On knowing who you are and who you are from: Some reflections on culture, biculturalism and identity

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Abstract

Engaging with poetic inquiry as a way of being and knowing, the author uses autoethnography and poetry to explore identity and to lay open the ideas of self in relation to culture and biculturalism. In this paper the author explores her immediate Western cultural contextual understandings in relation to the ancestral, historical context that has shaped her, and how these might be revealed in the bicultural context of Aotearoa-New Zealand. The invitation to deepen these understandings begins with her encounters with te Ao Māori. The paper and the poems unfold how mātauranga Māori might foster an expanded horizon such that the author can no longer consider her Pākehā (non-indigenous) 'self' an isolated 'I', but rather as deeply embedded in the world. The kōrero tracks her shift to consider herself in relationship to her ancestors (whakapapa) and her place(s) in the world (tūrangawaewae) where she is most connected to those ancestors and the earth. Supporting and woven throughout the text is the spine of a poem. Written over the course of a decade the poem, *Pepeha*, continues to grow and evolve as the writer's understandings change and develop.

Whakarāpopotonga

Ko te whakauru ki roto pakirehua toikupu hei ara mataora me te māhukihuki ka whakamahia e te kaituhi te rangahautanga kiritaumātauranga momo tangata me te toikupu hei tūhura tuakiri me te whakatuwhera i ngā whakaaro kiritau pā atu ki te ahurea me te kākano rua. I roto i tēnei pepa ka tūhurahia e te kaituhi ōna mātauranga horopaki ahurea Uru whakapapa atu ki ngā horopaki tīpuna, hītori tārai i a ia ā, me pēhea ēnei e kitea ai i roto i te horopaki kākano rua o Aotearoa-Niu Tīreni. Ko te tono whakahōhonu ake i ēnei whakamāramatanga, i tīmata i ōna tūtakitanga ki te Ao Māori. Ka whakaaturia e te tuhinga me ngā toikupu tērā pea mā te mātauranga Māori e whāngai he tirohanga whānui ake arā ia kua kore e taea e te kaituhi te whakaaro ake mō tōna taha Pākehātanga (tauiwi) 'kiritau' he mohoao 'au', engari kē e titi hōhonu ana ki roto i te ao. E whai ana te kōrero i tōna nekehanga ki te āta whakaaro

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i a ia me tōna whakapapa me t/ōna tūnga i roto i te ao i te wāhi e mau kaha ana te here ki aua tīpuna me te papa. E tautoko ana, e raranga haere ana i roto i te tuhinga te tuara o tētahi toikupu. Te toikupu, Pepeha, i tuhia nei i roto ngā tau tekau, e tipu haere tonu ana, e huria haere tonu inā neke haere, whanake haere ngā tirohanga ō te kaituhi.

Key words: poetic inquiry; autoethnography; biculturalism; whakapapa; tūrangawaewae; pepeha.

Author note

Occasionally reo Māori words, along with Scottish Gàidhlig words, populate the text. This is intended, not only as a gesture towards the decolonisation of the academe space, but also as the sowing of seeds that, like wildflowers, might go on to spring up in unexpected places. For the reader who appreciates an encounter with difference and would like to understand the non-English words there are links to two online dictionaries (one reo Māori; one Scottish Gàidhlig) at the conclusion of the text. For the reader who finds themselves irritated by the inclusion of non-English words (and the not-knowing/not-understanding that ensues), or indeed having to rely on an online dictionary, or finds such non-conventions disruptive or disturbing — there is an invitation to notice the feelings evoked when encountering a word that feels strange to the ear and in the mouth.

> Cuimhnich air na daoine às an tàinig u
> Remember the people from whom you came
> — Gàidhlig proverb
>
> Titiro whakamuri, kōkiri whakamua
> Look to the past to see the future
> — Māori whakataukī

Introduction

This paper has grown around the bones of a poem and some reflexive, autobiographical, writings, that the author began in 2012 in response to a noho marae. The poem(s) and writing as source of, and inspiration for, reflection have continued growing and developing over the ensuing years allowing for a deepening immersion in the subject matter. Poetic inquiry is an emergent, arts-based research methodology (Vincent, 2018) where the use of poetry is woven into the research process itself as well as forming part of the representation (of data) and method (Faulkner, 2019). Poetry and poetic inquiry provide a powerful way to present deep, nuanced understandings, allowing space for play and ambiguity, revealing fresh and surprising ways of thinking about phenomena. In their research poetry workshops Fitzpatrick and Fitzpatrick (2021) invite participants to "surrender to the sensuous, embodied provocation, and to generate words and phrases…the poetic research material" (p. 1). Prendergast (2015) describes the notion of surrender. This is a total involvement for the researcher, a consuming preoccupation, synonymous with the "experience of being" (p.

