

CHAPTER EIGHTTHE ETHNOGRAPHY 3: THE SECOND PERIOD OF INSPECTIONINTRODUCTION

This chapter contains the third section of the ethnography in which the writer moves beyond the thick descriptions presented in the previous sections of the ethnography in order to interpret Jim Carr's school world. The second period of inspection followed the first month's exploration on-site and the inspection of Jim's school world throughout the greater part of the school year. During these two latter periods, the researcher became immersed in Jim's school world and the key arenas which constituted that world. After developing the series of thick descriptions of these arenas, the researcher thoroughly "interrogated" his data in order to develop ideas which might be useful in explaining the life of Jim Carr in his school world. This process is termed "conceptual leveraging" (Schatzman and Strauss 1973:117-121) and does not consist simply of reading one's notes. Rather, the researcher returned to the research question which underlay the study: "What is life like in the school world of one New Zealand secondary school principal and how can that life be explained?" The question has two parts: "What is life like in the school world of a New Zealand secondary school principal?" and, "How can that life be explained?" Chapters Six and Seven contain descriptions of aspects of Jim Carr's school world in answer to the first part of the question and the reader is provided with thick descriptions portraying life in the school world of a New Zealand secondary school principal.

In concluding Chapter Seven the writer indicated that he sought continually to gain some explanation of Jim's school world. The conceptual levering of the data provided the basis for seeking some solution to the second part of the research question which was concerned with explaining life in Jim Carr's school world. The writer examined the data carefully, making particular use of the annotations which had been added to the fieldbook notes during the year. These notes provided a guide to constructing the summary table of each arena which is contained in the present chapter. (Table 3). From this table the researcher developed a framework by which Jim's life in his school world could be explained. The decision was made to observe Jim at work for a full week in October and to use the data gained during this second period of inspection for the purpose of explaining and interpreting the ideas contained in the framework.

In this chapter, the writer outlines the activities which he undertook during the second period of inspection at Manoa College. He presents a summary of the arenas which constitute Jim's school world and provides a synopsis of a week in October in Jim's school life. Next, he presents an interpretation of Carr's life in his school world using the data gathered by observation of Carr at work and discussion with him as the means by which to develop the interpretive ideas which emerged from the earlier interrogation of the data. The chapter concludes with a commentary on the period and the further refinement of ideas which are summarised, finally, in the concluding chapter of the study.

The Researcher's Activities during the Second Period of Inspection at Manoa College

During the week of Monday, October 5 to Friday, October 9, the researcher was on-site from the time Jim Carr arrived at school each day until he departed from the premises. Participant observation was the main data gathering technique and Jim was accompanied and observed continuously throughout the week on all but two occasions when the researcher absented himself from the room. On Tuesday morning for an hour Bill Cowan met Carr to discuss a personal matter and the researcher left the room although both Cowan and Carr later discussed the matter freely with the writer. On Friday afternoon, for twenty-five minutes, Carr interviewed a parent about her daughter's rumoured attempts at glue sniffing. Jim introduced the researcher and briefly stated the reason for his presence. The parent replied with a question, "Is he connected with what we are going to discuss?" Carr responded, "Only in that it's part of the overall administrative work in which I'm involved. Do you mind?" Noting that the parent looked unsure, the researcher immediately left the room.

The week in October was selected as a suitable time for continuous observation for a number of reasons. First, the researcher felt comfortable and accepted in the college. Second, although the end of the school year was approaching, at this time the school was fully operational with all students being in attendance. Third, Jim's schedule for the week included involvement in the Board of Governors arena - an important part of his work although an arena not experienced in every week of the school year. Fourth, the researcher considered

that he was well accepted by Carr and that the principal would be willing and able to be observed naturally without Carr having any need to structure the situation in order to determine what the researcher should see.

As an addition to the second period of inspection, during November and December the researcher undertook a number of taped interviews with a selected sample of thirty-six staff and Board members in order to gain their perceptions of Carr's principalship and to cross-check the details of events which had been observed during the year. The interviews form only a minor part of the report of the study. Their value lay in the usefulness of the material for verifying the researcher's observations. A significant feature about the interviews was that every person who was approached for an interview agreed to participate - there were no refusals. This level of co-operation is one indication of the acceptance of the researcher by staff and Board members.

In the next section of the thesis, the writer summarises the arenas which constitute Jim Carr's school world.

A SUMMARY OF THE ARENAS WHICH CONSTITUTE JIM CARR'S  
SCHOOL WORLD

Chapter Seven portrayed the arenas which constitute Jim Carr's school world. This world can be termed, too, the cultural "milieu" or "environment" in which Jim works. Jim's cultural milieu has been shown to consist of a set of arenas - each of which can be perceived as a unique entity with its own membership, agenda of business, means of operating, group feeling and set of values which are promoted. In short, each arena has its own cultural uniqueness. Jim Carr's world of Manoa College, therefore, consists of a series of arenas, each of which has its own culture or way of life. Handy noted this diversity among parts of the same organization:

Even within organizations cultures will differ. The R and D laboratory in the fields of the countryside will have a different atmosphere to the director's floor in the central office. The invoicing department will not be mistaken for the market research department, or the factory for the sales division.

(Handy 1981:178)

Gregory (1983) made the same point in more clearly cultural terms in a paper in which she reported her identification of overlapping cultures in a computer products manufacturing firm in Silicon Valley, California:

This paper suggests, however, that many organizations are most accurately viewed as multicultural. Subgroups with different occupational, divisional, ethnic, or other cultures approach organizational interactions with their own meanings and senses of priorities.

(Gregory 1983:359-360)

The one person in the life of Manoa College who spans each arena is Jim Carr. Other people may

participate in several of the arenas but Carr, alone, participates in them all. Jim knows the people who are involved in each arena but he knows, too, the business which is transacted, the routines and procedures involved and the feelings and values which are characteristic of each arena. These arenas are significant and meaningful to Jim in his life as a secondary school principal. He is aware of their existence and importance. He knows how to function in each arena.

Not only does Jim Carr's cultural milieu consist of the set of arenas with their unique cultures but also Jim functions in each arena in a culturally comfortable fashion in the way of a multicultural man. The term "multicultural man" might more commonly be applied to someone who is comfortable in a range of different ethnic situations. However, it is the contention of the present writer that Carr displays the same skills which would be required in the more commonly used sense of the term. Jim knows, and is able to use, the rules appropriate to each arena. As he moves from one arena to another, Jim changes the nature of his participation in order to behave appropriately in each setting. A simple illustration is provided by the difference between Carr's participation in, for example, the arenas involving students and the arena involving himself and his two senior colleagues, Olive Sumich and Colin Black. In the former situation, Jim never moves from the traditional principal image in which he assumes a leading role as principal as he promotes the positive features of the college. In the latter situation, Jim takes a much less strong role of principal and meets with his colleagues on equal terms and in a relaxed fashion.

Table 3 provides a summary of the arenas which comprise Carr's school world and were discussed in full in Chapter Seven.

Arena	People Involved	Business Transacted	Mood/Feeling, and Values	Carr's Participation
"THE COLIN, OLIVE AND JIM LEVEL".	Jim Carr, Colin Black, Olive Sumich.	Discussion about the running of the school: notices, organizational details, the arena itself, students, staffing, professional development, curriculum.	A busy, professional arena; concentration on business; the participants are equals. Information and ideas are shared openly; all aspects of school life are important; a senior management team image is important.	Directs the discussion; keeps in touch with his school world; has his actions questioned; provides a training ground for Colin and Olive. Interacts freely with Colin and Olive.
"THE SECOND MOST IMPORTANT GATHERING IN THE SCHOOL".	All holders of positions of responsibility.	Consideration of new ideas and information: administration, staffing, curriculum, management training.	An arena in which information and opinions are openly shared and considered in a professional manner. Consultation, debate and consensus are important; teamwork under the principal's leadership is important.	Exercises active leadership; provides information; has his actions questioned; controls discussion; gets on with the business; speaks frequently with his advice and opinions. Friendly, but maintains a professional relationship with colleagues in this arena.
"THE MOST IMPORTANT GROUP OF PEOPLE IN THE PLACE".	All staff members.	Discussion of professional or personal topics in a range of situations: 8.30 am, fortnightly, Deans and PPTA meetings; in staffroom or offices.	An arena of frequent informal interaction; a feeling of staff involvement and commitment is evident. Staff are encouraged to be committed to the life of the school; staff are seen as very important people in the school.	Is "on deck" - leads with ideas and opinions and is aware of his position: being pleasant to and interested in staff and aware of professional issues; knowing who does what; giving advice and information; stating his expectations; sometimes being criticised or thanked. Friendly and interested in staff members but maintains a social distance from them.
"WE CATER FOR ALL WHO COME HERE".	Students - small and large groups; individuals.	School and form assemblies, giving praise or admonishment, irregular and informal interaction, supporting staff, taking part in routine activities and public relations.	The traditional principalship role is always present in this arena; a feeling of the principal always being in charge is evident. The positive features of the school are promoted: the value of hard work, firm discipline and participation in extra-curricular activities; all students being catered for is an important value.	Takes the leading role as principal; promotes the positive features of the college; controls conversations; seeks to establish common ground with students. Formal relationships on most occasions.
"A VERY FINE TOOTH COMB".	All members of Board of Governors.	Managing business affairs and implementing policy: finance and equipment, buildings and grounds, policies and appointments; Board and sub-committee meetings.	An arena in which there is close concentration on numerous details of school life; Board meetings are more neutral in character than P & A meetings; some tension when Carr is questioned. Board members take their responsibilities very seriously; there is an air of an employer-employee relationship between Board and all staff members.	Follows affairs actively; provides ideas, information and explanation as the Board's professional advisor; responds to questions and criticism; receives some supportive comments. Participates fully but maintains some distance from Board members; is an ex officio Board member.
AN ARENA OF MISCELLANEOUS EVENTS.	Trustees of Educational Trust	Fund-raising.	An arena in which there is concentration on its business agenda.	Takes a less active part; provides information and ideas
	Parent groups	Attending meetings: PTA meetings, orientation evenings.	An arena in which there is concentration on the business in hand. The positive features of the school are promoted; the principal appears as being firmly in charge.	Takes the lead in managing proceedings; controls discussion; promotes his image of the school; provides information; functions as the figurehead. Formal relationships on most occasions.
	Individual Parents	Interviewing to discuss problems (e.g. behaviour, enrolments).		

