



AWATERE ON INTELLECTUALS

by DONNA AWATERE

ACADEMIC FRAGMENTATION OR VISIONARY UNITY

The university is built on Maori land, by proceeds taken from Maori land. Our people died defending that land. The university therefore represents the aggression and anti-Maori hostility of colonial invaders.

For Maori people the Auckland University Centennial is no cause for joyous celebration.

The Centennial represents 100 years of intellectual suffocation and subjection which has resulted in the prevalence of an autocratic, ideological conservatism and the stagnation of the indigenous white intellectual tradition. This has led to the bizarre situation where it is the Maori who understands pakeha and white colonial society better than the pakeha.

The white intellectual who is locked into Anglo-American mimicry has meant that the Maori is indeed quite alone in identifying the roots of the Pakeha past. We are therefore alone too in identifying the reality of the Pakeha present.

THE PAKEHA INTELLECTUALS

Intellectuals are normally written off as adjuncts or major props of the establishment in this country. This is quite true of economics, a blatant ideological appendage of western capitalism. To churn out natty little men who work the wheels of commerce. Economics as taught here is not an objective science, but is based on assumptions of property, materialism, individualism and western capitalism in general which are taken for granted.

The social science Departments are no better, churning out bureaucrats to fill niches in Internal and Foreign Affairs departments and psyching up social workers whose job it is to fix up the social havoc the system itself creates.

New Zealand 'intellectuals' see themselves as quite separate from the 'establishment'. They are under the illusion that they operate in intellectual and academic 'freedom', unable to see the semi-feudal hierarchical structure intimately linked with big business, government in power and a conservatism rooted in colonial British beginnings.

In other countries the intellectual has fuelled radical movements. Or at least has been one of the elements of the radical impetus. Not so in New Zealand.

From the New Zealand Universities Act of 1874 and the Auckland University College Act of 1882 came a rigid administrative structure which excluded professors and teachers, and of course students, from any real input into why and how and for whom universities should be run. Three people elected by the General Assembly, the Mayor of Auckland and the Chairman of the Education Board sat on the first Auckland University College Council. This set the colonial, business, state alliance which persists today.

New Zealand universities are sad copy-cats of Anglo-American methodologies of thought, parroting traditional disciplines. Generations of overseas staff have filled teaching and research positions here. The combined effort of this has been the continuation of a colonial and neo-colonial intellectual relationship with Britain and other overseas places to the exclusion of the development of an indigenous Pakeha intellectual tradition. The only adequate academic research and practice in any way indigenous to this country is in agriculture.

Academic research is purely descriptive and where it is analytical it is on a superficial level. This is especially conspicuous in the area of History, where academics have been totally lost in layers of illusions and have been hooked into the game of sharing unreality with each other. The process of recording what happened automatically favours the white occupiers because they won. In such a way a whole past 'created' and then given the authority of 'truth'.

THE MAORI INTELLECTUAL

The key intellectual difference between the Maori & Pakeha schools of thought is one of unity as opposed to fragmentation. Intellectual unity deriving from connections which assume responsibilities. Every Maori whoever, whenever, where ever, is connected to Maori unity. The connecting theme is time, cyclic time. Whakapapa. Land. Cosmos. Each Maori is a link in an unbroken chain that connects them with those who live in the past and those who live in the future.

When we Maori meet, we immediately begin to establish these connections.

There is a responsibility to both the past, the future, and all those with whom we are connected in the present day.

This means that Western knowledge and material things are not a tool for individuals to 'better' themselves but merely a tool to carry out one's responsibilities to those to whom one is connected.

Now the intellectual leads to the potential for change. To change society one has to understand reality.

Reality is tangible and intangible, separate and whole. To understand it one must go beyond the illusions, the 'official' reality, beyond the tangible.

The Maori offers a vision not from the future, but from the past. The past exists, is tangible and intangible. The past sits in front of us, the future behind us.

There is remembrance and felt pain. The rip from the land. The daily hostility felt towards things Maori and people Maori. The sense of grievance in the past, in the present, for the future.

Most whites have never felt a real grievance in their lives. The worst a lot of students have had is to go without a holiday job, have a lousy relationship, have to give up varsity and go to work or go on the dole. This is hardly enough to give them, as a group, a radical edge. It won't last beyond the first degree, permanent job, child, or settled relationship.

Unlike us they have never experienced a history of wrong. They don't go to a tribal area, now under occupation, and feel their guts drop.

White people have no understanding of what it is like to experience the realities of living under an alien culture. They find it easy to dismiss moemoea Maori as 'petit-bourgeois nationalism'.

White people who reject the 'official reality' of their own culture are in the position of having to 'create' themselves as a people. But the extent of The absorption of Anglo-American culture makes this an impossible task. The white can only reject fragments of the whole. Disconnected pieces.

It is we, the Maori people who offer a vision which rejects the totality of Western Colonial life. Continued refusal to acknowledge this condemns white academics to an impotent intellectual limbo.