5). In this way the researcher caught up with poetic inquiry aims to give over fully, or as fully as possible, in order to "make sense of the material with *all* of [their] senses" (Fitzpatrick & Fitzpatrick, 2021, emphasis in original). Butler-Kisber (2021) suggested poetry "opens up our hearts and ears to different ways of seeing and knowing" (p. 21).

Poet Elizabeth Alexander suggests we need language to reach across the void in order to reach another human being and I am reminded of the last line of Ars Poetica #100: I Believe (Alexander, 2005), "Poetry (here I hear myself loudest)/is the human voice,/and are we not of interest to each other?" In this way the poetry and reflections offered here are something of my attempts to reach across the void, to visibilize or begin a bridge for that gap represented in the indigenous-settler or indigene-coloniser hyphen (Jones & Jenkins, (2008). The hyphen connects, becomes a symbolic bridge (Stewart, 2018) but it also interrupts, intrudes, and inserts itself. For Stewart (2016) this is the intercultural hyphen, Aotearoa-New Zealand; indigenous-settler; Māori-Pākehā. Here the hyphen brings our attention to something that connects two groups, two worldviews, and highlights the potential for engagement, or disengagement, across the bridge, from either side (Stewart, 2018).

Dove (1994) has described poetry as "the art of making the interior life of one individual available to others" (p. 25), which is where, for me, poetic inquiry might extend toward the autobiographical. Autoethnography is a form of qualitative research combining autobiographical and ethnographic writing. In autoethnographic research the author uses self-reflexivity to examine and explore personal experience, with a view to understanding something of the culture (Ellis et al, 2010). Autoethnographic writing, like poetic inquiry, challenges conventional research methods such that research might become "a political, socially-just and socially-conscious act" (Ellis et al, 2010, n.p).

Mihi

Tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou katoa

A familiar greeting to many who reside in Aotearoa-New Zealand in te reo Māori, the language of tangata whenua. The thrice uttered welcome greeting acknowledges those gathered, but also those who came before, and those yet to come into being. I spoke these words, in borrowed tongue, to a gathering of the International Symposium on Poetic Inquiry in Halifax, Nova Scotia at the end of 2019. I was there to speak about my reflections on biculturalism from my time living, working and being in Aotearoa-New Zealand.

I also spoke a greeting in Gàidhlig, the largely lost language of my ancestors.

Madainn mhath, ceud mile failte

I stood to give this talk upon the traditional, ancestral and unceded lands of the Mi'kmaq First Nations people. In acknowledgement of this I also offered the mi'kmawi'simk words;

Kwe', wela'lioq

In the Canadian context land acknowledgements are part of the continuing work of reconciliation by non-Indigenous Canadians (Mills, 2019). The reference to *traditional* recognises the traditional use and occupation of the land by First Nations. *Ancestral* acknowledges the handing down of land from generation to generation, whilst *unceded* recognises land not turned over to the Crown by treaty or settlement. Land acknowledgements serve to mark indigenous peoples' relationship to land. In their use they become a "stepping stone to honouring broken Treaty relationships" (Mills, 2019, n.p.). The acknowledging of land and people was familiar to me because of my time in Aotearoa-New Zealand, because of my contact with tangata whenua. I knew before I set foot in Nova Scotia that it was important to know whose land I was on, and to offer a greeting in their own language. Attending to a greeting that acknowledges the people(s) of the land disrupts the notion of *terra nullius*, and erasure of indigenous presence (Wiremu Woodard, personal communication, November 2020). In an academic setting, language other than English disrupts assumptions about understanding, and who *should* be able to, or indeed *can* understand, unsettling the dominant discourse.

