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COVER IMAGE

Leafa Wilson/Olga Krause *Ich Heisse Olga Krause, Deutsche Kuenstlerin* 2005
Poster print (detail). Image reproduced in full below.



The life-long work of performance artist Leafa Wilson/Olga Krause began in 2005. These propagandist poster-styled works are loosely based around the Russian Constructivist design aesthetic adopted by the German band 'Kraftwerk'. With both Samoan and German ancestry, the artist reconciles their past and present by creating utopic race relations in the site of their body: I am Olga Krause, German artist (Ich Heisse Olga Krause, Deutsche Kuenstlerin)

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HISTORY AND RECONCILIATION, MĀ MURI Ā MUA KA TIKA.

Editorial.

Amelia Williams.

The title and guiding methodology for this edition of the journal — ‘mā muri ā mua ka tika’ — is Rangi Matamua’s adaptation of the Ngāti Maniapoto whakataukī which literally means when the back is right, the front is right. This guiding methodology is expressed in narrative forms and narrative practices; it can be intrinsic to the nature of narration. Such practices compel us to make right the things of the past (at the back) for ‘our’ present and future generations (at the front) as we narrate them. Matamua asserts that as Māori we must ensure that ‘our’ history is told, and that it is told by us, the ‘makers’ of that history.¹ Underpinned by political intent, the principle behind this narrative process is a strategic intervention that seeks praxian change within a cycle of conscientisation and transformation.² The tellers of our stories become the change agents of their own historical positionings.³ An essential element of this praxis requires the reliving of a storied past. This can invoke instances of intergenerational trauma whereby trauma, a shared experience, is transferred between generations. We can choose to avoid the trauma — to keep the silence — but the call of whakapapa overrides the messages embedded in pain, suffering and abuse. We must narrate our stories. Contributors to this issue of the journal embrace this guiding methodology. They work to get the back right.

In 1954 my parents joined a ‘closed’ religious sect. All aspects of our lives were premised on the literal interpretations of stories taken from the Bible: we embodied a skewed mix of ‘Pentecostal extremism’ and the tikanga practices of our parents. An invented lineage to Christian reformers Luther, Calvin and Wesley, and their metaphorical Aotearoa New Zealand son Marsden replaced the whakapapa of our iwi, Ngāti Koi Ngāti Tara Tokanui. English idioms and social mores constructed our public lives. The church members were our ‘family in Christ’. The parables of Jesus Christ replaced tūpuna narrative, the church building considered the ‘House of God’ was the central meeting house for the congregation. The King James Version of the Bible ‘taken literally’ formed the foundation stories guiding the principles for all social interactions

¹ Personal communication with Rangi Matamua, 12 February 2019. Contextualised by a discussion relating to whakapapa, whakapapa cannot be changed. It can be stolen, names amended to suit, but whakapapa cannot be changed, it belongs to the iwi-tupuna-person, to their iwi. Equally, history is made by the maker. It is for them to be the tellers of their history.

² Graham Hingangaroa Smith, ‘The Development of Kaupapa Māori: Theory and Praxis’. (unpublished PhD thesis: University of Auckland, 1997).

³ D. E. Comstock, ‘A Method for Critical Research’, in *Knowledge and Values in Social and Educational Research* ed. by E. F. Bredo, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2007), p.372.

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and social relations. Chief among these were ‘subservience, psychological abuse, exclusion and separation’ from the world.⁴ A ladder of civilisation existed in the minds of the leaders: Māori had yet to rise out of the earth to scale the first rung where ‘we’ were the fortunate few saved from a life of sin and damnation.

My siblings and I had no knowledge of our grandparents, our relations, no knowledge of what they looked like. At school cousins introduced themselves to us saying who they were and how they were related to me; their attempts were always met with a loud rejection. This connection could not be possible: my church family did not attend the local school, they did not look like this person before me. Deep, deep inside a voice keened to know, to be heard, to know the light of day, to narrate the connectedness of kith and kin stretching back before primordial time; back to cosmogony.

The ‘church’ was a microcosm of Aotearoa New Zealand society, it simply wielded its version of the ‘cultural values of the wider society’ in a manner defined by Smith as ‘the imperialistic power of subjugation’, and by Hall as ‘hegemonic containment’ in a more precise and brutal manner.⁵ Twenty-one years later, without advice, the Church left Kerepehi where we lived. My past had not been put right and unbeknown reconciliation beckoned in the form of the Waitangi Tribunal, Treaty Settlements and my doctoral thesis.