A stance of objectivity is anti-objective, since inherent to 'objectivity' is an inbuilt conservatism where the 'real' world is linked and hooked up to what already exists. This prevents linking up to the real unreal world what doesn't 'exist' officially. That is going for deeper meaning.

Now this affects white people and it affects Maori people. This airing of illusions places us in a relationship with each other which is connected to military and civil warfare but which also exists apart from it.

To change society one has to understand it.

Now the direct inheritance of Anglo-American consciousness is *fragmentation* of thought. Reality is split up into 'manageable' segments. Thus economics is separated from History, History is separated from Anthropology, is separated from Psychology, from Education and so on and so on.

Reality joins up only at each overlap. This training prevents intellectual unity, the perception of white colonial society as a whole. Thus white people cannot understand their own society.



White intellectuals and activists are thus reduced to borrowing ideas and analysis, indeed even 'struggles' from overseas. They do not see their own roots in an invader culture. The point is to reject this culture, to decolonise your minds. To change sides.

The legacy of fragmented linear thinking is seen in the issue politics of social movements. Like Feminists who talk about society as though it can be reduced to relationships between men and women, or to the left who talk about society as though it can be reduced to economic relationships, trade unions as though it can be reduced to owners and workers.

The task of theory is to understand chaos. The task for white intellectuals is to recover the unity of reality. Unless this occurs, intellectual fragmentation will continue. The white mind devoid of land and whakapapa based spirituality cannot grip the idea that intangible and tangible are one.

FROM THE PAST COMES THE PRESENT

Auckland University was endowed with 30,354 acres of land under the A.U. College Reserves Act 1885, Section 5: 'All moneys heretofore derived by way of rent or otherwise from the said lands or any position thereof, shall be paid over to the Treasurer from the time being of the Auckland University Council to be applied by the said Council for the purposes of said college.'

The land was:

Waikato: 10,000 acres Taupiri, the Mangakara, Hakansia, Kimihia.

Raglan: 10,000 acres, Karamu, the Mangaokahu.

Whakatane: 10,000 acres, Waimana, Ohiwa, Whakatane.

Waitemata: 354 acres, Ararimu, Kaipara.

This land was confiscated from our people. Taken by 9,000 Imperial Troops and 6,000 colonialist militia part of a campaign estimated to have cost 3,000,000 pounds.

Mr G.S. Cooper to Dr Pollen

Colonial Secretary's office 1872

Sir —

I have the honour to enclose a list of confiscated lands in the province of Auckland reserved or intended to be reserved as endowments for the New Zealand University, under the Act of 1868; and I am instructed by Mr Gisborne to request that you will be so good as to cause these reserves to be marked off with as little delay as possible, if this has not already been done; and forward full particulars of boundaries and with maps, to enable the necessary steps to be taken for their being effectively reserved as provided by law.

You will be pleased to take especial care that no part of any of these blocks of lands is alienated in any way, either by sale or gift, or by reserve, for any purpose foreign to that of University endowments.

*I have, &
G.S. Cooper
Undersecretary
General Government Agent,
Auckland.*

Eight hundred of our people are 'estimated' to have been killed in this part of the settler wars. This university was built and supported on a foundation of bloodshed of our tipuna and the illegal possession and occupation of our land.

Things Maori have been subjected to the fragmentation which Pakeha society demands. Maoritanga and language are made a subject for study, away from the land, the rivers, the mountains, the wairua, the tipuna. Away, Away, Away, in a cage carefully categorised, dissected, reduced to the meaningless of university study.

Taught by those who have learned the carefully conditioned split brain technique peculiar to those of us who 'make it' through the educational egg slicer.

Not even a marae, a turangawaewae in this place. After 100 years. It is now four yers since the New Zealand Herald announced that Maori students will have a turangawaewae, a place to stand on Auckland University Campus.

In 1956 there were 89 Maori at University out of a total of 11,000 studdnts. Twenty years later there were 1,352 out of 46,000. While this is quite a jump, a good deal of the 'increase' is accounted for by the fact that in 1976 the definition of Maori was changed from full to any part. As late as last week data was presented to a University Senate sub-committee which showed that less than 4% of students at Auckland are Maori. In 1976, five times more white women had university education than Maori women and six times more white men had degrees than Maori men: 6.3% of Maori people had some other education other than in secondary school while 20.7% of white people did.

Why is this? Quite simply. Abuse. White people have too long subjected things and people Maori to military, civil, physical, psychological, mental and spiritual abuse. Beginning with the Land. Beginning with the Language. Beginning with our children.

After only 30 years of missionary presence, over three quarters of our people were literate and two-thirds could write in Maori. Our people were literate in Maori before the white settlers were literate in English.

So what did the pakeha do?

In 1847 Grey's educational ordinance made subsidies for Mission Schools dependent on teaching English as well as Maori. By 1871 the Native Schools Amendment Act made instruction in English only compulsory. By these means the language was reduced to the state it is today.

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