Table 3 provides a summary of the multicultural school world of Jim Carr which is portrayed in the thick descriptions of Chapter Seven. It is possible to explain and interpret Jim's life in that cultural milieu in terms of the means by which he copes with that life. Inspection of Jim's participation, in Table 3, tentatively revealed to the researcher a series of six strategies which combine to form the way in which Jim copes with life in his school world. These strategies are explained as:

1. Standing Alone

Jim clearly maintains formal relationships with the people in each arena. The only exception occurs at the Colin, Olive and Jim level where the principal is more relaxed and less formal than usual. In all other arenas, he maintains a social distance from other people. It is difficult for other people to "get close" to Jim or to lessen the social distance.

2. Taking the Lead

Jim rarely steps out of his role as the senior professional person in the school. In all arenas it is obvious that Jim is Manoa College's principal. He takes the lead in all situations - speaking on behalf of the school and functioning as the figure-head of the organization. In addition, he takes every opportunity to express the values which he sees as important for the school.

3. Balancing Activities

In addition to his activities being spread across a range of arenas, Jim's school world involves him in an innumerable host of activities throughout his



work days and nights at school. These activities range across such diverse matters as: finances, discipline, curriculum, professional development, personal problems of staff members, daily routines and care of the grounds. Jim is knowledgeable about his range of activities and is able to move easily from one activity to another. His ability to balance the range of activities ensures that his tasks are not left undone.

4. Creating and Promoting his Reality

In his mind Jim carries a clear picture of the way in which he perceives the college. That picture is embodied in a set of values which he espouses for the school: the value of hard work, firm discipline, participation in extra-curricula activities, all students being catered-for and staff members being of vital importance. Jim is ready to promote these values for the school at almost any time, in any arena.

5. Managing Expectations

As principal, Jim is subject to the pressures of the expectations of the people in his school world. Other people seek information from him and question his actions. The observer gains a clear impression that everybody knows what is expected of a principal and, in fact, there may be considerable diversity among those expectations. Jim seems to be aware of those expectations and makes some effort to accommodate his behaviour to them.

6. Being Culturally Comfortable

As was noted above, (page 344) Jim functions as a multicultural man in his school world and moves

easily among the arenas which form his cultural milieu - being aware of the features which constitute each arena.

These tentatively identified strategies, of course, are more substantial than the brief summaries outlined at this point in the thesis. They arose, however, from the data gathered during the first period of inspection. The strategies provided the researcher with a basis for processing and presenting the data gathered during the second period of inspection and for developing an interpretation of Jim Carr's life in his school world. This process is illustrated in Appendix VIII.

Prior to entering a discussion of the strategies the writer presents a synopsis of the week's observation of Carr which was undertaken as the second period of inspection.

A SYNOPSIS OF A WEEK IN OCTOBER IN JIM CARR'S SCHOOL LIFEIntroduction

A synopsis of the week's observations of Carr is included at this point. This is intended to provide both a brief account and the flavour of the week. A summary of activities on each of the five days is included in Appendix VII.

From Monday, October 5, to Friday, October 9: A Week in Jim Carr's School Life

The period from Jim's arrival in his office each day by 7.45 a.m. until the 8.30 a.m. staff meeting provided Jim with the quietest part of his day. During this time, he processed the inward mail and interacted with individual staff members who called at the principal's office to exchange greetings or briefly discuss some item with Carr. By 8.30 a.m. Jim had crossed the corridor and entered the staffroom where he called to order the early morning meeting. Announcements were made, first by the principal and then by other staff members. After these meetings, Jim spoke briefly with two or three colleagues and, by 9.00 a.m. he had returned to his office. The time until morning interval was a busy period of interaction with other staff members - most of whom called at the principal's office although Carr made short visits, too, to other offices or outlying parts of the college.

Although Jim's week involved him in a wide range

of activities, a small group of tasks claimed his attention throughout the week. First, he spent time investigating possibilities for investing surplus Board funds in an interest-bearing bank account. A meeting with Paul Roberts, a Board member, from 9.00 to 10.45 a.m. on Monday, signalled the start of these investigations in which Carr telephoned Farmington bank managers during the remainder of the week in order to determine the facilities which might be available. Second, Carr met individually with two staff members whose personal involvement with each other had come to his attention. These meetings on Tuesday and Wednesday mornings were discussed with, or reported to other senior colleagues or Board members later in the week. Third, a case of suspected glue-sniffing by a fourth-form student occupied Jim's time during the latter part of the week in discussion of possible courses of action with the college's Guidance Counsellor, Senior Mistress and Deputy Principal before - on Friday afternoon - interviewing the parent of the student and preparing a memorandum reporting the case. Fourth, the issue surrounding the possibilities for allocating units for positions of responsibility, as a means of promoting teachers, involved Jim in discussions during the week with people concerned with, or likely to be affected by, the decisions. Fifth, Carr spent interrupted time throughout the week preparing written papers for Board meetings on possible allocations of a surprise grant announced by the government and on a costing schedule for use of the school's photocopying machine. Jim also prepared the abstract of a paper which he was planning to present at a forthcoming educational conference.

The principal attended a series of meetings during the week. Jim's regular meeting with Black and Sumich took place on Monday afternoon and was followed by a full staff meeting and a meeting of HOD's and sixth-form teachers to discuss methods of assessing the academic work of sixth-form students. The lunch-hour on Tuesday saw Jim meeting informally with the P & A committee's convenor and secretary in order to discuss the agenda items for the meeting which occurred that evening from 7.30 to 11.30 p.m. In addition, Jim attended the B & G committee's meeting on Wednesday afternoon, the F & E committee's meeting on Wednesday from 7.30 to 11.00 p.m. and a parents' evening at the college on Thursday from 7.30 to 9.00 p.m. On Tuesday afternoon, Jim visited another school where he chaired the meeting of the Farmington Principals' Association from 2.00 to 4.30 p.m.

During morning intervals, Jim joined his colleagues in the staffroom where he ate lunch, too, on three days during the week. A small number of Jim's activities related to his personal life: a telephone call from his wife on Monday morning, a visit to the Inland Revenue Department's office on Friday morning to discuss his tax return, a phone call to a local garage and a call from his daughter requesting the loan of a mathematics textbook. On Friday, Carr made a trip home for lunch and to collect his cheque book.

Jim departed the school grounds each day between 4.30 and 5.25 p.m. However, three evening meetings made it necessary for him to return to the college after dinner.

AN INTERPRETATION OF JIM CARR'S LIFE IN HIS SCHOOL WORLDIntroduction

It is possible to interpret Jim Carr's life in his school world in terms of the strategies which he uses in order to cope with life in that cultural milieu. A set of these strategies were identified after the first period of inspection and were summarised briefly earlier in this chapter of the thesis. In the following section, these strategies are embodied in the form of propositions which are tested against the data gathered during the week's observation of Jim during October and the discussions undertaken with him throughout the year. The strategies provided a framework through which the data could be considered and an explanation of Jim's school world could be developed. Six strategies were identified and will be discussed in turn.

1. STANDING ALONE

The following proposition was developed in order to embody this strategy:

*Proposition 1: The strategy of being able to stand alone helps Jim Carr to cope with life in his school world.*

During the week with Jim, two facets of this proposition were observed: first, Jim's ability to maintain a reserved manner with other people; and, second, his preparedness to stand alone in the face of criticism.

