# An Interview with Linda Tuhiwai Te Rina Smith

## *With Marie Battiste, Lynne Bell, and L. M. Findlay*

*March 27, 2002*

*Marie: Tena koe* and greetings to you today. I would like to greet formally Linda Smith and thank her for agreeing to join myself and my colleagues, Lynne Bell and Len Findlay, in this dialogue which arises from her talk last evening. I want to give you a chance, Linda, to begin this particular segment by telling us about the Maori tradition that begins each of your oral presentations.

*Linda: Tena koe* (Greetings to you Marie). *Tena Korua* (Greetings to you two—Len and Lynne). *Tena koutou katoa* (Greetings to you the audience). *Ko Putauaki te maunga* (Putauaki is the mountain). *Ko Ngati Awa te iwi* (Ngati Awa is the tribe). *Tena Koutou Katoa* (Greetings to everyone). In our culture we begin by introducing ourselves by naming our geography, where we come from, then our ancestral lines, and then finally we name the people. In ancient times there was no need to know your name; that introduction was sufficient. But in modern times I would say, "My name is Linda." It is important to begin in this manner as a way of identifying who we are, where we are from, and how we connect to everybody else.

*Marie:* Thank you.

*Lynne:* In talking about how you developed your ways of knowing as an Indigenous researcher in your book, you talk about the significance of your "descent lines," which come through your ancestral lines, and also your "dissent lines," the active oppositional stance you developed through your experiences with the colonial schooling system and living in the urban context. I wonder if you can tell us a little bit more about the significance of these two notions of descent/dissent?

*Linda:* I guess the first notion is simply that our genealogies and those more political genealogies are both like maps. They are a map of our history, they are a map of our identity, they are a map of our landscape. My father's iwi or tribe, Ngati Awa, was one of the tribes whose lands were confiscated by the Crown in the 1860s and was declared by the Government to be "rebels and to be in rebellion." As a result of that declaration by the Crown ninety percent of our land was taken. One of the consequences of colonialism is that the confiscated land was awarded to a neighbouring tribe the Crown used to invade us. And so you get this layering of colonialism. Our sense of injustice, is not just against the Crown but against another group of Maori who were used by the Crown to invade our territories. And that feeling of being told you are in rebellion-when as far as our tribe was concerned we were defending our own territories-doesn't just leave this legacy of dissent or a sense of grievance or a sense of injustice. It leaves something far deeper that gets passed down through the generations. Our tribe have described it as a sense of shame. People felt great shame. It did not come out as anger; it came out as

internalized shame. It was not until we started doing research around the Waitangi Tribunal in order to take a claim against the Crown that it all started to make sense and come together and people were able to stand up and tell their story. It was very cathartic in a sense and it felt at long last that the story of injustice could come out. One of the reasons it was shameful is that in order to speak it you had to speak against another tribe with whom we were related. Yes, so it was very hard to speak about.

Lynne: I wonder if you could talk a little more specifically about your own academic background and how your experience with various educational institutions fuelled your passion for decolonizing these institutions and their disciplines, curriculum, texts , practices, and so on.

*Linda:* Yes, I had an alternative schooling right from the beginning; I mean my parents taught me. They were teachers and I attended their classes and had that unique experience that maybe lots of other teachers' children also had. And then when I was a first-year university student, it was 1970. It was a time of great social change-not just in New Zealand but probably in the Western world-and I ended up learning more about life and society and how the world worked in the student cafeteria-reading all the alternate texts and being part of an activist group known as Nga Tamatoa which, at the time, was perceived as the most radical Maori group around.

Our commitment in that group was around two issues: one was Maori language and the other was the Treaty of Waitangi. Basically through trying to create social change outside, through this activist group, I learned how to engage inside with my own education. I didn't last long as an activist in the sense of running around doing protests, although you have to have a sense of humour to survive that, because there are some really funny parts. I thought "I don't just want to talk about it; I want to do something!" I thought that my biggest chance of doing something was in education. So I trained as a teacher and went out with great ideals to the classroom and suddenly got confronted with the fact that in a single classroom all the issues of power, justice and the silencing of our history are right there in front of you. You have to work that out as a teacher. You can ignore it. It is very easy. All the systems help you to ignore it, because you know texts, so in order to do something you have to go search and be really proactive. I think I learned a number of things just with the students that I taught. One was that I could teach. That is always reassuring: that you can actually educate other people. Another was that I could teach them to think critically. And I could do that in a way that didn't upset their parents because in teaching young people to think critically, you are actually teaching them to think, to use their minds. I got a lot of support from parents. The problem is that every year you get a new group of young people, and very soon I thought: Do I have to do this every year? Do I have to change families every year? There must be a more efficient way of changing education.

By that time my daughter was born and I was involved in alternative education through the Maori language. So I was trying to do two things: one was to create an alternative system; and two was to create change in the conventional schooling system. And that carried on when I moved to secondary school as a guidance counsellor and then to university. So I have been involved in these two things and

I see them not as being in opposition to one other but being multiple sites of struggle for us.

*Marie:* In your book you talk about decolonization and decolonizing methodologies. When I think about the kinds of experiences that have occurred with the Maori in New Zealand, I am wondering about what you consider to be the significant markers along that path, significant markers of the change toward decolonization? And what does that word mean to you?

*Linda:* Lots of questions. Significant markers. If I give you some historical moments, is that what you are asking?

*Marie:* Yes.

