

Introduction

From L. T. Smith (2004)

Decolonizing
Methodologies:
Research + Indigenous
Peoples.

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From the vantage point of the colonized, a position from which I write, and choose to privilege, the term 'research' is inextricably linked to European imperialism and colonialism. The word itself, 'research', is probably one of the dirtiest words in the indigenous world's vocabulary. When mentioned in many indigenous contexts, it stirs up silence, it conjures up bad memories, it raises a smile that is knowing and distrustful. It is so powerful that indigenous people even write poetry about research. The ways in which scientific research is implicated in the worst excesses of colonialism remains a powerful remembered history for many of the world's colonized peoples. It is a history that still offends the deepest sense of our humanity. Just knowing that someone measured our 'faculties' by filling the skulls of our ancestors with millet seeds and compared the amount of millet seed to the capacity for mental thought offends our sense of who and what we are.¹ It galls us that Western researchers and intellectuals can assume to know all that it is possible to know of us, on the basis of their brief encounters with some of us. It appals us that the West can desire, extract and claim ownership of our ways of knowing, our imagery, the things we create and produce, and then simultaneously reject the people who created and developed those ideas and seek to deny them further opportunities to be creators of their own culture and own nations. It angers us when practices linked to the last century, and the centuries before that, are still employed to deny the validity of indigenous peoples' claim to existence, to land and territories, to the right of self-determination, to the survival of our languages and forms of cultural knowledge, to our natural resources and systems for living within our environments.

This collective memory of imperialism has been perpetuated through the ways in which knowledge about indigenous peoples was collected, classified and then represented in various ways back to the West, and then, through the eyes of the West, back to those who have been

colonized. Edward Said refers to this process as a Western discourse about the Other which is supported by 'institutions, vocabulary, scholarship, imagery, doctrines, even colonial bureaucracies and colonial styles'.² According to Said, this process has worked partly because of the constant interchange between the scholarly and the imaginative construction of ideas about the Orient. The scholarly construction, he argues, is supported by a corporate institution which 'makes statements about it [the Orient], authorising views of it, describing it, by teaching about it, settling it, ruling over it'.³ In these acts both the formal scholarly pursuits of knowledge and the informal, imaginative, anecdotal constructions of the Other are intertwined with each other and with the activity of research. This book identifies research as a significant site of struggle between the interests and ways of knowing of the West and the interests and ways of resisting of the Other. In this example, the Other has been constituted with a name, a face, a particular identity, namely *indigenous peoples*. While it is more typical (with the exception of feminist research) to write about research within the framing of a specific scientific or disciplinary approach, it is surely difficult to discuss *research methodology* and *indigenous peoples* together, in the same breath, without having an analysis of imperialism, without understanding the complex ways in which the pursuit of knowledge is deeply embedded in the multiple layers of imperial and colonial practices.

Many researchers, academics and project workers may see the benefits of their particular research projects as serving a greater good 'for mankind', or serving a specific emancipatory goal for an oppressed community. But belief in the ideal that benefiting mankind is indeed a primary outcome of scientific research is as much a reflection of ideology as it is of academic training. It becomes so taken for granted that many researchers simply assume that they as individuals embody this ideal and are natural representatives of it when they work with other communities. Indigenous peoples across the world have other stories to tell which not only question the assumed nature of those ideals and the practices that they generate, but also serve to tell an alternative story: the history of Western research through the eyes of the colonized. These counter-stories are powerful forms of resistance which are repeated and shared across diverse indigenous communities. And, of course, most indigenous peoples and their communities do not differentiate scientific or 'proper' research from the forms of amateur collecting, journalistic approaches, film making or other ways of 'taking' indigenous knowledge that have occurred so casually over the centuries. The effect of travellers' tales, as pointed out by French philosopher Foucault, has contributed as much to the West's knowledge of itself as has the systematic gathering of scientific data. From some indigenous perspectives the gathering of

information by scientists was as random, *ad hoc* and damaging as that undertaken by amateurs. There was no difference, from these perspectives, between 'real' or scientific research and any other visits by inquisitive and acquisitive strangers.

This book acknowledges the significance of indigenous perspectives on research and attempts to account for how, and why, such perspectives may have developed. It is written by someone who grew up within indigenous communities where stories about research and particularly about researchers (the human carriers of research) were intertwined with stories about all other forms of colonization and injustice. These were cautionary tales where the surface story was not as important as the underlying examples of cultural protocols broken, values negated, small tests failed and key people ignored. The greater danger, however, was in the creeping policies that intruded into every aspect of our lives, legitimated by research, informed more often by ideology. The power of research was not in the visits made by researchers to our communities, nor in their fieldwork and the rude questions they often asked. In fact, many individual non-indigenous researchers remain highly respected and well liked by the communities with whom they have lived. At a common sense level research was talked about both in terms of its absolute worthlessness to us, the indigenous world, and its absolute usefulness to those who wielded it as an instrument. It told us things already known, suggested things that would not work, and made careers for people who already had jobs. 'We are the most researched people in the world' is a comment I have heard frequently from several different indigenous communities. The truth of such a comment is unimportant, what does need to be taken seriously is the sense of weight and unspoken cynicism about research that the message conveys.

