids coming in, Asian people or Asian background, coming into Australia. I enjoy the . . . As a group, they seem to be wanting to fit in. I live in an area where, none of my neighbours are Asian

[2] See Chapter 3.

> background, but High Glen has an Asian population in it. There's a . . . I can not see how people can have a problem with Asian people, to be ho . . . but I deal with Asian kids and that's different, perhaps and then I don't have any threat from them. I don't feel any threat from them . . . They're Australian kids, they've . . . a lot of them have a lot values, that I've had. You don't look at them as kids. You, just, look at them as students to teach, them you enjoy teaching.
>
> (Kelly, 1998, ll. pp. 537–549)

Kelly begins to answer my question but cannot finish the sentence. The focus of his discussion, however, is not his self-identity, but his affiliation with "them". He understands himself as the perpetrator of this relationship. "I am more than happy", "I enjoy", "I live", he tells me. His first sentence "I have no trouble" at first refers to his ability to speak about himself. At the same time, it refers to the nature of his connection with other ethnic groups. He does not "have any threat from them". The object of his conversation remains those "Asian kids" whom he is happy to allow in, who "fit in", who are no problem and who are not threatening. They "have a lot of values, that I've had". The "I" who has these values, or even what these values are, remains undefined.

> Parents Gail Dreske and Julie Pink give a more direct response. When I ask:
>
> I wonder if you ever think about that? What it means, how you would see yourself as Australian, compared to. I know that's a really hard one. I didn't ask that one ten years ago.
>
> They reply:
>
> But we are very different to the rest, our beliefs, our way of life. It's so different. We are . . . I think we are more loving and we give more for nothing and we don't expect anything back, like, we give our time. Time, I think, is very important, in that school, because . . . I'm not racist . . .
>
> No. It's just that I think the others, don't think they shouldn't have to do anything for the school. They think it should be the government . . . Sometimes, I get angry, even Kay, "Well, you're a parent too. Why can't you do it?" Any time, I would think, come across.
>
> (Dreske & Pink, 1998, ll. pp. 656–664)

Once again, I can hardly ask the question. I apologise, explain myself and start my question again. Unlike Bill Kelly, Gail Dreske and Julie Pink do begin to try to define who they are but like my question their description is made in comparison with other ethnic groups. "We are very different to the rest", they explain, "our beliefs, our way of life". "It's so different". In the second part of the extract, Dreske and Pink are even more direct. Other parents "don't think they shouldn't have to do anything for the school". They think it should be the Government. By inference, Dreske and Pink's community are not like that. They work hard to help themselves and the school. They are angry (resentful) at the way "the others" do not help.[3] Why cannot they "do it"? Dreske asks in exasperation. "It" refers to what Dreske and Pink do which "the others" do not do. "It" is what is so different and cannot be overcome. It is a relationship that is not only difficult to talk about but in some way illicit and should not be spoken about. "I'm not racist", they tell me, "It is just that . . . "

[3] The discussion of the way these kinds of resentment have become a crucial part of Australian discourse has been the focus of several recent texts. See particularly Brett (1997).

7.2 Negotiating Identity

When I ask parents and teachers to tell me about their identity as Australian, I find it difficult to ask the question, and they find it difficult to answer. Teachers and parents like Bill Kelly, Gail Dreske and Julie Pink do not define their self-identity. Instead their discussion immediately turns to the connection that exists between themselves and other ethnic groups. The observation that those who are "White" and understand themselves to be part-of-us find it difficult to talk about their own identity is well documented in the literature. Suzuki, asking a similar question from an American student, elicited the response:

> I wish I had something to contribute, but I don't know much about my background. In fact, I don't even have a culture.
>
> (Suzuki, 1991 in Giroux, 1994)

The observation that teachers and parents describe their own identity through their discussions about others is crucial to the argument I am making here. It begins to explain the nature of the relationship which teachers allude to but which remains undescribed. It examines how teachers and parents speak of this connection in conversations about multiculturalism rather than racism. Finally, it begins to explain how some people remain uncomfortable and not properly included within the community. The dualistic nexus between those who belong as one-of-us and those who are one-of-them is described differently as notions of identity change. In 1988, the knowledge that one had been in the school before the arrival of new and other ethnic groups within the school, and the understanding that ethnic identities are essentially different, allowed teachers and parents to define themselves and "others". Even so, I found that teachers and parents negotiated their identities between a number of ethnic possibilities and shifted in the way they understood themselves as belonging and not belonging within the community. By 1998, conceptions of identity are more complex. Difference becomes a matter of addition, as people take on or give away cultural differences. Moreover, some people imagine their identities as completely fluid and changing and that they can choose between different ways of understanding and making themselves. Nevertheless, people understand themselves as belonging differently within the community, as teachers and parents define the ways they understand their identities as containing more than one ethnicity and as being positioned differently within the community.

When I ask Tracy Cunningham to describe her ethnicity she reminisces:

> My parents were British migrants. They speak English but it wasn't easy – 12000 miles is a long way from home.
>
> (Cunningham, 1988, ll. pp. 112–113)

Cunningham's account of her ethnic identity begins with her parents' migration from Britain. Her story focuses on the things her parents needed to do as migrants. To become part of a new community was not simple. Cunningham's parents traversed the 12,000 miles between being at home and being elsewhere. They were not at home and "it wasn't easy". It is not altogether clear what her parents were trying to become at the end of their long voyage away from what they had been, only

that it "is a long way from home". How Cunningham perceives her self-identity now remains unclear. She describes her own identity only in terms of the difficulties faced by her parents.

Sally Williams also tells me she is from England. She and I, however, are far more interested that she is also of Greek descent, that she is "one quarter Greek".

I'm from England so I'm English but the kids are one quarter Greek so the kids sort of see me as a bit of a Greek.

> Q. So you were born English and one of your parents immigrated to England from Greece?
>
> A. My grandfather did ... mother is English as well but my grandfather ... full-blood Greek.
>
> Q. So do you speak Greek as well?
>
> A. No – not at all.
>
> Q. Do you do anything particularly to do with being Greek?
>
> A. No.
>
> Q. Just that you got that awareness?
>
> A. Yes the kids will all say to me what nationality are you – so they recognise it. It's quite interesting because I'm so fair as well – and that's my eyes ... They think there is some resemblance there.
>
> (Williams, 1988, ll. pp. 23–39)

Williams plays with the ways she can identify as Greek and English. Her English identity is consolidated by her place of birth and her parent's migration. "I'm from England so I'm English", she tells me. Her Greek identity is negotiated differently and by proxy; her grandfather is a "full-blood Greek". She cannot speak Greek and has no contact with Greek social or cultural life. Her Greekness is presented as an alternative and essentially different biological condition. Despite her fairness, her Greek heritage can be seen as something "that's my eyes". The students "recognise it". It is something which is of significance to Sally only in that it makes students ask "what nationality are you?". It is interesting that the fairness, which negates the "resemblance" that her students see in her, does not become a topic of our discussion.

Carl Davies discusses his own identity as the nexus between being accepted within an Australian school and having Dutch parents:

> Q. Because you never would have met with any prejudice or anything – coming from Holland?
>
> A. We used to stir each other but it was never prejudice.
>
> Q. Or that you would have felt like doing things that were culturally different?
>
> A. The Dutch are regarded as being the invisible migrants because they fit in so well with the Australian culture and I think that that's true. I don't think that Dutch people look much different than the typical Aussie and I don't think that their culture is really all that different.
>
> Q. And your parents spoke English before they came here?
>
> A. Just everyone there speaks a little bit of English but they have obviously got quite strong accents and you can certainly pick them through that.
>
> Q. Did it worry you when they came to school?
>
> A. No.
>
> Q. So they didn't really find it any problem at all to come here?
>
> (Davies, 1988, p. 12)

Like the parents and teachers who have spoken so far, Carl Davies does not speak with me about his own identity. Instead, he discusses what makes him one identity or the other. His association with the rest of the school community as a child is one where "we used to stir each other, but it was never prejudice". The definition of "it", is found in the juncture between being "the typical Aussie" and having Dutch parents. He is not quite one in the community but he is nevertheless an "invisible" migrant and able to fit in. He is able to look and behave like everyone else and the culture is not "really all that different". It is a position of invisibility that is more difficult for his parents because they have quite strong accents and you "can certainly pick them through that". Despite any problems his parents might have had, he has not found "it any problem". Being one thing or another is a matter of culture and physiognomy. Culture and language are able to be changed and are problems only for his parents. His appearance is similar enough to the rest of the community and therefore not problematic. Once again, the definition of what he is similar to – what the "typical Aussie" actually is – is explained through what is potentially different and problematic.

In Demetrius Kalidis' story, the nexus between naming oneself as one nationality, and being that or something "other", is made clear as he discusses his concerns about his son:

> My son was of course bright but he got mixed with a group of people when he was in Year 11 and he failed and later he repeated Year 11 and then he did Year 12. He didn't pass HSC and after that he was so disappointed that he just didn't want to do anything. He didn't want to get a decent job and he denounced even his origin. He said, "I am not Greek. I am Australian" and I kicked him out of the house. But later he started working as an accountant. He did accountancy at school as an assistant accountant. After two years he has some money and he got into businessman and a very successful one too.
>
> (Kalidis, 1988, p. 10)

Through the person of his son, Mr Kalidis explores the juncture between being *one-of-us* and *one-of-ours*. For Kalidis, this is a relationship defined by his son's assertion, "I am not Greek. I am Australian". It is an observation which places Kalidis' son outside both the Australian and the Greek communities. To understand this juxtaposition is to negotiate the Australian system (to mix in the right crowd, to get a "decent" job) and identify as Greek (to remember your "origin"). To become a "successful" man, Kalidis' son needs to navigate both the narrational fields that name him as Greek and Australian and the narrational maps which allow him *to be* both of those two things. In Stuart Hall's (1996) terms, it is to consider the place of suture between the discourses that call us to place and the socio-cultural context that mediates how identities can be lived and spoken about. The point of the story is that the Greek background of Kalidis' son is insufficient to decide his self-identity. It is up to his son to choose between cultural and language differences if he is to call himself both Greek and Australian. Kalidis' concern is that his son, in being able to choose between the taken-for-granted positions which make him Greek and Australian in a contemporary Australian context, might not make Greekness part of that identification.

ESL teacher Sandra Papapandis is also concerned by the link between being Greek and being Australian and being made Greek and Australian. Her parents (only her father is Greek) are "traditional" and yet "socialised". She finds she can usually understand herself as Australian but there is always the threat of visibility, that people might expect her to behave the way that people expect Greeks to look and behave. She explains:

> The ones that are going out like the young girls fourteen, fifteen (year old) Australian girls can go out whereas Greek and Asian girls can't go out – you can't . . . and that still goes now for a lot of Greek girls. They can't – not just for me – for other girls. They can't leave the house until they get married, and it's hard to persuade parents to believe that can be done. My parents were all right. They sort of got socialised but it was hard doing it – really, really hard. My parents are pretty traditional. The other thing I suppose is that people have expectations of how all Greeks look.
>
> (Papapandis, 1988, ll. pp. 380–401)

The borders between being Greek and Australian are, in the first instance, cultural. Nevertheless, they have become markers of seemingly enduring and essential difference which place Papapandis both inside and outside "being Australian". Not growing up in Australia, having a different accent, having traditional parents, leaves Papapandis both inside and outside the community. Papapandis alternates between describing herself as one-of-us and realising that she has been made "other". A Greek name makes her outside, even as she is Australian and inside. This precarious relationship between being one-of-us and being "other" gives Papapandis insights into both these narratives. Her empathy with her students problematises the stories commonly told about them even as she never doubts their validity. At the same time, having Greek parents makes it difficult to cross between these representations. She is frustrated because people have expectations about how "all Greeks look". Papapandis wants to negotiate how she will be Greek. She does not have an accent and she no longer behaves like her traditional parents. However, she is not free to make that decision. Her Greek name and looks position her indisputably as Greek.