*Linda:* The 1970's was a key historical moment because that was the moment that there was a new, revived activism around our language and our culture and, although at the time it was seen basically as a bunch of radicals who were in these alliances with the anti-Vietnam War movement, the second wave of feminism and gay liberation, just one more add-on political arm. What people did not realize is that we had our own agenda. The agenda really was about major social change around our history and recognition of our Treaty. So that is one moment. The other significant moment after that is 1982 and the development of the Maori language nurseries known as Kohanga Reo. That is significant because that was a time when as a people, as a community, we decided to act ourselves, to save our own language, and in doing that we brought together probably the most innocent groups in the community—babies and under five-year-olds, old people who spoke the language, and parents, mostly mothers-and you put them together and said, "we want you to create a nest and in this nest we want our children to be immersed in the sounds of the Maori language." That seemed possible. So that is a significant moment when our language nests began, and they started to multiply rapidly. There was something about that equation, the bringing together of those elements, that was magical and appealed to people so that they began setting up language nests. No one knew what the rules were. There were no rules, other than trying to get all those elements together.

Another significant moment comes as a consequence of the language nests and that is *Kura Kaupapa Maori.* Those are the alternative schools based on Maori philosophy and language. They began in 1986 as alternative schools and they were legislated in the Education Act in 1989 along with the tribal university option. By 1990, we had a strand of education from early childhood through to tertiary. Those would be the key historical moments.

Maybe the 1990's are too fresh to name a particular time. I think the 90's have been a period where we have been struggling to come to terms with neo-liberal reforms in education, which have painted a discourse of parental choice and competition between schools, and overall, the impact of these reforms on Maori has been quite devastating. At one level people have got local community control over schools. What it has done is highlighted where disadvantage really is located. Whole regions are now the sites of major interventions by the Ministry because the reform model of self-managing schools all fell apart. The model, the neo-liberal model of local community control, fell apart because local communities did not have the

resources. They just did not have the resources to look after their own schools whereas wealthy communities or boards could access lawyers and people in the computer industry and through simple fund raising they could raise money for school facilities. The schools I was involved in were having "bring-and-buy" sales. We thought we were great if we made a profit, you know a $100 was good; $2000 was just fantastic. So those inequalities just became really obvious in the 90's.

*Marie:* Parents are carrying the burden of education unlike state public schools which have the money not only to implement and resource, but also to define what is taught in the schools. I remember last year when Graham was here talking to us about that. I think the most poignant point that I remember was him saying that radical change in Maori schooling or education wasn't because they had legislation for Maori language. And it wasn't because they were able to develop schools in Maori language. The most significant, radical change was, as you pointed out, that parents became politicized as to what education is, was, and could be for themselves, their children and their future.

*Linda:* That's right. I think that became politicized not because something was clicking up here (head), but it started to click here (heart) and here (stomach). It was an emotional engagement with education leading the political engagement. It meant you worked hard, you raised money, you invested in this language nest idea, and then you watched your children go to school, and you see the language suddenly diminish or disappear. Parents don't make that level of commitment to watch their language disappear in 6 weeks, 2 months, 3 months, so they won't give up. We have tended to call it politicization. The more I think about it the more I think that perhaps that (kind of engagement in education) is how middle class people engage in education anyway. But we have just decoded that and so have seen it as politicization rather than as how the system expects parents to engage. I am just thinking maybe that is more what it is about.

*Len:* The middle class mode is the norm and anything that deviates from that norm will have to be seen as activist or dissenting or disruptive or behaving badly, so that the norm polices and sustains itself by suggesting it is neutral or it is just the way things are or it is, we assure you , to the advantage of all of us, even though you in a particular situation or community may not be able to perceive the advantages or to see them actually as a kind of disadvantage that requires mobilization, conscientization. Now it seems to me that in a way it is not surprising that

a movement as potentially and actually transformative as the one you are describing would have setbacks, and so would not mean the end of vulnerability for the communities that are charged with the change.

But having said that, we may want to come back to some of the ongoing obstacles and the setbacks posed by liberalism and other challenges to progressive social change. But looking at it, and reading your work and listening to your discourse, the dominant value that I get is one of extraordinary, rapid, and radical success. This is a huge success story and the rapidity of the gains seems to be matched by the reception of your book. Your book has had an instant, international, and profound impact and I wonder if you'd reflect a little on whether you are surprised by the effect the book has had, and what your sense of that suggests for what you are doing now.

*Linda:* I am surprised, but then I thought carefully about how I would position the book. I have been writing about research for ten years before I put that book together and in that ten years I have been searching and travelling. I have been here to Saskatchewan and listened to the stories. I had a good sense that what I was trying to say, others were also trying to say, but it was all kind of oral. That is how our communities work so in our communities we are all talking about research and researchers and about how terrible research is. But I couldn't find anything written. I decided I would put these things together and I made two decisions very early. One decision was to focus not just on research and its impact on Maori but to broaden that out a little bit in terms of other indigenous experiences. I did that really because colonialism-I think that Ashis Nandy put it better than I did-is a shared experience, a shared culture. So that was one decision. The second decision was to create a book in two parts. When I discussed it with many of my colleagues they thought that the two parts did not go together very well, but when I talked about it with my students, they wanted me to do something more than just deconstruct Western ideas about research. They did not want me to leave it there so that they would feel like there was no place for them to go. So the second part of the book is really written with them in mind. And what they argued is that you cannot just deconstruct everything into a blank space. We need a way to proceed and so that is the way the second part is written.