In 1997 the handover ceremony of the Hauraki research reports to the Waitangi Tribunal was held at our iwi Marae, Ngahutoitoi. There were 40,000 pages of evidence amassed in eleven volumes. This was the largest research report received by the Tribunal. Celebrated historians, emeritus professors, and social policy researchers presented summaries of their reports. Towards the end of the hui a Doctor of Philosophy in history tabled her report, setting out a wrongful account of our history to our iwi; a history of denigration. Mum bent over whispering ‘that’s us, our iwi’. Throughout the ‘reading’ Mum and Dad brushed away tears: this was far from the colourful speeches claiming

⁴ John Weekes, ‘Kiwi Cult Survivor Details Years of Abuse’. *The Dominion Post*, 3 September. 2016 <<https://www.pressreader.com/new-zealand/the-dominion-post/20160903/283137133228281>> [accessed 27 November 2018].

⁵ Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*, 2nd edition. (Dunedin: Zed Books, 2012), pp.22, 28; Stuart Hall, ‘What is this ‘Black’ in Black Popular Culture?’ in *Popular Culture and Cultural Theory: A Reader*. 4th edition, ed. by John Storey (Essex: Pearson, 2009), p.249.

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justice and rangimarie for Hauraki that we had all hoped for. Our history had been told for us, not by us, and without consultation. Our parents and kaumatua responded, recalling their discussion:

Ae! no more excuses... we joined the church to get away and now it has come back through the Pākehā at our own marae the more we stay silent the worse it gets for our mokopuna, we have to say our truth.... We don't want to remember the cruelty and hardship they bore, only for us to shun them...we can't do nothing. First, we karakia, we call a hui...we remember and share the korero of our tupuna... and then we fight, but we can't do nothing.⁶

Truth. It echoed, rolling through the whare like a cleansing, healing tide. The slamming of doors in one epoch bolted by shame, fear, and wrong remembered to rawness: on that day those doors were opened, tearing away the last vestiges of false identity layer after layer. The next twenty years became a search for truths, reclaiming our stolen whakapapa and righting the storied wrongs of our iwi. 2001 marked a milestone: when they stood before the Waitangi Tribunal to narrate the whakapapa of our iwi, kaumatua had embarked on a journey of revitalisation by peeling back the layers of a falsified history as a means of arriving at truth.

Guest editing this volume has been a uniquely pleasurable honour of bringing together a diverse range of contributors who, in engaging intensely rich voices, narrate the layers of *life stories* as a way of reconciling Aotearoa New Zealand's history with their own personal experiences. Reflective of the narrative process, the journal articles are a rich multi-layered account of events that occurred in the past that continue to impact the authors' present day and future lives. The selections are more than about telling a story about our past. They take us beyond to a place of reconciliation at a personal and community level: cumulatively they are about building an Aotearoa New Zealand nation based on truth. Because

merely describing or chronicling the facts of colonialism, without taking an emancipatory political stance, and without offering interventionist theoretical perspectives through which to examine the violent actions

⁶ Minutes of hui, Ngati Koi, Ngati Tara Tokanui kaumatua, 2001.

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and erasures of colonialism, does not make a study postcolonial in its critical impulse.⁷

That is, it does not make it tika, or right. In this manner, understandings of how we are continually caught in a multiplicity of hegemonic fists are voiced, unmasked–demystified and transformed.

Leah Bell begins this issue of the journal with a commentary that poignantly retraces a journey she took alongside a group of fellow rangatahi, high school students, to petition the government to have the ‘New Zealand Wars’ and their ongoing consequences recognised and taught in schools. Bell’s article is a heartfelt rendition of the historical events that have occurred in close proximity to her community, her family, her home. Bell traces her personal life story as a way of coming to terms with the history of her ancestors and their contributions to the history of Aotearoa New Zealand. For Bell, this is not about commemorating the acts of war, it is about an act of reconciliation, of laying bare the events and the ongoing consequences of the conflict, of righting the mis-truths to understand who we are as New Zealanders. Bell’s article is about how the narratives of tupuna bring truth, understanding and reconciliation as a way of remembering, lest we forget.