This cynicism ought to have been strong enough to deter any self-respecting indigenous person from being associated with research. Obviously, in this case, it has not, which leads to my other motivation for writing about indigenous peoples and research. This is a book which attempts to do something more than deconstructing Western scholarship simply by our own retelling, or by sharing indigenous horror stories about research. In a decolonizing framework, deconstruction is part of a much larger intent. Taking apart the story, revealing underlying texts, and giving voice to things that are often known intuitively does not help people to improve their current conditions. It provides words, perhaps, an insight that explains certain experiences – but it does not prevent someone from dying. It is with that sense of reality that the second part of the book has been written. Whilst indigenous communities have quite valid fears about the further loss of intellectual and cultural knowledges,

and have worked to gain international attention and protection through covenants on such matters, many indigenous communities continue to live within political and social conditions that perpetuate extreme levels of poverty, chronic ill health and poor educational opportunities.⁴ Their children may be removed forcibly from their care, 'adopted' or institutionalized. The adults may be as addicted to alcohol as their children are to glue, they may live in destructive relationships which are formed and shaped by their impoverished material conditions and structured by politically oppressive regimes. While they live like this they are constantly fed messages about their worthlessness, laziness, dependence and lack of 'higher' order human qualities. This applies as much to indigenous communities in First World nations as it does to indigenous communities in developing countries. Within these sorts of social realities, questions of imperialism and the effects of colonization may seem to be merely academic; sheer physical survival is far more pressing. The problem is that constant efforts by governments, states, societies and institutions to deny the historical formations of such conditions have simultaneously denied our claims to humanity, to having a history, and to all sense of hope. To acquiesce is to lose ourselves entirely and implicitly agree with all that has been said about us. To resist is to retrench in the margins, retrieve what we were and remake ourselves. The past, our stories local and global, the present, our communities, cultures, languages and social practices – all may be spaces of marginalization, but they have also become spaces of resistance and hope.

It is from within these spaces that increasing numbers of indigenous academics and researchers have begun to address social issues within the wider framework of self-determination, decolonization and social justice. This burgeoning international community of indigenous scholars and researchers is talking more widely about indigenous research, indigenous research protocols and indigenous methodologies. Its members position themselves quite clearly as indigenous researchers who are informed academically by critical and often feminist approaches to research, and who are grounded politically in specific indigenous contexts and histories, struggles and ideals. Many indigenous communities and organizations have developed policies about research, are discussing issues related to control over research activities and the knowledge that research produces, and have developed ethical guidelines and discussion documents. The second part of this book addresses some of the issues currently being discussed amongst indigenous communities that relate to our own priorities and problems. These priorities often demand an understanding of the ways in which we can ask and seek answers to our own concerns within a context in which resistance to new formations

of colonization still has to be mounted and articulated. In other words, research is not an innocent or distant academic exercise but an activity that has something at stake and that occurs in a set of political and social conditions.

If in a sense this book is simply another contribution to the ways in which social science researchers in general think about methodologies and approaches to research – in this case among people and communities who hold research in high disdain – it has not been written with that intention. Rather, it is addressed more specifically to those researchers who work with, alongside and for communities who have chosen to identify themselves as indigenous. A growing number of these researchers define themselves as indigenous, although their training has been primarily within the Western academy and specific disciplinary methodologies. Many indigenous researchers have struggled individually to engage with the disconnections that are apparent between the demands of research, on one side, and the realities they encounter amongst their own and other indigenous communities, with whom they share lifelong relationships, on the other side. There are a number of ethical, cultural, political and personal issues that can present special difficulties for indigenous researchers who, in their own communities, work partially as insiders, and are often employed for this purpose, and partially as outsiders, because of their Western education or because they may work across clan, tribe, linguistic, age and gender boundaries. Simultaneously, they work within their research projects or institutions as insiders within a particular paradigm or research model, and as outsiders because they are often marginalized and perceived to be representative of either a minority or a rival interest group. Patricia Hill Collins refers to 'the outsider within' positioning of research.⁵ Sometimes when in the community ('in the field') or when sitting in on research meetings it can feel like inside-out/outside-in research. More often, however, I think that indigenous research is not quite as simple as it looks, nor quite as complex as it feels! If I have one consistent message for the students I teach and the researchers I train it is that indigenous research is a humble and humbling activity.