First names are commonly used among the adult members of the college community, and staff and Board members usually address their principal and refer to him in conversation as "Jim." Jim's typical behaviour with other people is to be open, friendly and interested in them. This behaviour was observed throughout the week on numerous occasions as Carr interacted with other people to discuss both professional and personal situations. Jim's typical brief interaction is illustrated by a short conversation held in the corridor after Thursday's 8.30 a.m. staff meeting when Jim encountered

Rose Peters. "You look very nice this morning," Carr began, "You've got new glasses" - comments which led to a short discussion about the virtues of bifocal spectacles and the state of Rose's health. Similarly, at the end of a professional discussion with Colleen Ross, the school's Guidance Counsellor, the same day, Jim commented, "Anyway, how are you feeling?" A brief discussion followed, in which Ross outlined the state of her health after having recently been experiencing problems and the arrangements which she had been making to visit her ill mother.

Despite his characteristic openness, friendliness and interestedness, Jim always retains a subtle social distance from other people. The strategy is readily apparent in all his interactions with parents and students where Jim's image is clearly that of the principal. Jim's most "easy" interaction of the week occurred when Jack Forsyth, the Liaison Inspector, called into the principal's office prior to lunchtime on Monday. The two men shared information, in a manner of warmth and mutual confidence, on a variety of topics affecting the school. As the discussion drew to a close, Jim shared his own professional aspirations with Forsyth who asked, "What are you going to do when ten years are up?" Carr explained his hope of gaining another principalship in another part of New Zealand when his principalship at Manoa College reached ten years. Jim later commented on his view of Jack Forsyth: "I see him as a fellow professional on an equal footing."

Jim goes a small distance towards lowering his reserve in his interactions with his two senior staff members, Colin Black and Olive Sumich, and tends towards less formal interaction with them. However, he does feel some distance from them: whereas in the early days of the college, Carr "opened up" to the predecessors of his two senior colleagues, this now occurs to a much lesser degree. Jim explained this point:

To an extent, I open up to Olive Sumich and Colin Black but I find that I don't need to as I used to because I believe I'm more able to cope with the situation now and, furthermore,

the other interesting thing is that these two people... expect me to cope and I must honour that expectation.

With his colleagues and Board members, Jim is always careful to project the image of a professional person and is careful in such things as not being at all loose in his choice of language and not divulging more than minor amounts of information about his own personal life. Jim shows an interest in the people with whom he interacts: "I try to be pleasant with everybody and I don't tell people what bloody fools I think they are," he commented to the researcher. He does take part in occasional banter but such episodes are brief and momentary. For example, when the school secretary sent Jim a note reminding him of the money he owed her, she concluded, "Please pay the money you owe me or I shall send the girls to collect." Jim penned on the bottom of the note, "OK - you name the time and place." This comment drew a further reply from the secretary, "Behind the tractor shed."

Any joking or story-telling in which Jim becomes involved is best described as harmless or innocuous. On Thursday, at lunchtime, Jim shared stories of each other's school days with a group of six teachers for twenty minutes. The same day, as the 8.30 a.m. staff meeting concluded, Tom Cooper read aloud a humorous item to the assembled teachers. As the piece finished, Jim called, "How many hayfever tablets have you been taking, Tom?" The question drew laughter from the assembled group.

Jim is very much aware of his quality of standing alone and is able to explain its origins:



I think I have the quality to be able to stand alone - you've got to have that. I remember very well when I was an officer in the Royal Navy and I joined a new ship just before she commissioned - two months before - and one of my portfolios was officer-in-charge of books. I came across this little booklet about a quarter-of-an-inch thick: "Hints to Captains on Taking Over Their First Command." I shut my cabin door, put the snip across the lock and sat back and read it from cover to cover. Now, there was the distilled wisdom of generations of senior naval officers' experiences in the navy. One of the things it said was that, heretofore, you must remember you have been the life and soul of the mess in everything that happens. Now, as captain, you are invited into the mess only as a favour. While you're at sea, you retire to your cabin at the end of the afternoon. You'll be on your own until first thing the next morning. Now, that was a very salutary statement to me and it helped me tremendously in my understanding of the role of the principalship.

Carr's standing alone takes the form of being aloof or reserved rather than being physically alone. In his interactions with other people during his school life, there is a subtle projection of Jim Carr as being friendly and interested but still holding himself slightly apart from those around him. This aloofness shows in Jim not becoming deeply involved in conversations and only allowing himself to go a certain distance in getting involved with people or situations of a personal nature. Again, Jim is aware of this reserve:

I was aware that you are, and have to be, one stage removed. And I think that's been a quality that I have been able to call on. Other people may not think that way but I don't give totally of myself to the whole of the rest of the staff; they may think I do but I don't really. I appear to be relaxed with the staff but there's always that held in reserve.

The second facet of Proposition 1, Jim's preparedness to stand alone in the face of criticism, is illustrated in an incident during the P & A committee meeting. Carr presented a case for the non-continuation of the compulsory English course for seventh-form students not taking a bursary programme. Committee members discussed the issue and questioned the principal about aspects of the programme. Carr strongly defended his case:

It hasn't really been a success....I would request that you listen to me as the principal giving my professional advice....I'm saying that I'm advised by my senior professional in this area that its not successful.

The committee, however, decided to retain the programme until further information was gained - a decision to which Carr responded sharply:

My reaction is that I'm extremely annoyed at the Board's modus operandi. I would have been delighted had you accepted and made your suggestions. I feel very small indeed. I feel that my professional status is lowered tonight. I feel quite hurt by that.

On the evidence of the week in October and discussion with Jim, the researcher considers that Proposition 1 is supported and should stand as stated.

## 2. TAKING THE LEAD

The following proposition was developed in order to embody this strategy:

*Proposition 2: The strategy of actively taking the lead as the senior professional person in the college helps Jim Carr to cope with life in his school world.*

During the week with Jim, two facets of this

proposition were identified: first, the image portrayed by Jim's presence; and, second, the things he does during his working day.

Jim's presence in all situations portrays an image of him as clearly being the principal of the college. He presents an image of being the key leader in the school. Jim Carr commented in mid-September that "leadership" was one of the words which described how things happen in Manoa College. His usual behaviour at school is, obviously and actively, to take the role of the senior professional person: "I'm the bloke whose paid to do this," Jim commented during the week. Jim functions not just as a figurehead but also as the person who takes the initiative in personal interactions, in expressing ideas and in assuming a prominent position during meetings. Three aside comments made by him during the week illustrated the importance which Jim attributes to his assumption of the leadership role: "I tend to operate as though I'm in charge.... I like to be prepared - one jump ahead.... Do it now, is Carr's motto in sticky situations."

In visiting two classrooms to present merit certificates earned by students, Jim donned his academic gown before leaving his office. No other staff member in the college wears a gown at any time so that Jim's use of it provided a symbol of his being the senior person in the school. Similarly, the open door of Jim's office provides a sign to staff members that their professional leader is available to them and, in practice, a regular flow of visitors passes through the office to talk with the principal for varying lengths of time about numerous topics. Jim expressed his satisfaction with the response of his colleagues, "I

continue to feel happy that folk can walk in when the door's open." Throughout the week, such visitors included members of the teaching, office and Board staff.

During his working day, Jim's actions provide a clear indication of his active incumbency of the position of principal. Throughout the week, Jim was observed to take the lead on numerous occasions and in three different ways: initiating action and making decisions, functioning as a source of information and providing feedback to other people. Each way is discussed now:

a. Initiating action and making decisions

A significant task during the week involved Jim in gaining information from local banks concerning investment possibilities for surplus funds. Jim telephoned each bank in Farmington and outlined his requirements. During a discussion with Paul Roberts, the Board member who had been given the task of liaising with Jim to gather information on the subject, Carr provided the major lead and input throughout the discussion, with excerpts such as:

I'm just wondering if it might not be a good idea to look at bank statements. How much are our regular payments and at what frequency during the month are the others paid? We pay on the 20th of the month. Let's ask Robyn (the Board clerk) to come in....It might be advantageous to look at our minimum monthly balance on our bank statements....The question would be, "How much could we have available during the thirty days from the 20th to the 20th?"....I think we're going to look at it over a year. Robyn could analyse the accounts to determine our cash flow - but its a big job. So we need to look at all the accounts month-by-month and invest on a thirty day basis....I'll get the figures for the Wednesday F & E committee.