The structural and conceptual conditions determining national, religious and historical difference, articulate with those of class, gender, education and migration experience. Parents Justine Strover, Angela Sandros and Matthew Arkanidis examine how class differences, educational attainments and migration experiences mediate rapport within the school community. As Strover tells me:

> I wanted to be something but the English was too difficult – and I was too naïve. I wanted to do too much. When I drop in language that hard I cried. I wanted to go back. I didn't like the whole set up while in Germany – different culture, different everything. When I come here it's all I was in a . . . "I'm going back". "No" I cried. I was very lonely, miserable. I couldn't speak and that was really hard. I couldn't learn the spelling and I was angry. It was very hard. The whole forty years I was just learning. Now I start to . . . living again . . . OK I achieved too many things so . . .
>
> (Strover, 1988, p. 6)

Coming to Australia was difficult for Strover. She "wanted to be something" but because "English was too difficult" and everything was different, "different culture, different everything", she was unable to achieve the goals she set for herself. The

difficulties she faced are defined by an inability to communicate – the difficulties of working between two cultures, of not being proficient with language, and of being lonely. It took some time to overcome these difficulties: "The whole forty years" she "was just learning". Now, however, she has started "living again" as she feels integrated into Australian society and more proficient in its culture and language.

Parent Angela Sandros agrees that now she is:

> More Italian than Australian for me for the parent – but for the kids more Australian – but they love Italian food – but we live more Italian than Australian but the kids have grown up here – but Italian and Australian you know they are . . .
>
> (Sandros, 1988, ll. pp. 108–111)

Sandros examines her identity in terms of being Australian and being Italian. It is a process which shifts over time as a love for Italian food is combined with being "more Australian". Her children choose more easily. The very material differences in language and national cultures, and the difficulties implicit within the migration process, change with time as professional and educational opportunities improve.

From the vantage point of narrational fields, I trace the way parents and teachers negotiate their identities. In 1988, I do not speak with parents and teachers about their self-identity. Rather, we speak about the ways we define ethnic identities. We talk about the ways that people speak one language or another, maintain one culture or another. The observation of these discussions from the perspective of the narrational map suggests a third order to this analysis. Teachers, parents and I worry about how we can accomplish "it". That is how we can shift across the relational boundaries between being one ethnic identity and another. Questions of background, culture, language and physiognomy matter differently. For some, these difficulties become less over time and intergenerationally as the barriers between belonging and mobility become more easily negotiated. Others find these notions more intractable. For Papapandis' "Greek name" and "Greek looks" make people understand her another way. They position her to be one identity or an "other" regardless of her own hard work, experiences or particular choices.

Teachers and parents cope differently with the nexus between choosing one identity and another and being able to be one identity and another. Mathematics Coordinator Peter Lee already spoke English before he came to Australia. Further, after 20 years in Australia, Lee feels he is gaining control over the concepts and practices that are part of being Australian. He knows how to be outspoken, how to hold meetings and how to do his job effectively. He is a most effective teacher within the school, it is commonly agreed, and has just been promoted to coordinator. Nevertheless, Lee is concerned by narratives which suggest that he does not properly belong as part of our community. Teachers suggest nastily that he is being favoured because of his colour and has not properly earned his promotion. Lee has no trouble defining his background. He is an "Asian". His conversation is not about this identity but about the way that it defines his relationship with others within the community. It is a matter of philosophy, of right and of wrong concepts. It is a matter of being judged on one's own ability. What is shocking to Lee is that he is not given that choice: that people are "not talking about ability but skin colour" and that this matters.

Aruna Sandra also grew up in a country where the education system was both in English and based on an English system. However, when she came to Australia her competence was questioned. Her ability to use language and to teach in Australian schools was disputed. Her attempts to get a teaching job met with responses such as the following:

> When I came back he said, "You can't work here" and I said "What happened?" "Because your accent is too different and you are wearing different dress." At that time I am not smart enough. I mean now I am smart enough . . . I kept quiet . . . I said to him, "I know the dress is different. If I work here the children will . . . get used to it" . . . It was for teaching. I am a teacher and I said, "The same with the accent . . . After they will understand me."
>
> (Sandra, 1988, p. 8)

This story took place at another school. Sandra found that her accent, her dress, were too different. She begged the Principal to employ her, pleading with him that the "children will get used to it". The "it" here takes in all of these differences. They will become unimportant, she insists. She will be understood. Despite her entreaties, the Principal is disturbed by her difference and maintains that she "can't work here". By the time I meet Aruna, she continues to wear a sari but her "accent" has become less and she has learnt to be "smart enough" to deal with institutionalised behaviours in Australian schools. Nevertheless, her work at Southgate is not as a teacher but as a teacher's aide.

Linda Chan learned English in Vietnam before arriving in Australia and has some experience and training as a schoolteacher. Her job as teachers communication aide centres on her ability to understand and to negotiate cultural difference. She is required to translate conversations from one language to another and to understand crucial differences between the ways things happen within the school. Her ability to work with these differences is formidable. Not only is she able to explain to parents and students appropriate ways to access Australian schools, but she is also able to explain the complex Australian curriculum.

Chan explains that "nice people and rude people everywhere" treat her differently. She describes the principles that mark the nature of her difference.[4] The people who behave badly towards her were "born here". They did not come from "a different country". They do not need to "fight for it" as she needs to "fight". "It" is the other and omnipresent something that she must "take", "manage" and "face". Ng Van Be perhaps summarises the logic that underpins these conversations most succinctly. A pharmacist in Vietnam, Ng Van Be could already speak English as well as French and Vietnamese when he arrived in Australia and he is now an Australian citizen. However, having made a choice to be Australian Ng finds his decision laughable:

> Q. Now if I asked you what do you think is your ethnic background would you say Vietnamese or Chinese or Australian? What would you call yourself?

[4] See Chapter 5.

> A. Because of the background we are Vietnamese we get citizenship. If someone asked me who are you I can say I am Australian – but if I speak Australian they will laugh – you're not Australian you're Asian – so we say we are Vietnamese.
>
> (Ng Van Be, 1988, p. 7)

Australian, he explains, simply does not include Asian.

In 1988, teachers, parents and I do not discuss what it means to be a part of the community. Rather, we negotiate the nexus between being one ethnicity and another. Tom is proud of his Scottish antecedents. Besides this, he gives little significance to the link between being Australian and being Scottish. Carl Davies's parents' accent places limitations on their ability to belong as Australian. However, the mere fact of having Dutch ancestry is not of any particular consequence. Dimitrius Kalidis' son negotiates both his Greek background and his Australian nationality. Sandra Papapandis finds her ability to choose between ethnicities increasingly easy even as they continue to be mediated as "people have expectations of how all Greeks look".

The consideration of how "all Greeks look" considers the interstices between what it means to define one's identity and what it means to be that identity. For some, the tensions that disturb the terms and conditions of identification are temporary matters that change as people work through the cultural differences and positional differences of class and settlement. For others, these differences continue to matter but in different ways. Sandra Papapandis finds that having a Greek face and Greek ways of doing things sometimes matters. Peter Lee, Linda Chan, Aruna Sandra and Ng Van Be continue to find that they are made "other". The different cultural and racial identities they decide between, and the identities they are made to be, change the notion of what it means to move between one identity and another. Peter Lee considers the consequences of being understood as Chinese and not Australian, even as he thought that he had successfully negotiated the terms and conditions that made him one-of-us. Aruna Sandra and Linda Chan find their ability to pursue their professional lives constrained. Ng Van Be's answer contemplates the logic that demarcates the ability of some to define their identity differently from others. "If I speak Australian", he tells me, "they will laugh – you're not Australian you're Asian – so we say we are Vietnamese".

The tense relationship between naming oneself as an identity and being that identity becomes more complex in 1998 as the terms and conditions of identification can no longer be understood as essential, discrete and unchanging. Stephen Barrows contemplates what it means to be Australian. Like Bill Kelly, he finds this difficult to do and observes instead how his Australian identity is made in contrast to others. When I ask him:

> What do you think it means to you though, to have been several generations here in Australia?
>
> He replies:
>
> That's not something I spend a lot of time, thinking about, I can tell you. . . . My mother's people have been . . . She was born in Australia. Her parents were born in Australia. Before that her grandparents came from Britain, Scotland. My father actually was . . . He came to Australia when he was four, from Scotland. I guess. I've only been with people, who've only been in Australia and known no other country. I have done a little travel and it does

> make you think, a little I guess, about the place you come from and the person you are, but it's very hard to pin down. As you say, it's a hard question to answer.
>
> Q. I've just become intrigued with it, actually.
>
> A. I had never thought about how I would describe myself and my culture. My culture, I mean that . . . I don't know . . . I've never asked myself, actually. I think it's quite intriguing.
>
> Q. As you said, it's very hard to answer.
>
> (Barrows, 1998, p. 13)

Barrows begins to tell me what it means to be Australian. After several false starts where he attempts to answer my question, he tells me about his British descent. His father was born in Scotland. His mother's family came from Britain three generations ago. He has "done a little travel". These things are no longer about belonging to one ethnic identity and another. Barrows is all of these things. "It" no longer describes the nexus between being one ethnic identity and another but becomes almost indefinable, "It's a hard question to answer", he says. The difficulty of explaining what it is that is hard has two tiers. In the first place, "The place you come from and the person you are" have become "very hard to pin down". In the second, the task of describing himself and his culture is something that he has never set himself before, he had "never thought about" it, but he finds it "quite intriguing".

Stephen Barrows finds it easier to describe his self-identity through the ethnic identities of his parents and grandparents. He finds this is also difficult because the definition of what gives these identities uniqueness no longer seems clear. Barry Houston's story examines these same processes: the delineation of the way "you would identify yourself" and the way you are able to be "really Australian". He begins by telling me he was married to a Chinese, then continues:

> You're only, really, Australian if you have an Anglo background. If you're not, you have a bit of Polish in you or something, well you're not really, as Anglo as I am. In the days of the Republic, that will change very quickly. It's the link, clinging on to the importance of the English tradition, that makes that happen and that you can consider yourself an Australian. My children consider themselves Australian and in the next Millennium, because it will be a Republic, if they're not Anglo, they're still Australian. So the Vietnamese second generation of Vietnamese and so on. They'll be able to be Australians. Which in a . . . while still retaining their identities, their self. That's important to me as an Australian. I see that as where my country's going as opposed to the English, not just the English, as the people in the Bush.
>
> (Houston, 1998, p. 15)

In 1988, Houston tells me that he traces his family arrival in Australia to the time of the first European settlement. In 1998, Houston finds it difficult to discuss the Australian ancestry that was so important a decade earlier. Instead, Houston explains that he has "married a Vietnamese of Chinese descent". In 1988, teachers and parents discussed the implications of being one identity and another. In 1998, cross-cultural relationships not only become possible but also define the limits of Houston's self-definition. The mixing of those two ethnic identities within people's very bodies is not only consequential to him but also to his children. Houston's negotiation of narrations of belonging on his children's behalf forces him to reconsider the definition of the term "Australian". His exploration leads him to consider the conceptual domains, Anglo-Saxon and Australian. "Australian" needs to

be considered an outmoded concept and disentangled from its Anglicised roots. "You're only really Australian if you have an Anglo background". What is not quite Anglo is to have "a bit of Polish in you or something". His children deal with the difficult relationship between being "still Australian", being Vietnamese and being not-quite-Australian. His concerns lead him to examine the contested domain that defines the ways of calling oneself Chinese/Vietnamese and Australian and the condition of being recognised as Asian and as being Australian. He worries that regardless of how they deal with these differences, his children remain in some way Asian and not properly Australian. Houston's examination of his children's situation spotlights the logics of belonging and not quite belonging as Australian. However, Houston defines his own identity through his marriage to someone Asian, and his children's debates about between being Chinese/Vietnamese and being Australian. That is, he describes his own identity in terms of what his wife and children are not. We do not discuss what the Australian part of this interchange means to Houston's identity. Gillian Mulhauser still remembers her embarrassment and shame as her parents spoke differently and "you couldn't invite your friends" because "it was just too different". She reminisces:

> Yes, well I'm not Australian, I'm German and I came here as a migrant, when I was five years old and so lived through, you know, going shopping for my parents, filling in all the forms for my parents, being embarrassed about my parents coming to the school, because they looked different, they had accents, because we had different food, but I was brought up in . . . the schools I went to were very Anglo, so I was always the, along with my sisters, we were always a bit strange and then even the things we did at home, my parents didn't invite people home. You couldn't invite your friends over to stay overnight because it was just too different, and they wouldn't cope and all you wanted to be was Australian and have white bread sandwiches with hundreds and thousands.
>
> (Mulhauser, 1998, p. 19)

Mulhauser is no longer one thing or another. She defines herself as "not Australian", saying "I'm German". "I came here as a migrant". What this meant had been difficult for her as a child. She and her sisters were "always a bit strange". The "things we did at home" were "too different". Difference caused her two problems. "You couldn't invite your friends over" because "they wouldn't cope". "All you wanted to be was Australian". The space between being "Australian" and being incredibly different was almost insuperable. The most taken-for-granted and the most miniscule of day-to-day activities described those differences. They were a matter of looking the right way and having the right accents and eating "white bread sandwiches with hundreds and thousands".

The disjunction between being German and not-quite-Australian, and being Australian, haunts Mulhauser throughout her adulthood and continues to provide the definition of who she sees herself to be. Nevertheless, as I look at this statement through the lens provided by the narrational map, I question how being this ethnic identity and not being Australian is accommodated now. This is not something Mulhauser discusses. It is a juxtaposition that remains problematic when I interview teacher Sandra Papapandis a second time in 1998. In 1988, Papapandis felt she never quite belonged to one community or another. In 1998, she finds this even more

confusing. In Australia, she is recognised as Greek, even as she feels that she has lived most of her life in Australia and thinks of herself as Australian. In Greece, she is considered Australian. As she tells me:

> I feel very strongly about that. I am very passionate about that. They can't go back to Greece; we don't fit in, in Greece.
>
> Q. Is that when you went back, because you said you went back to Greece? Can you tell me a bit about that?
>
> A. You feel an affinity, when you go there, but you also feel alienated. I was born in Australia, so I've spent most of my life here. It's good to go back and it's good to see the family. But we've moved up from them. We've adopted the fantastic things from Australian society and we have adopted the great things from Greek society. Greek society there's a lot of negative things. There's always a lot of them swearing and they're pushing and they're shoving and I call it "organised chaos". At the same time, when you go there, they're fascinated by you, because not many Australian Greeks go back, over here. Where I'm from . . .
>
> (Papapandis, 1998, ll. pp. 273–295)

Papapandis is an "Australian Greek", born in Australia to Greek parents. In this passage, she discusses what it means to return to Greece. What that means shifts throughout the passage. Her discussion shifts from "we" to "they" and back again, "They can't go back", "we don't fit in". "We" and "they" is neither Greek nor Australian. "We've adopted the fantastic things from Australian society". "We've adopted the great things from Greek society". She is certainly not Greek. They swear and push. When you go back "they're fascinated by you". Her link with those people is palpable, it's "where I'm from", "it's good to go back and its good to see". Despite the fact that "you feel an affinity, when you go there", "you also feel alienated". The change of pronoun to the more objective "you" rather than "we" or "they" emphasises the universality of her comments but also her confusion and estrangement. The problematic "it", that so dogged her in 1988, is no longer named, even as the link between the two ethnic identities focuses her discussion. Once again, Papapandis talks to me about what being not Australian has meant to her. She never quite examines the meaning of "Australian" within the term "Greek Australian".

In 1998, teachers contemplate the different faces of their ethnic identification. The meaning they attribute to this identity varies. For Stephen Barrows, his parents' Britishness is intriguing. For Barry Houston, his marriage to a "Chinese" is interesting and something which is problematic for his children. Sally Williams speaks about the potential consequences of her British descent. Gillian Mulhauser finds that there were times when she thought this Australian–German heritage mattered to her, but it is uncertain whether it is consequential for her now. Only Sandra Papapandis remains perturbed by the complexity of not-quite-fitting-in in one place or in another. Despite the very different ways this mattered, each of these teachers described themselves only in terms of the differences that they invoked. The way that each of these respondents considered themselves as part-of-the-community and as one-of-us was not discussed. The "it", which loomed between being one thing and another, and was fundamental to the ways these respondents defined themselves, seems to have disappeared. This nexus appeared more complex when I spoke to Bernard Pieterse

and to Danny Miller. For these two teachers, taking on the attributes of one culture or ethnicity has become akin to the actuality of being of that ethnic identity. They have come to believe that they can choose between being one ethnic identity and another, regardless of the material and conceptual frames which bound their ability to do this. For Pieterse, the possibility of shifting between identities provides unbounded possibilities. Whereas in 1988, Carl Davies was relieved that his Dutchness had disappeared, Pieterse finds that in 1998 Dutchness (a Dutch sounding name, Dutch language and a chance of teaching in a Dutch school) defines superficial conceptual domains that are easily changed. He tells me:

> My background – I am Dutch. I have a Dutch sounding name. I speak Dutch. I have a Dutch – I want him to speak Dutch as a language. I had a chance to teach in a Dutch school and I am Australian. I am English speaking and Australian-born.
>
> (Pieterse, 1998, p. 7)

Bernard Pieterse does not perceive the ambivalence that Gillian Mulhauser or Sandra Papapandis report in their mediation of being both Australian and overseas born. Pieterse is a Dutch name, and Bernard is an Australian name. Calling oneself Dutch or Australian or being positioned as Dutch or Australian is no longer considered problematic. As Pieterse explains:

> What it means to be Dutch. That's a good question. Is that the only way that you define your identity? I don't think that your identity is defined by birthright. I think that is something that is nice. I think that is something that you choose. I think that you choose and when I talk about identity "I" means cultural point. The Dutch did some horrible things in the various colonies of the world – Indonesia and the – they don't have a clean slate and record but I don't take that baggage on board. I take on the things I like. I enjoyed the lovely exuberance of life I saw in France, the passion for life that I saw in Italy and I take that on board. That's a bit of me too. That's my cultural identity. So your identity is also a lot of other things that came in between during your travels. Yeah, you choose, you choose, you take these things on and . . .
>
> (Pieterse, 1998, p. 7)

For Pieterse, everything is up for grabs. Nothing remains as an indicator of identity. "I don't think that your identity is defined by birthright". Who you are is a simple matter of choice. "I take on the things I like", he tells me. "I don't take that baggage on board". In the end, he is removed even from his own identity, as "I" changes to the more objective you. "Your identity", "you choose, you choose, you take these things on". What it means to be Australian remains unspoken. The concept of otherness becomes all-embracing and yet something superficial, something nice, something that you can choose. Difference becomes something fun, the exuberance of the French and the passion for life of the Italians. In this compilation of stories, the historical contingency of these positionings is negotiated. Pieterse's sense of self-identity fuses a multiplicity of conceptions of exotica, passions and experience. It is difference itself that is exciting and collectable: Italian passion, French exuberance, a sadder but reconciled Poland. The void, which is us, is formulated against these differences. Pieterse lays claim to a multiplicity of ethnicities: Dutch and Australian, Australian and the exuberance of the French, the passion of the Italians.

Danny Miller defines himself as an ever-increasing differentiation of fragmenting identities:

> Where I'm coming from? Look, once again, I know, because I've . . . It's raising the question of, well what's my cultural identity? . . . I'll struggle to answer in one sense, just come from my experiences in Melbourne, from growing up in what was previously a working-class family who, sort of, struggled up to working class, to middle class. Then, being, growing up, in that time frame, in a Melbourne, I remember our idea of spaghetti was Kookaburra No. 9 spaghetti, with grated Kraft cheese on the top. Cheddar cheese. Yet, at the same time, during that period, my father worked for the ABC liaison Education Liaison Unit. So we actually had visitors in our home from . . . I remember from Africa, from Nigeria . . . My cultural background . . . enlightened parents in terms of . . . We used to go to live theatre. I have always appreciated, as an adult, the fact that our parents took us all to live theatre from a very young age . . . I used to really enjoy the Spanish part of Sesame Street, when I was young . . . So picked it up as a language at University. I didn't have lectures on Friday afternoons, or Monday mornings, wine and cheese on a Wednesday. No, it was interest in it. It developed, from there to the point where I was doing Contemporary Literature and Fifteenth Century Literature in Spanish by my third year. I did Aztec History with a wonderful woman called Mary Mantanis . . . It was great. I went to Mexico . . . where I visited classes in the back woods of Mexico and taught in lots of places there. The plan was, always, to go back to Mexico and do that . . . then I became involved in a Japanese Cultural Exchange program and I had to learn some Japanese in a hurry. I ended up having to teach Japanese to the kids. A little bit. So that was interesting. It's just part of my brain, really.
>
> (Miller, 1998, ll. pp. 636–685)

Identity for Miller is built within a mosaic of cultural conceptualisations: the changing food habits of Australians, the middle-class intellectualism of his parents, his childhood television habits, his university studies in history and language and his overseas travels. The middle classness of his "enlightened parents", and their love for live theatre, the narrowness of Australian culinary culture, the ability to travel, a university education merge together, unproblematised. Concepts of Aztecness, contemporary literature and Spanish fifteenth century literature conflate with experiences teaching in the "backwoods of Mexico". The fun of going to lectures and of wine and cheese days on Wednesdays, the difficulty of learning Japanese in a hurry, come together in a tapestry of experiences. Concepts, ideas, experiences, historical events, literatures, become collectables, matters of interest, things that one might choose between. Miller usurps them all. Each of them becomes part of his identity even as the material condition of the people who provide the focus for these choices is almost erased. The Aztecs and the Spanish are long dead. The Japanese person, the student in the Mexican backwoods, remains immaterial. In this moment, not only does usness re-conceptualise itself and others as absolutely the same, but it also takes onto itself both that otherness and its selfness. This ability not only to know the other, but also to integrate the other's text as part of one's own, becomes a matter of conception, just something "that was interesting", a matter, an "it" which is "just part of my brain really". Danny Miller and Bernard Pieterse define their identities without regard for the boundaries of space and time. The Amazon, Japan, Italy, Greece and Poland are within easy reach as these post-modern travellers shift from one place to another. Conceptions of place and space become made nothing within

the world of the hyper-real. The fence that surrounds the school disappears. The places where people live and work, the boundaries of place and time that demarcate them, become meaningless and break down. The materiality of present time and space becomes illusionary, a digital fabrication.

Even as Miller "could spin you out even further" with the absolute immateriality of the hyper-real, the material reality of difference re-emerges. The necessity to set up real machines, the possibility of actually going to the Cook Islands and the discussions with real people, re-impose the relationship between the very real bodies of those who are here and those who are there. Dan Miller's excitement, as he leads the first group of his students across to that other place, is that time, space and bodies seem insubstantial. At the same time their materiality remains.