Indigenous researchers are expected, by their communities and by the institutions which employ them, to have some form of historical and critical analysis of the role of research in the indigenous world. In general, this analysis has been acquired organically and outside of the academy. Despite the extensive literature about the life and customs of indigenous peoples, there are few critical texts on research methodologies which mention the word indigenous or its localized synonyms. Critiques by feminist scholars, by critical theorists, by black and African American scholars have provided ways of talking about knowledge and

its social constructions, and about methodologies and the politics of research. But the words that apply to indigenous researchers have been inserted into the text, then read with our own world in/sight. I hope that what is written here provides space for further dialogue within a framework that privileges the indigenous presence, that uses 'the words' (such as colonialism, decolonization, self-determination), and that acknowledges our continuing existence. It has not been written, therefore, as a technical book about research for people who talk the language of research, but as a book which situates research in a much larger historical, political and cultural context and then examines its critical nature within those dynamics.

The term 'indigenous' is problematic in that it appears to collectivize many distinct populations whose experiences under imperialism have been vastly different. Other collective terms also in use refer to 'First Peoples' or 'Native Peoples', 'First Nations' or 'People of the Land', 'Aboriginals' or 'Fourth World Peoples'.⁶ Some groups prefer the labels that connect us to Mother Earth, and to deeply significant spiritual relationships. While not denying the powerful world views embedded in such terms, within my own cultural framework as within others, they are not the terms that will be used here. A recent phenomenon which partly explains such a position is the Western fascination with New Age spiritual meanings which makes our own belief systems available, yet again, for further mining and exploitation. In some contexts, such as Australia and North America, the word indigenous is a way of including the many diverse communities, language groups and nations, each with their own identification within a single grouping. In other contexts, such as New Zealand, the terms 'Maori' or *tangata whenua* are used much more frequently than 'indigenous' as the universal term, while different origin and tribal terms are also used to differentiate between groups. Although the word 'Maori' is an indigenous term it has been identified as a label which defines a colonial relationship between 'Maori' and 'Pakeha', the non-indigenous settler population. For many of the world's indigenous communities there are prior terms by which they have named themselves. There are also terms by which indigenous communities have come to be known, initially perhaps as a term of insult applied by colonizers, but then politicized as a powerful signifier of oppositional identity, for example the use of the term 'Black Australia' by Aborigine activists. Inside these categories for describing or labelling are other terms that describe different layers of relationships and meanings within and between different groups. Some of these terms are about the classification systems used within the local colonial context, and others are about a prior relationship with groups whose territories now span different states.

'Indigenous peoples' is a relatively recent term which emerged in the 1970s out of the struggles primarily of the American Indian Movement (AIM), and the Canadian Indian Brotherhood. It is a term that internationalizes the experiences, the issues and the struggles of some of the world's colonized peoples.⁷ The final 's' in 'indigenous peoples' has been argued for quite vigorously by indigenous activists because of the right of peoples to self-determination. It is also used as a way of recognizing that there are real differences between different indigenous peoples.⁸ The term has enabled the collective voices of colonized people to be expressed strategically in the international arena. It has also been an umbrella enabling communities and peoples to come together, transcending their own colonized contexts and experiences, in order to learn, share, plan, organize and struggle collectively for self-determination on the global and local stages. Thus the world's indigenous populations belong to a network of peoples. They share experiences as peoples who have been subjected to the colonization of their lands and cultures, and the denial of their sovereignty, by a colonizing society that has come to dominate and determine the shape and quality of their lives, even after it has formally pulled out. As Wilmer has put it, 'indigenous peoples represent the unfinished business of decolonization'.⁹

The word 'indigenous' is also used in ways which are quite contrary to the definitions of the term just described, but which are legitimate meanings of the word itself. For example it is used to describe or account for the distinctiveness of colonial literary and/or feminist traditions. It has been coopted politically by the descendants of settlers who lay claim to an 'indigenous' identity through their occupation and settlement of land over several generations or simply through being born in that place – though they tend not to show up at indigenous peoples' meetings nor form alliances that support the self-determination of the people whose forebears once occupied the land that they have 'tamed' and upon which they have settled. Nor do they actively struggle as a society for the survival of indigenous languages, knowledges and cultures. Their linguistic and cultural homeland is somewhere else, their cultural loyalty is to some other place. Their power, their privilege, their history are all vested in their legacy as colonizers.