An acknowledgement of the traditional, ancestral lands where I live and write from in Tāmaki Makaurau (Auckland) for example, highlights the complexity of indigenous relationships to land. The area of land I currently live upon is tūrangawaewae for Ngāti Whātua o Ōrākei, Ngāti te Ata, Ngāi Tai ki Tāmaki, Marutūāhu, Te Kawarau ā Maki, and Te Taoū (Wāitangi Tribunal, 2007). I acknowledge that there may be other claims to the land I live upon, obscured or suppressed over time.

Whenua and Wharenui

Where, and who, I 'come from', that is, where I was born, a small town in the Peak District in the north of England, and who my ancestors are, meant very little to me before I found myself at the other side of the world. I was not born here in Tāmaki Makaurau, Aotearoa, in Auckland, New Zealand, but I have made a home here for the last 20 years. Before I came to Aotearoa, I did not understand much at all about where I came from and the ways in which it related to my identity, the ways in which it had shaped me. I came to Aotearoa at the age of 24. If I was to go back in time and ask my 24-year-old self about where she 'came from' she would likely tell you simply that she was born in Cheshire (because that was the location of the closest hospital to her tiny town in Derbyshire), and that she had lived in various places in England. She might have been able to articulate a special fondness for Scotland, where her grandparents and great-grandparents were from, where her aunt, uncle and cousin's family still live, and where she had spent many significant summers in childhood. This is the peculiar thing about memory, it shifts and reshapes itself. Are those memories more important now that she understands and sees her past differently? Schutz (1972) has called this the reflective glance, by which we imbue meaning on that which has been experienced.

This 24-year-old me moved to Aotearoa in 2001. Newly married, we welcomed our first child in September of that first year in a new country. This place is my husband's land, his whenua, although neither of us, back then, understood that in any meaningful way other than his passport and the visa in mine. Together with my new daughter I visited a playgroup. The woman running the group told me the centre's philosophy was based on the principles of biculturalism. I didn't understand what she meant and said that surely we lived in a multi-

cultural society. She insisted on biculturalism. I insisted on multiculturalism. Because I did not understand, and she did not seem to be able to help me understand, we left it at that. I did not go back. I didn't understand what biculturalism, or a commitment to biculturalism, meant. I knew somehow her mention of it made me feel ignorant, and ashamed. There were things I did not understand about this new place. Perhaps I clung to my idea of multiculturalism as a way to navigate this discomfort. Making the playgroup woman wrong allowed me to manage these uncomfortable feelings. I could stay 'right' and not have to change. As Stewart (2018) suggests, biculturalism is unsettling and uncomfortable precisely because it challenges dominant understandings and ways of being.

Years later, as part of a work training, I attended a two-day workshop on the Treaty of Wāitangi. I cried in that workshop. I cried for all the people murdered in the name of progress and civilisation. I cried for all the native forests cleared for cattle, I cried for the wars fought, for the land stolen, for the dishonesty and manipulation used to take the land, and for the lies told and enshrined into laws that make it legal. For the promises made and broken. For a people dispossessed and disenfranchised and still feeling the aftereffects. For the scars of war and alienation, slow to heal. For the children punished at school for speaking te reo, for prayers that said our God, not yours. How could I have lived here for six years and not know? I will answer my own rhetorical question — because I had, and still have, the luxury, and privilege, of being white-skinned/not-knowing. I had, and still have, the option of being bicultural.

I want to acknowledge here the literature on white women's tears (see for example, Hamad, 2019; Liebow & Glazer, 2019; Phipps, 2021; and in the 'grey' literature see Eddo-Lodge, 2018; Hamad, 2018; Stewart Bouley, 2018). I do not offer an account of my tears as a weapon, to attempt to silence anyone through a display of my (white) fragility, nor to absolve myself of the work and commitment required to work at the hyphen (Jones & Jenkins, 2008). Reed (2016) invites Pākehā to "step up and shrug off the invisible cloak of whiteness" (p. 5), stating that any change to the status quo is going to require tauiwi (non-Māori) to undertake this work. I would argue that this work involves grieving, not as a way to avoid responsibility or deflect accountability, but simply as a place to begin the deep learning necessary for many Pākehā and tauiwi. This deep learning, for me, necessitated an encounter with parts inside that had long been buried.

