SOUTHERN CELTS: NARRATIVE AS METHOD AND TEXT

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Abstract

This article explores the use of narrative as method and text in a practice-led narrative inquiry which explores how people with Irish and Scottish cultural backgrounds live out their connections to the northern hemisphere homelands of Scotland and Ireland, in Aotearoa New Zealand. It analyses eight excerpts from interview narratives using Clandinin and Connelly's (2000) three frames of narrative inquiry: time (past, present and future), place, and the intersection of the personal and the social, to illustrate the discursive construction of cultural identities (Fong & Chuang 2004, Weedon 2004). It discusses the use of autoethnography (Muncey 2010, Ellis & Bochner 2000, Reed-Danahay 1997) and the value of arts-based practices (Butler-Kisber 2010, Leavy 2009) including song and poetry in the representation of interview narratives. Finally, it argues that offering longer narratives, free of the intrusive voice of the analytical researcher, readers may be encouraged to bring their own experiences to their engagement with the text and to think *with* rather than *about* the narratives (Bochner & Riggs 2014). Through this process they might gain deeper insights into the individual, social and political factors that have shaped the lives of individuals and communities in Aotearoa New Zealand.

1. Introduction

This paper explores the use of narrative as method and text, in a practice-led narrative inquiry (Clandinin 2007, Clandinin & Connelly 2000) into how people with Irish and Scottish backgrounds live out cultural connections to the northern hemisphere homelands of Ireland and Scotland, in Aotearoa New Zealand. Entitled *Southern Celts*, the inquiry involves creating an artefact, which is a book of interview narratives, and an accompanying exegesis. The title refers to the Irish and the Scots who are Gaels, but who also belong under the wider Celtic umbrella of cultural origins (Oppenheimer 2006, Pryor 1993) and the 'southern' part of the title references New Zealand's geographic position in the southern hemisphere, in the south west Pacific.

The inquiry explores a series of questions about what there is of Scottish and Irish traditions in this country through a total of 40 interviews, collected from around the country, which were then edited to create coherent interview narrative texts. Questions included how narrators have lived their cultural connections over time, what they think there is in this country of Scots and Irish traditions and finally reflections on relationships between Scottish and Irish and Māori.

This article presents excerpts from those interview narratives and analyses them using Clandinin and Connelly's (2000) three frames of narrative inquiry: time (past, present and future), place, and the intersection of the personal and the social. In their work on narrative inquiry, Clandinin and Connelly draw on Dewey's 'pragmatic ontology of experience,' and introduce a three dimensional inquiry space, in which narratives are understood as both 'lived and told stories' (Clandinin & Connelly 2000: 62, Pinnegar & Danes, 2007: 5) The researcher/writer is also positioned in that inquiry space, 'visible in our own lived and told stories' (Clandinin & Connelly 2000: 62). Thus in the inquiry space I, as researcher, interviewer, writer and the granddaughter of Irish immigrants, am implicit in all decisions made about the inquiry, and my narrative is explicitly a part of this article as a narrator, in one of the excerpts. Clandinin and Connelly (2000: 59) explore what it means to be a narrative inquirer 'on the professional knowledge landscape' in the field of Education, as do other educationalists (Bathmaker & Harnett 2010, Trahar 2009) or with ethnographic method and insights (Lillis 2008). However this article applies the narrative inquiry lenses to analysing the discursive construction of culture/s and identity/ies, illustrated through the 'lived and told stories' of the narrative excerpts.

I will argue that the use of narrative as method and text, drawing on ethnographic insights and autoethnographic methods, produces interview narrative texts which function as 'micro-ethnographies' (Fraser 1997: 163) that provide insights into both the lives of individuals and their often multigenerational families, as well as the communities that have shaped them. Narratives such as these are valuable, as O'Shea Miles (2004: 149) writes, because oral history-type interviews record individuals' reflections on their life 'before the generation disappears forever.' Though Seidman (2006: 129) does caution that narratives are necessarily limited since narrators' lives continue but these narrative representations are 'framed and reified.'