Part of the project of this book is 'researching back', in the same tradition of 'writing back' or 'talking back', that characterizes much of the post-colonial or anti-colonial literature.¹⁰ It has involved a 'knowingness of the colonizer' and a recovery of ourselves, an analysis of colonialism, and a struggle for self-determination. Research is one of the ways in which the underlying code of imperialism and colonialism is both regulated and realized. It is regulated through the formal rules of individual scholarly disciplines and scientific paradigms, and the

institutions that support them (including the state). It is realized in the myriad of representations and ideological constructions of the Other in scholarly and 'popular' works, and in the principles which help to select and recontextualize those constructions in such things as the media, official histories and school curricula. Ashis Nandy argues that the structures of colonialism contain rules by which colonial encounters occur and are 'managed'.¹¹ The different ways in which these encounters happen and are managed are different realizations of the underlying rules and codes which frame in the broadest sense what is possible and what is impossible. In a very real sense research has been an encounter between the West and the Other. Much more is known about one side of those encounters than is known about the other side. This book reports to some extent on views that are held and articulated by 'the other sides'. The first part of the book explores topics around the theme of imperialism, research and knowledge. They can be read at one level as a narrative about a history of research and indigenous peoples but make much more sense if read as a series of intersecting and overlapping essays around a theme.

One of the issues examined relates to the way research became institutionalized in the colonies, not just through academic disciplines, but through learned and scientific societies and scholarly networks. The transplanting of research institutions, including universities, from the imperial centres of Europe enabled local scientific interests to be organized and embedded in the colonial system. Many of the earliest local researchers were not formally 'trained' and were hobbyist researchers and adventurers. The significance of travellers' tales and adventurers' adventures is that they represented the Other to a general audience back in Europe which became fixed in the milieu of cultural ideas. Images of the 'cannibal' chief, the 'red' Indian, the 'witch' doctor, or the 'tattooed and shrunken' head, and stories which told of savagery and primitivism, generated further interest, and therefore further opportunities, to represent the Other again.

Travellers' stories were generally the experiences and observations of white men whose interactions with indigenous 'societies' or 'peoples' were constructed around their own cultural views of gender and sexuality. Observations made of indigenous women, for example, resonated with views about the role of women in European societies based on Western notions of culture, religion, race and class. Treaties and trade could be negotiated with indigenous men. Indigenous women were excluded from such serious encounters. As Memmi noted in his 'Mythical Portrait of the Colonized', the use of zoological terms to describe primitive people was one form of dehumanization.¹² These images have become almost permanent, so deeply embedded are they

in the way indigenous women are discussed. 'How often do we read in the newspaper about the death or murder of a Native man, and in the same paper about the victimisation of a female Native, as though we were a species of sub-human animal life?' asks a First Nation Canadian woman, Lee Maracle. 'A female horse, a female Native, but everyone else gets to be called a man or a woman.'¹³ Across the Pacific, Maori women writers Patricia Johnston and Leonie Pihama make reference to Joseph Banks's description of young Maori women who were as 'skittish as unbroke fillies'.¹⁴ Similarly, in Australia, Aborigine women talk about a history of being hunted, raped and then killed like animals.

Travellers' tales had wide coverage. Their dissemination occurred through the popular press, from the pulpit, in travel brochures which advertised for immigrants, and through oral discourse. They appealed to the voyeur, the soldier, the romantic, the missionary, the crusader, the adventurer, the entrepreneur, the imperial public servant and the Enlightenment scholar. They also appealed to the downtrodden, the poor and those whose lives held no possibilities in their own imperial societies, and who chose to migrate as settlers. Others, also powerless, were shipped off to the colony as the ultimate prison. In the end they were all inheritors of imperialism who had learned well the discourses of race and gender, the rules of power, the politics of colonialism. They became the colonizers.

The second part of the book examines the different approaches and methodologies that are being developed to ensure that research with indigenous peoples can be more respectful, ethical, sympathetic and useful. The chapters in the second part ought not to be read as a 'how to' manual but as a series of accounts and guidelines which map a wide range of research-related issues. Feminism and the application of more critical approaches to research have greatly influenced the social sciences. Significant spaces have been opened up within the academy and within some disciplines to talk more creatively about research with particular groups and communities – women, the economically oppressed, ethnic minorities and indigenous peoples. These discussions have been informed as much by the politics of groups outside the academy as by engagement with the problems which research with real, living, breathing, thinking people actually involves. Communities and indigenous activists have openly challenged the research community about such things as racist practices and attitudes, ethnocentric assumptions and exploitative research, sounding warning bells that research can no longer be conducted with indigenous communities as if their views did not count or their lives did not matter.

In contemporary indigenous contexts there are some major research issues which continue to be debated quite vigorously. These can be

summarized best by the critical questions that communities and indigenous activists often ask, in a variety of ways: Whose research is it? Who owns it? Whose interests does it serve? Who will benefit from it? Who has designed its questions and framed its scope? Who will carry it out? Who will write it up? How will its results be disseminated?¹⁵ While there are many researchers who can handle such questions with integrity there are many more who cannot, or who approach these questions with some cynicism, as if they are a test merely of political correctness. What may surprise many people is that what may appear as the 'right', most desirable answer can still be judged incorrect. These questions are simply part of a larger set of judgements on criteria that a researcher cannot prepare for, such as: Is her spirit clear? Does he have a good heart? What other baggage are they carrying? Are they useful to us? Can they fix up our generator? Can they actually do anything?