In that workshop I connected with a new feeling inside of me, a hatred of the Crown, and a sense of shame about where, and whom, I was from. I left the workshop thinking what a lie the Treaty was. It promised so much, Participation, Partnership and Protection[2], and yet it seemed to me to have delivered so little for Māori. The Treaty seemed to be a lie founded on broken promises, and I could not understand why anyone would want to hold it up and celebrate it as a testament to fairness, justice or egalitarianism. I was so angry. And yet I did nothing. Very little in my outer life changed. Is this not the very definition of white privilege? (Flagg, 1993; Gray, 2012; McIntosh, 1989; Wildman, 2005). Flagg (2005) calls this the

1 More recent understandings attend to the differences between The Treaty of Wāitangi (the English version of the agreement between tangata whenua and the Crown), and Te Tiriti o Wāitangi (the version of that agreement written in te reo Māori). Under *Contra Proferentem* the interpretation of any ambiguity in a contractual document goes *against* the party who worded the contract. This means that the version in te reo Māori is the document that must be attended to and honoured by the Crown and its agents. The principles of Te Tiriti are Kawanatanga; Tino Rangatiratanga; Oritetanga; and Wairuatanga. (For a fuller discussion see, for example, Berghan et al, 2017; Came & Tudor, 2016.)

transparency phenomenon, in that whiteness does not have to see itself — to be white is not to think about race. Stewart (2018) writes that, unlike the dominant group who can ignore ethnicity, Māori have no choice but to be bicultural.

On Playgroup and a Treaty

they tell her, our philosophy is bicultural
she says, but we're multicultural
they insist, *bicultural* and
the word is funny in her mouth

she doesn't know that this land will open her up
she asks a friend who says, *read the treaty*
and she tries, but it's words … not people
she misplaces the playgroup
opportunity for understanding lost
workshop on the treaty
everyone there seems cross, or bored
we did this stuff at school, they say
but she didn't, because her school is 12,000 miles away
and her history was written and taught by white men
and that was another life
another land …

she learns how much land is taken
how many trees felled
for settler farms, for houses, for cattle
she meets the many thousands dead
by disease, by war
blood soaking into the same earth
that cradles the whenua of her babies
and she learns
how the word *bicultural* makes it better

she also learns 1) how to hate her own kind
2) how to be ashamed
3) angry tears don't stop nor do they make a difference
4) she is a coloniser
5) doing *bicultural* fixes nothing
6) a treaty doesn't put any of it right
7) she is Pākehā
8) she belongs nowhere because she can't go back now
even if she wanted to
9) that hate, disavowal and shame are not medicine

Home is here now
she's attached,
and she's living here on generosity,
and patience.
We wait,
for her to understand
how the blood of this land will open her up

Another six years pass, I am ashamed to say, because I have the luxury and the privilege of being white-skinned. In 2012 I began another training, my training to become a psychotherapist. In that first year our class had a noho marae at Te Puea, named for the wahine Māori leader, Te Puea Herangi. Te Puea was known for taking in orphans and the lost which will strike me, years later, as exactly what I was then, lost and in some ways orphaned. Despite my initial difficulties with notions I found antiquated and patriarchal, such as walking onto the marae behind the men, or being asked to wear a skirt, it felt so good to sleep under the protection of that wharenui, under Te Puea's watchful eye. When the kaumātua who led our group spoke to us about whenua, the land, he explained the word also meant placenta, that the wharenui is like the womb, that the men stand before the women to protect them because women carry the future generations. I fell in love with the metaphor of land and placenta, wharenui and womb, which is of course more than a metaphor at the same time. Whenua nourishes, it enriches and grows life, we need it for our survival, and without it we die. Without Papatūānuku (earth mother), without women, without whenua, life cannot go on. Tangata whenua is not instead, tangata o te whenua. People land, land people, the two are inextricably interwoven. Ko au te whenua, ko te whenua ko au. An understanding that my ancestors have forgotten.

On Finding One Does Not Belong

We broke into small groups that day on the marae and were given instructions as to how to write our own pepeha, a way of introducing ourselves that acknowledges our ancestors and where, and who, we come from.