In the second commentary in this issue, Vincent O’Malley offers an historical analysis centred on Kihikihi, a town in the central Waikato region. Writing in a lucid and engaging manner, he exposes how mis-truths, over time, become powerful mechanisms for framing how one group is marked with disgrace, shame and degeneration while another group is deified through their acts and solidified in the memory of New Zealanders. The importance of understanding these acts, the events that surrounded them, and their consequences, is that they have become the historical foundation stones of the building of our nation. In his commentary O’Malley persuasively establishes that street signs are not only directional way-finders for travellers, but also significant in the process of establishing the identity of a community. Secreted into the consciousness of a people, ‘street signs’ represent a repackaged form of violence perpetuating transgenerational trauma. O’Malley is an eloquent and engaging writer, and this piece sets the historical record aright, highlighting

⁷ Shome and Hedge, ‘Postcolonial Approaches to Communication: Charting the Terrain, Engaging the Intersections’, *Communication Theory*, 12, 3 (2002), p.250 as quoted in Archana A. Pathak, ‘Opening My Voice, Claiming My Space: Theorizing the Possibilities of Postcolonial Approaches to Autoethnography’, *Journal of Research Practice*, 6, 1 (2010), p.2.

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how paramount is the work towards the correct recording/narrating of Aotearoa New Zealand's historiographic events. Following on from O'Malley, Graham Ball similarly reminds us that Aotearoa New Zealand's history is a most important aspect of the social, political and cultural landscape of this country. Some two hundred and four years since the opening of the first Pākehā school in Aotearoa New Zealand, Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern announced that the history of this place will be comprehensively taught across all levels of the school curriculum. History is not simply a curriculum subject, it establishes the identity of a nation, self and community identity; it does not occur in a vacuum, but in a world already defined.⁸ Graham's title, 'Give me my history', represents the unified, powerful demand for an urgent political response. Ball, who has been at the centre of this movement to see Aotearoa New Zealand history taught in schools, is clear that the struggle has involved many New Zealanders, and his article provides moving insights into key moments over many decades of effort to have Aotearoa New Zealand's history taught in schools.

The focus of Renika Siciliano's commentary is the salience of iwi-tupuna narratives and how they are applied in a Treaty Settlements process. Siciliano reflects on how the voices of iwi scholars, the formal evidence prepared for the Waitangi Tribunal, and written versions of an iwi(s) history are given significant weight. However, Siciliano presents another side, arguing that the historical account is generally silent on the history of an iwi group's interaction with 'other' iwi. If whakapapa is the most important aspect of being iwi, one would expect an historical account to be a representation — a recollection — of those relationships so as to reconcile the history of the iwi. The formulation of an agreement of the historical account between iwi and the Crown is a fraught and challenging procedure. A Director of a major law firm in Hamilton, Siciliano has extensive knowledge of the settlements process and her commentary offers insight into the place of historical narrative in the Treaty settlements process.

Geoff Canham's commentary demonstrates the importance of tupuna narrative as a catalyst for change, leadership and revitalisation. He discusses how the honouring of Ngai Tamarawaho tupuna korero — their vision and

⁸ Jonathan Friedman, 'The Past in the Future: History and the Politics of Identity', *American Anthropologist*, 94, 4 (1992), pp.837–859.

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connectedness to Kopurererua Valley — by government agencies, myriad local community groups, and Tauranga City Council, led to the completion of what is believed to be the largest urban wetland restoration project in the Southern Hemisphere and one of the most dramatic inner-city turnarounds achieved in Aotearoa New Zealand. Writing as the project manager (1996–2005), Canham discusses how iwi-led partnerships underpinned by the narratives of their tupuna become exemplars of community collaboration, environment protection, and revitalisation. Canham and Ngai Tamarawaho’s achievements have served as a model for international governments seeking to co-govern and co-manage. It is an exemplar for Aotearoa New Zealand parks and reserves management and development. We acknowledge Ngai Tamarawaho kaumatua, Tauranga Moana for their leadership and for sharing their korero with our readers.

This issue of the journal also includes a student summary from Nicholas Haig, whose discussion of his colourful Master’s thesis explores the ways that Te Papa disburses its public responsibilities to enable the conditions for memory, imagination and subjectivity to emerge. He does this through consideration of Te Papa’s hugely popular exhibition ‘Gallipoli’. Charlotte Greenhalgh also reviews the celebrated book *Past Caring? Women, Work and Emotion*, a collection of works based on Aotearoa New Zealand’s women’s stories taken from historical and personal records. Her review is a persuasive invitation to discover a new account of Aotearoa New Zealand’s past as an active, discursive process of inquiry.

Amelia Williams is a Treaty Negotiator and the Executive Chairman of Ngati Tara Tokanui Post Settlement Governance Entity. The editorial board of the *New Zealand Journal of Public History* thank Amelia for her work on this issue of the journal.