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| **Speak Up – Kōrerotia** **National Identity – 15 April 2015** |
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|  | This programme was first broadcast on Canterbury’s Community Access radio station Plains FM 96.9 and was made with the assistance of NZ On Air.  |
| Female [Plains FM] | Coming up next conversations on race relations and human rights with Speak Up – Kōrerotia, here on Plains FM. |
| Sally[Intro] | E ngā mana, E ngā reo, E ngā hau e whāTēnā koutou katoaNau mai ki tēnei hōtaka: “Speak Up” – “Kōrerotia”.Join the NZ Human Rights Commission as it engages in conversations around race and diversity in our country. Tune in as our guests speak up sharing their unique and powerful experiences and opinions and may you also be inspired to speak up when the moment is right. |
| Sally | Hello and welcome to Speak Up - Kōrerotia, which airs every third Wednesday of the month from 9pm – 10.00. I’m your host Sally Carlton, a human rights specialist at the Human Rights Commission in Christchurch. Today’s show will feature three guests, James Liu of Massey University, Mike Grimshaw of the University of Canterbury and Bev Watson, National Coordinator of the Race Unity Speech Awards. Ko te kaupapa o tēnei rā, ko ‘national identity’ – What does it mean to be a New Zealander today? In just a couple of weeks’ time the centenary of the landings at Gallipoli will be commemorated. The arrival of Australian and New Zealand troops on the shores of Turkey is viewed by many New Zealanders as a nation building moment, when these countries were able to assert themselves on the world stage. This idea has been perpetuated across the decades – yet what does this event and the story of nationhood which accompanies it, mean 100 years on? In a country where one quarter of the population is born overseas, do New Zealanders continue to relate to the message of ANZAC Day? Does the event hold much meaning for people? These are some of the questions we’ll be discussing as a basis for exploring the idea. What does it mean to be a New Zealander today?Our first guest is James Liu, Head of the School of Psychology at Massey University. James’ research interests include changing demographic trends within New Zealand as well as the relationship between identity and history in the New Zealand, Chinese and international context. James, you describe yourself as a Chinese American New Zealander, that’s probably a great place to start our discussion of national identity and what being a New Zealander means. Could you please elaborate a bit on this self-description? |
| James | Oh yes, it’s probably... apropo to bring up the cricket results because New Zealanders never feel so Kiwi as when one of our sports teams are successful and I became a citizen of New Zealand in 1997 and after the ceremony, you know when I became a New Zealand citizen, I went to some friends, these Kiwi blokes were watching the All Blacks and I told them what happened and they go “Oh Jim, that’s great, congratulations, you’re one of us now, you’re a Kiwi” and I said “No, I’m a Chinese American New Zealander”. And that was very meaningful for me at that point as a new migrant to the country of three years and that’s because I didn’t really identify with them so much. I was trying to learn to appreciate rugby and cricket but I didn’t know a whole lot about ANZAC Day at that stage and so the idea that I would be homogenised into one single whole unified national identity didn’t really fit well with me and the research in psychology has shown that new migrants prefer an integrative approach so where they get to blend or select aspects of their own identity with that of the national identity in the country that they migrate to.  |
| Sally | And I guess the next question then is do you blend or select the sport? |
| James | For myself I do quite a bit of shifting. I think we’re in an incredibly privileged position in this country. First of all, we have no natural enemies; second of all, we have this wonderful democratic tradition that is safe guarded via Australia by the great sheriff of the Pacific: the United States. So that’s one aspect of my identity but the other thing is that our economy now is increasingly dependent on Asia, especially China whose demand for milk powder is insatiable and so I shift back and forth. I travel a lot internationally; I’m fluent in both English and Chinese. If I shift into Chinese I’m able to behave at least somewhat like a Chinese person. My accent changes when I go to the US and I understand that things are quite different in the US so I would say that I am shifting in a different context. I started to blend more because I’ve been here for so long now but blending isn’t really easy, it’s much easier to hold different contexts separate and then just fit into those contexts for me. |
| Sally | That’s very interesting. James, can you tell us a little bit about your work please and has your journey with all these different identities influenced that path? |