Whakapapa, the kaumātua explained, means to place in layers, it is our foundation, our heritage, to know where and who we are from. Tūrangawaewae can be literally translated as tūranga, standing place, and waewae, feet. The word indicates a place to stand but more than this tūrangawaewae as a concept connects us to our whakapapa, our foundation or home, and it signifies a place where we feel empowered, connected to Papatūānuku. These two concepts, whakapapa and tūrangawaewae, are still working on and in me today. Almost a decade later I feel I can say I am beginning to understand their significance. However, the impact of these terms, and their ability to unsettle me and expose my lack of belonging, was instantaneous. On the paper before me that day I wrote down the following words;

Maunga, mountain,
Moana, sea or awa, river,
the Waka that brought you to this land,

Iwi, tribe
Hapū, family group
Marae — spiritual or communal meeting-place.

I struggled to identify myself in this new way, to think of my place in the world and where I had come from as intrinsic to my being. At that point I had lived in New Zealand for most of my adult life, yet I did not feel I could claim a mountain here, and yet, nor could I have told you the names of the places in England and Scotland that I was connected to. I felt ashamed again, at my ignorance, at how disconnected I was from 'my people', my history. Where was my land? Where was my tūrangawaewae? How could I understand and connect to my whakapapa? I did not even know the maiden name of one of my grandmothers.

When the time came to deliver our pepeha to the group I had cobbled together some semblance of myself. This is what I had written;

Ko Maungarei tōku maunga
ko Waitematā tōku moana
ko Stafford, ko Stopford tōku hapū
ko Te Puea tōku marae
ko Emma taku ingoa

Maungarei is the mountain I live near, walking there regularly. Waitematā is the body of water I recognized as being closest to me. The names Stafford and Stopford are the family names of my maternal and paternal grandfathers respectively. I had never had a marae before. As well as signifying a meeting place or place of spiritual meeting, marae as a verb means to be generous and hospitable. The tangata whenua of Te Puea marae had been generous and hospitable, opening up this precious place to us, offering us this wānanga. At the beginning of our time at Te Puea we participated in pōwhiri. We were told that this ceremony welcomed us to this particular land, this marae, an acknowledgment of transitioning to a different way of being in relationship with the people there and the place. This generosity, that I could be invited in so warmly, felt difficult to hold, especially contrasted with my awareness of my status as 'other', as perpetrator and coloniser. Could I then say that Te Puea was my marae? Probably not in the way that I understand now, but at the time I desperately wanted to claim Te Puea, a home for myself.

Simultaneously, I had never felt less like I belonged anywhere in my life. I had become aware of a gaping hole inside of me. I came up hard and close with my lack of self-knowledge and self-understanding and in doing so felt acutely alone, adrift, desolate and homeless. I believe this is something of the white self that is empty, unstable and insecure and at risk of wanting to take in the Other's culture, another colonisation (Tudor, Green & Brett, in press). Moreover, I had once again become painfully aware of the shadow of my heritage as 'British', my identity as colonial perpetrator. The feelings from the Treaty workshop surfaced, leaving me feeling ashamed, exposed and raw. How could I be scrabbling to find English roots even as I was filled with anger, shame and hatred towards these parts of myself?

At the end of our stay at Te Puea we gathered together before the kaumātua and they invited us to share kōrero. Some, a minority I considered bold, spoke. I remained silent,

emptied out of words, emptied out of self. Later I would keep turning this over and over, why not speak, in that space, where I had felt embraced and protected by the spirit of Te Puea, where I had been moved to tentatively call this place mine?

I wrote the poem below to make sense of some of these feelings, as a way to express some of the words I wish I might have been able to articulate on that day.

Pepeha (I)

Your pepeha divides us
keeps us pigeonholed
compartmentalised
separate,
(you will see I do not belong)

A record of heritage, lineage, blood
who did what to whom and when
You will know me by association
(you will see I do not belong)
a meeting defined by wounds, injustices
A testament to our difference,
our separateness

I have stood before you, unable to speak
we are not alike, although you offer to shelter me,
no river here is mine, no mountain can I claim
my landmarks are far, far away, even if I knew the names
and the legacy of my ancestors is arrogance and ignorance
and a heavy price.

I do not want to be defined by those who came before me
categorised, written off
I am afraid
Instead of connection, instead of a meeting
you will hear difference and you will be reminded
(as if you could forget)
of the deeds of my forefathers
Condemned for the accidental country of my birth
the landing of shapes, lines and numbers on the page

At the core of this struggle? I want to hide
my shame and guilt, so you will not see me
I am afraid
you will see,
you will see me

(you will see I do not belong)

I love this land I call home, and yet
what I know to be true today
what I understand is that
love is not enough.
If you see me, if you judge me,
if you find me wanting,
and wanting I am
(a home, a story, a self)
maybe I will be denied this land

You have made me see how small and lost I am,
(your land is all I have)
this thread hangs,
I am not sure I could bear to be turned away.