Miller spins me out in the material world. His story is about what "we" will do. "We were the first Australian school to go", "we've come back", "we're actually organising", "we're going to host". They, on the other hand, will "access that". What "it" is, is no longer a matter of what is in Miller's imagination. The discussion continues to be about the nexus between "we" and "they", about what "they want" and what we can do. Miller's reality is juxtaposed not only with the material world, of real machines and places, but of the representation of those bodies within those places and spaces, real and virtual. The Cook Islanders, gratefully accepting the services of the school as they set up their virtual domain, brings to mind the tale of others dependent on our help that Tracy Cunningham considered in 1988. Bernard Pieterse similarly considers the reality of difference, even as he negotiates its amorphousness:

> It is difficult because I don't want to necessarily identify – if I wanted to write a policy that was – I know there is a problem with boys, particularly Cook Island boys. I would hate to sort of wind it up as a formal school policy. It would be an issue to try to address the balance but I would hate to have it written up so that you were favouring one ethnic group over another. Perhaps strategies might support a particular group. It may be that our sister school, one of the Cook Island schools, could be further explored to help empower boys here with a common background to feel more confident about their studies and to engage in further studies but I would hate to have it written up that there was something that would deliberately target that group or highlight them or favour them – same thing with the Aboriginal communities I guess. I wouldn't say that I wouldn't hand out money to you because you are Aboriginal . . . It should be done in an inclusive way that supports the group but doesn't actually identify the problem as actually being characteristic of the ethnicity of that group – very dangerous ground to walk on.
>
> (Pieterse, 1998, p. 6)

Even as Pieterse celebrates the pleasures of universal alterity, the shadows of otherness remain immanent. The Aboriginal, the Cook Islander, is different, dependent on our help, even as those differentiations are nebulous, dangerous even. The material structures of race and class make Pieterse's ability to choose ambiguous. He is no longer in control over who he is or how he can know and locate others. The problematic and relational "it" that defines his identity no longer describes the nexus between having one ethnicity and another. Nevertheless, it continues to mark the limitations of who he is against representations of others who are essentially different and refuse categorisations of sameness. The realisation that not everyone

is the same and that difference matters disrupts this perception. It is frightening not only because difference is understood to have disappeared but also because it is "very dangerous ground to walk on".

Pieterse's relativist notion that he is a tourist who can choose those aspects of difference he wishes to take from others, comes under pressure. The pleasure of collecting tokens of diversity, the excitement of learning another language, another history, of eating another food or being in another place is juxtaposed with fears that defining and formalising difference is dangerous. The conception that difference has been reduced to the pleasurable and the insignificant is interrupted by the realisation that otherness has not disappeared at all. Pieterse and Miller are confronted by the material reality of other people's lives: the Japanese whose language is learnt, the poverty of those living in the backwoods of Mexico, the sufferings of the Aztecs wiped out by the conquering Spanish. The other lives of these people interrupt the attempt to write them out of the "school policy". The Cook Islanders remain identifiable, and in need of strategies to enable them to feel confident about their studies. Aboriginal communities remain in need of "inclusive" policy implementation, even as to "identify the problem as actually being characteristic of the ethnicity of that group" is "very dangerous ground to walk on".

In this section, I am investigating the ambivalent identity that positions "us/them". My respondents and I call ourselves one identity and another, even as we identify ourselves and others to be one identity and another. We are made to be within and outside the community differently at different times even as these distinctions are struggled against and disrupted. This is to investigate identity from the place of "in-between"; from the junctures between the different vantage points provided across and between narrational practices, fields, and maps, and between practices and between fields and between maps. In 1988, I find that the differences between these viewpoints are easily described. In 1998, these different vantage points are harder to define. The clearly defined boundaries between calling oneself one identity and another, and the ontological notions that define the conditions of living out that identity, become increasingly blurred. That is, the relationship between those contingent domains in which we argue about and shape our identities (as viewed from narrational fields) and the taken-for-granted ways that define how those identities can actually be (as viewed from narrational maps) becomes confused and conflated.

Further examination of the different ways parents, teachers and I speak about identity in 1988 and 1998, brings forth barely discussed notions of who we are. In 1988, we examine the contingent and disjunctive concepts and practices, which define how one can attribute to oneself one ethnic identity and another. The view of these conversations from the vantage point of the narrational map shows the kind of intervention teachers and parents undertake when they find their ability to select these ethnicities shaped by the taken-for-granted concepts that continue to position them as inside and outside the community. It is a juncture that is barely acknowledged and scarcely spoken about. In 1998, teachers and parents barely mention "it" at all. Instead, they consider ways that they can have one ethnic identity and another. Danny Miller's story conflates the narrational fields from which he can choose to name himself one identity and another, and the taken-for-granted maps which

position his sense of being. Freed by this conflation between the fields which confer the concept of ethnic identity, and the maps which position persons as one identity or another, Miller believes he can take on aspects of any other identity he chooses. At the same time, he remains comfortably one-of-us. He knows the other, locates the other and can be the other. The very fluidity of difference, as it can be travelled to, communicated with, consumed, becomes not the object, but part of the subject of his self-identification. The multicultural story of the secondary college is represented by artistically blending different ethnic faces on the internet web page – the ultimate consumption of the text of the other. The ethnic person becomes nothing more than the image that Miller projects on his computer screen. Even so, the other remains omnipresent though out of reach. The concept of who-we-are and who-they-are remains. The Cook Islander sits hostile behind the computer screen, the Asian sits quietly at his desk, not quite located, not quite known. Their re-emergence disrupts the innocence and comfortableness of Miller's homely representation of the school. Ways of meaning and practice that teachers and parents use to choose between identities and the normalised ways of knowing and being in the world, and that mediate these choices, become conflated. The conceptual and material formations implied within these differences remain. Other and different people continue to demarcate the boundaries of who-we-are and we are shocked to find them still present.

7.3 The Terror of it

An orientalising logic, in which a "White" self maps out its identity through that which it is not, shapes the conversations I have with teachers and parents. In ambivalent changing negotiated relationships people make themselves, and are made differently, in different spaces and different times. This disjunctive logic provides the underlying map of the ways people understand themselves and work and live within the school. The binary logic of this interconnection is disrupted as those other and different people remain out of reach and not entirely knowable or visible. The way that this takes place can be viewed in its full complexity from the vantage points of narrational fields and maps. At the edge of our discussion, we, my respondents and I, are concerned about the thing, the "it" that forms the boundaries between being able to be that identity or another. The other, just out of reach, remains as the "other". The other identity, whose text marks the edge of who we are, remains, even as it is not quite known or locatable. The discussions about self and other are disrupted by the paradoxical nature of this nexus; both an obsession with others and the disavowal of their presence. As Robert Young explained:

> Colonial discourse does not merely represent the other, therefore, so much as simultaneously project and disavow its difference, a contradictory structure articulated according to fetishism's irreconcilable logic. Its mastery is always asserted but always slipping, ceaselessly displaced, never complete.
>
> (Young, 1990, p. 145)

More recently, these others become even more frightening, as they no longer seem outside but inside us all. The discussions that take place in a school represent a "Whiteness" discourse, whereby those who-are-us find their own identities through defining who they are not. In doing so, they textualise their own identity through the knowledge and location of an "other". By 1998, the project to make the other known and visible seems self-evident.

In this section, I consider Homi Bhabha's (1994) warning that these normalised frames and the disjunctive, contingent domains of concept and practice to which they are tied, are decentred by contradictions and ambivalences contained within them. The mastery of other ethnic groups by ourselves is disrupted as the object of our gaze is both asserted and is slippery, displaced and incomplete. The object of our gaze becomes at the same time a site of preoccupation and of disavowal. When asking how ethnic and race relationships are spoken about in schools, I find that teachers and parents seldom name these interactions but rather refer to a nebulous and contested "it". In 1988, Sally Williams considers "it" as she sits with her students in a metropolitan train.

Williams sits on the train with her students. Outsiders smile across at Williams and "say what lovely children". Their smile across to Williams unites her with them and makes the children "other". The children remain innocent of their position as the object of this silent conversation. They "don't hear anything", "don't seem to feel it". Nevertheless, "it" is there, caught in the silent understanding which Sally Williams shares with outsiders as they look at "our kids". The gulf, which manifests itself between those "outsiders" and the Asian boys and girls, is overcome by their politeness so that "the old ladies say what lovely children". The reversal of the notion of who is on the outside and who on the inside is palpable. The outsiders, no longer outsiders, are "old ladies". The children are no longer "our kids" but Asians. They are silent, unhearing, unseeing and quietly polite. The kids in the train remain the focus of Williams and the old ladies. I too join Williams by proxy and stare at those other children on the train. At first, they are "our kids". We know them and smile. By the end, we are relieved at their polite silence as "it works in a positive way".

I talk to Sally Williams again in 1998. This time Williams watches her students from the distance, in the more open and confusing spaces of the shopping mall:

> And the kids talk about that too. That in "Southgate" everyone gets on. But when people stare at you, when you go into the City. So we get lots of talking about . . . (At) Maidstone the security guards move on the . . . The security guards move on the groups of Asians. I said, "Are you sure it's just Asians? Look around and see. Did they move along anyone who's not buying anything?" Lots of talk comes of that too.
>
> Q. But there is this feeling that Southgate's somewhere safe and now it's not . . .
>
> A. They say that. Yes.
>
> Q. Somebody else was saying that too . . . that there was this kind of feeling of . . . safety here.
>
> A. Comfortableness. The kid I've just got into my Year 11 is from St. Gregory's, where he thought he was getting racial taunts from the other kids, about his racial background. He's Sri Lankan or something. He's come here and I said, "Well, how different is it here?" And

> he said, "Oh, more relaxed." I thought you can't find that thing up here, because everyone's different.
>
> (Williams, 1998, p. 16)

This time Williams is not present with her students. She is told what is going on when they talk about going into the city. They tell her "people stare at you". Williams and her students discuss this gaze by people outside the school. "We get lots of talking about" that. The implicit "that", is not something that Williams shares. "Are you sure its just Asians?" she asks them. "Did they move along anyone . . . ?" The "they" now is the security guards, the people who move "Asians". However, even as Williams argues that these things can happen to anyone, her students are once again the object of her conversation, "They say that. Yes." The thing that she has denied happens but on the outside. The kid from St Gregory's was getting racial taunts at other schools. This is something that doesn't happen here. It is "different" here, "more relaxed". "You can't find that thing up here", because everyone is different. It is the unspoken something, that doesn't happen at the school, yet happens elsewhere. Even as Williams suggests it does not happen, she has reasserted it as the object of her discussion. Moreover, even as Williams has denied that any association between herself and others has significance, she finds it continuously made the focus of her conversation. The borders of what is inside and what is outside no longer seem so secure. The comfortable school is nevertheless not quite safe. What is outside now seems inside and outside. The difference that seemed so easily defined now seems difficult as Williams sees everyone as the same in their difference and understands that some are positioned differently from others. The Sri Lankan student is both different elsewhere and different here. It is just that here everyone is different.