I guess the result of being published is... I mean I have had literally e-mails from all round the world. I have had two sets of e-mails, I can group them really easily into two sets, indigenous communities and indigenous people will just email me saying, "Yay, thank you for writing this book. It has enabled us to do things and say things that we have struggled to do." And then I have had academic audiences saying, "we use your book in our course or it's a different sort of approach to the book." There is a little minority, I guess, of people who say, "I know you didn't write the book for non-indigenous people but this is how I have tried to use the book." So those are smaller voices.

As you know, in the Academy the reviews you really need are academic reviews. I mean those views legitimate it, but the best reviews that I have had have been directly to me or through e-mail by Indigenous communities. That is the audience that I wanted to reach, and that's the audience that I tried to write for. That is the audience that don't read books and don't buy books. If I just look at my own communities, they don't buy books. So my dilemma was how to write to them through maybe a third party and how do you reach Indigenous communities? I just used my own experience that what my students do is photocopy off material and distribute it around communities. So I thought I had to reach that kind of audience and rely on them to do what I knew my audiences at home do, which is distribute material themselves, and that is what seems to have happened.

*Len:* So in a way you are like musicians. You are an overnight success. It took you ten years to be an overnight success. I think that points to the difficulty of the undertaking and the remarkable achievement of reaching multiple audiences, and if you look at the two parts, the academic impetus or inclination to separate that which you have insisted on keeping together, it takes courage and it also opens out new spaces for different kinds of conversation. In the academic world at the

moment, research, research intensiveness, there are constant assertions that the legitimacy of the educational enterprise is absolutely connected to notions of research. And research is often seen as pure, and if something is political at all, it falls off the academic wagon and becomes advocacy rather than research. It is interesting that in both parts of your book, both the deconstruction and the articulation of this Indigenous agenda for research, that both of them could be construed, I'm sure, have been construed, as more political than research. How do you respond to people who are puzzled, or troubled, or worse by what are clearly the political implications of a rigorous intellectual project?

*Linda:* I just agree with them. It isn't that it is advocacy: that is the whole point of it at one level. The easiest way to give an illustration is if you go to any university bookshop, they usually have all the research books together. They are often really thick; they reproduce year after year the same essential kind of formula for carrying out research and they are really, really boring. They have the most boring books that you can possibly buy because they are so repetitive and they are very formulaic. I remember standing at a bookshelf, I think it was in UBC, and said, "I want to get my book onto this bookshelf. I wonder if I can do it." The interesting consequence really, I think, is how the book is categorized by the bookshop because in truth it does not appear on the research shelves. It appears in interesting little corners. It appears in Sociology, Ethnic Studies, Native Studies, and everything other than the research shelves. So I haven't quite achieved one of my goals which was to put the book before people who study research or students who think, "I've got to write a thesis, I will just go and get this book to tell me how to do it." I do want to create a resource that expands people's ideas of what the recipe is for research because too often it is seen as a recipe rather than as a conceptual framework and I think the conceptual framework that you work in is more important than the methodologies or tools that you use. You've got to have the conceptual stuff first. You cannot just buy a box of food when you don't know what you are going to be cooking.

*Lynne:* Picking up on that notion of your book being in two parts and the notion that within any decolonizing framework, deconstruction is only part of the story, can you talk a little more about your concepts of "remaking ourselves" and "researching back," which form the focus of the second part of your book?

*Linda:* And in doing that I should answer Marie's other question about decolonisation, which I realize that I didn't define. I really took the idea of "researching back" from two places. One is the "talking back" idea. And I know that African-American writers have talked about "talking back", but my definition of "talking back" was from my own cultural context, where "talking back" was seen as being, you know, if you "talk back" to your parents, that was the height of disrespect. That was really rude behaviour. As an adolescent, in order to create some speaking space for yourself so you can become a new person, you have to talk back, because not talking back is to just get boxed up and constrained more and more. That was one idea.The other idea was from a Maori writer Patricia Grace, who's a very well-known short story writer in New Zealand, and she talked about writing back in terms of creating texts for ourselves. And so the two ideas come together in researching back. Perhaps the part I have added is that we can create an agenda of research that enables us to do the same sorts of things, create research for our-

selves, and talk back to the Western research academy. And those multiple elements pick up on the theme of decolonisation because I know when I talked about it in the early 1980's, suddenly all this critique arrived on my desk from political studies people who said, "Decolonisation means this." They are talking about the change in power after Second World War. And the historians come, in probably equal place with the political scientists to say, "Decolonisation means this." And once again I point to Africa and a lot of the writing around decolonisation was about the change of power in Africa. There is an absence of voice around the Pacific and around our experiences. So that was partly what I wanted to add in. But I saw decolonisation as being multiple: it's not just political; the political does not exist out here. It is tied to the idea of decolonisation of the mind which Ngugi Wa Thiong'o talked about. It's tied to decolonisation of our spirit, about letting our spirit free. So all those other elements to me add up to decolonisation. It is multiply layered; it's not just pulling the British flag down and putting up the flag of another country. That doesn't do it. If you don't believe me, you just have to look at those countries now. They are still not free.

*Lynne:* Within the Western research academy, postcolonialism has become a very big terrain and has generated a great deal of scholarship. I am wondering how useful you find both the term and the scholarship for an Indigenous-centred research project?

*Linda:* Good question. I try hard not to use the term. It is hugely contested in our context. The question for us is "who decided that the 'post' should be put there?" Since when has there been a 'post' of colonialism? So a lot of Indigenous communities are uncomfortable with that term and it's partly about this idea that suddenly our history can be named. Suddenly we have gone from colonisation to a postcolonial world. But I also see its usefulness in the Academy. This was drawn to my attention in the United States where the term postcolonial has created some space for dialogue between the voices of the colonized and those of the colonizer.