Underpinning this article are literatures about narrative and narrative inquiry, the discursive construction of culture/s and identities, insights produced through using autoethnography as method and text, and the use of arts based methods in representing narratives.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Narrative

De Fina & Georgakopoulou explain that while Narratology is the study of narrative as a genre, which approaches narrative as text type, there is also a tradition of narrative as mode in which theorists view narrative as fundamental to human cognition and understanding of the world. The use of narrative methods and analyses gained momentum in the 1980's, informing a 'narrative turn' in the social sciences which emphasises human experience and a narrative epistemology that encourages researchers to maintain a high degree of reflexivity (De Fina & Georgakopoulou 2012: 18).

Narrative philosopher Ricoeur (1980) posits that narratives are constructed within *time* and *memory*. Following Ricoeur, narrative theorist Mishler called the combination of chronological and non-chronological dimensions of time, 'the double arrow' of time which contributes to 'how conscious and reflective persons re-present and re-story their memories of event and experiences' (2006: 36). There has been scepticism about the naïve acceptance of an individual's reflections as 'truth,' but this has been addressed in several ways. Muncey acknowledges that memories do not necessarily contain verifiable truth, and reminds us of Spence's distinction between 'narrative truth and historical truth' (1982: 97, cited in Muncey 2010: 102), while Bochner (2012: 161) describes the kinds of truth that narratives such as those in this article

record, as 'embodied, dialogic and collaborative.' Reissman offers an analysis of a story, or a narrative, as co-produced 'in spaces between teller and listener, speaker and setting, text and reader, history and culture' (2008: 105), clearly illustrating the embodied and dialogic nature of narrative, on micro level of teller and listener, text and reader and macro influences of history and culture. The interview narratives sit squarely within the 'narrative turn' in qualitative research, requiring, as De Fina and Gerogakopulou (2012) explain, a high degree of reflexivity on the part of the researcher, and which Clandinin and Connelly describe as requiring constant 'wakefulness' about decision making (2000: 185).

2.2 The discursive construction of cultures and identities

Postmodern and poststructural understandings of the discursive construction of culture and identity underpin the thinking of the scholars who have influenced this inquiry. For Chuang cultural identity is related to 'nationality, race, ethnicity, gender, lifestyle choices, organisations, age, class, group membership, regional identity and spiritual identity,' and it is 'dynamic, fluid, dialectical, relational, contextual and multifaceted' (Fong & Chuang 2004: 65). Weedon, too, reflects that same understanding of complexity when she writes that cultural identity is 'neither one thing nor static…it is constantly produced and reproduced in practices of everyday life, education, the media, the museum and heritage sectors, the arts, history and literature' (2004: 155). Weedon describes narratives, such as the interview narratives collected for this inquiry, as 'cultural narratives' and as 'sites from which we learn about others' (2004: 115). This article argues that the opportunity for learning from these texts is enhanced through the use of the three lenses of narrative inquiry.

2.3 Ethnography and Autoethnography

Reed-Danahay (1997: 8) views ethnography and autoethnography both as method and text, shaped through different degrees of emphasis on ethnographic representations of others and self- representation (1997: 8). Tedlock (2000: 455) explains that ethnography which produces 'historically politically and personally situated accounts of human lives' has, as method and theoretical orientation, long used within anthropology, now moved into wider use in qualitative research. Autoethnography is a form of autobiographical ethnography (Holman Jones, Stacey, Tony Adams and Carolyn Ellis 2013, Muncey 2010, Ellis and Bochner 2000) which Reed-Danahay describes as a postmodern form questioning the self-society split, validating the authority

of the researcher-writer to speak as a member of their group, 'a self-narrative that places the self within a social context' (1997: 9). Arnold (2011: 54) too acknowledges the situated self as data and calls such texts 'subjective academic narrative.' Autoethnographer Chang (2008: 49) argues that making explicit connections to broader social issues is integral to using one's own life as data for academic research, applying 'critical, analytical and interpretive eyes' as I attempt to do. Following Chang, I place my own story alongside the interview narratives in this article, aware as Clandinin and Connelly advice that I have 'narrative blinkers' like any other narrator (2000: 61) thus I need to cultivate wakefulness (2000: 185) about decision making.