Jim took the lead, too, in arranging several discussions with staff members. On Thursday afternoon, as Raewyn Gates, a contender for the advertised position of HOD Commerce, passed the principal's office, Jim called, "Have you got a couple of minutes?" In the next few minutes, Carr explained to her the actions which the Board planned to take in making an appointment to the position. Earlier that day, Carr had spoken with Brian Gregory on the allocation of hockey coaches and Gregory's likely responsibilities for the following year. The previous Monday, during a short discussion with Fred Miles, with whom Carr had produced a paper to be presented at a conference on research in education, Jim commented, "I've decided to include your last paragraph and go beyond their word limit." In brief encounters with students, Jim initiated and controlled the direction of discussion - reprimanding students for making a noise when playing with a game calculator in the corridor, and, on Friday morning, sharply asking the student on duty as an office messenger, "Haven't you got any work to do?" On Tuesday morning, when he met a group of sixth-form students standing outside a classroom awaiting the start of their history examination, the principal asked, "All ready? It's good for you to sit and write for three hours on a day like today." Jim's second means of taking the lead follows.

b. Providing information

Jim functions as a source of information - as is shown in the examples below. He provides, or is asked to provide information on numerous aspects of the running of the school. Throughout the week, Jim acquired an extensive range of information about bank investment opportunities and took a leading part in the

discussion of this matter during the F & E committee meeting. When he met with Black and Sumich on Monday afternoon, the principal reported on a number of topics which he had earlier discussed with the visiting Liaison Inspector: staffing matters, new course possibilities, Board finances, etc. During the P & A committee meeting, Carr presented a case for making a decision to appoint a staff member at the PR1 level. Jim's third means of taking the lead follows.

c. Providing feedback to other people

Carr readily provides other people with feedback on the way in which he sees their performance. When he met Gary Wright early on Monday morning, Jim commented immediately on the athletic team which Wright had managed during the weekend:

You did a great job with the sports. One thing that did disturb me was the scruffy dress. If you get into any difficulty, yell for help. Don't feel you've got to do it all on your own. I suppose I'm partly to blame, too, for not checking. Let's raise the standard for next time round.

After reading a reference written for a seventh-form student by Betty Maiden, Jim added a note saying, "This reads so much better than our former style of reference doesn't it! Thank you very much for a comprehensive document." Similarly, Carr complimented Brian Gregory for having maintained library purchasing within budget: "Good, Brian. Well done!"

Jim is aware of his ability to take the lead and attributes this ability to an incident which occurred early in his principalship:

I've taken more of an initiating role than a decision making role because of the factor of sheer numbers but the other reason why I've done so was brought home to me very early on in the school's life when we had an HOD of Phys. Ed. who was always fighting solely for her own department and its advancement with little cognisance of the value of the rest of the school. She and I crossed swords on a number of occasions and it eventually came to a stage where we - she and I - just had to talk things out. One lunchtime, she, Murray Gee and I went for a walk around the grounds and she said to me, (and it was backed up by Murray) "Jim, you are too nice to everybody and you can't be nice to everybody. You can't please all the people all the time." That was quite a significant milestone in my development when the realisation came right home. I've never found it difficult to make decisions but prior to that I thought too much about the reaction a decision would have from other people and I would tend to listen to them and, I suppose, be swayed by what people thought.

On the evidence of the week in October and discussions with Jim, the researcher considers that Proposition 2 is supported and should stand as stated.

### 3. CREATING AND PROMOTING HIS REALITY

The following proposition was developed in order to embody this strategy.

*Proposition 3: The strategy of creating and promoting his own reality at Manoa College helps Jim to cope with life in his school world.*

During the week with Jim, two facets of this proposition were identified: first, the perception of the school which Jim creates in his own mind; and, second, his expression of that perception to other people.

Jim Carr commented in mid-September that "communication"

was one of the words which described how things happen at Manoa College. Jim ensures that he communicates his perception of the college to other people.

The researcher had concluded tentatively from the examination of data gathered during the first period of inspection that Carr carried a clear picture of the way in which he perceived the college and he readily promoted that picture in any arena in which he found an opportunity to do so. Jim's picture - the researcher considered - incorporated a set of values which Carr espoused for the school: the value of hard work, firm discipline, involvement of staff and students in extra-curricula activities and all students being catered for. Jim noted his belief in these values in a discussion with the researcher:

The function of schools is basically to educate pupils academically - because that's what they spend most of their time doing at school; and to try to give them patterns for living within a pretty well-defined structure and guidelines for acceptable behaviour; and to expose them to a very wide variety of experiences which they may or may not take up which will round out their lives, experience and personality; and I think that that can be transferred virtually directly to this school because, if I believe that for all schools, then I must believe it for this one.

Jim Carr creates in his own mind his own reality of life at Manoa College. His perception of reality may or may not be held fully or in part by other participants in the life of the college but the point about Jim is that he willingly lets other people know how he perceives the college and the directions in which it should be moving. During the week's observation in October, however, the researcher did not gather a large amount of evidence of this strategy. However, he did



record a number of brief items of data in support of the proposition.

On two occasions during the week, Jim visited classrooms and presented merit certificates to students who had earned these awards. The visits provided an opportunity for the principal to reinforce the actions of successful students in front of their peers and signified that the actions were sufficiently valued for the principal to take time to visit classes personally. On each occasion, Jim appeared in the classrooms wearing his academic gown and offering warm praise to the awardees. One example occurred in the technical drawing room where Carr called the student to the front of the room, shook the boy's hand firmly and exclaimed, "Congratulations, Mr Brown!" The principal then led the clapping.

An incident which involved Carr on a number of occasions throughout the week concerned Bill Cowan with whom Jim discussed the personal relationship which had developed between Bill and a female staff member. In discussing the matter with Bill - and, later, with Colleen Ross, the college's Guidance Counsellor, and two members of the P & A subcommittee - Jim portrayed a belief in the staff's ability to provide understanding and support and a belief in the value of professional counselling. Jim advised the female teacher, "You have to come back and re-establish a professional relationship. Throw yourself into the school's life. Face up to it all." Later, Carr reported to Colleen Ross on his advice:

They know it's all off and they must get back into a professional relationship and seek professional help to sort themselves out....  
I've also said the staff will be warm.

However, Carr was less clear of the

outcome when he advised Cowan to visit a professional counsellor, "You'll find out that much more about yourself although I don't know what they do."

In a discussion at the end of the week with Fred Miles concerning the step from sixth to seventh form Dean which Miles would make the following year, Carr expressed his perceptions of the reality of working with students at the higher level by means of stories taken from his own experience:

I look back on my time at Fruitvale College when I was seventh-form Dean. We had a barbecue at our house at the start of the year. It set the tone for the year. It was a stimulating year. In form period, I read Winnie the Pooh to them...The kids appreciated the humorous by-play, too. Well you know, bright kids appreciate the bright teachers. They learn from it and will carry these things for the rest of their lives.

In order to further test this proposition, the researcher considered two sources of data gathered after the week's observation. First, in the school magazine - published at the end of the year - Carr briefly summed up his perception of the values promoted in the college:

... when one's major concern is with people rather than things, I should have realised that in a lively place like Manoa College, action was not likely to remain dormant for very long...what continues to give me, and I am sure, all of the Manoa College community so much pleasure and satisfaction, is to hear so regularly comments of appreciation about what we are doing and try to do for our students both inside and outside the classroom, in the academic area, in our sporting and cultural pursuits and in our various other activities.... So much of the reason for this lies in the commitment and dedication of our staff.

His speech to students, parents and Board members during the end-of-year Senior Awards Evening also contained an expression of the perceptions which Carr holds of the college. Jim stressed the high level of involvement which he had noted in reviewing the year: involvement of students in a wide variety of sports activities; involvement of parents and community in such activities as the PTA, the gala day, the Educational Trust and the Board; and, the involvement of staff as, "a solid core; the backbone and strength of the school; second to none." Jim noted that he was constantly warmed and strengthened by their dedication and loyalty and their high sense of commitment. Finally, the principal moved to take a glimpse into the future:

Life is dominated by increasing pressures. Parents, in your own environment there is job uncertainty and unemployment for sons and daughters, the burden of tax, the price of housing. On a wider scale there is an increasing deluge of information - we have an infobomb explosion in our midst. Long held values are dissolving: a young girl recently explained, "I don't want to get married. I'm going to live as a de facto." There is profit, competition, boredom, drudgery, union pressure. What can we (Manoa College) do about it? Keep to our standards, provide an environment of stability, encouragement, stimulation and caring concern - as we have done and shall continue to do. What can you as parents do? You can do these things, too. I leave with you one practical suggestion: turn TV off one night a week and throw a ball around with your seven year old, play cards with your twelve year old, talk politics with your sixteen year old, go out with your family on a Sunday afternoon. But, above all, slow down and enjoy the youngsters who are with us for such a brief period.

On the evidence of the week in October, supplemented with the evidence gained at the end of the year, and discussion with Jim, the researcher considers that Proposition 3 is supported and should stand as stated.

#### 4. BALANCING ACTIVITIES

The following proposition was developed in order to embody this strategy:

*Proposition 4: A group of strategies to maintain the balance of the college help Jim to cope with life in his school world.*

"It's a real balancing act this principal's job," commented Jim Carr to the researcher on Thursday morning, "and keeping ahead by one jump if possible." Jim's comment underscored his awareness of this group of strategies to ensure that the college proceeds along a balanced course. Several facets of the proposition were identified during the week: anticipating, spending time, gaining an overview and focussing on policy. Carr uses an analogy drawn from his naval experience to explain the way in which he perceives that the school functions:

Think about the processes of landing a shell in the place where a plane will be. That's a very, very complex thing. Now, that's simple compared with the workings of a school but even in that very simple set of operations there's a tremendous amount of balance that has to take place. You've got to balance the movement of the plane with the movement of the ship through the water, with the movement of the waves and the tides, with the sluggishness of the movement of the gun turret which is being moved by motors. All this has got to be balanced together and I see the school in very much the same sort of sense that its a whole set of interrelated mechanisms.