The issues for indigenous researchers seeking to work within indigenous contexts are framed somewhat differently. If they are 'insiders' they are frequently judged on insider criteria; their family background, status, politics, age, gender, religion, as well as on their perceived technical ability. What is frustrating for some indigenous researchers is that, even when their own communities have access to an indigenous researcher, they will still select or prefer a non-indigenous researcher over an indigenous researcher. There are a number of reasons this happens, sometimes based on a deeply held view that indigenous people will never be good enough, or that indigenous researchers may divulge confidences within their own community, or that the researcher may have some hidden agenda. For quite legitimate reasons the indigenous researcher may not be the best person for the research, or may be rejected because they do not have sufficient credibility. The point being made is that indigenous researchers work within a set of 'insider' dynamics and it takes considerable sensitivity, skill, maturity, experience and knowledge to work these issues through. Non-indigenous teachers and supervisors are often ill prepared to assist indigenous researchers in these areas and there are so few indigenous teachers that many students simply 'learn by doing'. They often get hurt and fail in the process. I have heard this articulated by indigenous researchers as 'being burned' or 'being done over'. The second part of the book provides some ways for thinking about such issues.

In writing a book that focuses on research I have drawn together a range of experiences and reflections on both indigenous and research issues. I have a childhood familiarity with museums, having helped my father – a Maori anthropologist – pursue his own research in the back rooms of the Auckland War Memorial Museum and other museums in the United States. I cannot really recollect how, specifically, I helped him

because many of my strongest memories are of playing hide and seek in the cupboards and corridors. I do remember quite vividly, however, the ritual of cleansing ourselves by sprinkling water over us which my mother insisted on when we returned home. My grandmother was not too thrilled with the idea of my being in a museum at all. Many other Maori people, I was aware, were scared of what lay in the cupboards, of whose bones and whose ancestors were imprisoned in those cases. Later, my first ever paid job was as an assistant working at the Peabody Museum in Salem, Massachusetts. I helped my father, when required, to photograph intricately carved Marquesan adzes which ships of the East India Company had taken back from the Pacific to Salem. My paid job was to work in the basement of the museum typing labels to put on the logbooks of ships which had sailed from New England during the American Revolution. What was especially ironic was that there I was, a 16-year-old Maori, in the basement of a museum in Salem, Massachusetts, working on material related to the American Revolution – and none of it was new to me! I had already had a strong diet of British, European and American history.

In a sense, then, I grew up in a world in which science and our own indigenous beliefs and practices coexisted. I did not become an anthropologist, and although many indigenous writers would nominate anthropology as representative of all that is truly bad about research, it is not my intention to single out one discipline over another as representative of what research has done to indigenous peoples. I argue that, in their foundations, Western disciplines are as much implicated in each other as they are in imperialism. Some, such as anthropology, made the study of us into 'their' science, others were employed in the practices of imperialism in less direct but far more devastating ways. My own academic background is in education, and in my field there is a very rich history of research which attempts to legitimate views about indigenous peoples which have been antagonistic and dehumanizing. Discussions around the concept of intelligence, on discipline, or on factors that contribute to achievement depend heavily on notions about the Other. The organization of school knowledge, the hidden curriculum and the representation of difference in texts and school practices all contain discourses which have serious implications for indigenous students as well as for other minority ethnic groups.

My own career in research began in the health field, working alongside a team of respiratory physicians, paediatricians, epidemiologists and psychologists who were trying to make sense of the ways families manage asthma in young children. As coordinator of this project I had to learn very quickly how to participate in discussions on a wide range of matters, how to gain access to some very serious bureaucratic systems

such as hospital wards and emergency clinics, and how to talk about research to a range of audiences, from medical doctors to families with limited English language. I enjoyed the challenges of thinking about what things mean, about why things happen and about the different ways in which the world can be understood. I also enjoyed interviewing people and, even more, analyzing the responses they gave. While I enjoyed the hands-on level at which I was working I found that the more rewarding work involved me in trying to 'think through' a problem, 'working with' the data and bringing it together with my own readings. Mostly, however, I found that the particular issues I faced as an indigenous researcher working with indigenous research participants were never addressed by the literature, my own training or the researchers with whom I worked. Later I became involved in other research projects in education, evaluation, tribal research and community-based projects. I began to teach others about research and have since become involved in managing much larger research projects that train indigenous and non-indigenous researchers. I have spoken about research to First Nations peoples in Canada, to Hawai'ian and other Pacific Islands researchers, and to Aborigine audiences as well as to many Maori groups who have become active as research communities. I supervise indigenous students carrying out their research projects, participate in research groups and lead some of my own projects.