2.4 Arts based methods

Drawing on creative analytical practices (Richardson & Pierre 2005, Richardson 2000) and arts-based practices (Butler-Kisber 2010, Leavy 2009) in the presentation of interview narratives, I integrated song and poetry, two of which are represented in excerpts in this paper. Sullivan (2009: 111), a poet and a qualitative inquirer, writes that a poem brings an image to life and provides the reader with a sensory embodied experience (cited in Butler-Kisber, 2010: 97). Leavy (2009: 2) suggests that drawing on arts-based forms of narrative research contributes to the researcher accessing … 'real, textured, complex, sensory, contextual meanings.'

3. Methodology

3.1 Data collection

I collected 40 interviews from around New Zealand, roughly equal numbers of women and men from both the North and South Islands: five were born in Scotland or Ireland and the rest in Aotearoa New Zealand, several with families who have lived here for a number of generations. Ages ranged from approximately thirty to eighty years old. This process took me to places historically connected to the Irish and Scots around New Zealand and other areas of the country from Otago to Northland, doing interviews which are narratives that are co-constructed through the question response process (Reissman 2002, Gubrium and Holstein 2002).

3.2 Data analysis

Aware of the need to proceed ethically, I ensured that each person had an

opportunity to give permission for their interview to be used by signing a consent form, while others gave verbal permission (Muncey 2010, Tolich 2010). Interview texts ranging from 3,000 to 7,000 words after transcription were returned to narrators, with questions for clarification and further details in order to accurately represent their experience, as Chase (2011: 424) and Reissman (2008: 198) recommend. I analysed the transcripts using a technique Ryan and Bernard (2003: 88) call 'theoretical sensitivity,' a flexible variation on grounded methodological approaches used with texts where the speaker's trajectory, a sense of the whole story and the whole person, is crucial. Theoretical sensitivity involves identifying common understandings and viewpoints, but recognises the limitations inherent in the fact that data is reflective and self-reported.

From the forty interviews I chose twenty five, thirteen woman and twelve men, some have multiple cultural connections, Irish and Scottish, or English; four also had Māori family backgrounds. The narratives were grouped in the book under sections which include: business, Gaelic languages, music, writing, visual arts of carving, sculpture and film making, religion and spirituality, and sport, with my own autoethnographic analysis used as an introduction.

3.3 Data organisation

This article draws on my autoethnographic reflections, then seven excerpts from those twenty five interview narratives. In this section the seven excerpts are organised according to Clandinin and Connelly's (2000) lens of place: the first three narrators were born in the homelands and the other five born in New Zealand. I use the three frames of narrative inquiry: time (past, present and future), place, and the intersection of the personal and the social to open up the texts, focusing on individuals' use of language and their responses. This analysis is extended in the 'Discussion' in relation to pertinent aspects of the underpinning literatures.

4. Autoethnographic reflection

In this excerpt I introduce myself, a New Zealand-born female, a teacher of English as an Additional Language, as having done oral history interviews with both my parents,

> Now I come to write about family I question the wisdom of not keeping my

> own first hand written accounts of living nearly a year in Ireland. But I had decided that what I remembered over time would be enough, and in a family who care about family connections and relationships I have photographs, stories, written material, and travelers enough to keep the family connections alive. I have done oral history interviews with both my father and mother recording their experiences as the children of Irish immigrants, though my mother's sister …. added her own corrections to my mother's interview.

Applying the third lens of narrative inquiry, the intersection of the personal and the social, to this text, I place myself as part of a family who keep relationships alive, through sharing stories and through travelers, who move both ways across the world (lines 4–6). Acknowledging that my aunt added another perspective to her sister's experiences (lines 9 &10) clearly shows that I am not naïve enough to take my parents narratives as 'truth', but rather that they reflect their own personal perspectives. Place is viewed as Ireland, and New Zealand, which family journey between, keeping the relationships alive (lines 6 & 7), while time is bridged through my personal memory, which I acknowledge needs family back up (line 4).