In seeking to bring this balance to the college's operation, Carr uses a battery of strategies which help him to cope with this aspect of life in his school world. At an obviously observable level, he can be seen to do things such as using his diary to record for himself notes of points requiring action or major

points of discussions. He uses written memoranda to other staff members and uses an audio-recorder to dictate letters. Such strategies help to ensure the accuracy of the messages which Carr communicates. He also follows routines such as processing the incoming mail first thing each morning and being available in the staffroom for 8.30 a.m. staff meetings and morning intervals and most lunchtimes. Examination of the data gathered during the week revealed four additional strategies which contribute to Jim's balancing function in the college. The first of these strategies is anticipation.

a. Anticipation

Carr uses the strategy of forward thinking as he seeks to anticipate events rather than simply leaving events to take their own course. "I like to be prepared - one jump ahead," he commented during the week. Anticipation, for Carr, involves thorough preparation for forthcoming events. This feature was demonstrated during the week by Jim's extensive and thorough investigation of the possibilities for investing surplus Board funds. By the time of the F & E committee meeting, Jim was able to compare interest rates and terms of investment for each bank in Farmington and advised the committee of the bank with "...the best rate and personal service. I would recommend to the Board that we invest it there." In answer to members' questions, Carr was able to quote from the school administration manual to clarify legal and taxation aspects of the planned investments. Similarly, preparing his case was the purpose behind Jim consulting extensively with colleagues before finalising his recommendations to the Board for the allocation of units

of positions of responsibility and before interviewing the parent of a student suspected of glue-sniffing. For the latter occasion, Carr had discussed the matter with Manoa College's Guidance Counsellor and Senior Mistress in order to plan an approach aimed at gaining the parent's receptivity to the courses of action which would be suggested - without her becoming antagonised. The second balancing strategy is spending time.

b. Spending time

During the week, Jim was constantly on the job, from his arrival at school until his departure. He was readily accessible to other people, spent little time working alone and interacted with a constant flow of people seeking his attention. He gave his full attention to each task of the moment and sought to spend concerted periods of time on the major tasks such as his interview with Bill Cowan. On this occasion, Jim willingly made himself available for the first hour of the day in order to talk with Cowan without any interruptions being allowed. Jim did not delay in tackling tasks. After speaking with Gary Wright early on Monday morning about the untidy appearance of the school athletic team, Carr commented, "I don't like doing jobs like that. My philosophy is to do it as soon as I can so it doesn't dig into me." Similarly, on Friday morning, as soon as Carr decided his approach to interviewing the suspected glue-sniffing student's parent, he reached for the telephone book, located the parent's telephone number and dialled immediately. The ensuing conversation was brief but directly to the point:

Mrs \_\_\_\_\_ ? Jim Carr, Principal of Manoa College. One or two things have come to my attention about Jenny and things she's doing at school. I think we should have a chat. 1.30 today?

The third balancing strategy involves an overview of the college.

c. Gaining an overview

As principal, Carr was in touch with many people and aspects of the college's life during the week of observation - as is demonstrated in a scanning of Appendix VI . In any one day, Jim engaged in discussions with a wide range of adult members, in particular, of the school community. He was frequently found in the "front" area of the college - in his own office or the adjoining offices of the Board, Black, Sumich or Miles, the general school office or the staffroom. At other times he moved around the college environs. Being available and talking to people provided Carr with the knowledge necessary for an overview - as he advised Board members:

I'm very interested in sailing. I can read books and talk to people about sailing but the best way to learn is to feel the rope in your hand, the wind in your hair, the boat under your seat. I would respectfully suggest that the way in which Board members can get the feel of the place and really know what's going on is to come in and talk with staff and be in the staffroom.

Carr initiated conversations with people; he received news and information from them. He knew, for example that Rose Peters had been unwell with influenza, that Fred Miles was applying for a position as Deputy Principal in a school in another city, that Olive Sumich was feeling overlooked in Carr's handling

of the glue-sniffing case. He readily knew "who does what" and ensured that people were informed of information of concern to them: for example, reporting decisions from the P & A committee meeting to Mary Patterson about her leave application, to Jane East about her seventh-form English class and to Raewyn Gates about her application for promotion. As was demonstrated in Chapter Seven, Carr is the one person with the overview of events, issues and personalities involved in each arena of his school world. The fourth balancing strategy is attending to policy matters.

d. Focussing on policy

Although a large part of Carr's days concerned him in responding to items as they reached his attention, Carr was aware of the need to think constantly beyond such tasks. "I've got to stand aside from the immediacy of the situation and review policy," was Carr's explanation of this strategy. His use of the term "policy," in fact, is more consistent with "keeping an eye on the implications of events." When Board members, for example, expressed an interest in examining the school's future direction, Jim warned against the possible effect on staff members, "Staff aren't used to this intense searchlight." Much of his business with Black, Sumich, the visiting Liaison Inspector and Board committees involved Carr in considering or explaining the possible effects or implications of decisions. As Jim commented during a discussion with Colin Black and Jack Forsyth, the Liaison Inspector, on possible staff promotions:

You have to be aware of the ramifications of this and the realities on the ground when there are others who have slaved for years. I'm concerned about the effect of this on the school.



On the evidence of the week in October and discussion with Jim, the researcher considers that Proposition 4 is supported and should stand as stated.

#### 5. MANAGING EXPECTATIONS

The following proposition was developed in order to embody this strategy:

*Proposition 5: The strategy of managing the expectations of other people helps Jim to cope with life in his school world.*

During the week with Jim, three facets of this proposition were identified: first, the expectation of his availability; second, the pressures exerted on him; and, third, Jim's assessment of the expectations of staff and Board members. Each facet is discussed now.

##### a. The expectation of availability

As the Manoa College staff members assembled for Monday's afternoon staff meeting, Jim appeared in the corridor outside the staffroom at the same time as Paul Hansen who, earlier that day, had read Carr's memorandum of proposed guidelines for the conduct of future staff meetings. "Congratulations on the staff meeting memo," said Paul. "You're still seen to be doing what you are paid to do - make decisions." Paul's statement was reflected many times each day when Jim was observed at work. There is a clear expectation by Carr's colleagues that their principal should be readily available on most occasions, should be able to provide information on most topics and should be competent at handling most problems.

Each day involved Jim in contact with a steady flow of people in whom these expectations were apparent and Carr responded to many such interactions as the following:

- Kay Free:           Excuse me. Do you have copies of all that material on PR's?
- Jean Hoskin:       Do you have the circular on Public Service mileage allowances?
- Tom Gregg:         You might be interested in reading this letter about a successful student.
- Fred Miles:         I'd like to discuss a new system of recording UE marks.
- Frank Payne:       Are you happy with the performance of the Xerox machine, so far?
- Brian Gregory:     Can we replace two overhead projectors in our department?
- Mary Patterson:    Can I show you my application for leave to go to U.K.?
- Kay Free:           How long has Mary Patterson been here? Is she doing a good job?

By responding positively to the expectation of availability, Carr gains information about events in the college and is seen by others to be doing his job. "There is an expectation that I'm the bloke whose paid to do this," he explained. The second facet of this proposition follows.

b. The pressures which are exerted

As noted above, Jim received many requests for his time or knowledge during the week. Typically, the requests were phrased in a gentle fashion such as that by Fred Miles who asked, "Jim, could I crave a little time, please?" Carr replied, "Yes, sure; sit down." On only a small number of occasions was the principal observed to be receiving strong pressure. First, after his regular Monday meeting with Black and Sumich,

Jim commented:

I felt unreasonably pushed at the beginning. I was saying to myself, "Oh, hell! Not another stir-up I've got to placate." In much, they were looking for my reaction or decision.

Second, as soon as Carr arrived at school on Friday morning, Olive Sumich entered his office and stated that she thought she ought to be involved in the interview concerning the glue-sniffing incident. Carr replied, "No. I'm just informing the mother but letting her know I think it's serious enough for the principal to be involved." After Olive had left the room, he commented, "Bloody women. You think you've got it all sewn up and they come up with something else." Third, during the P & A committee meeting, the principal tersely responded to a comment by David Kingston:

Kingston: It raises the need to think ahead and be aware of the inputs and directions in which we're going.

Carr: Do you do that at your work?... I would conjecture that this school has done far more of this than 99 per cent of the parents in this area have done about their child raising. The Aims and Objectives have been through drafts and agonising.

Kingston: Then why did the Chairman ask us to look at it?

Carr: You ask him that. My first thought was, "Bloody hell! We've been through this many times before."

Later in the same meeting, Jim strongly expressed his annoyance with the committee when his recommendation was not accepted for the cancellation of one of the seventh-form English courses. Discussion now follows of the third facet of this proposition.

c. The assessment of the expectations of staff and Board members

Carr's perception of the expectations of him which are held by the staff have been noted earlier (page 371 ) while he holds a clear perception of the expectation which he considers they hold for him in the staffroom:

In the staffroom I have a fairly delicate role to play in that, if I go and plonk myself down next to someone at morning tea time, I've got to be aware that they know that the principal is sitting next to them - that they're not likely to engage in small talk with me to the same extent that they would with one of their peers.