| James | Sure, psychology is a very interesting field and I think the phrase that often applies is physician heal thyself. I think the phrase for psychology is psychologists understand thyself and essentially I’ve become the Head of School of Psychology at Massey University which does quite a lot of distance education, outreach, mature students and that type of thing is really about refining, understanding yourself better. I got into this research simply because I was born in Taiwan, I grew up in a southern part of the United States so in the boot heel of southern Illinois, they talk a little bit like this [puts on accent] and some of the customs that people go hunting and fishing. |
| Sally | You do it very well, that accent. |
| James | Ah yes, I’m just joking though. So I found it quite difficult growing up there to fit in so in terms of this identity issue as a psychologist, people often try and understand themselves and then they find out while their experiences are simply a reflection of what everyone else experiences. A majority member has an identity; they’re just not called upon to confront it as often as a minority group member. And so that distinction between majority and minority and inter-group relations is how I began, but then when I arrived to New Zealand I just realised that so many things that we took for granted in the United States like the pervasiveness of racism were actually cultural constructions. So to give you an example: I’ve just recently analysed the speeches from the throne from 1854 until now with a student Angela Robinson and we found that there is not a single instance of biologically-oriented racism; that is, inferiority or superiority directed in any of the speeches towards Māori/Pākehā relations. Instead, what we find is quite a persistent idea of benevolence; you know, that’s this very British Empire liberalism: Well, we’re here to bring the torch of civilisation to all of humanity, we’re here to help… You know, there’s a lot of respect given to Māori simply because when we analyse this research on social representations of history, if settlers took things into their own hands, they generally got shot up quite badly, like the Wairoa incident, so there was quite a bit of respect for Māori because of their military prowess but also just in that particular place, the racial inferiority just didn’t play itself out, it was very different. There were intimations of biculturalism from the very beginning, even though this of course didn’t really blossom until recent times with the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi. So I became even more conscious of my culture and how history and historical trajectory, that there was always an evenhandedness between the colonial regime which was bent on getting on the land and achieving sovereignty over the land and Māori who are fairly successful at resisting this for some series of time, that history created a significant amount of national identity in New Zealand which is very different between the United States where you have a history of slavery. And so racism in the United States is influenced by the fact that the United States had slavery for almost 300 years and to maintain slavery you’ve got to believe in superiority and inferiority in a way you never had to in New Zealand. |
| Sally | That’s very interesting, so you’re basically saying that the sort of construction of race and racial relationships is different in America and New Zealand because of slavery, is that right? |
| James | That’s the argument, that’s a historical argument and we can throw some empirical evidence at it as well. Psychology is positioned as both an art and a science and so the science of for instance, biculturalism in New Zealand is really interesting. There’s a task that a colleague of mine from the University of Auckland, Chris Sibley and I did called the implicit associations task. It was invented in the US but we applied it to looking at brown, white and yellow faces so you know, people that look different, and pairing them up with national symbols of New Zealand or symbols of foreign countries and the way this IAT works is that people often don’t tell you what they really think if you ask them directly. If I say “Sally are you racist?”.  |
| Sally | Sure, you say “no”. |
| James | I know what the answer is going to be right. But then I can get you to click on these things and say how quickly can you pair a white face with symbolism of New Zealand, a brown face with symbolism of New Zealand or a yellow face with symbolism of New Zealand versus other countries and then we look at the difference in milliseconds between your reaction times versus pairing those with foreign symbols. And what happens is… So this is very scientific in terms of methodology. What happens is: New Zealand is the only post-colonial Anglo-settler society in the world in which university students react equally quickly to brown – that is, Māori – faces and white – that is, Pākehā – faces to pairing up with symbols of New Zealand. So we are actually symbolically bi-cultural, at least for the young people of New Zealand. Which is not true in Australia; in Australia, whites are reacted to much quicker than Aboriginals. It’s not true in the United States; whites are reacted to much closer to symbols of the United States than African Americans, even in domains where African Americans are completely dominant like in track and field Olympic athletics. By contrast, Chinese or east Asian faces are reacted to much slower when people try to pair them up with symbols of New Zealand. |