My enduring concern is that it has also unleashed voices that, because they are more powerful, continue to silence the voice of the colonized. For example, I have gone to conferences that are ostensibly called postcolonial ones; there is not an indigenous person in the conference other than myself. So there are layers of colonisation that have been talked about, you know, the white settler layers of colonialism. And then there are those who still experience it, their voices still absent. Hence my discomfort with the term. While I do acknowledge its usefulness, in creating a different kind of space for different voices to come through, I think it does depend on who is making that space and how they are conceptualizing it, because if it's simply a space that enables all academic, literary discussion, it is going to become really irrelevant to the sorts of things that our communities are trying to cope with.

One of my other concerns about the term is that it's too soon to use it as a tool, a theoretical tool to examine the tendencies inside ourselves to destroy ourselves. There are a lot of new studies, for example, on governance issues in indigenous communities and the point of the study is really about the corruption of governance in an indigenous community, and I am not sure if that is helpful. I keep saying, "Hang on. Look at the crisis in Western democracies. Don't just see us as

being corrupt and then talk about Western democracies as being in crisis." The two are related and we have to be really careful about what the field of postcolonialism enables or enacts in terms of the research agenda of postcolonial studies.

*Marie:* Those are really good cautions for us. I, on the other hand, look at postcolonial in an aspirational kind of way. I think we need to think about the words that are always used to create our experience in a colonial way. It's sort of like putting us in a place, creating categories for us and putting us into these places. I think we need to break out of the definitions largely placed by the academy or Webster's or many other dictionary kinds of authors, so as to recreate new words that capture the experience we are having. And to find ways to bring a new, if you will, decolonised way of thinking. Two words. I use postcolonial in an aspirational way, and I am not necessarily connecting it to those layers of authors, but saying that it can occupy a much greater, larger creative space for us in looking at the issues. As we look at some of the work and the wonderful emerging kinds of work that has gone on in Otoeroa, I am wondering about how those events, and those events you have laid out as significant historical markers, are creating theory? Or is it rather that the emergence of that renaissance is leading the practice? Where do you see the pressure or pulling of that?

*Linda:* I see it as all very circular. The reason why I see it as circular is we have had enough experience to be able to theorize it as circular. At the time, when you are in the middle of an alternative kind of movement you are thinking about a strategy in order to reach a particular goal. You don't begin to theorize that until you have reached that goal and realize that there are some more goals beyond that goal you have to think about. What we have done is learned from our experiences, reflected on them, and reapplied what we have learned to another site of struggle. And reapplied it again. So that circularity is about conscientization, action, reflection, theorizing. So what we have now theorized is that everyone is in the struggle, some are passive, some are waiting for leadership, but everyone is in it. They don't come into the circle when they are already in it. It is not a linear struggle. It not like you have to be conscientized and then you are suddenly woken up and you see the world as it really is and then you go out and act.

People can act and then be conscientized afterwards, or people can be conscientized really after reflection on many years of radical action. You see former radicals now reflecting on their lives in a really different way from when they were talking about it at the time. We have had thirty years of change and we have been able to theorize that and apply it in a more considered and more strategic way to new initiatives, but it has taken time. In truth, I don't think we were theorizing it when we were trying to develop an alternative school movement. We had strategies, we acted strategically, we had goals; but we were all sort of crossing our fingers that we would achieve what we wanted to achieve, and we talked about it as more of a commitment. You have to be committed and people who were not committed weakened the cause so you discarded them. In your front lines you have to have totally dedicated, committed warriors, and I think we have relaxed a little bit from that position now.

You do need commitment, but you need leadership; you need people in the second row, the third row, you need people sitting here on the side supporting you, who

are giving you suggestions, resources. They do not need to be up there putting their bodies on the line day after day. What we have learned is that that approach on its own is unsustainable, that to sustain social change you have to have a depth of activists and some of those activists are really very passive. They are potential activists for when you all get tired and worn out. You need to be able to have a rest and pull up your second line and say, "Here, have a go." We also learned that if you are in the front line you have to let go. You can't just do all the politics to start, like our alternative schooling movement, and then think you can teach in the school, run the school, educate the parents. You can't do that. Everyone who has tried to do that has got worn out and one of our major activists in the schooling movement died. People's health suffered. It is simply not sustainable.

So in order to sustain social change, you need to have a theory of social change and then you have to have some idea of how to include people who, for very good reasons, are fearful. They fear change. And you have to, rather than think of them as being not committed, you have to think of them as being people who will potentially benefit, but you cannot expect anything more of them at the time. That is just how it goes.

*Marie:* I would like to slip back to that notion of conscientization. Without having to read Paulo Freire and trying to understand what that word means-and for people who are looking toward these processes of both conscientization and resistance and action/reflection-what process goes through conscientization? Some of these things seem to be clearly postcolonial methodologies or processes that we understand. But I was thinking of Eduardo Duran's book *Native American Postcolonial Psychology*, in which he talks about postcolonial meaning having to come to a socio- historical awareness of our place, how we become who we are by the historical and socio-cultural processes that have created the conditions that we live in. And he says when we come to that place of awareness, that somehow we begin to see that our lives are not simply personally enacted. We do this, but always within the conditions of the society that we are living in. I wonder whether this is the same thing as conscientization or are there some other parts of it that are missing in that equation?