I don't think the staff expect me to be a regular member of the darts school but they would be happy to see me occasionally going and having a game of darts. They don't expect me to come out with rude comments made with reference to other staff. When I've done so they've fallen like lead balloons....You're not expected to say that sort of thing....I don't think I've opened my mouth and shot it off this year. I've got to watch that one because I used to be a great one for slinging off at people. I mustn't do that now because its too powerful.

His perception of the expectation of their principal which is held by the Board of Governors has been summarised by Jim as:

In New Zealand, the experience is that the secondary school principal is the last active dictator. In this school that concept has been rudely and quite definitely shattered by our Board of Governors which regards the principal of this school as a manager - as a paid employee, in other words.

The meetings with Board committees during the

week covered an extensive array of business. Jim's main strategy in these situations was to assess expectations and be prepared to answer questions or criticism and to provide information. His sharp reaction to two, of many, points of business was noted above.

On the evidence of the week in October and discussion with Jim, the researcher considers that Proposition 5 is supported and should stand as stated.

#### 6. BEING CULTURALLY COMFORTABLE

The following proposition was developed in order to embody this strategy:

*Proposition 6: The strategy of being culturally comfortable helps Jim to cope with life in his school world.*

As a concluding statement of the strategies used by Jim Carr to cope with life in the cultural milieu of his school world, this proposition serves effectively as it embraces the five preceding propositions. Jim's own summary of his strategies reflects those which were identified from, and supported by the observational data:

An awareness of what's going on in the place; a willingness to take charge and not let things happen; a strength of personality not to let other people climb on top of me; an appreciation of the expectations that others have of me even though I don't necessarily have to fulfil that - I've got to be aware of what other people expect of me. This is all part of maintaining the balance: the ability to let everybody who should know know what's going on in the place; but, at the same time, the capability to decide how

much people should know - in other words, what's good for them to know; the willingness to make small adjustments instantaneously.

In this thesis, the reader has been presented with an ethnographic account of Carr functioning in his school world - moving between the various arenas which constitute the world of his principalship. He knows the part which each arena plays in the life of the college. He knows who participates and how things get done in each arena. He knows how each arena works. He knows, too, how he should behave. This knowledge enables Jim to be comfortable in his cultural milieu and to function, therefore, as a multicultural man.

Jim Carr interacts with the people who share his school world and is aware of them as people with anxieties, aspirations and values of their own. He has his own expectations of the principalship and is aware of their's. He has an understanding of the workings of the school and the skills which a principal might use. His school world is neither a place for which he holds all the answers nor one in which he always does the right thing. Indeed, his own store of knowledge is increased as he responds to changing circumstances or new tasks. Jim is the recognised authority figure in staff, student and parent arenas although his relationship with the college's Board of Governors moves sometimes from cooperation to compromise or conflict.

Jim perceives Manoa College as a very finely balanced mechanism in which an imbalance in any one area affects the balance of the successful operation of the other areas. "Part of my job," he explains "is to maintain that balance as best possible. But that's

only part of my job because at the same time I've got to build and develop that mechanism." The way in which Jim perceives the college reflects, too, his own background of training in engineering.

In his own right, as an individual, Jim brings to his cultural milieu his unique background of experience and life, his own aspirations for the school and himself and the pattern of values which has emerged from his past cultural experience. Indeed, in his principalship, Carr does not function in a random, "hit or miss" fashion. Rather, his cultural milieu is a world of observable patterns of arenas and strategies, which together constitute an identifiable "way of life."

In discussion with the researcher and when being observed talking to a visitor to Manoa College, Jim used the same term to describe his principalship and the reason for seeing it that way:

Basically, this is a way of life and not a job of work or a salary. Basically, that's because I'm the sort of person I am. It really stems from my own experience and enjoyment of the job.

On the evidence of the week in October and discussion with Jim, the researcher considers that Proposition 6 is supported and should stand as stated.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter the writer provided an interpretation of Jim Carr's life in his school world. After summarising the arenas which constitute Jim's cultural milieu the researcher identified six strategies used by Carr to cope with his life as a principal. These strategies were examined in relation to data gathered during the second period of inspection and which were supplemented by material gathered during discussions with Carr. The strategies were examined in the form of propositions - each of which was found to be supported by the evidence of the observational and discussion data. In brief, the strategies included: standing alone, taking the lead, creating and promoting his reality, balancing activities and managing expectations. It was noted that these strategies were embraced by the sixth strategy: being culturally comfortable.

The next chapter concludes the thesis. The writer summarises the study, briefly states the theoretical outcome of the work and reviews the methodological approach to the study.



CHAPTER NINECONCLUSIONINTRODUCTION

In this chapter the thesis is drawn to a close. The study is summarised and the writer presents his conclusions in the form of a theory of the principalship. The thesis concludes with a reconsideration of some aspects of the methodology used in undertaking the work and some suggestions for further research are made.

Summary of the Study

This total thesis is an entity in which the writer describes his study of the principalship of a New Zealand secondary school. The research question which evolved early in the study took the form of a question, "What is life like in the school world of one New Zealand secondary school principal and how can that life be explained?"

From his own background the writer brought an interest in the concept of culture while an interpretive paradigm and the development of grounded theory provided a means of portraying an understanding of the school world of Jim Carr, Principal of Manoa College. The ethnographic approach provided the researcher with techniques for being in the field and gathering his data - principally by means of participant observation. The background of literature for the study ranged from classical observational studies to New Zealand and overseas writings on the principalship. The emergence of a group of observational studies of

principals at work was noted and Wolcott's (1973) ethnographic study of Ed Bell, an American elementary school principal, provided a model for the present work. In preparing for his work in the college, the researcher examined the technicalities and practicalities of the ethnographic approach to fieldwork.

The researcher spent much time at Manoa College during one school year and Jim Carr became the focus of the study. The first month in the field - the period of exploration - was described in the first ethnography. The researcher ranged freely throughout the school during this period in order to become familiar and accepted in the college. The remainder of the year - the periods of inspection - were described in the next two ethnographies. The arenas which constitute Carr's school world, together with Jim's part in them, were described. After considering those arenas a series of strategies were identified by which Carr copes with life in the cultural milieu of his school world. The chapter in which these strategies were discussed constitutes the major interpretive section of the thesis. The strategies were stated in the form of propositions which were examined against a week's observation of the principal in October and material gathered during discussions with him. In this concluding chapter the strategies are brought together to form a theory of the principalship, at this point.

## TOWARDS A CULTURAL THEORY OF THE PRINCIPALSHIP

### INTRODUCTION

The research question, on which this study was based, asked, "What is life like in the school world of one New Zealand secondary school principal and how can that life be explained?" Thick description was used to portray "what life is like" while interpretation was used as a means of explaining that life. The writer sought to develop ideas which would explain Carr's principalship at Manoa College. These ideas form the theoretical component of the study. The writer considers that theoretical ideas should have four qualities: explanation, predictability, testability and scope for further development. However, in working towards a cultural theory of the principalship, the writer first returns to the concept of culture, which was discussed in Chapter Two as an important conceptual foundation of the study.

### The Concept of Culture - In Retrospect

Culture, it was noted earlier in the thesis, (page 28) is learned, cumulative, normative and adaptive, and its parts form a consistent whole. The writer accepted the definitions of Wolcott, (1975a) Roberts (1976) and Edgerton and Langness (1974) who each defined culture as a group's "way of life". "The things people do," the present writer noted, (page 28) "the ways in which they do them and with whom, the ways in which they think about those things, together, constitute the culture of the group." At Manoa College, the researcher endeavoured to penetrate the school's culture in order to identify those things - and, then, to describe and interpret them. An understanding

of the ways in which those elements fit together implies, too, an understanding of the patterns and rules which underlie the life of any group. Patterns provide life with order while rules provide people with guidance for functioning as members of a group, as was noted earlier. (pages 29-30)

At Manoa College a series of arenas were identified as providing a pattern to Jim Carr's life in his cultural milieu and a series of strategies were identified as providing Jim with his own set of rules for coping with life in his school world. This perception of the culture concept provided the researcher with an approach to making observations in the college and, subsequently, for ordering his data and presenting it in the ethnographies of Chapters Six, Seven, and Eight. In essence, the intent was to describe and explain Jim's way of life with its attendant patterns and rules. Dufty et al (1976: 147) noted a series of dimensions which must be considered by anyone seeking to understand the culture of another group. Cultural understanding will come, they suggested, when the observer looks at a group's ways of: thinking, expressing and valuing; producing and distributing; establishing authority; becoming organised; teaching and learning; communicating and interacting; coping with people as individuals; and, providing for the group's basic needs. At Manoa College, throughout the school year, the researcher observed aspects such as these and they were described for each arena in Jim's school world. (Chapter Seven) The thick descriptions portrayed a number of features of the way of life in the arenas: the people who are involved, the business which is transacted, the mood or feeling, samples of incidents or events and a consideration of Carr's part in each arena.

Whose Reality is Portrayed?