In positioning myself as an indigenous woman, I am claiming a genealogical, cultural and political set of experiences. My *whakapapa* or descent lines come through both my parents. Through them I belong to two different major 'tribal' groups and have close links to others.¹⁶ In my case, these links were nurtured through my early years by my extended family relationships and particularly by my maternal grandmother. It is through my grandmother that my sense of place became so firmly grounded. That was especially important because my parents worked away from either of their tribal territories. My grandmother insisted, and my parents supported this although she gave them no choice, that I return to her as often as possible. When I had to return to my parents she would pack food parcels for me just in case they did not feed me well enough! Although she developed in me the spiritual relationships to the land, to our tribal mountain and river, she also developed a sense of quite physical groundedness, a sense of reality, and a sense of humour about ourselves. It may be those qualities that make me sceptical or cautious about the mystical, misty-eyed discourse that is sometimes employed by indigenous people to describe our relationships with the land and the universe. I believe that our survival as peoples has come from our knowledge of our contexts, our environment, not from

some active beneficence of our Earth Mother. We had to know to survive. We had to work out ways of knowing, we had to predict, to learn and reflect, we had to preserve and protect, we had to defend and attack, we had to be mobile, we had to have social systems which enabled us to do these things. We still have to do these things.

Politically, my dissent lines come down through my tribal lines but also through my experiences as a result of schooling and an urban background. One of my tribes, Ngati Awa, is part of what is referred to as the *raupatu*. The *raupatu* refers to those tribes whose territories were invaded and whose lands were confiscated by the New Zealand Government last century. The grievances which have come about through the *raupatu* form the basis of our claim to the Waitangi Tribunal. That particular dissent line is part of a legacy shared by many other indigenous peoples. My other dissent lines, however, were shaped by the urban Maori activism which occurred in New Zealand in the late 1960s and early 1970s. I belonged to one group, Nga Tamatoa or 'Young Warriors', and was at one point its secretary. We had several aims, although the main two were the recognition of the Treaty of Waitangi and the compulsory teaching of our language in schools. We formed a number of different alliances with other radical groups and some of our members belonged simultaneously to two or three groups. One of my roles was to educate younger Maori students about our aims. This took me into school assemblies and to situations where young people gathered. From those beginnings I became a primary or elementary teacher, then a secondary school counsellor, a health researcher and then a lecturer at university. While my professional career was developing I also helped in the early development of Te Kohanga Reo, the Maori language nests, and was one of the group which initiated an alternative Maori elementary school movement known as Kura Kaupapa Maori. I write, therefore, from the position of an indigenous Maori woman from New Zealand. Like indigenous peoples in Australia, Canada, the United States and Western Europe I write from the context of the First World, a world described in Julian Burger's *Report from the Frontier* simply as rich.¹⁷ Despite the very powerful issues which locate many First World indigenous peoples in Third World social conditions we still, comparatively speaking, occupy a place of privilege within the world of indigenous peoples. That does not mean that indigenous peoples from the First World have better ideas or know anything more. It may mean that such things as access to food and water can be taken for granted or that the politics of food and water can be played out in vastly different ways within the First World than is possible within developing states.

One of the many criticisms that gets levelled at indigenous

intellectuals or activists is that our Western education precludes us from writing or speaking from a 'real' and authentic indigenous position. Of course, those who do speak from a more 'traditional' indigenous point of view are criticized because they do not make sense ('speak English, what!'). Or, our talk is reduced to some 'nativist' discourse, dismissed by colleagues in the academy as naïve, contradictory and illogical. Alternatively it may be dismissed as some modernist invention of the primitive. Criticism is levelled by non-indigenous and indigenous communities. It positions indigenous intellectuals in some difficult spaces both in terms of our relations with indigenous communities and within the Western academy. It is not a new phenomenon either, the matter having been addressed previously by Frantz Fanon, for example. More recent writers have situated discussions about the intellectual within debates about post-colonialism.¹⁸ Many indigenous intellectuals actively resist participating in any discussion within the discourses of post-coloniality. This is because post-colonialism is viewed as the convenient invention of Western intellectuals which reinscribes their power to define the world. For each indigenous intellectual who actually succeeds in the academy, however – and we are talking relatively small numbers – there is a whole array of issues about the ways we relate inside and outside of our own communities, inside and outside the academy, and between all those different worlds.