| Sally | That’s really interesting James and I’ve heard you speak about that before and it was really fascinating research and the visuals really helped this become really clear and that was great. We’re just going to take a break and then we’ll come back and talk I think a little bit more about this idea of biculturalism and multiculturalism in New Zealand. Just before we do, you’ve chosen a song for us today. You’ve chosen ‘Reach’ by Gloria Estefan, can you just give us very briefly a reason why you chose it? |
| James | Oh it’s about aspiration and I think identity is about aspiration as much as it is about some reality or fact. |
| Sally | Thank you, here we go.  |
|  | **MUSIC– “REACH” BY GLORIA ESTEFAN** |
| Sally | Welcome back to Speak Up - Kōrerotia, the radio show of the Human Rights Commission playing here on Plains FM 96.9. We’ve been speaking with James Liu about New Zealand and we were just speaking with him about his research on how people in New Zealand react to symbols of identity in New Zealand and James, you finished by saying that New Zealanders react equally well to white versus brown faces but not so well to yellow. I’m really interested to delve into this a little bit more and hear your thoughts on biculturalism versus multiculturalism and as New Zealand’s population changes, how do these two concepts sit alongside each other? |
| James | Yes. Well let me start off a little bit about this unusual symbolic inclusion of Māori in the New Zealand national identity. I think this is earned through the decades, through the centuries of these two groups of people evolving and in significant respects becoming one people. The difficulty for Māori has always been that this symbolic inclusion has come at a cost, which is essentially the loss the sovereignty, the loss of land and then to have a marginal position within the economy traditionally. So that’s one trajectory – so the symbolic inclusion – and there’s economic marginalisation, which is only now being addressed with the fiscal envelope for the past injustices. The history with respect to Asians is very, very different, so although there were Chinese in New Zealand from the 19th century on, primarily as a result of the Otago gold rush, these were very small in number. They were faced with egregious discrimination and learned to really fit in, whereas the majority of Asians that arrived in New Zealand, arrived post-1987 and so that’s why they are not as symbolically included in the New Zealand national identity. Māori symbols and Māori people are very much woven into the history of New Zealand and so that’s what the IAT [experiment] picks up, is this association, this common association between them. With Asians, the large numbers only came post-87 and so you don’t have that long time association, and I think Kiwis are very subtle and very nuanced in the way they express prejudice. I think Kiwis hate to be called prejudiced or racist in any way, shape or form, and I mention that this is even in the colonial era when the land wars were being fought, there was still very little directly overtly racist language directed at Māori. There was far more, for instance, directed, even by Abraham Lincoln, towards African Americans in the 1860s in the United States. So the expression of racism comes in typically subtle forms here. So it might be that if you send your CV in, this is a research that a colleague of mine, colleague Ward did, if you send a CV in and it has relatively equivalent qualifications, if your last name sounds Chinese you’ll have less of a chance of getting a call back than if your name sounds English. So there are these prejudices that exist perhaps because of lack of familiarity, perhaps because of stereotypes. And so when people come to this country they do experience different degrees of welcome depending on what part of the world they come from.  |
| Sally | James with that research on the surnames, has that same research been carried out for Māori-sounding surnames? |
| James | No that hasn’t, I don’t know what the results of that would be. My guess is that you shouldn’t get any effect at and it’s possible that you could even get an advantage for a Māori-sounding surname but that’s a great idea.  |
| Sally | Something to think about maybe. |
| James | Yes. |
| Sally | You mentioned 1987 a couple of times, what’s so key about that date and increasing numbers of Asians coming into New Zealand after that date?  |
| James | Yes, prior to 1987 New Zealand had a more or less race-based policy for migration. After 1987 it became a points-based system, so essentially it didn’t matter what your country of origin was, it simply mattered what your qualifications were. And once that happened, it opened the doors to a much more multicultural flow of migration and that has permanently changed the face of New Zealand. Asians in 1987 would have been less than 2% of the total population of New Zealand, and now Asians are more than 12% and growing so it’s changed the whole demography of the nation substantially. |