The use of qualitative techniques such as observation enables the researcher to investigate behaviour in the subjects' own settings. The intent is to discover and understand the reasons underlying the actions of those subjects. Murdock explained that the strength of such techniques is to: "...seek consistently to penetrate social relationships in depth and to view behaviour emphatically from the point of view of the participants themselves." (in Sanday 1976:173)

The same point was made earlier in the thesis when the etic and emic perspectives of Harris were discussed. (pages 142-144) During the study, the researcher moved from an etic view of events in which he saw things, at an early stage, from his own perspective. With increased understanding of Carr's school world, the researcher was able to take an emic perspective in which he became able to see things, and explain them, from Carr's perspective. An example of the difficulty of portraying events and ideas - developed in a qualitative study - from an etic perspective, was illustrated in Chapter Seven, (pages 336-337) when the writer reported his early attempts to develop theoretical ideas explaining Carr's principalship. Analogies of the principal as "juggler" and "journal" were found to be unsuited to the task as the ideas were imposed artificially by the researcher rather than being generated from the data of the study itself. The identified strategies which emerged in Chapter Eight (pages 346-347) were considerably more suitable in explaining Carr's principalship as they were derived directly from the data itself. The writer has sought to portray, therefore, Jim Carr's perspective of reality at Manoa College.

### The Identification of the Propositions

The grounded theory approach to the development of theoretical ideas was discussed in Chapter Two. (pages 41-45) The researcher used the approach as a means of continually shaping his study and providing direction for his data gathering. From the first month in the school - during the period of exploration - to the two later periods of inspection, the writer sought to develop and refine his theoretical ideas which might explain life in Carr's school world. The arenas constituting Jim's school world were identified, described and later summarised. (Table 3) This table included a column in which the nature of Carr's participation in each arena was indicated. The researcher inspected this column and undertook the processes of conceptual levering and grouping and labelling of categories which were described in Chapter Five. (pages 208-209) Several categories, which were termed "strategies", were identified tentatively. They were embodied in a series of propositions which were examined against the observational and interview evidence gained from a week's observation of Carr in October and from data gathered during discussions with him. Therefore, the final statement of theoretical ideas is grounded in the study. Appendix VIII illustrates this process.

### The Presentation of the Theory

The conclusions of the study of Jim Carr's principalship at Manoa College are presented as a cultural theory of the principalship. This is a cultural theory in that it has been derived from examination of the cultural milieu of Carr's school world. In stating the theory,

the writer believes that any such statement should be clear, brief and concise. The elements of the theory consist of the following propositions which were examined and accepted in the previous chapter. The term "the principal" has been substituted for "Jim Carr" in the wording of each proposition. Each element explains an aspect of the way in which Carr copes with life in his school world. However, in terms of the definition of culture used in this study, each element functions as a rule or code which regulates Carr's behaviour as principal in his school world. Carr's school world consists of a pattern of arenas and these rules or codes determine the way in which he functions in those arenas. Carr's behaviour in each arena is not random but is regular. His behaviour has a pattern to it which is much more complex than a simple pattern provided by a timetable, or schedule, of events.

The writer used the confirmed propositions, reported in Chapter Eight, as the conclusions of the study in the form of a cultural theory of the principalship - developed from the study of Carr. The theory consists of six elements:

1. The strategy of being able to stand alone helps the principal to cope with life in the school world. This element includes the abilities to maintain a reserved manner and to face criticism.
2. The strategy of actively taking the lead as the senior professional person in the school helps the principal to cope with life in the school world. This element includes the portrayal of an image of being the principal and a range of activities such as initiating action, making decisions, and providing information and feedback.
3. The strategy of creating and promoting his own perception of reality in the school helps the principal to cope with life in the school world. This element includes two facets: the perception of the school

created in the principal's mind and the expression of that perception to other people.

4. A group of strategies to maintain the balance of the school helps the principal to cope with life in the school world. This element includes anticipation, spending time, gaining an overview of the school and focussing on policy matters.
5. The strategy of managing the expectations of other people helps the principal to cope with life in the school world. This element includes the expectation of being available and of being able to assess and handle the expectations of other people in the school world.
6. The strategy of being culturally comfortable helps the principal to cope with life in the school world. This element includes the cultural knowledge necessary for the principal to be able to function in the arenas constituting the school world.

The present writer considers that four important questions should be asked of any theory:

1. Can it explain what has been observed?
2. Can it be subjected to a test of falsification?

These questions can be discussed together. The researcher constructed the theory from the analysis of data gathered - primarily by unstructured observation by the researcher as a participant observer - of Carr actually functioning in the cultural milieu of his school world. The researcher gathered an extensive amount of data throughout the school year. Rigorous attention was given to the technicalities of gathering the data in the knowledge that the ethnographic approach and observational methods are sometimes subject to skepticism. All data were carefully cross-checked and the researcher ensured that he became thoroughly familiar with the data. The ideas contributing to the theory arose directly from the data throughout the study. The theory,



therefore, is grounded in, or developed from, the study of Jim's school world. The researcher demonstrated a growing familiarity with, and understanding of, that cultural milieu which was described. The descriptive material was used as a basis for interpreting and explaining the way in which Carr copes with life in his school world.

The ethnographies included in the thesis have been constructed with the intent of describing and interpreting Jim's school world and with the intent of being recognisable and intelligible to Carr. In this study of Manoa College the writer had sought not to evaluate this principalship but to portray Carr's perception of reality. Gregory (1983:374) concisely sums up the value of studying and presenting this perspective: "Native-view paradigms... can provide both basic and applied researchers with solid bases for understanding the complexity of organizational cultures." Greenfield,(1983) too, highlighted the importance of considering peoples' experiences, choices and values in order to understand organizations which themselves, Greenfield believes, are people. (1983:3,34)

The writer considers that the grounded theory accurately and honestly explains the observations made of Carr's school world. Two further questions can be asked of the theory:

3. Can it predict what has not yet been observed?
4. Can it be tested by further examination and modified by the acquisition of new data?

Again, these questions can be discussed together. This theory provides a tentative basis for explaining the way in which Jim copes with life in his school world - hence, the use of the first word in the title of this section of the thesis, "Towards a Cultural Theory of the Principalship." The theory has been derived from, and used to explain, the

school life of one school principal and, obviously, should be considered further against the reality of the school lives of other principals. Further use of the theory's elements will be necessary in order to determine their predictability. However, the theory provides a framework through which the coping strategies of principals can be considered and categorised. Subsequent modification to the theory or the production of different theories of the principalship should not be unexpected. Two recent ethnographic studies of small samples of principals, for example, have produced their own explanations of the principalship. Bredeson (1985) stressed the part played by the metaphors of maintenance, survival and vision in the daily practice of five principals while personal closeness involving fear and "being great" were important explanatory factors in the life of the principal studied by Donmoyer. (1985) Different theoretical outcomes are likely when subjective worlds and data are examined. But, therein lies a key value of studies employing an ethnographic approach: the real world in which people live and function is not reduced to statistics but the way in which that life is lived is interpreted. Wolcott noted the commitment of the ethnographer: "It is to cultural interpretation." The Manoa College study of Jim Carr's life in his school world was derived from, and grounded in, the cultural milieu of the school world in which Jim Carr's life as principal unfolds each day.

The predictive aspect of theory is contained, also, in the notion of theory providing a guide to practice. The cultural theory of the principalship developed in this thesis requires further testing in the school world of other principals before its utility in assisting practitioners can be verified. The researcher is confident, however, that the theory would predict the behaviour likely to be observed should another researcher observe Carr at work in his school world. This confidence arises from the knowledge that the theory is embedded in the actual cultural milieu in which Carr functions

at Manoa College and was generated and refined over a substantial period of time.

#### A Note on Jim Carr

In his principalship, Jim does not function in a random, unstructured fashion. His life in his school world has an order consisting of a series of arenas which provide a pattern to this principalship. Jim's work days (and nights) revolve around those arenas. Each arena has its own way of life or culture. In this sense, the college is a multicultural organization. Gregory, in her recent work, (1983:359) noted that this is an accurate view of organizations. Carr's behaviour in any of the arenas is not random, either, but results from a set of rules which guide his actions. In concluding this study, these rules have been perceived as the strategies which are embodied in the theory of the principalship which was developed. The rules by which people live are the product of the vast range of experiences which form a person's background and from which one's values are generated. In this thesis, the rules have been identified although the researcher has not explicitly explored or reported the origins of Jim's values. However, in the profile of Carr which is contained in Chapter Six, the writer noted, for example, that Jim is aware of the influence of his parents during his upbringing in addition to his decision to become a Christian at twelve years of age. Such influences, it could be anticipated, will have played some part in the formation of the values which Carr uses as a basis for his work as a school principal. The effect of Jim's experience as a naval officer is made explicit in the thesis as having influenced the way in which Carr perceives his ability to stand alone and to take a part in bringing balance to the school. He readily links his naval experience to his work as a school principal, (e.g.

page 355) as in the following example:

I've read a very fine document on the less obvious qualities of a leader, written by a British naval officer, which I think is most important. I remember one of these is courage. I'm quite sure that's one that's very necessary as a principal.