Pepeha, written in 2012, remains largely as it was. Back then I still didn't really understand the way in which the pepeha and whakawhānaungatanga processes had only highlighted something already, always inside me. As Stewart (2018) has written, "what we might learn in the bicultural space is not necessarily what we are prepared to know" (n.p). The process of whakawhānaungatanga had opened me to my own lack of cultural identity, to the profound disconnection from my ancestors and heritage and my sense of place in the world. I am referring here not to geographical place, but more a sense of belonging, a groundedness in the universe, a sense of interconnectedness. In simple terms, I didn't know who I was because I didn't know who I was from. I was culturally lost. This lack, so painfully exposed in these experiences, becomes foregrounded in relation to the 'Other' and the strong cultural identity of tangata whenua becomes something to be intimidated by, envied, craved, or perhaps spurned. These experiences would eventually spark a research project that would reveal links between whiteness and an empty, insecure, unstable cultural identity (Tudor, Green & Brett, in press).

Weaving Pepeha, Place and Belonging

In the same psychotherapy training we were tasked with creating a genogram, and so I found the names of my grandparents, and great-grandparents, and great-great-grandparents and so on. This project, begun nearly a decade ago, continues on today. My mother and aunt have become involved and together we have forged new connections and a new relatedness together as we search for ourselves in our shared past. The (re)search (Romanyshyn, 2007) has brought a closeness with my father as he reminisces about his own childhood, his parents and grandparents. I found a photograph of the children's home that his maternal grandfather had been sent to (he was profoundly deaf) and we suspect that this is where he and my father's maternal grandmother met each other. Together they would raise four girls with sign language, one of whom would be my father's mother. Over time, I put the pieces of

my life, and my story, together. I was able to put my *Self* together in a new way, no longer so isolated, now more in relation to my ancestors and those who came before. Gradually, I found a way to my own whakapapa, my own tūrangawaewae. I had had to travel thousands of kilometers to discover it was lost. To discover I had been lost, drifting and disconnected.

A Valley and a River of Tears

It is with great sadness that I have come to recognise that many stories that I might have had about my whānau are also lost. All I have are the fragments that remain in living memory. It is hard to weave with fragments. One of the pieces that has helped me understand myself is through my mother's line. My mother's grandmother, Margaret Mclennan-Mckenzie Glasgow, was born and raised in a small coastal village in Ross-shire in the Highlands of Scotland. Margaret left the Highlands, moving south, presumably for work or greater opportunity, to Dùn Èideann (Edinburgh), where she met and married my great-grandfather, Andrew Glasgow. I don't know why she moved or how many of her family were displaced, but it would have been at a time when the land and the people were in disarray. The Mclennans had been crofters, a hard way to eke out a living from unforgiving land, and had perhaps begun moving south towards the towns and cities for work opportunities, and no doubt because of the impact of the English way of life on the highlands in a shift from subsistence to capitalist ventures. Fuadaichean nan Gàidheal, a strategic and brutal clearing of the land of Gaels, was intended to provide landowners more space to raise sheep, but also to quell any further notions of independence and resistance to a union between Scotland and England. The clearings began around the mid-eighteenth century, continuing, on and off, well into the mid-nineteenth century. After the threat to the Crown of the Jacobite uprising of 1745 these 'clearances' were also a systematic way to devastate and demoralise an entire people into submission. Highland culture, including traditional dress and language, was made illegal. Granny Margaret, by the few accounts available to me, was a formidable woman. She kept the family names of her ancestors, Mclennan and Mckenzie, even as she married and became a Glasgow. Although she was punished at school for speaking Gàidhlig my mother and Aunt recall her singing Gàidhlig nursery rhymes to them as children. In tracing these links I find myself forging relationships with these ancestors, with Margaret particularly, drawing strength from the sense that she is with me, that her fierceness and determination is inside me and that I too might hold onto those names as a thread of connection to my ancestors.

