CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION

Notes to My Self - Writing from the gut

My struggle to live in academia informs my theorising. Throughout my education experience I have struggled with the politics of being Maori. I struggle to retain my Kaupapa in a predominantly Pakeha institution. This is the struggle of all Maori children who enter the mono-cultural education system in Aotearoa. My struggle in education and academia has been a struggle to ‘get out’ of academia, to de-educate myself. The crux is that whilst I am seen by Pakeha and by some of my own whanau, to be a success in academia; this is not how I have felt.

I struggle to come to terms with learning the grammar of Te Reo Maori, before the wairua of Te Reo Maori. I struggle to ‘write’ essays and a thesis when I would rather be standing in a wharehui engaging my korero with listeners, to ‘whai te korero’. I struggle to write a thesis when I know that the people that I want to reach out to are the ones who are least likely to read it, to have access to it; these are Maori who will never get to University. This is my preferred audience.

The pathos is that whilst I write as one individual Maori, I am writing for my Mother, her mother, and her mother before her; my brothers and my own children especially. I am not one, I am literally hundreds. There is nothing ‘individual’ about my writing. This is also the violence that I inflict upon myself in this mahi because this is lonely work and I leave, not only myself, vulnerable to the world of critics and critiques: I represent others who don’t get to this place where they can engage.

So I have written these notes to My Self - this is how I can live in this academic space. Don’t ask me to legitimize Kaupapa Maori Theory. Don’t ask me to objectify Kaupapa Maori Theory; to make it an object of discourse. Don’t ask me to be an ‘it’!
I struggle all my life to listen to Pakeha discourses that try to legitimate Maori, where we come from, how we got here, whose waka we came on, by courtesy of this or that drift wind. Nobody needs to tell me where I came from or how I got here - least of all the Pakeha experts. My truth is that I did not arrive - I have been here since Te Ao Marama. No one can take that from me.

In my naivety, I wanted my thesis to be a bi-cultural effort; my supervision was hopefully to be a bi-cultural one. Yes, 'use the tools of the Pakeha' but retain my taha Maori. This did not eventuate. I found myself having to defend my Kaupapa Maori, even before I had theorised it; being told by the Pakeha supervision that my work 'lacked a body of theory'. Well of course it did; the theory was in the making! Being told that my personal 'narratives' should be in a separate space within the body of the thesis. I wanted to be right throughout the thesis. Being told that my story was only one of many. But 'hang on here - my story is important!' This is not just my own narrative. I do represent hundreds. Anyway, aren't I relevant? Being told that it's only an M.A. thesis - 'don't try to change the world'. That was just the point - I am trying to change the world!

Needless to say the bicultural supervision didn't work. These are the things I have learned from this mahi. This is my contribution to Kaupapa Maori Theory. Yes I do want to change the world, but more importantly I want to live in the world, according to my Kaupapa, my Tikanga, my Tino Rangatiratanga.

In the introduction of this thesis, I wrote that I had the strongest desire to tear asunder all the constrictions that my identity as half-caste implies. To 'get out' the duality, which for me, represents the dichotomy between Maori and Pakeha in Aotearoa today. The notion of discourse as a violence underpins my writing. Whilst written forms of language and their association with progress, objectivity and subjectivity, are seen as the road to Enlightenment; I have suggested that the methodology of the West leaves much to be desired. Simply put, the construction of
European modes of dualistic thought and Theory; conform to, and understand only forms and not wairua.

Not only have I illustrated many of the ways that Maori have been described and inscribed, in and out of existence; I have illustrated in Chapter Two, using Foucault’s analyses, processes by which The European identity appeared and disappeared beneath the weight of discourse!

Throughout the thesis, I have elaborated on the dualistic tendency of the West. Some further comments are required. To engage with the European notion of Theory is to engage with the Philosophical heritage of ‘Dead White Males’. European Philosophy incorporates within it a uniquely dualistic mode of thinking and thought. As such, the whole history of European Philosophy can be seen to be about dualisms, polemics, oppositions. This is the appropriations and expropriations of forms of knowledge that negate in order to legitimate themselves.

Colonisation itself is a philosophy of dualisms such as Black/White, oral/written, first-World/third-World, developed/under-developed. According to the dominant European philosophical heritage, indigenous Knowledge (Matauranga Maori), that is already there, is posited as myth. One of the most destructive dualisms, implicit within the European philosophical heritage is the dichotomy of Man and Nature; the incessant quest for control and domination of the natural world.

However, the Man/Nature dichotomy was just a progression from the split that had already taken place in the consciousness of Man, whereby the objectification of the Mind, the creation of the Mind as a separate entity IN ITSELF undermined any notion of a holistic kind of living.

I have engaged with the notion of Theory in two ways. Firstly I discussed the theoretical construction of the European individual as a Subject within the dominant dualistic philosophical heritage. I also engaged with the notion of Theory as encapsulated within the paradigm of Kaupapa Maori. Whilst Kaupapa Maori Theory
can be seen as a counter-theory to the dominant Western ‘Spectre’ of Theory; it is rather the conceptualisation of philosophies that are unique to Tikanga Maori and Kaupapa Maori.

Tino Rangatiratanga has been my methodology throughout this thesis. Whilst my writing can be seen as a rather personalised journey through academia, and this may suggest a weakness; my reason for writing stems from one of strength. Writing is a political activity, whether personal or theoretical.