| Sally | And if you could give us some more stats on how the nation is changing in terms of demographics that would be great please. |
| James | Ah yes, so New Zealand has always been relatively ethnically diverse because of Māori and then subsequently the influx of the relationship with Pasifika; however, this has really accelerated in recent years with essentially this theory of liberal or open migration, the fact that New Zealand’s economy almost collapsed from the 70s when Britain withdrew to the EEC and we had to search for new markets. Our new markets are now in Asia, and Asian people are coming here and contributing to our economy as well so it’s very globally oriented. And what it produces is something like a patchwork quilt and what we’re hoping is that patchwork quilt still stitches together.Auckland is the economic engine of New Zealand, it is the most ethnically diverse part of New Zealand, anyone who buys property in Auckland realises how expensive it is and it is very different than, say, rural New Zealand, where much of our agricultural wealth comes from. So you’ll find in a place like Auckland, there’s more personality-based openness, whereas in a place like Timaru there’s on average more honesty, humility. So if that relationship between town and country, between the biculturalism and multiculturalism, it has to stitch together to manage this very complex and lumpy ethnic diversity in New Zealand. |
| Sally | I love that metaphor of the quilt being stitched together, that’s beautiful. James, that’s about all we’ve got time for today unfortunately, maybe we’ll have to get you back you on the show to talk about some more points that I’d love to discuss with you. |
| James | Thank you very much Sally, it’s a pleasure. |
| Sally | Well thank you so much for taking the time. |
| James | Ok bye. |
|  | **MUSIC – “THERE IS NO DEPRESSION IN NEW ZEALAND” BY BLAM BLAM BLAM** |
| Sally | Kia ora. Nau mai ki tēnei hōtaka Speak Up - Kōrerotia, here on Plains FM 96.9. In the previous part of this part of this show we spoke with James Liu of Massey University about the changing demographics of New Zealand and bicultural versus multiculturalism. We’re going to continue thinking about national identity now looking specifically at ANZAC Day and the Race Unity Speech Awards. To have this conversation, we’ve got Mike Grimshaw of Canterbury University and Bev Watson who heads up the National Speech Awards. They’ll be bringing to the conversation very different backgrounds and experiences and I’m sure it will make for an interesting dialogue. First of all, Mike: could you tell us why you chose the song that you chose, which was “There’s No Depression in New Zealand” by Blam Blam Blam. |
| Mike | The reason I chose it is because a lot of the talk about national identity fails to acknowledge that it’s a mythology, there’s a whole lot of myths that go on about national identity. National identity itself is a myth and this song from 1981 – I think it was by Blam Blam Blam – sort of lifted the plaster, sort of picked off the scab of New Zealand national identity and said, “Well, we’re not the country of the golden weather, there’s all this other stuff that’s happening underneath”, and this led up also to the Springbok tour which is in a sense the great forgotten of national identity in New Zealand. That the country had to remake itself, had to say, “Well, the old hegemonies that controlled the country, the old power blocks, the myths that everything was clean and pleasant and green and happy and everybody was just living very contended lives” needed to be exposed. And I think this song actually, for a whole generation, made us reimagine what New Zealand could be but also made us realise that the myths that we’d grown up in and the myths that had been passed down to us were not as imposing, or they could actually be critiqued. I think that’s the important thing about national identity, that it’s a project that needs to be constantly reworked and reimagined and the myths need to be… in a bit of jargon… demythologised, sort of taken apart and see what’s actually underneath them and this is what that song actually did. |
| Sally | And both you, Mike, and you, Bev, work with young people about national identity I suppose, so if you could just give us a bit of information about the work that you both do. |
| Bev | Well I’m the national coordinator of the Race Unity Speech Awards which the Bahá’i community initiated in 2001 so this is our 15th year of the competition which is really exciting. The thing that we wanted to do with the Speech Awards was to really get young students to think about race relations in New Zealand, what was good about it, what was bad about it, what do we need to learn, how do we go forward. And we especially wanted to give the youth a voice in that conversation and that’s what we’ve been doing for the last 15 years.In 2005 we actually initiated the Race Unity Conference which built on from the Speech Awards and we have interactive workshops and so on, which allow the students to really explore things in more depth. And it’s just amazing what they learn and what the feedback that we get from the parents as well and the teachers and the students, you know, how much they have learnt from just having that conversation. It’s really important that we give the youth the opportunity to have that conversation. |
