

bicultural issues . . . from the NSCBI

The Society's National Standing Committee on Bicultural Issues is preparing a regular column for future issues of the *Bulletin*. In these we will seek to inform readers about particular bicultural issues, explaining their implications for the activities of psychologists and for the practices and policies of the Society.

Why there was no powhiri at the Waikato conference

Some participants questioned the lack of a powhiri at the Waikato conference and it is appropriate to explain that this was not an omission by the organising committee. The NSCBI was consulted about the organisation of a powhiri and advised against it for a number of reasons. We want to outline these because we do not wish to return to the days when there was no powhiri simply because nobody thought to organise one.

A powhiri is not simply a welcoming ceremony. It is a ritual process that brings two groups; tangata whenua and manuwhiri, from strangeness and separateness to a common identity. There is a simple waiata that expresses this very clearly:

He tangata ke koutou
 You are a different people
 He tangata ke matou
 We are also different
 Engari i tenei wa
 But for this time
 Tatou, tatou e.
 We are one (people)

The effect of a powhiri is often presented to Pakeha as "now you are part of us, this is your marae". Participating in the powhiri provides the manuwhiri with a standing, from which they speak and contribute to the life of the gathering. The business of the hui is conducted within this common identity. As other manuwhiri arrive both tangata whenua and the previously welcomed manuwhiri contribute to the powhiri. And the powhiri implies that there will be a poroporoaki, a formal acknowledgement of parting.

It is immediately clear that there are a number of issues that need to be resolved before a powhiri will sit comfortably with the current conference going practices of psychologists. Our most important concern can be thought of as the "consent" of the welcomed. Participating in a powhiri means entering into the Maori understanding of the relationships between peoples and between people and place. It may well be that many, most, perhaps all, conference

attenders would welcome such participation and, for this reason, noticed the absence of a powhiri this year. But the participation must be more than standing or sitting passively behind a Maori speaker. There should be some involvement with what is being said to and on behalf of the visitors and is shown most clearly when the manuwhiri rise together to provide the waiata that follow their speaker's oration.

We (the NSCBI) feel that it is not tika to have Maori groups acting for the organising committee (hosts, tangata whenua) and manuwhiri if this reduces the powhiri to a performance that conference participants view with enjoyment or toleration. It is particularly inappropriate, in Maori terms, if both groups of speakers are tangata whenua for that place. Manuwhiri need to have their own speakers. Further, consenting participation implies a commitment to draw later arrivals into the gathering, to provide both a mihimihi and an opportunity for them to respond. And, finally, there should be a space to farewell people rather than have the gathering dwindle away as seems to be the current practice.

These are not insuperable difficulties if, as a society and profession, we want to develop effective bicultural practice. They certainly need to be recognised and faced squarely by organising committees and conference participants. If there is a will to proceed it will need to be matched by a willingness to learn about the protocols and to develop sufficient skills to participate in a suitable manner. ■

Patricia Crittenden Workshop Papers

* A Bibliography of Dr Crittenden's work is available free on request, from NZPsS, Box 4092, Wellington.

* National Office also has a copy of the article by Dr Crittenden entitled *Peering into the Black Box: An exploratory treatise on the development of self in young children* [Chapter IV from Cicchetti D. & Toth S. (Eds) Rochester Symposium on Developmental Psychopathology, Vol.5. The self and its disorders Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press.]

This 70 page article includes an extensive list of references, and is available at a cost of \$5.00 (to cover photocopying & postage).

Patricia Crittenden's keynote address to the NZPsS Conference on 23rd August 1994, will be published in the December Bulletin.

Dr Crittenden has advised that her paper "Attachment and Psychopathology", presented in Toronto in October 1993, will appear in S.Goldberg, R.Muir, & J.Kerr (Eds) Attachment theory: social, developmental, and clinical perspectives. Hillsdale, NJ: The Analytic Press.