> There is a further manifestation of "it". I examined fragments that implied the possibility that racism happened in the school. In 1988, some teachers and parents argued that "it" was a matter of "good people" and "bad people". In 1998, it was more difficult to know who the good people and the bad people were. I noted earlier Linda Chan's comments that, "You don't know how people see you, but you would rather the fact that you would rather not know, so you can still keep in your mind peaceful in the area . . . The Australian attitude is very hurting". Aruna Sandra tells a similar story whereby she finds her ability to become part of one community or another thwarted even though she can already speak English and has professional qualifications. Peter Lee, on the other hand, has lived in Australia for most of his life. He can barely speak Chinese. His links with his birthplace are "virtually lost". He is concerned above all that all people should be treated the same way and not treated differently because of race. Even so, he finds that his ability to choose between one identity and another is absolutely frustrated. The lines of being included and being excluded become increasingly unclear. He knows that he can never be sure: "You know, before you talk to a White person, you going to think. Are they genuine or not, or are they, basically, hating you or something like that."
>
> (Peter Lee, 1998, ll. pp. 722–729)

An experienced administrator for a shipping company and a fluent English speaker, Ata Hiwai, Teachers Aide, carefully explored her options before deciding to come to Melbourne:

> We came here not knowing what to expect. My husband came here two months before us and got us a house and came back to the job that he was in when we came on holiday . . . an

> extended holiday. While we were here he worked for a couple of weeks and then went back home, because he's never seen $300–$400 a week in his pay packet . . . so we came home for a month and I get the kids to come to school. And two weeks and they want to go home. They just wouldn't want to get out of bed to come to school and that took a while. I stayed home and I used to come straight and go to work which I don't know where we live. I was working for a shipping company back home and I got transferred to Port Melbourne, to the office over here.
>
> (Hiwai, 1998, ll. pp. 185–198)

Shifting to Melbourne was a matter of finding out whether the city was comfortable and how her children could go to school. Because of the high-powered nature of her work, she had little difficulty being transferred to an office in Melbourne. Despite the ease with which she is able to move from one country to another, Hiwai finds the ability of her children to enter the school community compromised. Students from the Cook Islands, who have arrived most recently, only have the use of an aide because of the voluntary services of Mrs Hiwai. Feeling concerned about her own children and the children of her friends, Hiwai comes 2 or 3 days a week to work as an unpaid teacher's aide. At that time, Hiwai visits families, speaks to students with problems, helps students with their school work, intervenes in conflict situations between staff and students, and between students, organises fundraising and cultural concerts, and holds regular community meetings with Pacific Islanders in Cook Island Maori. Despite recognition that Hiwai is most effective in this role, the school is not able to get funding to employ her.

For Li Kim Ha, Business Studies Coordinator, identities are so fluid, that she finds herself to be a floating person. As she explains:

> Now I happen to be a floatie person. I happen to have no root, because my language save me. I live in Paris and worked in Paris for 8 years. French and English the same thing. I didn't use Chinese at all. At all, because I didn't tell you, I was born in Vietnam. The year I graduate I lost Vietnam, so I got nowhere to go. I went to Paris, but I got background of French when I was little. This why how, you can learn one language. I was not educated in Chinese, when I was very little. When I was little lived in Vietnam but a French Education, twelve years.
>
> (Li Kim Ha, 1998, ll. pp. 349–354)

Li Kim moves from one culture, language, country to another. She speaks four languages, has qualifications from three different countries, moves easily from one city to another. Her skills are well respected. As well as teaching economics and business, both in English and bilingually, she works as a marketing expert for the school, selling the concept of the school to sister schools overseas. If she does not like it here, she will go elsewhere. She will simply float on. Nevertheless, the business of floating is not an easy one:

> So, even in Vietnam, you're saying, your birthplace. You were really, floating because you were Chinese and then you came to Taiwan and you were . . .
>
> A. I'm not the same Chinese. I am, always, a marginal person.
>
> Q. You went, then to . . .
>
> A. Paris, I got a French Passport, in fact, but I'm not French. I'm happy the way I am, because I'm just a floating person. I float; I just look on the positive side, because I float.

> I learn a lot of things. Wherever I go the first two years is tough, but I get used to it. When I get used to it. I can cope and when I get used to it. I think I am excited, because I . . .
> (Li Kim Ha, 1998, ll. pp. 447–519)

Even as Li Kim "floats" from one country to another, adapts to one country and then another, she remains "always a marginal person". Floating is exciting, but it is also tough; you have to "cope" and "get used to it". Floating is not just a matter of being one identity and another, it is a matter of floating on the surface, of never being part of any culture. This is a matter of not belonging which is different in complexity from Papapandis' lack of belonging in either Australia or Greece. Li Kim belongs everywhere and nowhere. Like Miller and Pieterse, she is a "floating person". For Li Kim, however, floating is a matter of confronting the tensions between various material possibilities. It is not just a matter of choosing between being one thing and another, but trying to be those things. It is not easy. She needs an education, to learn French, to get a French passport. You need to "learn a lot of things". In the end, she still has to get used to "it", but she can "cope". She never really belongs. "I'm everyone's enemy", she tells me elsewhere. (Li Kim Ha, 1998, ll. pp. 29–33)

7.4 Between Disrupted Narratives

An outcome of my analysis was the delineation of a "Whiteness" discourse that defined the terms and conditions of being other (and therefore self) within the school community. A consequential step for my analysis was to focus the lens to the self who defined this logic. This proved to be a complex task. In 1988, I did not think to ask questions about the self who made these stories. In 1998, I did ask these questions but only with great difficulty. When teachers and parents did talk to me about their ethnic identities, I found that they continued to describe themselves in terms of what they were not. The observation of these patterns from the vantage point of the narrational map revealed a complex logic. Teachers and parents felt that they could choose between one ethnicity and another, but found this ability affected by the way they could be that identity. In 1988, this nexus was described by a nebulous and barely understood "it" that needed to be negotiated as people shifted between recognising themselves as one ethnic identity and another and as people could be that identity. In 1998, this differentiation seemed blurred so that teachers and parents believed they could simply choose to be one ethnic identity and another but found that their ability to be another identity often impeded.

Moreover, the normalised positionings, which formed the logic of how one was able to describe one's identity, remained. Teachers and parents continued to express their identities against that which is not one-of-us. In 1998, this kind of identification became more difficult as respondents refused "ethnic tags" and difference would seem to have disappeared as "we are all different". Nevertheless, difference re-emerged as teachers and parents realised that others who remain not quite known and just out of our reach border the condition of who-they-are. The frightening thing for these teachers and parents, the terror of it, was that these differences were

no longer on the outside, but something that was inside our most comfortable places and inside us all. More shocking for others of my respondents was the realisation that they continued to be defined as one identity or another no matter what their choices were. In 1988, these teachers and parents found there were good people and bad people who might treat them differently. In 1998, they no longer knew who the good people and who the bad people were. They found themselves excluded, even as they were also in some way included as both us and not us.

Finally, when discussing people's experiences with ethnic relationships and when considering matters of multiculturalism and racism, I found these discussions linked to deep-seated conceptions about self-identities, otherness and the association between them. Ethnic and race communications were concerned with the way that those who were one-of-us understood themselves in relation to those who were not one-of-us (and therefore were one-of-them). In 1988, people were regarded as belonging to one ethnic group or another. In 1998, the borders between being one ethnic group and another seemed to fall apart. People were shocked to find that the other ethnic group remained, only now the borders between others and selves seemed fluid and haphazard. The "other" could now be found in the most comfortable of our spaces and inside us all. The terror of it could be seen clearly as this dialogue was studied from the vantage point of the narrational map. Even as other identities seem fluid and matters of choice, we continue to be haunted by the other whom we do not quite know, cannot quite locate, and cannot quite be, but who nevertheless determines the boundaries of who we are.

Chapter 8
Another Identity

The first question he was asked after he gave the statement was "So you are saying there was no element of racism in the riots on the weekend?" He answered "I said what I said. I do not believe Australians are racist. I thought the behaviour yesterday was quite unacceptable and I said that attacking anyone on the basis of their race or their colour or their appearance is quite unacceptable". In other words, he refused to answer that straight question.

In his opening statement the Prime Minister had said "I think it's important that we don't rush to judgements about these events. I do not accept that there is underlying racism in this country, I have always taken a more optimistic view of the character of the Australian people".

In this way, and with just a few sentences, he converted a difficult situation, one that a conventional politician might have thought required strong, highly critical talk about elements of the society, into a positive message about the good nature of the Australian people – not most of us, or the majority, but all of us.

My friend in Sydney said that was exactly what his neighbours, the mums and dads of Cronulla rioters, wanted to hear.
(Shaun Carney, The Age, Saturday, 17 December 2005, p. 29)

The battle was over the most quintessential of Australian home spaces. Five thousand youths, some wrapped in Australian flags, went on a rampage, attacking anyone who looked of Middle Eastern descent and vowing to free the beaches from "The Lebs". Cronulla beach, ironically called "The Shire" by locals, had been home to a surfing culture described in Kathy Lette and Gabrielle Carey's (1979) autobiographical book *Puberty Blues*. Appealed to by radio "shock jocks" and a miscellany of SMS messages, members of the local gang, "The Bra Boys", were joined by a coalition of "White supremists" and other, mostly young, men. The tragedy of the day's events was immortalised in an array of pictures: a crowd of men, many with looks still girlish with youth, made ugly with alcohol and grimaces of hate, held back by police from attacking a young couple who happened to be on the beach; two girls in hijab hiding in a kiosk; a man shielding himself from a rain of words and blows. The next day's papers contained pictures of angry Middle Eastern-looking men walking through Sydney's streets smashing windscreens and sending residents scurrying into their homes.

R. Arber, *Race, Ethnicity and Education in Globalised Times*,

The symbolism in discussions about battles in "The shire" (in defence of our beaches, our women) was an oft-noted theme in newspapers over the days that followed. What seemed clear was that a White-led mob did not want those "others" in their area and attacked to clear "their" space. The next day, gangs of "Lebs" took to the streets. What was less clear was whether the focus of the "White" attack was on Christians as well as Muslims of Lebanese descent; all Muslims, whether or not they were from Lebanon; or anyone of Middle Eastern descent, regardless of their religion or place of birth. In any case, the attackers targeted anyone who looked "woggie", including Italians and South Americans.[1] Moreover, the question "Who are the Australians?" and the culpability of "the-rest-of-us" in the battle was confusing. Speaking publicly the next day, Prime Minister John Howard argued that these attacks did not mean that Australians are a racist nation. The bad behaviour of some youths did not alter the understanding that Australians, all-of-us, are a good-natured people who do not behave like that. It was a point debated in an *Age* opinion poll conducted the following week in which 75% of Australians agreed "there is underlying racism in Australia".[2] Nevertheless, as Shaun Carney argues in the quotation at the beginning of this chapter, the Prime Minister's words were exactly what mothers and fathers in suburban Sydney wanted to hear.

The proposition that discussions about race and ethnic relationships are more than they seem has far-reaching implications. My discussions with teachers and parents explored the ways that members of a school imagined their community and the ways they believed that associations between groups and individuals should take place within it. Such a terrain of imagined community and space needed to be examined more comprehensively and in ways that could analyse the complexity of unequally empowered, changing, often conflicting discourse. The most important task was to set out the parameters of a framework that could manage this complexity. The second task was to explore the implications of this analysis for the ways that race and ethnic relationships could be understood. The obsessive evasiveness that underlies the binary relation "us/not-us" was contained not only within the "noise", but also within the "silence" that articulated discussions about race and ethnic interaction. Discussions about ethnic and race relationships did more than trace individual negotiations between racially defined and ethicised identities and contingent and changing debates about multiculturalism and racism. They included the taken-for-granted notions of self and other, as they were negotiated across shifting inequalities of power, which were the subject and the object of these conversations. These remained firmly in place, even as modern notions of identity as self-evident and essentially different became increasingly understood as fluid, changing and entangled.

The purpose of Carney's article is not the attribution of blame or wrongdoing. Rather, Carney's writing explores the ways that the events at Cronulla Beach can be

[1] A "wog" is an Australian slang term, usually used derogatorily, to describe someone of Mediterranean and more recently Middle Eastern, or even Indian, descent.