| Mike | And I teach sociology at Canterbury University and before that I taught religious studies and I have a background in history as well and what I find is that so many of our students don’t know the debates that actually went on. They think it’s a new question or all they’ve had is what’s been in a sense rammed down their throats at school, that there is this one thing which is Waitangi Day and that’s really history of New Zealand. And yet when I get in there and say well there’s been all these debates back in the 30s, back in the 40s, back in the 50s, people were trying to work out what does it mean to be a New Zealander – Are we Polynesian? What does it mean to live in the South Island? How do we express being a New Zealander in art and culture and literature? –Suddenly their eyes are opened and then they get really angry and they get angry because they say why doesn’t anyone ever tell us these things? They haven’t encountered, even someone like McCahon, they haven’t encountered the poetry of Kurnow, they don’t know the history, even the history of New Zealand music they don’t know, they think it all starts in many ways almost with the X Factor or something like that. And you’ve got to take them back and I think that’s the great tragedy of national identity. We don’t have an understanding that this is an argument, this is a conversation, this is something which goes all the way back through to the colonial period and the colonial period where the New Zealand settlers actually describe themselves as New Zealanders against the British because they felt that the British were trying to limit their opportunities. Yet the British Government was actually on the side of Māori in the Taranaki wars so there’s all these nuances that we actually don’t get and we get a very thin, we get a very top down, very limited engagement and this is the trouble where we find it very difficult to get our students interested in New Zealand because they don’t know the history. The other side of it is the living in the bicultural environment in a multicultural country and how do we handle that? The new migrant use of ‘Kiwi’ over and against ‘New Zealander’ because ‘New Zealander’ is seen as a limitation. And yet you’ve got to get in and say, well actually, what does bicultural actually mean? What does it mean to be still a settler? And that’s a very provocative question for people who have been born here might go back three or four generations.But what does it mean to live here and yet not know your own history? That’s the other thing. Probably the best example I had was an old tuhoi komātua, a guy called Sonny Reni, who once said to me after a debate, he said the trouble with you buggers is that you don’t know your history and Māori can’t tell you who you are, you’ve got to go away and find out who you are and what your history is, what does it mean and then come and talk to us. And he was very scathing in what he called the tangata bone people, so the Pākehā who go and put on a greenstone pendant, who put a bone carving around their neck and have the tattoos and think that makes them authentic. And he said, well actually, that’s not authentic, you’ve got to know your own history and then you can come and have a conversation. And that’s what I try to do, try and stimulate that conversation, try and be provocative and say, well actually we’ve got to reimagine this here and think about the diversity and the problems and the issues. And it’s picking at the scabs is really what we have to do the whole time.  |
| Sally | And one of the reasons that we’re thinking about national identity today is the centenary of ANZAC coming up and speaking of myths and myths that could do with unpicking, that for me is a pretty big one. Mike, you also teach about ANZAC Day? |
| Mike | Yeah we look at these sacred festivals that are sort of civil religion and ANZAC Day has fascinated me because it’s a very strange… It’s a defeat, it’s a blood sacrifice myth. And we haven’t actually thought about this and if we think about the blood sacrifice myth of the war and yet we think now about the diversity of New Zealand and it’s a very settler-based myth. It’s the… You’re going to defend the Empire, but then being betrayed by the Empire myth. We forget that we actually went off to the Boer War before that. And what does it mean for all the new settlers? How do they work their way into a narrative of nationhood betrayed by Britain? We forget that more soldiers died in France and so we have to think what is it about Gallipoli itself, is it a crusade mentality, is it because it’s clean and dry in the desert not over in the mud and drowning in the mud of Passchendaele? And then we have to think about, well, what does it actually mean? How it came to become sort of controlled? It’s a very Pagan ceremony and this is interesting because the Catholics and the Jews didn’t want to partake in it; it was too ecumenical for a long time, they didn’t actually turn up. And then you get this strange ceremony which became sort of… Lest we remember… So we remember and then let’s go and drink ourselves silly so we forget. And you have this sort of history. And this is why it actually changed: because the hotels were saying in the 60s, it’s not fair, we’re not allowed to open but you’re allowed to go down the RSA and get absolutely boozed. So the RSA had to actually say, well actually, OK we’ll make it a half-day holiday. So there’s all of these things about New Zealand national identity and culture that need to be unpacked in it. It’s a really, really strange day for a country that says it’s a secular country as well. |
