

## Pou Korero A Journalist's Guide to Māori and Current Affairs

Carol Archie.  
Wellington. 2007: New Zealand Journalists Training  
Organisation  
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Reviewed by Bridgette Masters-Awatere

"One plus one equals three" In this quotation Archie refers to the description of what happens when two customary systems meet, absorb new elements, and then what emerges is a new system that encapsulates the best values and concepts of the founding cultures of Aotearoa New Zealand. Archie sees this as a possibility for New Zealand media. I hope this would also be applicable to psychology.

Carol Archie began her career as a cadet journalist for the NZBC in the mid 1960s and has since worked extensively in television news, current affairs and documentaries. Her book 'Pou Korero' was launched by Auckland University of Technology Chancellor Sir Paul Reeves on Monday 27 August, at Nga Wai O Horotiu marae (AUT); and discussed by a panel including Sir Paul, Whai Ngata (TVNZ), Wena Harawira (Māori TV), Carol Archie, and Jim Tucker (NZJTO). Both the launch and book received reviews by media with a number of commentaries available on the internet. One such review quoted Jim Tucker, the Executive Officer of the New Zealand Journalists Training Organisation, at the launch;

*It is 23 years since author Michael King produced 'Kawe Korero', his straightforward and accessible guidebook on how journalists could best interact with Māori and report their stories... His work has endured. But it has been apparent for some time something more comprehensive was needed to keep pace with the Māori renaissance and its impacts, which the so-called mainstream news media has at times struggled to report with any measure of confidence or competence. (Jim Tucker, quoted by Unknown, 2007)*

From the range of reviews that I read, it seems that *Pou Korero* has been accepted as bringing up to date the previously used *Kawe Korero* as a guide for journalists working in New Zealand. With reviewers comments along the lines of; "This book is a "must-have" for those in the media, regardless of ethnicity or experience" (Corfield, 2007); and "Everyone, regardless of their ethnicity, has some sort of prejudice. This book aims at breaking this down and giving practical, helpful advice on covering Māori affairs" (Lyell, 2007). It seems that this book has been well received within journalism circles.

When initially presented to NSCBI as a book to review it was implied that psychologists may not find this book relevant. The primary reason being that it was not written specifically for psychologists. While being written by a journalist and with

journalists in mind I believe that *Pou Korero* has application to psychologists and their practice. It is the exploration of issues that impact and involve Māori that make it applicable to a wider audience. Archie notes "...this book is not written with Māori issues specialists in mind. It is for all journalists to help them improve their coverage of Māori activities..." (p103). She does this well, and so I am confident that this book will resonate with psychologists as Archie explores concepts of language interaction, first impressions, the development and reinforcement of stigma, cross cultural interactions, negotiating cultural inclusion, and much more...

In the foreword Archie draws on Māori philosophy to explain the contribution that people from different settings bring to any situation; Ma tau rourou, ma taku rourou, ka ora ai te iwi. From the outset Archie poses the notion that having an understanding of Māori issues and the correct pronunciation when speaking with/of Māori matters is an important start point. With these tools under ones' belt people will have a good basis for engaging with Māori.

*Any book that can engage a reader in such a positive and encouraging manner will produce an increase in cultural awareness*

The analysis of society and its status as being ill-equipped to deal with Māori is clearly considered a weakness from Archie's viewpoint. Archie refers to culture of thought in some sectors that were being posed at the time of the dawn raids, when people with brown skin were challenged for their proof of right to be in New Zealand. One of the unpleasant (and indefensible) actions of the authorities was to stop brown-faced people on Auckland streets and ask for proof of their right to be in New Zealand. Among those questioned was a Māori. He was asked by a policeman how long he had been here: "I told him: 'A thousand years. What about you?'" (p.xiii)

Archie provides an easy to read summary of New Zealand's history starting from the signing of the Treaty. Here she gives an overview of the different articles. She goes on within that same chapter to provide an explanation of the tensions that arise from the differing versions and poses the relevance of contra preferentum in this context. As a lead in to exploring the Waitangi Tribunal, Archie does well to describe the process of dealing with grievance in a simple way, while providing useful direction to a reader who may be unfamiliar with the Tribunal or the whole disputes process. After describing the historical relationships between Māori and the Crown, Archie goes on to provide useful information to journalists intending to work with Māori. She outlines a very useful process that professionals should go through to keep themselves safe when engaging with Māori on marae. Archie talks about the various ways that the journalists can explore to ensure that their process of engaging with Māori on their marae is culturally