[2] *The Age*, Tuesday 20 December 2005, p. 1.

understood in relation to the ways that Australians think about and behave towards each other. In Western countries such as Australia, racial and ethnic differences have often appeared to many as interesting and exciting, but of little consequence. The possibility that the outcome of difference might be racism and exclusion has seemed improbable. Discussions about such a possibility have appeared irrelevant, perhaps dangerous. Now, however, the spectres of other and different people are suddenly fearfully present at the borders of communal imaginations, frightening "us" because they do not fit well. Whereas older expressions of race and culture allowed the differentiation to be made easily between those inside and those outside the community, newer expressions of identity now make the most taken-for-granted notions of "who-we-are" and "who-they-are" appear increasingly confused and changed. Expanded migration programmes and global and technological innovations have altered the ways that people move into and out of communities, languages and identities. What has become so frightening is that in a rapidly changing world, and one in which the definition of identity has become so confusing, "others" remain the material focus of our greatest fears and our most intimate desires. Of importance here are the implications of this noisy and silent logic for our work as teachers in schools in Australia and in Western countries generally.

8.1 Re-imagining Research Methodology

My examination of the complex and multilayered logics that constitute race and ethnic relationships began with my long involvement in education and with my experiences as a Jewish, White, Australian professional woman. Increasingly, the study of one State Secondary School in Melbourne, Australia and my conversations with nearly 30 teachers and parents, took centre stage in my thinking. We, my respondents and I, spoke about the impact of racial and ethnic interactions on our everyday lives in times of huge transformation. At the beginning of the research, we discussed schools that seemed diverse as, almost unexpected, students from different cultural and educational systems arrived at the school. A decade later, students arrived from an ever more complex miscellany of backgrounds, and schools became further altered by globalising and technological changes.

Conversations which chronicle a school community overwhelmed by demographic and global changes and the policies and practices put into place to deal with this come together as a pervasive and important story. Narratives reveal all-encompassing patterns which nevertheless fail to account for the data: a general reluctance to speak about race and ethnic relationships directly; a predilection for conversations about these interactions to take place as multiculturalism rather than as racism; and a barely acknowledged yet persistent focus on the cultural and racially defined difference of school community members. My respondents spoke about social experiences, debate policies and practices, and discussed deeply held notions about identity. They mentioned things in passing or barely mentioned them at all. Clearly, the analytic task involved in interpreting data about race and ethnic

relationships is a complex one: a matter of understanding that which is said, but also that which has become (in many ways) a silence.

From the beginning, the stories and opinions that teachers, parents and I exchanged about our day-to-day experiences in schools are central to the analysis. From the vantage point of narrational practice, I describe contradictory and unpredictable relationships between changing and separate persons who might act badly or well towards others. The events and activities I describe appear *ad hoc* and inconsistent. We are unsure of how these reflect actual relationships. Identity and difference are experienced individually and within the time and space of individual actions and experiences. Teachers and parents tell a multiplicity of stories about the different ways they negotiate between calling themselves one ethnic identity and another and being given a particular identity. Together, we discuss the ways that we behave as one person or another, the problems we face as we try to carry out those behaviours, and the ways that others behave and do not behave in return.

The aim of critical and naturalistic research methodologies is to bring together as themes and debates the disparate ideas and experiences of respondents. From the vantage point of narrational fields, race and ethnic relationships appear patterned by different ways of meaning and practice. Teachers and parents negotiate the conceptual and material domains that allow them to deal with this: descriptions of identities as one ethnicity or another, definitions of multiculturalism, the presence of racism, the implementation of language policy and the impact of globalisation. The consequences of these debates – students forced to take one subject or another, policies promulgated but not practiced, students bullied or excluded – become the focus of concern.

At the core of the research enterprise are normalised notions that underlie these debates and the everyday activities that give rise to them. From the vantage point of narrational maps, I trace taken-for-granted and deep-seated conceptions about the ways one can be one identity or another and the relationships that exist between these notions. This undertaking interrogates the basic categories of human existence which underlie conversations about race and ethnic association. The dualistic relation "self/other" is one of compulsion and elusiveness, as this nexus that can barely be spoken about provides the very basis of who-we-are. It remains as the subject and object of conversations about race and ethnicity and the ways they can be spoken about.

Such seemingly different conversations – about practice, the issues they traverse, and the sense of "historic forever" that frames them – make up a terrain of imagination where unequally empowered ways of meaning are struggled over by experiencing individuals who are themselves caught within these same ways of understanding. This shifting, changing terrain needs to be understood as more than surface only. Its multilayered conflicting confusion of noises and silences needs to be understood from different but integrated vantage points. The first, that of *narrational practices*, considers the seemingly haphazard condition of individual stories and experiences as experiencing individuals conceptualise and participate in their everyday worlds. From this viewpoint, identities seem discrete, changing and separable. Relationships between self and other appear as a matter of behaving in particular but unpredictable ways. The embodiment of self and other is experienced

individually. The enunciation of these experiences is heard as a cacophony of different and individuated experiences. The second vantage point, that of *narrational fields*, considers the patterned, yet contingent and often-disjunctive ways of meaning and practice related to a particular conceptual or practical domain. From this vantage point, entities and the relationships between them appear patterned, interweaving tropes of meaning and practice. The third level, the *narrational map*, considers the interconnectiveness of these narrational fields as they define the essential ways of knowing and being in the world. It explores the relation between entities, self and other, as they are made and practiced within the "totality" of taken-for-granted ways of knowing and being in the world. From this viewpoint, entities and relationships are understood as being embodied within the basic and taken-for-granted categories of human existence. Racial and ethnic identities and relationships are enunciated as it is to speak and to name, or to be spoken of or to be named, within the basic categories of knowing or being in the world.

The different viewpoints provided by this analytic frame interrogate the contingency that configures the articulation of race and ethnic relationships. From the vantage point of narrational practices, people discuss the ways their actions and experiences in relation to race relations are changed (or not changed). From the vantage point of narrational fields, these changes are understood through historic trajectories of social and cultural meaning which form the context and product of interweaving patents of meaning. Debates about a host of subjects related to race and ethnic relations, particularly multiculturalism but also about race, migration, demographic change, civics and international education, change over the decade. The narrational fields which define these debates change in ways different from the narrational maps, which in terms of the time–space relation appear as they are understood in terms of basic categories of human existence across different lived formations. People experience race and ethnic relationships differently over time and enter the debates that shape them in other ways. The vertical and horizontal relationship between each of these levels provides the contingent link to the way they can be spoken about. In contemporary times, the obsessive evasiveness that articulates the dualism self/other, changes slowly even as it continues to focus the shifting debates and the inconsistent but persistent day-to-day particularities which define race and ethnic relationships.

Too often social theory remains caught within the different viewpoints provided as one looks at the social world from the point of view of individual experience, or institutional debate or underlying discourse. What makes this methodological frame innovative is not only that these different ways of exploring the research are discussed but also the relationships between them explained. The intricacies of each viewpoint are interrogated to consider how these different viewpoints understand racism in its different aspects: the place of the person and difference, the relationship between identities and their embodiment and their enunciation within time and space. The person, understood in day-to-day life as an experiencing, changing, separate person is, from the vantage point of narrational maps, the subject placed and called into the world through the totality of taken-for-granted ways of being in the world. Difference, which in the everyday world is understood as a matter of

dealing "nicely" or badly towards others, is defined as the taken-for-granted ways which position subjects as "self" and "other". This explicit analysis of the integrated whole which is part of "knowing the world we live in" allows the complexity to be analysed in its part whilst illuminating the intricacies of the whole.

8.2 Re-writing the Terms of Race

At the centre of the assorted narratives that make up my research is an ill-defined but nevertheless ubiquitous "it". To contemplate the nature of "it" is to strike at the core of the ways race and relationships are understood and played out. From the beginning, "it" alludes to the juncture between feeling part of the school community and not quite part of the school community. In earlier interviews, a few teachers and parents were concerned that people might behave badly or well towards them. Bad people made it difficult to belong properly within the school community. More recently, this ability to recognise good and bad people becomes confused and it becomes difficult to know who the good or the bad people are or when one might be included or excluded in this way.

The point is that people speak a lot about race and ethnic relationships but only in particular ways. Different areas – demographic change, curriculum reform and diversity – become sites where conversations about race and ethnic relationships take place. Issues about belonging and not belonging remain crucial, even as these ideas are not named or are alluded to obliquely. Discussions about racism, and the exclusionary nature of race and ethnic relationships, are frequently avoided. The examination of these noisy–silent narratives suggests that "it" has a second, asymmetric meaning. "It" comes to describe the nexus between the ways that people can live within the community and the ways that communities should work. These dialogues, stated in terms of being about demography, curriculum and diversity, discuss the relationship between the ways that ethnic and racially defined peoples live in communities and the normative frames which position people differently within the community. In 1988, this relationship was described as being between two discrete and essentially different entities caught behind almost insurmountable cultural, social and biological barriers. Such conceptions of identity as being absolutely different were placed in conflict with universalistic notions whereby everyone is the same. Teachers and parents felt out of control as other and unknown ethnic groups moved into their "home space". They sought to define and to properly know who these others were and to map their location within the everyday spaces of school.

In later discussions, tensions between modern notions of difference as essentially defined and liberal notions of sameness become increasingly complicated as global movements and change make subjectivity appear fragmentary, contingent, changing and fluid. Despite these changed ways of negotiating the conceptual and material domain which defines ethnic identities, these negotiations continue to be framed by taken-for-granted notions which make people – at various times – one-of-us or an-other. A subsequent step in the analysis shifts the focus away from the discussion

of others and interrogates the identities of those who formulate the terms and conditions of social interaction. This kind of analysis is difficult. In earlier research, I did not think to even ask the question. Later, parents and teachers acknowledged the question, but continued to speak to me about the conception and location of those-other-people-whom-they-were-not. Now, however, the ability to choose between identities appears contested and to fall apart even as it remains tied to unspoken understandings that define the ways that one can be that identity.

The examination of the relationship between being identified as "raced" or "ethnic" and identifying oneself as an ethnic or raced person brings forth the terms and conditions of habitation within communities. Such analysis interrogates the very nature of what "it" is that teachers and parents allude to in conversations about race and ethnic relations. "It" conceptualises the relation between notional and material domains where people negotiate between being one ethnic identity and another, and the normalised frames which define how they can be those identities. Taken-for-granted conceptions about how one belongs are made against the stories of those who do not quite belong. Others who do not belong remain our obsession and our text and at the same time out of reach and not quite in our control. Most frightening, in recent years, is the re-emergence of identities that seemed to have disappeared. Borders between identities and places fall apart and difference no longer seems to matter. The terror of it is that the other, who seemed so under control as to be a mere matter of our choice, re-emerges so that we no longer know who-they-are and who-we-are. The terror of it is that identity becomes so confused that the other is now found inside us all.

There is another way that "it" is terrible. Some teachers and parents speak about the way they are able to change the attributes that make them one ethnic group or another. In earlier interviews, teachers and parents improved their education, learned to speak English and became acquainted with common ways of understanding things and doing things in Australia. Later, teachers and parents continue to do this. For some, these kinds of changes are accomplished often, and appear as being a matter of "floating" between the characteristics of being one ethnicity and another. Despite these abilities to take on the characteristics of one ethnicity and another, these people also come across "it". They find that no matter how they might choose to be one identity or another, or how hard they might try to be that identity, their ability to actually be that identity is circumscribed. Despite their attempts to be one-of-us, these people find themselves represented as one-of-them.

Finally, "it" is terrible in the way that it can be spoken about. Homi Bhabha's (1994) notion is that the other who marks the edges of our definitions of who-we-are is marked out by the representations of those we-are-not. The ability to know and locate such others becomes both an obsession and something not quite within our grasp. The tenuous relationship between ourselves and an-other becomes a source of irritation and fear, "our" obsession and something that can barely be spoken about. In earlier conversations these relations were referred to as "it". More recently, these relations are often not mentioned at all, even as they provide the focus of our conversations. Discussions about policies and practices of multiculturalism and anti-racism consider ways to deal with ethnic and race groups. These negotiations consider race

and ethnic relations in particular ways and by proxy without referring specifically to the real substance of their debates – the way people belong and do not belong as one-of-us. The terror of it is that the material and conceptual manifestations of these relations continue to be apparent even as they remain almost unmentioned and unmentionable. The terror of it is the re-emergence of the relation that cannot be spoken about even as it remains the focal point of the discussion.