5. Narrators born in Scotland

The first excerpt is from a man born in the Scottish highlands and a businessman now in New Zealand, who explains how he came to live in New Zealand and comments on connections here to Scotland.

> I did a lot of travelling and something about New Zealand gelled. I liked it, I felt at home. It wasn't a hard decision. I went back to Scotland after that and worked for a few years, but I *could nae* get New Zealand out of my mind. ….. I was born in … in the Northern eastern highlands of Scotland, came 25 years ago to New Zealand to have a look, liked it, and stayed. ……We are in a fortunate position that we get to go to Scotland a lot. Having said that, it's part of life, not all of life. Of course people in Scotland are not running round the hills in kilts every moment of the day flinging haggis over their shoulder. But, *yeah no*, it's funny how it's continued on. It's particularly easy in Canterbury as there are a lot of connections for it.

Viewed through the three frames of time, place and the intersection of the personal and the social, this excerpt illustrates a significant aspect of his

cultural identity, linguistic identity. The narrator's use of 'could nae' (line 3) is a marker of his Scottish linguistic background. Later (line 10) he slips into 'yeah no' a colloquial phrase in New Zealand English, which suggests that over time, in his 25 years in New Zealand, he has adopted the local idiom. The use of the direct first person voice in the narrative, allows the distinctive voice of the narrator to be retained, keeping the narrative lively and fresh, which could not be achieved if the language of the narrative had been homogenized into a third person report. In terms of place this excerpt reveals that he feels it's easy to stay in touch with aspects of Scottish cultural traditions in Canterbury (Line 11) in the South Island of New Zealand.

The second excerpt is from a Scottish-born woman, a journalist in New Zealand, who offers a poem written by her father, in Scotland, for the birth of his grandson, in New Zealand. A verse follows:

Your name is redolent of
That ocean-warmed western isle;
Of heather, myrtle and whisky;
Of people gone before;
Of worlds old and new

The poet focuses on the boy's name, 'your name' (line 1), which there is no need to specify, as it is a family name, and all those for whom the poem is written will already know it. For the grandfather the name evokes place, in the 'ocean-warmed western isle' (line 2) and associated 'heather, myrtle and whisky' (line 3). The final two lines, 'of people gone before/ Of worlds old and new' appear to encapsulate in poetic image Clandinin and Connelly's (2000) three dimensional narrative inquiry space: place, time (past, present and imagined future) and the intersection between the personal and the social. The new grandson too is placed in that three dimensional space.

6. Narrators born in New Zealand

The third excerpt is from a New Zealand-born woman of Scottish Orcadian–Orkney Island–Kai Tahu, and English backgrounds. A writer, she describes her understanding of her grandmother's and great aunt's experience of marrying Māori brothers, and comments on a wedding photograph of her mother's parents.

> They were 'Free Kirkers' — a splintered sect of Presbyterians who didn't like being ruled by a convention. Quite a few of them migrated to New Zealand. They were very strong minded, proud but very obstinate….
>
> One of the fascinating things about this photo (of her mother's parents) is, because this is a wedding portrait, which would have been sent back to family in Scotland, his face has been ever so slightly bleached. Take a look at his hand. He has gloves in one hand, but the other hand, you can actually see his colour. He was not a white man. My nana was very happy and so was her sister who married his brother. I do know that the racism of magazines and particularly newspapers was stunning. But they were obstinate, wilful, stubborn people who follow their hearts and do what the spirit led them to do.