*Linda:* I think it depends somewhat on how you come to that idea. Because I think you can approach it psychologically and come to conscientization as the opening of that awareness. I think you can approach it historically by believing that if people see their history, that they will be smacked in the face by the truth of it and sort of feel that is not good. Or you can come to that understanding politically and think, "What is it that in the end causes people to act against social injustice?" Because there are lots of examples around where people live in oppressive circumstances and are not organized and don't have that sense of agency to act, and that is the question that many theorists have tried to consider. I think Gramsci's idea of hegemony explains that sense of acting in ways that continue to cause your own oppression as a useful idea. I guess for us we have probably taken Freire's term of conscientization and indigenized it for Maori. We have done that through a number of programs, very specific programs that did come out of Freire. One was through the churches who organized a kind of bicultural structural analysis program that people took out into communities; so they were—this was the Church of England and the Presbyterian church—they had this program which was partly

about antiracism and partly about anticolonialism. And it was very effective as a community movement.

And then you had the political groups like the one I was in where we were probably influenced by the civil rights movement. We read what was coming out of AIM (American Indian Movement), we read what was coming out of feminism, and then we looked at our own circumstance and said, "Well, all this stuff is irrelevant, but this stuff we will keep because it is useful as a tool to unlock what we are trying to articulate." If I just sort of come back to the idea of history. We have always known that we had a history that is different from the history taught in schools. We never knew how to activate that alternative view of history; we just learnt it at home. We learned that we had a Treaty. We learned that at home. I think it takes many different factors to mobilize and cause a group to act and that is why radicals are really important, but they sometimes spin off something that if you were to sit back and reflect on it may not be the most sensible thing to react to, but in the end it does not matter. What matters is that they acted. And then from that action you can notch it up a level or kind of distribute it.

An example: a woman on the tolls (telephone exchange). And I'm talking about an era when if you wanted to talk to someone in another country you had to go through tolls. She said the word Kia Ora. She greeted people with the expression Kia Ora which is a Maori greeting, and she was reprimanded by the telephone exchange at the time and it made front page headlines because she dared to use the small Maori words Kia Ora. And she was sacked. Now you might think, well that is just kind of small, but it just created this huge outcry amongst the anti-Maori language community that then activated those who thought this is ridiculous. We have got to make a stand for our language. So a little small spark can actually set off the fire. The issue for those of us who are interested in change is that we cannot control the spark but we sure as hell can fan the fire.

*Marie:* And that spark has gone from within the community and within the schools and into the universities. Tell us some other places where you see that spark moving.

*Linda:* Very much into the health sector in New Zealand, probably one of the strongest sectors where you've got Maori involvement. So that sector and into the justice system, particularly in the area of child, youth and family justice. So across many sectors you are now getting the same phenomenon and the same application of the theory of change, if you like, that Maori people are able to strategize in a much more efficient way to reach the goals that they set for themselves. I think we have got to the point now in our change where we can start talking about building our capability. Whereas before it was like, if you were not in the struggle, get off because we are moving, and no attendance to succession, to how you educate the next generation. We are now in a kind of fortunate space where we can plan around research capability, around workforce capability, around youth and leadership.

So maybe someone somewhere knew all this before we learned it, but we have learned it in our own struggles and we are able to apply it. I think we have made huge progress in New Zealand and I think people are often surprised how far our Treaty has gone. The Treaty now is not just in legislation, but it is in the charters of

every university, every school, every publicly funded educational institution, it is in the health system, the justice system. Those interventions are now beginning to reach down into the middle and lower levels. People are talking more and more now about measuring the performance of institutions against their Treaty requirements. So it has had its reach, but it has taken time.

*Len:* It seems in a way a very traditional thing that you have returned to education not as about exclusivity and containment, but education as a leading out, a fanning out, a spreading out, a dissemination which is inclusive of communities and validates their concerns and their knowledge, and that seems both radical in a way but also traditional, and this doubleness of rehabilitating or recuperating something but also deploying it in the interest of a new project. You talk about indigenous pedagogies, recognizing that if teaching, if the classroom is a primary instrument of socialization, then those who feel separated from or devalued within society as a consequence of that socialization, have to change the curriculum, the classroom, its modes of interaction, its pedagogy. Could you say a little about things and examples of indigenous pedagogy that have had immediate and successful impact?

*Linda:* Let me talk about pedagogy as a power relation between those who teach and those who are taught. If we talk about those who teach as those who define what is taught, the knowledge, the curriculum path, the selection of texts and resources, power is embodied in those who teach. The decolonisation aspect about pedagogy is unsettling that relation of power and distributing, if you like, to the communities of those who are taught the power around making decisions about what is taught, what is the curriculum, what are the texts, what are the resources, what is the language, the mode of instruction. The decolonisation part is about unsettling that. At the same time that you are doing that you almost inevitably decolonise the pedagogical processes that are used in that relation-those relations between those who teach and those who are taught.

All that does is make room for indigenous pedagogies and, in our context, our pedagogies are really, really different, partly because our concept of those who teach and those who are taught, our word is exactly the same word, our work is Ako. It means to learn and to teach. I am sure that our indigenous communities here have similar, well not similar, but they all have their own concept of that relationship between learning and teaching. From your own concepts you then develop the pedagogies that suit, in reality, the context of our times. The context of our times is that children watch television, they engage with the Internet, they go to movies, they see global culture, so it is not just about traditional indigenous pedagogies. One of our traditional pedagogies is that the best time for learning is at dawn. Now, if you ever want to learn in a traditional mode dawn is a really good time. Many of the traditional Wananga or sessions of learning were done in the evening through into the early hours of the morning. I don't think it is practical anymore to have night school that goes through to dawn. Our young people would not tolerate it. It is not that they are not awake at night, but that they now do other things then. So it is about applying into modern times or the 21st Century, those pedagogies that kind of fit with what our people are currently comfortable with. It might mean a classroom in which during the course of the day you get a mix of pedagogies.