The insight of critical race theory is that day-to-day behaviours and experiences in contemporary Western societies are shaped by notions that specify who people are and that structure the ways they can belong within communities. The terms and conditions of these notions, made within the crucible of interweaving and unequally empowered discourse, are contested and changing even as they remain tied to notions and structures that define who-we-are against who-they-are. This relationship can be interrogated and its component parts explored. Individual perceptions that experiences are *ad hoc*, contested and changing can be understood in relation to the conversations and debates that formulate their implementation. The interrogation of these practices and experiences, and the debates and issues which emerge from them, from the point of view of narrational maps, allows the ontological notions that are their site and subject to be disaggregated. The point is that people are comfortable when they speak about contingent and disjunctive conditions of ethnic difference and the ways that they are traversed. Multiculturalism has become an important way to speak about the negotiated and changing aspects of raced and ethnic identities. Racism, as it maps out the material and conceptual conditions under which unequally empowered entities come to embody these relationships, becomes the field which is difficult to articulate. The conceptual and material structures that define how people are perceived and can live within communities are almost impossible to discuss.

This nexus between dialogue about identity and belonging, and ontological notions which position how people can be within the world as "we-know-it", become even more difficult to articulate as, in times of intense global movements and digital interrelationships, commonplace terms and conditions that define identity, time and space are placed in tension. As subjectivity loses its essential and primordial aspect and becomes understood as fragmentary, contingent and changing, it becomes increasingly difficult to know who is identifiably other, and therefore who is self. However, the taken-for-granted notions which make people, at various times, one-of-us or "other" remains, as those-of-the-community continue to define others in ambivalent and paradoxical relation to their own unmarked and ill-defined selves. Even as they appear more confident that they know about the different ethnic groups within their social world and how to work with them, their ability to know who those others are and to locate these groups is tenuous. Thus, the notions remain which position some within the community differently from others, even as the boundaries that separate identities and the borders which locate them inside and outside the community become hard to define. Discussions about policies and practices of multiculturalism and anti-racism articulate ways to deal with the complexities and tensions that shape relationships between identities. These tropes explore interrelations between those-who-are-us and other raced and ethnic groups in particular ways and

by proxy without referring specifically to the real substance of their debates. These narratives fail, insofar as they are inadequate to explore the complexity of these relationships. The terror of "it" is that the material and conceptual manifestations of these interactions continue to be apparent, even as the terms and conditions that define them appear contingent, disjunctive and changing. The inexorable logic that underpins this paradoxical relation remains almost unmentioned and almost unmentionable. "It" is the re-emergence of the relationship that cannot be spoken about, even as it remains the focal point of the discussion.

8.3 Re-assessing Classroom Conversations

The articulation of the innermost fears of a community has implications for all-of-us who reside in Western countries such as Australia, particularly teachers. My respondents (the teachers and parents with whom I spoke and for that matter myself) were well-disposed towards their students and worked hard to implement good practice within the school. Policy debates about multiculturalism and newspaper discussions about the concerns of our time – immigration, security, terrorism, globalisation, indigenous issues – demonstrate the importance given to the implementation of comprehensive ways of managing resources and people within our community. Nevertheless, contained within these vibrant discussions are subtexts that define deeply held notions about community identity and difference. The implications of these understandings are far-reaching, affecting the ways that all-of-us can live, work, go to schools, understand ourselves or speak. The conflation between the working everyday conversations about practice and notions of identity, difference and community, their articulation and their consequences, must be disentangled if we are to lay the foundation for strong relationships within our schools and communities.

At the very least, the "strategic essentialism", whereby some-of-us describe groups-of-them as economically as possible, needs to be understood and dismantled (Luke, 2005, p. xvii). Teachers, parents and I were determined to find ways to help students and ourselves cope in an increasingly complex and changing world. Our conversations focused on the best practices to enable students to learn English, work with languages other than English, have respect for the cultures of all students in the school and to work with new and increasingly global technologies. The practical definitions required (those that suggest best teaching practice for particular students, for instance), too easily slipped into the discursive device of the stereotype. Attempts to categorise the broad elements of cultural practices and process for particular students, became inventories of seemingly primordial attributes which deny any sense that the identities described are changing or negotiated. In creating the illusion of precision, the definitions of groups of individuals become reducible to a limited list of characteristics, part of a generalized story known to describe particular and other people. (Pickering, 2001, p. 7).

The consequence of the stereotype, and the insidiousness of its exclusionary powers, needs to be properly understood and addressed. As teachers, we need to

understand the learning needs of our students. However, this demand must be accompanied by a continuous reflective process that enables us to work with each student and their particular educational development, the historical and cultural understandings they might share in common and the ways these are negotiated, in process and changing. As participants in discussions about the social world in which we live, it is imperative that we remain cognizant that people share common cultural, linguistic and historical roots, but also that these are interlinked with and mediated by many other social practices and notions available to them. Most particularly, we must become aware of our own historical and cultural trajectories and the way these experiences and ideas position us within and outside the community, and frame our knowledge of ourselves and therefore others. All community members, particularly teachers, must become aware of histories that differ from those considered "of-the-community". More particularly we must learn to interrogate who-we-are.

A second significant understanding arising from my research is that the conceptual and material domains through which conversations about race and ethnic relations take place need to be reconsidered and renegotiated. The relocation of these debates as matters of multiculturalism in the research conversations means that these discussions take place in particular ways. Conversations about race and ethnicity are understood as being about the definition of cultural difference and its management. The codification of notions such as demographic change, diversity and globalisation means that the real implications of ethnic and race relations, difference, and local and global interactions are often ignored. Debates about demographic change, for instance, acknowledge the important insight that newly arrived migrants have particular needs when integrating into Australian schools. At the same time, these debates repeat unquestioned taken-for-granted notions about the conditions of being one ethnic identity or another and as belonging as one-of-us. These conventions of noise and silence entrench public debate about policy and practice in particular ways. Language curriculum becomes a proxy battleground for the ways members of the community play out definitions of self-identities and the identity of otherness. Language programmes become a vehicle for ethnic association and preservation and a boon for ethnic involvement and power. Community language education is controversial: understood as a right and a productive asset for all the community, and yet as a dangerous and powerful counter to community cohesion. English language curriculum is also understood in conflicting ways: as a matter of social justice; a vehicle for civic education and assimilation or alternatively, as a vehicle for discrimination, disadvantage and ghettoisation. These issues are important and should be debated. Nevertheless, the normalised notions at their core cannot remain unchallenged.

Most importantly, the notions and structures which define and include people within our society must be named and constructed otherwise. Too often, racism is understood as being about the ways that individuals do bad things to other people because of their race or ethnic or religious origins. This approach assumes that problematic and raced relationships in schools and communities are about individual and prejudiced attitudes and behaviours aimed against particular members of another ethnic or racial group (Chambers, 1991). This kind of "individual" racism

(whether it is overt and intentional or covert and inadvertent) is of course wrong and an important principle within schools and within societies is that it should not be tolerated. The thrust of materials for multicultural and anti-racism curriculum programmes is that programmes and policies in schools and communities must take a holistic approach towards combating racism, including individual racism as well as cultural and institutional racism. "Cultural" racism describes the domination of one group over another in terms of language, norms, values and standards. It refers to the prejudiced attitudes and discriminatory behaviour of one group over another on the basis of the ways they understand and interpret the world around them. "Institutional" racism describes the system-wide operation of a social milieu that excludes substantial numbers of members of particular groups from significant participation in its major institutions. Such an approach importantly highlights the structural and cultural conditions that underpin racism. It demonstrates how actions related to racism are far more than individual displays of deviant and unsympathetic behaviours and that people are prevented from achieving their aims because of the ideologies and the rules and routines that mediate their activities. However, this method of combating racism is limited, insofar as it sees the institution and the individual as separate and discrete entities in which individuals are helpless victims against a malign, animated and omnipotent system. It is limited insofar as it sees cultures as something separate, monolithic and unchanging – a suitcase (Kalantzis, Cope, Noble, & Pointing, 1990) of concepts and ways of doing picked up in early childhood and carried unchanged throughout the lives of similarly unchanged and monolithic individuals. Understanding the way racist processes and practices occur in schools requires that teachers and community members understand the relation between individual action and cultural and structural contexts.

Acknowledgement that identity is not singular or fixed, but is constituted as part of a struggle between differently empowered ways of explaining and understanding negotiated within contexts of history, culture and experience, adds complexity to a holistic teaching approach.[3] Ways of explaining and understanding compete to re/present real students and teachers as they interact in real schools in ways that are neither equally empowered nor equally empowering. Using this approach, racism becomes not just one culture but a field of understandings and discourses that take up a whole range of racialised expressions. These expressions include all the beliefs and verbal outbursts, acts and their consequences and the principles upon which racialised institutions are based. Racism here is not one single trans-historical expression but something that constantly changes and transforms as our experiences and the ways we understand those experiences change. It is found throughout the minutiae that make up the fabric of our day-to-day life: in the spaces that we do and do not inhabit, the values and interests we do and do not have, the friends we do and do not make, the jobs we do and do not do. Thus fighting racism becomes something whereby:

[3] See Hall (1997a,b,c), Gunew (1994), Goldberg (1994), Frankenberg (1993), Rattansi (1992), Gilroy (1987) and Rizvi (1985).

> Resisting racist exclusions in their wide array of their manifestations is akin to a guerrilla war. It will involve, often unpopularly, hit and run sorts of skirmishes against specific targets, identified practices and their rhetoric of rationalisation; against prejudices and institutional rules; against pregnant silences and unforseen outbursts (Goldberg, 1994, p. 224)

Working against racism in Australia's increasingly cosmopolitan schools means that we need to rethink our roles as teachers. Racism and violence cannot be understood only as incidental and flamboyant activities that take place between malevolent individuals and groups in another place and at another time. Fighting racism is not a matter of removing something superficial from the surface as if it was simply "a coat of paint" (Gilroy, 1987, p. 11) Rather, fighting racist expressions involves changing materialities and ways of understanding which struggle and compete for position throughout societies, schools and ourselves and understanding the consequences of these expressions as they work through real social relations, students and teachers.

Arguably, the struggles and tensions that mediate social conversations and interactions in our time are changed as, in a globalised world, their ontological base intersects with those of cosmopolitanism. As the flow on effect of markets, financial and cultural interchange and population movements' transform definitions of identities; relationships between people and the structures to implement them, are altered. Within a modern world some people travel ever more extensively corporally, imaginatively and materially; consume en route, indulge their curiosity, take a risk, map out cultures and identities and interpret and appreciate the world of others Szerszynski and Urry (2002). Others find their ability to move curtailed. Their movements and manner of their exclusion enforced harshly and in new ways. They too travel virtually and imaginatively in a cosmopolitan world to watch, dream, desire and envy. More than multiculturalism, a cosmopolitan reality calls us to "account for deep difference" and to transcend the paradoxical interchange between essential notions of difference and universal moralities embedded in contemporary Western social thought (Mitchell, 2003, p. 257). The strategic imperatives of globalisation and the neo-liberal agenda, with its focus on the reduction of public costs, market choice and accountability and their impact the creation of "hierarchically conditioned, globally orientated state subjects" needs to be interpolated. The reshaping of conversations about relationships and identities in schools and communities in relation to these tropes, must be interrogated.