Time places the events of this narrative excerpt in the late nineteenth century, in the colonial settlement period of our history. The narrator uses the artefact, the photo which has been bleached to disguise the colour of her grandfather's skin, to illustrate the overt racism of the time. Using the frame of the intersection of the personal and social, we see that the narrator suggests that despite the wider social attitudes, her grandmother who came from 'wilful, stubborn people, who follow their hearts' (Lines 12 & 13) made a personal decision which she was happy with, as was her sister, the narrator's great aunt. Viewed through the lense of place it seems from the narrator's comment that the wedding portrait (Lines 6 & 7), which would have been sent back to family in Scotland, was changed to accommodate attitudes to skin colour that would have been prevalent in the northern hemisphere as well as in New Zealand at the time.

The fourth longer excerpt from a New Zealand-born man, a sculptor, describes the profound influence that his Irish-born father had on his own life as an artist, and the way his daughter's life was influenced in turn by his.

> … I spent a lot of time in Central Otago, something was absolutely a dam overflowing, because I recognized the landscape in Central Otago as the internal landscape that my father was speaking from. He came from a part of Ireland that was quite barren, and this land clearly represented it in my mind. So this unleashed a body of work over three decades: just that realization, that I finally understood my father was actually talking from his native landscape not the New Zealand landscape.

He explained how his daughter grew up around his sculpture studio and later worked in London, then did her doctorate in Ireland, doing excavations at ancient sites in Scotland and Ireland.

> … Crawling around, she was fascinated with dust which I've created quite a lot of. She became one of the world authorities on dust as an archeological material. So there was just a brilliant conversation going on with her research and her learning about where it might have located itself in her childhood. She said her childhood inspired some of her breakthroughs in thinking and research over there.
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> …I just think it is so rare for three generations of a family to be so intimately connected in all the disciplines, socially, intellectually and creatively. I'm lucky. I see myself as being in the middle, uncharacteristically of a generation that has departed, namely my daughter and my father, so they have both left a legacy, as a centre of that trinity that informs my work so potently.
>
> ... My daughter completed a circularity of life. She is a unique example of how the 'New World' informs the 'Old World' in ways people could never have dreamed…

This excerpt adds levels of complexity to Clandinin and Connelly's (2000) three lenses of inquiry. Time bridges three lives from different generations: the narrator, his father, and his daughter, restoried in the narrative. Place, in this narrative is viewed as both external and internal. The external New Zealand landscape of Central Otago (line 2) which affected the narrator's ability to create, because he understood in a moment of epiphany that barren southern hemisphere landscape represented the northern hemisphere Irish landscape that his father grew up in, and which he believes continued to affect his father as an equally powerful internal landscape (lines 7 & 8). Place is also the narrator's art studio in New Zealand, where his daughter spent time as a child and which (line 13 &14) influenced her research in the northern hemisphere. The narrator charts movement between another two places, the 'New World' of New Zealand where his daughter was born and grew up and did her early training, and the 'Old World' of the northern hemisphere countries (line 22) and Ireland where her grandfather came from, and also where she went to live, taking with her new skills and understanding from the south.

The lense of the intersection of the personal and social highlights the narrator who describes himself as being in the middle of three generations (lines 17, 18 &19) who have both 'potently' affected his creative abilities, and continue to do so (line 19 & 20).

The next excerpt of a New Zealand-born man, a master carver, with Scottish and Irish cultural backgrounds, clearly illustrate his sense of identity as a southern Celt.

> I basically see myself as a Southern Celt: a South Pacific Celt. The way I look at it, as the Celts came across Europe they could've picked up influences of different cultures. In a sense if I didn't reflect a certain Polynesian influence in my work it would mean I was insensitive. Māori people will come in and see my work and say its very Māori and people who come straight from England look at it and say its pure Celtic. I like to see it as a mixture of both.
>
> …. One of my carvings has Mananan, the Celtic sea god on one side, and Tangaroa, the Polynesian sea god on the other: one eye is Baltic amber, the other is 45 million-year-old Kauri gum out of the Kamo coal mine.