| Sally | I’m very interested in speaking more about this idea of unpicking ANZAC Day and if it’s come up at all in any of the speeches for example and Waitangi Day as well if that’s been mentioned too. We’re just going to take a quick break though and Bev, you’ve chosen the song for us? |
| Bev | Yes I have… What did I choose? |
| Sally | It was ‘One Love’ by Bob Marley, one of my favourites by the way. |
| Bev | Oh good OK. |
| Sally | Was there a reason why you chose that one? |
| Bev | I just liked the sentiments behind it; basically I just liked the sentiments behind it. |
|  | **MUSIC – “ONE LOVE” BY BOB MARLEY** |
| Sally  | Kia ora and welcome back to Speak Up Kōrerotia. With us are Mike Grimshaw and Bev Watson, and we’re talking about what it means to be a New Zealander today. We’re going to move from thinking about ANZAC Day a little bit more to thinking about the Race Unity Speech Awards and Bev, has ANZAC Day ever come up as a subject of the speeches as far as you’re aware? |
| Bev | No it hasn’t, I don’t think that ANZAC Day has been seen as part of the conversation about race relations in New Zealand. It’s never been a part of the topics that we have given to the students and none of them, that I recall, has ever managed to weave it into their speech. So no, that hasn’t actually been part of the dialogue. |
| Sally | That in itself is probably quite interesting. Waitangi Day, is that brought up very often? |
| Bev | Yes, it depends, it depends on the subject. Now over the last five years or so perhaps, what we have done is we have adopted the theme for the Speech Awards competition that year that the Human Rights Commission has selected for the theme of Race Relations Day that year. So for example, this year the them is ‘Big Change Starts Small’ and so that’s what we have given to the students to consider as part of their… well, as their theme. But what we also do is we usually give the students a couple of quotes, one is a Māori whakataukī proverb that they can weave into their speech, or at least consider when they are preparing their speech, and the second thing is we give them a short quote from the Bahá’i writings that relates to the theme. And then on top of that we give them a couple of bullet points, two or three bullet points that they need to consider as well. And last year and this year there has been a focus on the Treaty of Waitangi. Last year because we knew that this anniversary was coming up, and this year because it is the anniversary. So for example this year the students were given this bullet point: “As a rangatahi of Aotearoa in 2015, how do you think we have progressed as a nation since the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi 175 years ago?” So this year and last year it has been very specifically a part of the dialogue; in previous years, it has either come in because the students chose to put it in there or it didn’t come in because they chose not to put it in there, but these last two years it’s been specifically a part of the theme.  |
| Sally | And if we’re thinking about national identity and the Treaty of Waitangi and the 175th anniversary of the signing of the Treaty as well as the centenary of ANZAC Day, it’s a big year for New Zealand in terms of identity. Do you see these two centenaries or milestones overlapping at all? |
| Mike | I think they do but there’s this question of identity is something that I don’t think is handled very well in New Zealand because we’ve got these two events, we’ve got the contested identity of Waitangi, we’ve got the ‘lets go and fight overseas’ of Gallipoli and the blood sacrifice – and yet there’s so many other discussions about identity, the way that identity can be performed, the way that identity can be engaged with that actually get excluded. It’s like we’ll have these two days, let’s talk about identity then and then let’s not talk about it on any other day and I think this is problematic with New Zealand is they become contested days or you get the… It’s almost a sentimentality of ANZAC Day that has actually occurred now. And then we’ve got this terrible thing of the pilgrimage to Gallipoli, which the irony of young New Zealanders and Australians going and invading Turkey again and deciding what’s going to do, going and drinking, saying this is what’s going to happen and then leaving again. The irony of that isn’t actually being unpacked in many ways and