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safe. From this perspective, no matter what profession a person comes from the information provided here will be useful. An important directive that Archie makes has been included here - with a minor substitution;

*Whether [psychologists] take part in powhiri or observe them as part of the tangata whenua will depend on circumstances. If you are a visitor to a strange marae, travelling to a hui with a larger group of people, then you should join the manuwhiri to be welcomed formally. This applies even if you are there in your professional capacity. (p.19)*

The nature of the media is discussed within the context of looking at who and what determines the 'news-worthiness' of a story. In the past this was determined by the largely uninformed, supposedly unbiased journalist;

*Pakeha reporters tend to attach labels to people, like 'activist' or 'protestor' or 'truck driver' or 'political enemy'. But then you see those people in the context of their own world, those labels become one-dimensional and facile. The apparent enemies are related and are fond of each other. (p.69).*

She then goes on to provide a description of key Māori media personalities and the role they played in advancing New Zealand media reporting, Archie starts to move into a description of the key skills needed to effectively present a culturally appropriate story as presented by Māori journalists. From there she provides advice about Good Practice. Such tips as the importance of knowing the background of the group you are about to work with is covered. She makes reference to getting an understanding of the politics, personalities, history and so on. While she does not say it is important to get involved, she does clearly note the importance of being aware of the context you are engaging and that positive relationships will have a cumulative effect in terms of building positive relationships with Māori groups;

*This well written, easy to read, guide provides some useful considerations for the reader to familiarize themselves with and to inform themselves of New Zealand's history and the impact of various practices on Māori.*

*Although it will take years to build up a range of Māori contacts, as your knowledge and experience increase, people will be more forthcoming. They will see you as worthy of their effort and trust. Meanwhile, you and your audience will notice the results of your efforts. (p.49)*

At the end of the chapter on good practice she references a paper that provides an insightful view on privilege. That paper was written by psychologist Dr Neville Robertson of Waikato University who wrote "On Equality and Colourblindness".

The longest chapter (*Rounds p.101*) describes the significance of Māori perspectives on a number of issues. These are presented by Archie as a way to encourage the reader to engage with research about the subject matter; in this case social welfare, politics, education, economics, arts and culture, and finally health. The underlying message Archie

provides here is about placing pressure of Māori journalists to be experts in all of these fields because they are applicable to Māori. Without sufficient recognition of the level of expertise required for each of these fields, and then when considered in conjunction with the level of knowledge needed to be an expert in the diverse culture that is Māori, Archie argues that journalism runs a very real threat of burnout for Māori journalists. She presents these arguments in an unthreatening, yet matter of fact manner, that outlines the logic for why such expectations are unrealistic and yet the same expectations are not placed on non-Māori or Pakeha journalists.

Also included with the book is a compact disc with the voice of Scotty Morrison who takes the listener through a range of Māori words to aid the development of accurate Māori pronunciation.

While I have provided a description of a number of chapters within the book, it was not my intention to give you an outline of them all. I wanted to give you a taste of what the book has to offer by way of it's relevance to psychologists. I tend to cringe at the thought of providing a checkbox approach

to working with Māori, and so I'm glad that Archie does not do that. What she has provided in this well written, easy to read, guide that includes some useful considerations for the reader to familiarize themselves with to inform themselves of New Zealand's history

and the impact of various practices on Māori. Archie's book is thought provoking in that it encourages the reader to consider their own cultural assumptions and how these may reflect what has been largely led by the media reporting of New Zealand's history. She provides suggestions for ways forward, to developing relationships with Māori that are mutually beneficial and respectful of each others' cultural values and positions. She is hopeful that what will emerge from a mutually beneficial relationship will be something that is the best of both Māori and Pakeha cultures. Any book that can engage a reader in such a positive and encouraging manner will produce an increase in cultural awareness (of oneself and others) and therefore will get my recommendation as a worthy read.

### References

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