One afternoon, driving with my mother-in-law from Whangārei to Dargaville, we passed through a valley I now know to be called Whekī Valley. I made her stop the car. It felt like home. This land, a green unfolding over dramatic grey limestone that occasionally breaks through, thousands of miles from where I had grown up in the Peak District in Derbyshire, reminded me of home. I felt the call of the land, a land I no longer thought of as home. This experience led me to booking a trip back to England and Scotland, to see family, but if I am honest, my primary intention was to be with the land. It was on this trip, at the end of 2017, that I realised, standing on a beach on the west coast of Scotland, one that I had played on throughout my childhood, that I felt a visceral connection to the land that is Scotland, the land of many of my ancestors. The Whekī Valley reminded me not just of the Peak District, but of Scotland.

This (re)search for my own history, my whakapapa and tūrangawaewae, through tracing the lives of my ancestors, allowed a different relationship to Aotearoa and to tangata whenua. My relationship to colonisation emerges as multilayered and complex. I felt I had fallen into a deep, wide, raging river of tears. I felt opened up to something in the collective, not just my tears, and not just tears of sadness, but hot, angry tears also. Margaret, and her parents and grandparents, connects me to the archetype of colonised, now able to be acknowledged as living inside me, opened up and raw, alongside the coloniser in me. I am both; I am coming to know both somehow.

In the precariousness of making a statement about knowing something about *colonised* it is vital to add that my intention is not to detract from the acknowledgement of the brutality, cruelty and devastating losses that tangata whenua have experienced as a result of colonisation, but rather to offer that in (re)searching and coming into relationship with my ancestors, and with my own cultural heritage, I come into a different relationship to Self, through my ancestors and through my connection to land, far away though it may be. This enhanced relationship is made possible through an engagement with matāuranga Māori whakapapa and tūrangawaewae. I find my empathy increased, I find also that my fears, of getting it wrong, of offending, are greatly reduced. Not because I won't get it wrong or offend anyone, but rather because there is a solidity in knowing myself and who I come from more intimately and this makes me a safer practitioner in terms of our bicultural context here in Aotearoa. I believe this learning and growth makes me a safer practitioner precisely because it affords me a stronger sense of self related to who I am from, in turn making it less likely that I will seek to idealise the other's cultural heritage but can instead begin to draw on my own as a foundation for openness and meeting. I carry these learnings with me into my teaching work and write about them here in the hopes that others too might engage in a biculturalism that is transformational, rather than transactional. *Pepeha (II)* was written in 2018 as I prepared to give a talk, on which this paper is based, in Nova Scotia.

Pepeha (II)

My bones too,
and my heart is broken open
(I see I belong)
Living in blood, not memory
born of fire,
born of rolling green,
silver stone, purple heather,
black of crowberry.
Standing there,
I shine

I want to put down this shame,
let it rest it beside my grief,
It has filled my ears and heart
for too long

Closing me to your blessings
such that I cannot hear your singing
I need to listen now

Your greeting is an invitation
I understand that now
You want to see me,
to know me,
And the difficulty of it makes me open
Breaks me open
Because when we see each other…
when I see myself,
and can be seen,
we can begin.

I finish with a beginning, with an introduction that has taken almost a decade to form inside me.

Pepeha (III)

E mihi ana ki ngā mana whenua
E mihi ana ki ngā tohu o nehe, o Tāmaki Makaurau e noho nei au
Nō Ingarangi rāua nō Scotland ōku tīpuna
Ko McKenzie, ko Mclennan, ko Stopford ratou ko Stafford ōku tīpuna
He uri ahau nō Ingarangi rāua nō Scotland
Nō Derbyshire ahau
I whānau mai au i te taha o te Peak District
I raro i te maru o te maunga o Shining Tor
Ko Lochcarron, ko An Cuan Sgitheanach ōku moana
Ko An Sgùrr, ko Suilven, ko Shining Tor ōku maunga te rū nei taku ngākau
Ko Ngāti Pākehā te iwi
He tangata Tiriti ahau
Kei te noho au kei Tāmaki Makaurau
Ko tenei taku mihi ki ngā tangata whenua o te rohe nei
Ko Emma Green ahau
Nō reira, tēnā tatou katoa

Resources

Māori Dictionary Online https://maoridictionary.co.nz/
Learn Gaelic Dictionary https://learngaelic.net/dictionary/index.jsp

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