I think it’s just become another, as they say, rite of passage. Now the rite of passage that you’ve got to go overseas, it’s again, it’s that war mythology of the exile going overseas for the rite of passage. National identity should be organic and it’s actually got to come out of the engagements here. And national identity in a sense does start with biculturalism and it starts with what does it mean to be a settler? What does it still mean to be a settler? And if we’ve got a notion of tangata whenua and then we’ve got settlers, then part of that is that engagement, well then new settlers are actually in the same position that I am in as Pākehā and I have to be able to unpack that. But then how do express it? How do we express this? And I think the national identity has got to be expressed. How do we express it in music? How do we express it in art? How do we express it in various forms of culture? Otherwise we just get the sort of sporting drama of national identity. And I think this is one of the other issues that comes up in New Zealand. It’s not that sport is too strong in New Zealand because when we compare it to other countries it’s the same. What is weak in New Zealand is culture and that’s where our lack actually is. It’s in culture itself and our ability to work out culture. I’ve had students from American come over and say, “Oh we came here, we thought we’d see a new culture and I turn on the TV and I’m back home”. And we colonise ourselves all the time. I mean, we think, we grow up thinking of England and America. We listen to England and America, we read England and America. We live in this land but our heads are somewhere else which is a very strange colonial experience but we do it more than Australia actually I think. And I think this is the sort of debate that we need to have and in this way ANZAC Day – which always takes us back and locates national identity outside of the country, and in a very masculine tradition too, it’s the men who go off and fight and bleed for the country to save… and we were betrayed by the English and all these sorts of things... We need to unpick that and keep on unpicking it and then put up a counter narrative. And I think this is what we need to do, a counter narrative of nation identity, of creativity. |
| Sally | Mike, you’re speaking about this counter narrative and lack of culture in New Zealand and for me I see quite a strong generational element in this perhaps and this comes in again to the Speech Awards – young people getting up and talking about a New Zealand they would like to see and a New Zealand that they see is around them. And I guess that generational element for me is pretty strong. Do the young people have a role to play in this thinking about what it is to be a New Zealander?  |
| Mike | I think they do but they’ve got to know what went before, you can only build on… Rather than trying to reinvent it and I think this is the big issue. If we know what went before then we can see the developments, see the engagements. And I think this is not to knock what is being done, but a lot of it is very, very thin. I mean it’s the same thing as what often we see in music, where people play something because they think that’s what the sound is rather than going back and knowing in a sense the genealogy or… We don’t know the cultural whakapapa of the country and I think that’s the sort of thing we’ve got to do, go back and engage with that, engage in the events. We’ve got to get our kids into the art galleries, into the museums and do it in a way that doesn’t thrust it down their throat but say look this is exciting, this is really interesting – this is a really strange place to live, there’s a really strange narrative that went on here and look at the exciting things that actually have happened – and if we can do it in that way, then I think we can actually start to recreate new ideas. And then we have to think about the differences in the country. Auckland is a different country to living down here in the South Island. Where you’ve got one in four Aucklanders are born outside of the country, national identity means a different thing from down here in the South Island where people tend to stay put and biculturalism means different things. And we’ve got to have that conversation in a way that actually facilitates dialogue rather than just retract people back into their set positions. And that’s why the Race Unity Speeches are a really good idea but… We should have more of this sort of stuff and it shouldn’t actually be run by an outside group, this should be part of the curriculum. |
| Bev | Yes absolutely it should. And actually Mike, can I ask you a question? I remember right at the beginning of the Speech Awards, probably in about year two or three of the Speech Awards, we had a very interesting young man from [?] College who was from, I think, Samoan or Tongan, I can’t remember now. And in his speech he talked about how New Zealand has created a series of silos, he said you’ve got the Kiwi silo here, you’ve got the Polynesian silo here, you’ve got the Asian silo here, you’ve got… You know, all these different silos. And New Zealand talks about being a multicultural country and it is if you think of it in terms of silos, but if you think of it in terms of the really, you know the coming together and the learning together and the growing together and the supporting a whole new culture coming out of New Zealand, it does not exist. |