Place is described by the narrator in relation to his own cultural origins in the northern hemisphere, 'as the Celts came across Europe' (line 2). Also in the carving he created which drew on mythologies of place, 'Mananan, the Celtic sea god on one side, and Tangaroa, the Polynesian sea god on the other' (line 8 & 9) and used resources of different hemispheres, 'Baltic amber' from Europe and 'Kauri gum' from Northland, New Zealand. Time is both the present of the narrator's life as a carver in New Zealand, and the millennia represented in the amber and the Kauri gum. The intersection of the personal and the social brings all these influences and resources together here in New Zealand, where the narrator describes himself with reference to the south Pacific as 'a southern Celt' (line 1) and where his carvings hold stylistic influences that are familiar to local Māori whose carved patterns have grown out of influences in this land, and wider the Pacific, as well as people from England familiar with traditional northern hemisphere Celtic art.

The sixth excerpt is from a New Zealand-born woman of Irish background, a film maker, who recounts her orientation towards life,

> First of all, and more than any else, I grew up in the tradition of Irish poetry. When I was a child, we used to have regular family parties, so in that context I was standing and reciting poems and singing from very young. I decided when I was in my early twenties that I would be a poet. It made perfect sense inside the New Zealand Irish culture I grew up in. But in society it's not a real job. So how are you going to do that? For me there was really no question that was the most important thing to do, and for me that is still the most important thing to do, describing our circumstances here and as people on the earth. I've written poetry and plays, for stage and for radio, written books, and made films and its all poetry.

Viewing this excerpt through the lens of the intersection of the personal and

the social, the narrator places herself firstly 'in the tradition of Irish poetry' (lines 1 & 2) and then 'inside the New Zealand Irish culture I grew up in' (lines 5 & 6). She describes her multimedia skills as poetry (lines 9, 10 & 11). Time is past, 'When I was a child' (line 2), and moves to the present when creating poetry 'is still the most important thing to do' (line 8). Place is New Zealand and a society which views her life's choice of being a poet, as 'not a real job' (line 6) and a global view, expressed in 'describing our circumstances here and as people on the earth' (line 9).

Finally a New Zealand-born man of Irish and Te Arawa backgrounds, a poet and publisher, offered a song he'd written about a soldier in the colonial army who deserted his post. Another narrator told a very similar story of a soldier of the 65th Infantry regiment, who deserted his post, unable to fight Māori any longer because he found them so similar to his own people. The following excerpt contains three verses and a chorus of the song which seems to be based on a similar incident.

Potatoes, Fish and Children
To escape from the famine, starvation and pain
And seeing his dear ones dying
Patrick Fitzgerald left old Erin's Isle
And headed for the South Seas sailing

He landed here without a pig or a bob
And decided to join the army
Because it was the only job
To take the land from the Māori

CHORUS . . .
He thinks to himself by the fire at night
I don't know why we kill them
O, sure they're the same as the people at home
Potatoes, fish and children

The tribe that found him took his body back
From *te wahi moemoea* and restored him to life
For they saw in his eyes when they opened
Potatoes, fish and children

The story is placed in 'the South Seas' (line 4) a northern perception of the southern hemisphere. The use of Māori '*te wahi moemoea'* (the place of dreams) and the story of the tribe who rescued the fictional narrator, Fitzgerald (verse 3, line 2) clearly places this text in Aotearoa New Zealand. The reference to the famine in Ireland, 'old Erin's Isle' (line 3) is poetic license, as most Irish migrants to New Zealand came later than the famine decades. The third inquiry frame of the intersection of the personal and the social is embodied in the man, 'Patrick Fitzgerald' whose job 'to take the land from the Māori' (verse 2, line 4), places him in the New Zealand land wars. He recognises his shared humanity with the people he is fighting, which the song writer expresses through the images of food and children (verse 2, lines 2 & 3). Fitzgerald deserts his post and is rescued by Māori who accord him the same humanity because they see his similarity to themselves (verse 3, line 3 & 4). The use of rhythm, rhyme and image to tell the story add depth and variety to the text which gives a more nuanced insight into one man's experience of being a colonial soldier, and responses to him from local Māori.