Understanding race and ethnic relationships in a globalised, contemporary world interrogates a[4] complex and multilayered cosmopolitanism which accounts for the activities of individuals concerned with a modern world influenced by their changed ability to travel and interact both virtually and materially. The lives of people in local communities across the globe are affected as demands of industry and capital interchange make new demands on labour, education and social behaviour. These altered conditions introduce new tensions and debates that transform conceptions of community relations. They include debates about marketing, internationalisation

[4] See for instance Whitehead (2005), Matthews (2002), Singh (2001), Purdie (1999) and Dooley (2001).

and cultural interchange. They are also about terrorism, refugees and illegal workers. For Delanty (2006, p. 26) these changed conditions suggest the need for a critical cosmopolitanism concerned with the principle of "world openness ... associated with the notion of global publics". Here, those inside and those outside, the local and global, self and other, can no longer be simply defined, understood or excluded. As Ulrich Beck (2002, p. 18) explains:

> The central defining characteristic of a cosmopolitan perspective is the dialogic imagination. By that I mean the clash of cultures and rationalities within one's own life, the internalised other. The dialogic imagination corresponds to the coexistence of rival ways of life in the individual experience which makes it a matter of fate to compete, reflect, criticise, understand, combine contradictory certainties.

For Beck, a critical approach to cosmopolitanism negates a "monologic imagination which excludes the otherness of the other" (Beck, 2000, p. 19) for a perspective which includes the "otherness of the other". Community identity has come to be defined by the seemingly divergent tropes suggested by multicultural and monocultural thought. My research conversations describe those who belong within the community even as they include some differently within the community. These conversations increasingly take place within the shifting times and blurring boundaries of globalising change. The ambiguities that underpinned earlier discussions nevertheless remain: the individual is both differentiated and implicated in various group identities; and undifferentiated in his common humanity. The question for our time is the interrogation of conceptions of identity itself and the times and spaces to which identities belong as they become ever harder to define. The complex nature of this paradoxical relation in contemporary times of insurgent globalisation shape cosmopolitan thought and demand and make the interrogation of the logic of race and ethnic relationships essential.

Crucially, a critical view of cosmopolitanism must account for the interconnections between notion and activity, constructed as they are within an unequally empowered and interactive social world. The ontological context of today's world, shaped within socio-historical context and global and technological changes, provides a new, but by now normalised and taken-for-granted circumstance that mediates modern thought and behaviour and argument. It is concerned with a terrain of imagination entered into from the very different perspectives made available by individual experience, community debate and socio-cultural circumstance. The exploration of this terrain includes the interrogation of discourses about the identities who describe and are described by these activities. People acting in a social world of day-to-day activity negotiate the culture and histories which define how identities are in process; sometimes to replicate them and at other times to transcend them (Hall, 1992). In Western countries, these productions are formulated within the crucible of modernity: within the notional and material terms and conditions of risk, transience and uncertainty (Bauman 1997a,b, 1998, 1999, 2001, 2004).

Debates about race and ethnic relationships, as they are understood and experienced within the day-to-day of everyday lives, exist in tension within a multilayered

complexity played across patterned fields of power. These reconstitute and transform communities and identities within schools and communities as:

> The languages in everyday lives of students and teachers both inside and outside of the classrooms do not exist in neat, discrete categories but in fact are used in creative, intertwined ways ... This negotiation process has seldom taken place in entirely democratic, constraint free ways but has been subject to the hegemonic effect of the already-in-place normative evolution mechanisms born in the habitus and subjectivities of the postcolonial state's elite (Lin and Martin, 2005, pp. 10–11).

Already-in-place "normative evolution mechanisms" underpin the ways that the day-to-day discussion and implementation of race and ethnic relationships take place, and these need definition. They are part of the terrain of unequally empowered discourse that frames the ways that day-to-day lives and policy discussions are shaped and practiced. The foundation of good practice in schools and in communities means that the full complexity of this insight needs to be understood. My conversations with teachers and parents about race and ethnic interconnectiveness were informed by an orientalising logic and it is this which needs to be made visible and understood.

8.4 Beyond Noisy–Silent Whispering

If we are to move forward, the noises but also the silences that comprise conversations about race and ethnic relationships must be made transparent. My conversations with teachers and parents emerged from the miscellaneous and unequally empowered individual and institutional practices and interests that create and maintain what it is to be in "our" world. Moreover, the voice of that which is not us was also in some way silenced. It was an achievement set in place in several ways. The first was quite literal. I was not able to move into the school until I had promised to discuss my study only in particular ways. The second describes the hushed voice of that which is seldom said, can hardly be said at all, and needs to be discussed in other ways. It describes the voices of people who find it difficult to find the language or the position from which to speak to us. These are conversations that are very difficult to conduct. Stories about the exclusionary consequences of race and ethnic relationships are difficult to speak about even as they provide the focus of much of the discussion. There is a need to find the words and a place from which they can be heard.

Integral within conversations about race is a silent whispering which needs to be made explicit. The terms and conditions laid out in noisy–silent conversations which define belonging within communities need to be clarified and interrogated. It is within the power of those speaking from a position of power in "our" world to define the dimensions of the map that construct the ways that day-to-day worlds in contemporary Western societies are understood. As part of this process our identity and our community take on the appearance of normality. This comes to represent the universal condition of being and working within the world. "Usness" comes to be

seen as "that which is". That which "it is not" becomes that which is not ourselves. Too often in Western societies this has become mapped out as part of the orientalist project to locate and to know others and to make within the ambivalent protocols of fantasy and desire the other person, never quite pinned down, and represented in its consideration as one thing and its opposite. It is an impulse that is always doomed to failure: disrupted, slipping and incomplete. Nevertheless, it is a matter of which all-of-us must be aware as we are part of the process of speaking about and living within communities.

This is not to argue that conceptions of who-we-are and who-they-are are singular or unchanging notions. The simplest notions of "we", they and community are constantly changing entities that put different members of the school both inside and outside the community differently. In my research, teachers and parents spoke about ways they felt excluded from the community even as they participated in those same normalised conversations which included others and themselves differently. At different times, respondents described their community differently and as pertaining to different groups of people inside and outside the school. It was not just that we – parents, teachers and I – failed to be reflective of the notions about identity and belonging that dogged our conversations. The crucial power of Whiteness, of "usness", is its very colourlessness. The definition of who-we-are is left as an almost empty category. Defining the "usness" community is an almost impossible task, save through the acknowledgement of that which we-of-the-community-are-not. Our conversations, unable to define what it meant to be who-we-are, turned instead to the ambiguous stories that discussed ways that others and ourselves were different from the unspoken norm. Our determination "to know" that which is other than the self, was all-pervading but frightening in its insufficiency.

The conversations that have taken place since the 11 September tragedy have made the ambivalence contained in the way we discuss race and ethnic relationships all the more conspicuous. The horribleness of these events is the awful reality that we are no longer safe in the most intimate of our home-spaces. The terror, which accompanies the hideous materiality of these events, is the realisation that difference has not disappeared. These events make it clear that ethnic and race relationships are social constructions with material consequences. They remind those of us who feel part of a particular community that other people do exist, that they can speak outside the representations we make for them and they can make choices quite regardless of the ones we might want to make for them. Further, our own ability to choose who-we-are within these manoeuvres is not completely free but mediated by the particular ways we exist within the community. At the same time, the definitions of who-we-are and who-they-are become increasingly unclear, as the definitions of the kinds of identities one can be are fluid and changing. These entities are made and practiced in ways that are quite different from the taken-for-granted logics assumed just over a decade ago. Thus, even after the group of people who attacked New York and Washington have been given names, they remain in a sense unknown and unlocated. Subsequent events suggest how traditional conceptions of otherness are used as a way to practice more workable conceptions of the "other" who could be found outside the community. Integral to these events are the intricate ways

globalisation changes the manifestation of relationships between people and communities. In 2001, Australians watched the unfolding of these events on television as they happened and even before they could be seen in New York. Now, Australians associate themselves as one-of-us who has been attacked, even though many have never been to New York or to Washington.

It is in this vein that events such as the Cronulla beach riots in Sydney can be understood. It is too simple to explain them as a matter of bad behaviour by some maladjusted people or as a matter of an inherent and pathological "racism" by all Australians. Rather, the interstices between the actions on the beach, the recent debates that define relationships in our communities, and the normalised logics that structure them, need to be made clear. The discussions of our time have centred around the ways that some people, "the Lebs", can be understood. A series of rape cases, dissent in the Middle East, terrorist attacks, a campaign against allowing refugees from the Middle East into Australia, the Iraqi and Afghan wars, and a long history of suspicion of Islamic customs and religious practices, have profiled a group, a slippery group of Lebanese, or Islamic, or Middle Eastern or simply "woggie" as being of concern here. Arguments about the different customs "they" have and "their" loud and aggressive behaviour add to discussions that define community concerns. What matters is that beneath these debates and events are other logics that define their circumstance and form. These logics define the space of our beaches and determine that those who are "us" should define who can be there and how they should behave. What becomes frightening is our inability to properly define who-they-are, and therefore who-we-are. The fear of our time is our anxiety that we not only do not know who-we-are fighting but we no longer know who-we-are ourselves.

This book documents my discussions with good teachers who care about their students and who work hard to make a difference to their lives. The policies and programmes they have implemented provide important examples of best practice implemented in schools buffeted by demographic and global changes. Yet, integral within our conversations are other logics that define the ways in which members of the school community belong differently. My story marks the beginning of a journey to expose the normative notions that presently undermine our earnest efforts to do the best for our students and our work to develop strong and supportive communities in complex and changing and seemingly dangerous communities. It requires us to listen to the whispering in our hearts, to overturn the obsessive evasiveness that underpins the relation of self and other, that underpins the "noise", but also the "silences" of discussions about race and ethnic relations. The noisy and silent narrations that speak of ethnic and raced relations do more than trace individual negotiations between raced and ethicised identities and contingent and changing debates about multiculturalism and racism. They include the taken-for-granted notions of self and other, as they are negotiated across shifting inequalities of power, which are the subject and the object of these conversations. The conceptual and material domain of "multiculturalism", as it considers the negotiated, contingent and disjunctive conditions of ethnic difference, becomes the rhetorical field of the thing to be discussed. "Racism", as it considers how these conceptual and material

conditions are normalised and embodied within unequally empowered identities, becomes the field which is difficult to discuss or cannot be discussed at all.

At stake, in conversations about race and ethnicity and particularly in times of immense global and demographic transformation, is our ability to know who-we-are. At issue is the definition of who-they-are and therefore who-we-are and the ways that "they" can be allowed to live as part of "us". The way forward asks that we interrogate and renegotiate the ways that we behave and speak about others in the everyday of our lives. It requires that we enter into the national debates which seek to define and structure the terms and conditions of these relationships. Most particularly, the normalised understandings that provide the subtexts of the ways we speak about ourselves and others need to be made transparent, debated and changed. More than a matter of debating, the tropes that have come to define race and ethnic relationships in our time – particularly those of multiculturalism and racism – this is a matter of questioning the logic that interpolates the terms of race and ethnic relationships, and the ways that these interactions can be debated and researched. To move forward demands that we reconsider and renegotiate the ways we speak about difference and make transparent the subtexts of our conversations that rename and restructure the ways we speak about issues relating to race and ethnic relationships; particularly in our schools. This book is concerned with opening up this interrogation. It reconsiders the terms and conditions of race and ethnic definition and suggests comprehensive directions to research this. It argues that we re-assess classroom conversations in ways that provide comprehensive and inclusive education for all of our students. Most particularly, it is a call to us, asks of all-of-us, that we move beyond the noisy–silent whispering in our hearts, make transparent these taken-for-granted ways of understanding and behaving, and consider the ways that they could be made otherwise.

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