We talk about our relationship called Tuakana-taina older sibling, younger sibling. That is a very critical relationship in our genealogies. Tuakana-taina, the older sibling, has responsibilities for the growth and development of the younger sibling. Younger ones have responsibility to the older sibling. They are not just takers; they are givers. The relationship is, you cannot have a Tuakana without a Taina. If you are going to be an older sibling, you have got to be an older sibling to someone else and vice versa. That has become very much a key pedagogical strategy in our schools and how does that translate in practice? It translates when a teacher will set an exercise. It could be in mathematics, it could be in reading-and the older children in the class work with the younger one.

I remember my daughter coming home and saying, "I don't know what to do with my Taina, I can't help my Taina." We are going, "What's the problem?" She said, "I am trying to teach her this and she won't listen." It's what teachers' struggle with, and we don't expect our young people to struggle with it, but that is what one of our pedagogies is. We do ask them to think of some strategies and then our response to her is, "Well, when you are a Taina, how would you like to be taught?" And you just broaden these skills in order to teach them to work with another child. But they don't do that all day long because we also know our children and they get fed up. They go,

"We don't want to work with the Taina anymore." It is a variety of pedagogies and in that variety you will, as a Canadian, come into our schools and you will think that happens in Canadian schools. Well it does, but we control the context. We control when it happens and I think that is the difference. In our schools we have control over the choice of the pedagogies, the nature of the curriculum, and how it is delivered. Sorry, that is a long answer.

*Len:* No, it is wonderful in the sense that it asserts that it is community knowledge at work through this circuitry rather than the hierarchy that comes with professionalisation. The notion of expertise is held by a few and then delivered through various forms of subordination to those beneath them. It looks like a wonderful model. Whether it would be taken up more broadly and particularly in institutions like universities where the notion of expertise, the academic division of labour, and the ever more compulsive command of the ever smaller terrain reigns, that kind of move to an increased grasp of less and less, I think that is a major, major challenge.

*Linda:* But more and more authority, less and less space to operate. Everywhere it has much more authority.

*Marie:* I wanted to recall when I was in New Zealand another example of the pedagogies that I saw. The *Kura Kaupapa* school where there was also a *Kohanga Reo* and so the children as young as small babies are in one part of the school, but in the same school. The children are grouped seemingly in same age groups, but there is a lot of interaction of older children with the younger children and different kinds of people who were there. I noted a teacher, as I was in one of the classes, and asked, "Is that the teacher doing all of the songs?" My escort said, "No, that's the parent." And for the whole morning the parent was leading and the teacher was moving around the overhead projector and didn't say much of anything that morning.

Another instance I remember was that there was a youngster who went to the *Kura Kaupapa* where the babies were, and took one of the babies-who I presumed was his brother or sister-and took that baby, after it woke up, out for a walk. He went for a walk and went to the classroom and everyone in the classroom went to the child and gave it lots of hands-on interaction. It was a wonderful moment to see many things happening and many people involved in the schools. I get a sense that the community pedagogies of doing this are re-enlisted into the schools as an ongoing way through which those things are beginning to emerge. What kinds of new challenges exist in for those schools and how they move into the future? Where are some of the new challenges for the *Kohanga Reo* and the *Kura Kaupapa Maori* schools?

*Linda:* I have mentioned the word sustainability and I think that is a key issue even now. We have our teacher training programs that are accredited and students also do their university degrees. But we struggle to retain and nurture our teaching work force. They come in committed to this alternative way of operating, but it is hard work. Even when they might have been wheeling around the overhead projector, it requires them to share power. Some of our teachers were trained in our own system, and move then to the conventional school system and they say things like, "It is so much easier, we don't have to put up with parents coming into our classroom, there are rules about parents coming into classrooms." I think one of our concerns right now is not only the sustainability of our teachers but how we are developing a whole strand of professional development that keeps them active as teachers and enables them to, not so much feel that they are powerful, or that they have power, but take the model that has been designed that has committed parents and develop new ways to keep teachers committed to that model because it is clear that it is a difficult model for teachers. There is that element.

The other one is still, I guess, one of the tensions in being funded by the state as we are now, that the state imposes its own regulations. One of those regulations that we struggle with is around governance: the whole governance of our schools is through a board of trustees elected by the community who are then personally liable for bad management. What that has done is separate out the governors from the parents and the community, so in the end real decisions have to be signed off by the board of trustees, whereas in our alternative model, it was the parents as a community. It was done at community meetings that, I have to confess, went on for hours and hours and hours. Once a decision was made there, people were committed to it. Now the decision is made at the board of trustees and it comes back to the community and, if they don't like it, it goes back up there, but it is ineffective. So that is an issue.

There is a continuing issue around the production of resources and the design of curriculum. We have got a very solid resource base of Maori language material for the first three years of schooling and then it starts to get very, very uneven. With our teenagers, they kind of express boredom with the texts that keep dealing with things that are seen as more traditional. They want texts that reflect their contemporary lives and the fact that they are into global culture in a big way and they want that expressed in Maori language. There are now senior students who are

now, you know, sixteen years old, seventeen years old. They want the challenging texts and so the whole resource development is another area.