7. Discussion

Analysis of excerpts has highlighted both language and content. The excerpt which focuses on the narrator's use of language illustrates that the use of the first person, rather than a third person report, allows the voice of the narrator to be heard, and adds a linguistic element to the narrative of cultural identity, which is also more engaging for the reader or the listener than an homogenised third person report. Different text types, such as poem and song can add an element of imagery, along with textured, complex, sensory, contextual meanings as Leavy (2009) describes which further captures and illustrates Fong and Chuang's (2004) and Weedon's (2004) analysis of identity as complex and relational

These are narratives we can learn from, as Weedon (2004) writes, illuminated through the three lenses of narrative inquiry. Viewed through the lens of time narrators have told of generations before and after them, and how these have shaped and been shaped by aspects relevant to Scottish or Irish identities in family contexts. In the case of the master carver his sense of time encompasses millennia. Narrative philosopher Ricoeur's (1980) and theorist Mishler's (2006) concepts of time and memory, and how these influence how people restory their memories and experiences, provide some explanation for

how such relatively short texts can contain such a depth of information, as narrators move back and forward in time, creating layered texts.

Place is viewed in variety of ways, the 'Old World', Scotland and Ireland, Celtic Europe, and the New World, Polynesia, the South Pacific and Aotearoa New Zealand referenced differently by different narrators. It is also perceived as both external and internal landscapes, which is captured vividly in the narrative of the man who recalls the moment in the Central Otago landscape when the barrenness of the landscape triggered an association between the landscape his father grew up in Ireland and the internal landscape he seemed to react out of, which for the narrator was not that of New Zealand. This experience he recalls powerfully influenced his creative abilities over the coming decades. Applying the lense of place to these excerpts reveals further insights into how thee narratives illustrate Fong and Chang (2004) and Weedon's (2004) view of the relational and complex nature of culture and identity.

The third lens of the intersection of the individual and society particularly illustrates the discursive construction of cultural identity, as dynamic and contextual. Each excerpt reveals the individual's reflections on his or her own experiences, in the context of the social and cultural communities that have shaped them, illustrated through the use of Māori language in the final excerpt. Two narrators use an artefact to tell help tell their story: firstly a photograph which embodies the widespread attitudes to race and skin colour at the time the narrator's Scottish grandmother and great aunt were married and secondly the carving which draws on Celtic and Polynesian myths and uses European amber and New Zealand coal.

8. Limitations

As outlined before, these narratives are self-reports. Thus there may be more to be told than narrators have remembered or included as they reflect on questions and shared experiences. This an inevitable outcome of this style of research and has already been acknowledged in discussion of the nature of 'narrative truth' and 'historical truth.' Despite this they are valid for the richness of experience they reveal from the individuals' point of view about the influences of Scottish and Irish backgrounds on their lives.

9. Conclusion

Southern Celts narratives are intended to inform and engage both scholars and general readers. Much already published work which explores the lives of the Scottish and Irish in Aotearoa New Zealand does so through the more traditional methods of historiography using the major lens of ethnicity, and a range of sources that offer ' insider' and 'outsider' perspectives (Paterson, Brooking & McAloon 2013, Bueltmann 2011, McCarthy 2011, 2007; Brooking & Coleman 2003, Akenson 2000, 1990; Fraser 2000). In contrast, the narratives exemplified in excerpts in this article, offer only 'insider' perspectives, and use the frame of the discursive construction of culture, rather than ethnicity. Without the intrusion of the voice of an analytical researcher it is my hope that readers will read *with* rather than *about* the narrative (Bochner & Riggs, 2014), able to bring their own experience to their engagement with the texts (Benson 2013, Reissman 2008, Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) and so gain deeper insights into individual lives, and the social and political factors which have shaped and continue to shape people and communities in Aotearoa New Zealand with Irish and Scottish cultural backgrounds. These insights may offer possibilities for living into a future in which the varying cultural groups who now live in this society are able to lives as individuals and groups in which their mana is acknowledged and respected.

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