By deconstructing the philosophical heritage of the European identity, I have sought to encourage Pakeha to engage with their own representation. The processes of philosophical construction that have created the autonomous individual as a client, a consumer or unit of production, have dangerously undermined the ability of Pakeha to have control over their own destiny. Nothing is ‘new’ about the New Right movement in its ascent. This movement is in essence Philosophy in retrogression. This is the movement that puts a price on identity.

In choosing to ‘buy’ into individualism, Pakeha pay the price for achieving rights, autonomy, democracy and egalitarianism. The notion of Liberalism as a Grand Narrative of freedom is reduced to a sham. We, as Maori and Pakeha are left to pay the price for Progress.

In my discussion on Kaupapa Maori Theory, I have illustrated the liberation potential inherent within Kaupapa Maori. Specifically, within the academic space of Universities, it is imperative that Maori challenge, activate and transform the creation of Theory. As a Kaupapa Tangata, Kaupapa Maori Theory is not a separatist pedagogy, nor does it align itself with opposition, with dichotomy.

Many of the underlying essences of Kaupapa Maori Theory and praxis are incorporated within Te Reo Maori. The survival of Te Reo Maori and Tikanga Maori are imperative. The desecration of Te Reo Maori, by the processes of colonisation, have not only left many Maori bereft of a voice; these processes have rendered
Pakeha disadvantaged in this country by limiting their World View, narrowing their vision. This is the challenge that Pakeha must pick up if they choose to.

For Maori, being different is okay. We accept our difference to Pakeha. We are not colour-blind, as some Pakeha choose to be. Maori do not attempt to negate Pakeha. Why would I deny part of my own identity? I can however live with my difference, not be ruled by dichotomy.

There are several limitations in my writing. I have provided an extensive amount of quotations in this thesis. This has served to illustrate the massive proliferation of discourses that have positioned Maori as the savage, malleable, submissive, constructed, dying Other. The words stand! They require engagement. They do not disappear. The project remains for Maori to inscribe our own identities.

My immediate reality is Tamaki Makaurau. I choose to support the work that has been done by Maori students and writers within this location. As such, this may be seen as a weakness. However, this is the reality which informs me.

I have also resisted using theoretical discourse from other indigenous and ‘minority’ writers. Whilst I am familiar with the writings of Edward Said, Homi Bhabha, Gayatri Spivak, Franz Fanon and certain women-of-colour theorists; I have sought to validate and support the words that have been written and spoken by Maori. Our Kaupapa is unique to Aotearoa and as such, deserves further credibility. For Maori, the praxis of decolonisation is imperative. From being positioned as an inferior oral culture, Maori writers today access the power of print literacy, in ways that centre us in our own World. The task for Pakeha is to identify themselves, not as the Other to Maori. In short, there is much work to be done.

Na reira, kia kaha taatou.
NOTES


   To exist, humanly,. is to name the world, to change it. Once named, the world in turn reappears to the namers as a problem and requires of them a new naming. (P.Freire, 1972:60-61)


3. The term ‘half-caste’ is one that I use to describe myself at times. Whilst for some people it is problematic, for me it is not. (It depends of course on who is using the term).

4. I use the term ‘Tino Rangatiratanga’ in this thesis in the same sense as ‘Sovereignty’. Simply put, this is being in control of your own destiny.

5. Use of the term ‘praxis’ is also from Paulo Freire (see Note 1). For Freire, praxis is reflection and action; it is transformation of the world. As praxis, it requires theory to illuminate it.


   Critical theory aspires to bring the subjects themselves to full self-consciousness of the contradiction implicit in their material existence, to penetrate the ideological mystifications and forms of false consciousness that distort the meaning of existing social conditions. Critical theorists see the distinction between theory and action which is accepted by advocates in which ‘theory’ only serves to foster the status quo. By way of contrast, critical theory seeks a genuine unity of theory and revolutionary praxis where the theoretical contradictions inherent in existing society, when appropriated by those who are exploited, becomes constitutive of their very activity to transform society.


7. See Note 1.


See also L. Smith (1985) 'Is "Taha Māori" in Schools the Answer to Māori School Failure?' in *Nga Kete Waananga Readers in Māori Education* G. Smith (ed) Auckland College of Education.

See also K. Kenkins (1992) 'Literacy as Control of Knowledge' in *Creating Space in Institutional Settings for Māori*, Monograph No. 15, Research Unit for Māori Education, Te Whare Waananga o Tamaki Makaurau.

10. See L. Smith (1992:5) 'Ko Taku Ko Ta Te Māori, The Dilemma of a Māori Academic' in *Creating Space in Institutional Settings For Māori*, Monograph No.15, Research Unit for Māori Education.


For a Pakeha discussion of this, see P. Spoonley (1986) 'An Interview with Michael King' in *Sites* No.13, 1986, Massey University.

12. For a discussion on the attempt by Pakeha feminists to establish an 'indigenous' women's theory and movement, see 'Hoiho Wahine Pakeha' by Cherryl Smith and Mereana Taki, in *Te Pua* (1993), Vol. 2, Nos 1&2, Puawaitanga, Te Whare Waananga o Tamaki Makaurau.


14. For some insight into the politics of being a fair-skinned Māori, see 'He Whakaoriori' by Hinewehi Mohi in *Mana Wahine: Women who show the way* (1994), A. Brown (ed), Reed Books, Auckland.


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167

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174