The fourth area is around evaluation and assessment. There is really a resistance amongst Maori to the forms of assessment that are being imposed from above. So we are struggling once again to argue that there is a different way of doing it, but we haven't actually invented that yet, but you argue for the space first and then you fill it up later. You have got to get the space first. The drive for standards and assessment is very much driven by United States models. It is very frightening to teachers, and we don't quite know whether we want to buy into any of it. You know, our parents want assessment, but not for the same reasons that government want assessment. Government wants to be able to rank schools, rank teachers and write a line here and say these schools are performing well and these schools are underperforming. This is not really what our parents want. They ask, "Can my child read well? Why can't my child read at the same level as that child down the road?" You know, they do want comparisons, but they do not necessarily want to see these schools ranked. It is interesting because the neo-liberal model is that you rank your schools and then all the worst schools are going to close because parents will opt out of them and go to a good school. In New Zealand, that never happened. What happened is, if your school is ranked badly, everybody rallies. The community mobilizes and they work hard to keep that school open. So the schools don't close.

*Marie:* Now that is a far better alternative and good lesson to learn about what you need to do. I think that has been the case in Canada as well. We find ourselves with schools in some communities, First Nations communities in particular, and somebody says, " I want to go to the provincial school because I think it does better for these things." There is always the rallying cry in politics around which is better. How do you assume what better means?

*Linda:* And in rural areas, let's be real, you cannot close the local school. The costs of shipping and putting children into schools far away have been there. Then you have to create residential schools and who wants to go back there? You can't pull the plug on schools in small communities. You have to invest in them and they do cost more and that is just how it is.

*Marie:* I think the Maori have a very unique perspective about the future and I want to ask you to share with us about that future-the notions of past in the front and future forward-but also, within that, what does that symbolism of future mean in terms of how parents look to the future?

*Linda:* That is a hard one. In the Western sense, our theory of future is very backward looking because if you were to position yourself to the future you would put your back to it. We look to the past, we are very familiar with the past, we can talk about the past. Our ancestors are in the past, and we have learned about things in the past so we talk about the past as being ahead of us. The Maori word is in nga wa o mua or the times in front, and refers to the past. The future is behind us because we don't know about the future, so you put your back to the future. Your back is stronger for starters, but also you can look at familiar faces as you move into the future. That is the kind of orientation. I have simplified it and it is never quite that simple because you have to put in the factor of time and place. The word Wa

means time and place, in other words, context. Your sense of the future is something you do have to organise about. It's not that you are simply allowed to unfold around you. You organize, you mobilize, you use what you know about the past to move into the future. That is kind of a nutshell version of it.

Lynne: Just switching gears a little and talking about research models. In your book Decolonizing Methodologies Indigenous Peoples and Research, you note in the New Zealand context examples of decolonizing research which are being done as bicultural, multidisciplinary and cross-cultural research projects. As a white researcher myself, I am engaged in an indigenous-centred research project with Marie and Len which is focussed on developing strategies for decolonizing education in the Canadian academy. And I am interested in how you see these strategic alliances and coalitions between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal researchers working?

*Linda:* Those models or those terms-bicultural, multicultural research, treaty-based research I think it is sometimes called-are models that have enabled non-Maori scholars to contribute to and work along side Maori researchers. They do share some common things and we would differentiate those sorts of models from your business as usual models. One of the themes they share is that there is a sense of community voice very much in the formation of the research program, the research design question, so it is a very privileged voice in the research. It is not an individual investigator thinking, "I know the question, I know the model, but I really just want a Maori person to go and interview these Maori." We would call that a business as usual model of doing research. It is not an empowering model; it is not a decolonized model; the power is still in the researcher and they just employ someone basically to front their research in our communities.

That is how I learned the business of research. I was a researcher in those types of projects and that is why I don't want to go back to those types of projects ever again because, to put it crudely, you get set up as the indigenous researcher. So these other models of research are ways where we can use the expertise of non-Maori scholars and researchers because the truth is we don't have all of their expertise. We need to use their good will, because they are trying to work in radical ways to create space for more indigenous participation, but we also need to match them with a community of interest that might be other Maori researchers or it might just be one person to help them work through the research question, the basic assumptions in which the question has been asked, and then to develop the methodologies.

For example, I've just completed a study on oral histories of teachers and students of the native schooling system. That was done with a Pakeha, a white scholar who had a team of Pakeha researchers and I had a team of Maori researchers. The Pakeha research team interviewed the Pakeha teachers and students because we did have Pakeha students in the native schools. My team had to be bilingual because they had to interview either in Maori language or in English language. Then, we did the analysis separately, and then we did the analysis together. And then we had to ask the hard questions about what does all this really mean? Both of us did the archival research. Now we think that worked quite well actually. It gave independence; it meant in a way we did probably three distinct studies. There

were the Pakeha interviews, the Maori interviews, and there was the coming together. Each of those can be published, so just at that simple level there is very rich data, very fruitful, lots of possibilities in what you can do with it. So from that project, we have just written two books and we have got students continuing with other thesis work. I am thinking that our next product will be an exhibition because what we discovered were all these photographs and I thought, "Let's take the researcher's voice out of it altogether, and let's just put the photographs and the interviews and archival records together." So that is just another product.

*Marie:* So the photographs are of what?

*Linda:* They are from the archives. So some of them we don't know who is in them. We thought an exhibition would be a good way to invite people to come and try to identify people. The photographs do tell a story that the official texts and documents never tell, you know. You look at some of those photographs and there is a little white woman or a tall white woman in a school that obviously we would call the Wopps (Outback), way out in the back, and a group of Maori students who all look like ragamuffins. So you look at that picture and say, "Wow! How did this teacher survive, this one woman teacher?" But, secondly, "How come we lost our language and there was just one white teacher? What was going on that meant that the community was clearly a dominantly Maori community and the teacher was one, possibly two if her husband was there, three if their child was there. What was in that teacher's power? What was the nature of the power?" The teachers were the registrars of birth, marriage and death; they had judicial powers in isolated communities. I don't know what it was like here, but they were powerful. You look at the photograph and go, "Oh my God, how could this have happened, one individual?"