| Mike | Yes, I think that is very true. I mean one of the problems with multiculturalism is that it reifies culture and it separates off whereas if we think about the project of America where you’ve got this identity that transcends the limitations, in the end everyone is actually an American whereas New Zealand still has… we don’t have the hyphenated identities in New Zealand so you’re not a something-New Zealander, something-New Zealander, you’re a New Zealander and then you are a new migrant I mean this term ‘new migrant’ I think is really problematic, I think it keeps people separate and I think this siloisation of New Zealand…. So then we talk about cosmopolitism and the cosmopolitan identity as well: What transcends over the difference? You can be different but what is the things we hold in common? But until we work that out in New Zealand and we have a narrative that all can participate in, we’re going to have the retraction back into multiculturalism. And the other trouble with multiculturalism is it’s used to sideline Māori: We are now a multicultural country; therefore biculturalism should just go away.  |
| Sally | So we’re getting back again into bi- and multiculturalism.  |
| Mike | It’s the great quandary we’ve got to actually work our way through and it’s not going to end, it’s an ongoing project and I think that’s what we have to have. |
| Bev | And I think this is what the kids who participate in the Speech Awards are really trying to figure out you know, a lot of the comments that they make are looking at… They know what the… Well, they have an idea of what the ideal is and they just want it to happen but they don’t… and they’ve got a lot of ideas as to how to help make it happen but they’re still young, they’re Years 11, 12 and 13 at high school so they don’t have necessarily a whole lot of knowledge and background to the history of New Zealand and how we bring all these strands together and help it to go forward. But there’s a lot of passion out there and there’s a lot of determination out there and I think that these students, you know we give them ten years and they’re going to be just knock outs, some of them are going to be really… you know, they’re youth leaders already and they’re going to be quite incredible give them 10 or 15 years. |
| Sally | That sounds like a really good place to wrap it up. I’m sorry guys, that was such a good conversation I’m sure we could have kept going for much, much longer on it. Thank you so much for coming into the studio today and thank you again, it’s been a very, very interesting discussion. |
| Bev | Thank you. |
| Mike | Thank you. |
| Sally | And just to finish off we’ve got a short interview with one of the approximately 140 participants in this years Race Unity Speech Awards, Laura Heslop, who also took part last year and won the Canterbury heat last year and came runner up in this year’s one. |
| Sally | Laura how are you feeling? |
| Laura | Anxious but excited, I suppose. |
| Sally | This is the second time you’ve taken part, why did you choose to do it twice? |
| Laura | Well it was because this is a speech competition where if you go up to Auckland then it’s just amazing the opportunities and it’s really, like the people you get to meet, it’s amazing really. It really is. |
| Sally | And you won the North Canterbury heat last year? |
| Laura | Yes I did.  |
| Sally | What were you talking about last year? |
| Laura | Last year was a similar thing, it was about race unity and how our country can be unified and it was a bit about the Treaty of Waitangi as well. |
| Sally | And what are you planning on talking about tonight? |
| Laura | I’m mainly talking about how big things started small and how we can be unified as well again, it’s got the same kind of morals but just with a different twist to it.  |
| Sally | Well I’m looking forward very much to hearing yours and everybody’s speeches and good luck for tonight. |
| Laura | Thank you very much.  |
| Sally | For all of you to note the Christchurch City Council’s Long Term Plan is open for consultation, it can be accessed at www.ccc.govt.nz /ltp and this is going to be quite an important document in determining the future of Christchurch so it might be worth thinking about getting a submission in. For anyone who is interested, the Race Unity Speech Awards information and some of the past speeches can be accessed online as well on [www.raceunity.co.nz](http://www.raceunity.co.nz). I highly recommend you go online and have a listen because those speeches are just very, very inspirational. That winds up this month’s Speak Up - Kōrerotia. We hope that the topic and the comments got you thinking. In your view, what does it mean to be a New Zealander? Please tune in again on Wednesday 20th May for next month’s show, in celebration of Matariki the Māori New Year, the show will be a dedicated discussion about Māori in Christchurch. |