Language and the citing of texts are often the clearest markers of the theoretical traditions of a writer. In this book I draw on selected ideas, scholarship and literature. These may or may not be attributed to either Western or indigenous traditions. I say that because like many other writers I would argue that 'we', indigenous peoples, people 'of colour', the Other, however we are named, have a presence in the Western imagination, in its fibre and texture, in its sense of itself, in its language, in its silences and shadows, its margins and intersections. The selection of ideas has been informed by a preference for, and a grounding in, particular forms of analysis which are probably already evident. Like many other Maori undergraduate students who attended university in the 1970s I read some texts for my formal course of study and another set of alternative readings to keep sane, to keep connected to the rest of my life and, more importantly, to make sense of things that were happening around me. Much of that alternative reading course is now collected in anthologies labelled as cultural studies.

In addition to this literature, however, are the stories, values, practices and ways of knowing which continue to inform indigenous pedagogies. In international meetings and networks of indigenous peoples, oracy, debate, formal speech making, structured silences and other conventions which shape oral traditions remain a most important way of developing

trust, sharing information, strategies, advice, contacts and ideas. In Maori language there is the expression *Kanobi kitea* or the 'seen face', which conveys the sense that being seen by the people – showing your face, turning up at important cultural events – cements your membership within a community in an ongoing way and is part of how one's credibility is continually developed and maintained.¹⁹ In First Nations and Native American communities there are protocols of being respectful, of showing or accepting respect and reciprocating respectful behaviours, which also develop membership, credibility and reputation. In Hawai'i *kanaka Maoli*, or native Hawai'ian researchers, have talked of the many aunts, uncles and elders whose views must be sought prior to conducting any interviews in a community. In Australia Aborigine researchers speak also of the many levels of entry which must be negotiated when researchers seek information. Other indigenous researchers speak of the long-term relationships which are established and extend beyond a research relationship to one involving families, communities, organizations and networks.

Some methodologies regard the values and beliefs, practices and customs of communities as 'barriers' to research or as exotic customs with which researchers need to be familiar in order to carry out their work without causing offence. Indigenous methodologies tend to approach cultural protocols, values and behaviours as an integral part of methodology. They are 'factors' to be built in to research explicitly, to be thought about reflexively, to be declared openly as part of the research design, to be discussed as part of the final results of a study and to be disseminated back to the people in culturally appropriate ways and in a language that can be understood. This does not preclude writing for academic publications but is simply part of an ethical and respectful approach. There are diverse ways of disseminating knowledge and of ensuring that research reaches the people who have helped make it. Two important ways not always addressed by scientific research are to do with 'reporting back' to the people and 'sharing knowledge'. Both ways assume a principle of reciprocity and feedback.

Reporting back to the people is never ever a one-off exercise or a task that can be signed off on completion of the written report. Some of my students have presented their work in formal ceremonies to family and tribal councils; one has had his work positioned amongst the wreaths which have surrounded the casket of a deceased relation. I have travelled with another student back to an area where she carried out her interviews so that she could present copies of her work to the people she interviewed. The family was waiting for her; they cooked food and made us welcome. We left knowing that her work will be passed around the family to be read and eventually will have a place in the living room

along with other valued family books and family photographs. Other indigenous students have presented a symposium on their research into native schools to an international conference, or given a paper to an academic audience. Some have been able to develop strategies and community-based initiatives directly from their own research projects. Some have taken a theoretical approach to a problem and through their analyses have shown new ways of thinking about issues of concern to indigenous peoples.

Sharing knowledge is also a long-term commitment. It is much easier for researchers to hand out a report and for organizations to distribute pamphlets than to engage in continuing knowledge-sharing processes. For indigenous researchers, however, this is what is expected of us as we live and move within our various communities. The old colonial adage that knowledge is power is taken seriously in indigenous communities and many processes have been discussed and enacted in order to facilitate effective ways of sharing knowledge. Indigenous communities probably know more than the dominant white community about issues raised by the Human Genome Diversity Project, for example, or the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) agreement. I recall, when attending the Indigenous Peoples World Conference on Education in Woollongong, New South Wales, an Aborigine woman telling me that 'we are always waiting for them [white Australia] to catch up. They still don't know.' I use the term 'sharing knowledge' deliberately, rather than the term 'sharing information' because to me the responsibility of researchers and academics is not simply to share surface information (pamphlet knowledge) but to share the theories and analyses which inform the way knowledge and information are constructed and represented. By taking this approach seriously it is possible to introduce communities and people who may have had little formal schooling to a wider world, a world which includes people who think just like them, who share in their struggles and dreams and who voice their concerns in similar sorts of ways. To assume in advance that people will not be interested in, or will not understand, the deeper issues is arrogant. The challenge always is to demystify, to decolonize.

In reading this book you may well think that it is an anti-research book on research. There is certainly a history of research of indigenous peoples which continues to make indigenous students who encounter this history very angry. Sometimes they react by deciding never to do any research; but then they go out into the community and, because of their educational background and skills they are called upon to carry out projects or feasibility studies or evaluations or to write submissions that are based on information, data, archival records and interviews with

elders. They are referred to as project workers, community activists or consultants, anything but 'researchers'. They search and record, they select and interpret, they organize and re-present, they make claims on the basis of what they assemble. This is research. The processes they use can also be called methodologies. The specific tools they use to gain information can also be called methods. Everything they are trying to do is informed by a theory, regardless of whether they can talk about that theory explicitly.