In the cultural milieu in which he functions, Carr is a significant figure from a cultural viewpoint. He is culturally comfortable in moving between, and functioning in, the arenas of his school world and - in this sense - is a multicultural man. He takes an active part, too, in shaping the culture of the college by taking the lead as the college's senior professional person and by promoting the values which he holds for the college.

#### The Place of the Study in Relation to the Literature

The writer considers that the study adds to our understanding of the principalship - particularly, of the secondary school principalship in New Zealand. This area of literature is sparse and consists of anecdotal reports (e.g. Kelly 1975, Tait 1985) and a nationwide quantitative survey undertaken in 1975 and reported by Johnson, Adams et al. (1977). No other ethnographic or qualitative study of the New Zealand secondary school principalship has been undertaken, while none of the studies of primary school principals extended over a school year or involved researchers in extensive exploration of a principal's subjective world.

The work provides another step in an emerging field of qualitative studies of the principalship which is largely centered in Australia. The study differs, however, from the work of O'Dempsey (1976) and Willis (1980a) who focussed on the work activities of secondary school principals rather

than seeking to take a cultural perspective in coming to understand their principals' school worlds. Lanyon's ethnographic study (1982) of four principals has features in common with the present work although each subject was observed for only two weeks. Cook (1983) reported that his study was still in progress. This work involves unstructured observation, description, and interpretation of a primary school principal in an attempt to use the insider's view to set the principal in the context of his life and work. This study appears to have much in common with the present study and the report will be awaited eagerly by this writer.

North American studies located by the writer differ to the study of Jim Carr's school world. Kelly's (1974) ethnographic study of a secondary school principal focussed on the work component of the job as did Peterson's (1978) work with elementary school principals. However, Wolcott's (1973) ethnographic study of Ed Bell, an elementary school principal, provided the prototype for the present study. Wolcott's approach and techniques formed an appropriate means for undertaking the work at Manoa College where the researcher undertook one of a small number of such studies and remained faithful to the approach; seeking to "get inside" Carr's subjective school world. Wolcott also highlighted the concept of culture as a valid and fruitful means of understanding the workings of the principalship in the same way as was done by Lacey (1970), Willis (1977) and Corrigan (1979) in their studies of life in British schools.

In recent literature, Jelinek, Smircich and Hirsch (1983:331) noted "an important movement in the study of organizations toward the... interpretive paradigm." The present study includes such description and interpretation of Carr's cultural milieu. Smircich (1983:339) noted that there is no consensus on the meaning of the culture concept.

However, this study took the "way of life" definition as being one which implied that identifiable patterns and rules underlie any social group's life. To describe and interpret those patterns, the language, views and explanations of people in Manoa College were used. Smircich supports this type of analysis. She wrote: "The focus of this form of organizational analysis is on how individuals interpret and understand their experience." (Smircich 1983:351)

Gregory, (1983) even more strongly stressed the importance of understanding and using the "native's" view of cultural life. In discussing Gregory's work, her colleagues wrote:

Her aim is to understand the "natives" in their own terms and to understand the varieties of native behaviour, in this case that of functional specialists in Silicon Valley electronics firms.

(Jelinek, Smircich and Hirsch 1983:331)

Indeed, Gregory (1983:369-373) achieved this stance in her description of cultures in Silicon Valley. The data are used and the descriptions are presented in language which reflects that which would be familiar to Gregory's subjects in the valley. In the same way, the present writer described and explained Carr's life in his school world in language and concepts which are familiar and comprehensible to him.

The writer next reconsiders several methodological aspects of the study.

THE METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY RECONSIDERED

Participant observation and the grounded theory basis for collecting and processing data provided the freedom and flexibility necessary for exploring Carr's cultural milieu and for shaping the study as it proceeded. Three specific aspects of the methodology require comment.

First, the acceptance of the researcher was a crucial feature of the study. Throughout the year, the researcher was not denied access to any information he sought. Staff and Board members spoke freely with him about many features of the school's life. Sensitive and confidential information was readily shared with him. The researcher was meticulously careful at all times neither to break confidences nor to make judgemental statements. "Wayne's part of the woodwork," Kay Free explained to new Board members. Jim Carr proved to be a very suitable informant - willing to be shadowed, to talk, to explain his views and actions. Throughout the year, the relationship between Jim and the researcher was warm and open with each interested in the other's life and work. Jim shared many confidences with the researcher. The nature of the relationship was most strongly shown in mid-July when Carr telephoned the researcher before school, "Wayne, I have to talk to you today as soon as I can. Can you call in this morning?" The researcher had commitments all through the day and was unable to meet Jim until 4.00 p.m. Carr arrived at the meeting exactly on time and immediately shared with the researcher a domestic difference with his wife which was causing Jim anxiety.

Second, the study proved to be a physically demanding task for the researcher. This was certainly not "blitzkreig ethnography" (Rist, 1980) as the researcher was in the

field, often for long days and late at night, for a substantial part of the year. Intense concentration was required at all times - when other participants might be "switched off" or relaxing. There was no such rest for the researcher, who was anxious not to miss any item of information. While observing a meeting in August, the researcher noted in his fieldbook, "I'm tired now. It's 10.54 p.m. My concentration is going." The study also took place in tandem with the researcher's teaching responsibilities in a tertiary institution so that, on some days, the researcher's schedule was heavy as he moved from Manoa College to his own place of work and accommodated the demands of responsibilities in both places.

Third, from time-to-time, the researcher felt some anxiety about reciprocating the assistance of people in the college. The researcher felt that sometimes he would like to be able to make a positive contribution to substantive discussions beyond an informal and friendly level. Occasionally he was asked to provide an opinion although on only two occasions was any mild pressure exerted. Even then, the occasions instanced a positive degree of acceptance of the researcher. In May, Jim explained to the researcher the difficult situation which was developing with Jane East. "What would you do about it?" Jim asked. The researcher stressed that he was not in the college to give advice but proceeded to summarise the situation which Jim had explained and offered several possible courses of action which would have been obvious to Carr, anyway. In July, the researcher was called to the front of the room by Olive Sumich as the staff meeting concluded discussing staff relationships with the Board Chairman. "You've seen him more than any of us this year, Wayne. What do you really think he's like?" Olive asked. The researcher offered no opinion but simply commented, "Oh, well, that's



difficult; I couldn't really say," and quickly left the group as soon as someone else contributed to the conversation. The writer did not feel stressed psychologically in the ways suggested by Zigarmi and Zigarmi (1980) although the careful setting up procedures early in the study clarified the nature of the researcher's participation in the college. Thereafter, he sought to take a professionally responsible stance as researcher - being on time, unobtrusive and undemanding; responding warmly to people and being discreet with the information he acquired.

The study at Manoa College highlighted some possible areas for further research. These areas are suggested in the next section of the thesis.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

There is still a need for further qualitative studies of principals and other administrators at work in their school worlds. This aspect of the literature on educational administration, particularly in New Zealand, is still sufficiently sparse to be able to offer considerable scope for future investigation. In addition, such studies might include observation and data sources such as diaries, logs, personal accounts, photographs and novels, as Willower (1985) has recently commented.

The theoretical ideas embodied in this final chapter, of course, can be further tested, examined and applied with other principals. Such research would determine the utility or applicability of the ideas to a wider audience of principals or suggest modifications to the theory, if necessary.

Two facets of the Manoa College study, in the opinion of the writer, offer possibilities for further research and hold considerable potential for increasing our understanding of the ways in which administrators function. First, study might focus on administrator values and the influence of these on life in schools. For instance, at Manoa College, different sets of values seemed to exist between the school's staff and Board members. An increased knowledge of this facet might provide understandings which could lessen the tensions between lay and professional people involved in school government. Second, in the present study Carr was shown to be involved in numerous activities. An American study (Bar-Kama 1978) reported this aspect of the working lives of forty professors. Bar-Kama demonstrated the

way in which these people created "synergy" between their activities in order to bring to their work the co-ordinating quality which exists between the organs and tissues of the body and which enables it to function effectively. There would be value in investigating ways in which school administrators effectively handle their many activities so that the quality of those activities and life in the organization are enhanced.

Some brief remarks now conclude the thesis.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The study of Jim Carr's school world at Manoa College provided the researcher with an extensive, valuable and stimulating experience - academically, professionally and personally. As was the case during the fieldwork portion of the study, the writer refrained, throughout the thesis, from expressing judgements on the work of Manoa College or Jim Carr. Rather, the researcher used his data to portray life in Jim's school world. However, in re-examining the fieldbooks, a relevant item was identified in the observation notes of the August meeting of the Board of Governors. The meeting was attended by William Nicholson, Senior Inspector in the New Zealand Department of Education. A statement made by Nicholson expressed a viewpoint with which the writer feels well able to relate now that the thesis is concluded:

Walking through the school and knowing the full history, I find how well the school has been developed over the years - what a good school it is! This struck me forcibly this afternoon. I think you were the foundation chairman, Don, and you the foundation principal, Mr Carr. It's come a long way!