Finally, a brief comment on non-indigenous researchers still researching with indigenous peoples or about indigenous issues. Clearly, there have been some shifts in the way non-indigenous researchers and academics have positioned themselves and their work in relation to the people for whom the research still counts. It is also clear, however, that there are powerful groups of researchers who resent indigenous people asking questions about their research and whose research paradigms constantly permit them to exploit indigenous peoples and their knowledges. On the positive side, in the New Zealand context, work is being carried out in terms of bicultural research, partnership research and multi-disciplinary research. Other researchers have had to clarify their research aims and think more seriously about effective and ethical ways of carrying out research with indigenous peoples. Still others have developed ways of working with indigenous peoples on a variety of projects in an ongoing and mutually beneficial way. The discussion about what that means for non-indigenous researchers and for indigenous peoples is not addressed here directly. It is not that I do not have views on the matter but rather that the present work has grown out of a concern to develop indigenous peoples as researchers. There is so little material that addresses the issues indigenous researchers face. The book is written primarily to help ourselves.

Notes

- 1 Thompson, A. S. (1859), *The Story of New Zealand. Past and Present – Savage and Civilised*, John Murray, London. Thompson writes that, 'This comparative smallness of the brain is produced by neglecting to exercise the higher faculties of the mind, for as muscles shrink from want of use, it is only natural that generations of mental indolence should lessen the size of brains', Vol. 1, p. 81.
- 2 Said, E. (1978), *Orientalism*, Vintage Books, London, p. 2.
- 3 *Ibid.* p. 3.
- 4 See, for a summary of issues, Burger, J. (1987), *Report from the Frontier. The State of the World's Indigenous Peoples*, Zed Books, London.
- 5 Collins, Patricia Hill (1991), 'Learning from the Outsider Within: the Sociological Significance of Black Feminist Thought', in *Beyond Methodology. Feminist Research as*

- Lived Research*, eds M. M. Fonow and J. A. Cook, Indiana University Press, Bloomington.
- 6 Aga Khan, Sadruddin, and Hassan bin Talal (1987), *Indigenous Peoples, a Global Quest for Justice: a Report for the Independent Commission on International Humanitarian Affairs*, Zed Books, London.
- 7 For background see *ibid.* and Wilmer, F. (1993), *The Indigenous Voice in World Politics*, Sage, California.
- 8 Burger, J. (1990), *The Gaia Atlas of First Peoples*, Gaia Books, London.
- 9 Wilmer, *The Indigenous Voice*, p. 5.
- 10 I am not quite sure who said it first but several writers and texts have employed this concept in their titles and writing. Salman Rushdie wrote that the 'Empire writes back to the center'. African American women writers have taken the theme of 'talking back' or 'back chat' in similar ways to which Maori women speak of 'answering back'. Also important was a critical text on racism in Britain written by the Center for Contemporary Cultural Studies, University of Birmingham (1982): *The Empire Strikes Back: Race and Racism in 1970s Britain*, Hutchinson.
- 11 Nandy, A. (1989), *The Intimate Enemy: Loss and Recovery of Self under Colonialism*, Oxford University Press, Delhi.
- 12 Memmi, A. (1965), *The Colonizer and the Colonized*, expanded edition (1991), Beacon Press Boston, pp. 79–89.
- 13 Maracle, L. (1996), *I Am Woman. A Native Perspective on Sociology and Feminism*, Press Gang Publishers, Vancouver, p. 21.
- 14 Johnston, P. and L. Pihama, (1994), 'The Marginalisation of Maori Women', in *Hecate*, Vol. 20, No. 2, pp. 83–97.
- 15 See for example, Smith, L. T. (1985), 'Te Rapunga I Te Ao Maori', in *Issues of Research and Maori*, eds, G. H. Smith and M. K. Hohepa, Research Unit for Maori Education, Education Department, University of Auckland.
- 16 The term 'tribal' is problematic in the indigenous context but is used commonly in New Zealand to refer to large kinship-based, political groupings of Maori. Our preferred name for a 'tribe' is *whānau*.
- 17 Burger, *Report From the Frontier*, pp. 177–208.
- 18 See, for example, essays by Spivak, Gayatri (1990), *The Post-Colonial Critic*, ed. S. Harasym, Routledge, New York.
- 19 Bishop, R. and T. Glynn (1992), 'He Kanohi Kitea: Conducting and Evaluating Educational Research', in *New Zealand Journal of Educational Studies*, Vol. 27, No. 2, pp. 125–35.