*Len:* We have seen the postcolonial identified as something that has not yet happened, and we have seen it in our exchanges as something that we would like to happen, so there is the sceptical and the aspirational dimensions with which we have been using this term. Another term that always needs to be put along side the postcolonial is the neo-colonial, and the huge challenge for educators at all levels, particularly in the universities, is to disarm and resist neo-colonial practices that inscribe and re-establish old hierarchies to the advantage of the usual suspects, perhaps, in a way. I was struck at the end of your public talk two evenings ago with your concluding emphasis, "Think, think, think, think, think," and that seemed to me to take a word that is often associated with detachment and irrelevance, and activate it and energise and legitimate it as as crucial to any sense of a transformative, truly postcolonial agenda. Would you like to reflect on your emphasis on thinking?

*Linda:* I think! It is very important. It is about using our minds, and culturally when I say using your minds, I also mean your brain, your stomach, and your heart. Our word for mind situates the intellect in your entrails, not in your brain. So it is really about focusing, about thinking critically, about reflecting on things, about being strategic. It is not simply about thinking yourself into a stationary position which often happens in the Academy. I think people theorise themselves and they end up in a position of not acting because to act can be very messy. There is no purity in it, and it is about thinking much more strategically about social change and what we

have learned is that change is going to happen anyway. But you can influence change if you act. It is just the sense of agency; you grab it, you use it, but you don't leave your thinking hat behind when you act. You do try to mobilise the two together. And that sort of contradicts what I said about our entire experience where I said we just acted and then we thought. We kind of learned from that and I maybe got a little bit older and more inclined to think first before I leap. Part of learning to act, is learning that when you act things happen, and so thinking about acting is simply thinking about what the likely possibilities are going to be and preparing for that. As I have said earlier, it is not just about you made it to this goal. Oh, you can have a big party and celebrate and then think you will go back to your own life. It changes your life as well as creates new goals. In a way, you get to a point where you can't stop and that can have at least two effects. One is you feel you have no control over anything because the treadmill just carries on, or I think it is not going to stop so at some point I am thinking ahead and the moment that it becomes clear that you are reaching your goal you begin to think ahead. That is really forward planning.

*Len:* Well thank you for the idea that if the mind is in the entrails there should be no such thing as a gutless academic.

*Linda:* Oh, I wish.

*Marie:* To follow up and to begin to pull ourselves to a close here, I want to go back to that wonderful story that you began with last night which was the basket story. Because when we are thinking about all of the postcolonial education movements and all the things that have happened that we are really going back to our stories, our own stories, where they give meaning to what it is we do. And that's why going to our original tribal or our First Nation's stories and understanding-what they mean and bring of our contemporary significance to them-is the way we can bring the contemporary, the global, the international to the work that we do. So I wanted you to tell us the story about the baskets that were part of the Maori beginnings.

*Linda:* Ok. Well, make yourselves comfortable. We begin the story really with the sky father and the earth mother who had many children. This particular story is about one of those children Tane nui a Rangi, the great ancestor Tane. He had many roles in our story making, one of which was that he created the first human being who was a woman. The story of knowledge is also his story, that he climbed basically through the heavens, to the twelfth heaven to gather knowledge. And obviously along the way he had many adventures which tested his fortitude, but he made it in the end and he collected the knowledge from the gods. That knowledge came down to us, he brought that to human beings in three baskets of knowledge. The first lesson we draw from that is that knowledge came to us selected and it came to us in these sort of distinct forms that could be fitted into a basket. The way those baskets of knowledge are interpreted now is that inside one basket was the knowledge that all humans needed to live their daily lives. So that is the really useful knowledge. That is one way of putting it. In another basket was knowledge which you didn't need all the time. It was like an archive; you needed to go back into it for specific things. Some of those were around warfare, that when you needed to act in a particular way you needed access to another form of

knowledge. Then there was a form of knowledge in the third basket which was kind of dangerous knowledge, and it was an acknowledgement in our culture that human beings can do the most terrible things and so in that basket of knowledge was the dangerous knowledge. That is how humans got their knowledge. It came in three baskets. But we also have in our culture what we call Tohunga or experts, so there were experts who were intellectuals whose speciality was cosmology, for example, they were the ones who helped us navigate across the Pacific Ocean. There were the experts in the day to day business of living. There were experts in the arts of warfare and building canoes, and there were also experts in these dangerous arts, the dangerous knowledge, and they were pretty much the ones that Europeans got rid of really quickly. They were seen as the ones who stood in the way of progress, civilisation, as ones who, you know they were the ones who practised witchcraft. They were sort of the witch doctors, and that is how they were portrayed. And so they were banned in legislation in 1906, but in banning them the government banned all our experts. So when we look at education and the agenda of colonisation we see that moment of banning the use of the term which defined expertise as a very powerful colonising moment because it took away from us our right to access expertise and the right for our experts to be acknowledged as experts. So that is the story.

*Marie:* Well thank you so very much. We have come to the end of our interview today and on behalf of Len and Lynne, I want to thank you very much Linda for being with us today and this week, for the gift and elegance of your scholarship, and for your inspirational decolonizing methodologies and practices that you have left with us at the University of Saskatchewan. We send our greetings and our good wishes back with you to Aotearoa. Ta ho!

*Glossary of Terms*

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| Iwi | commonly translated as tribe, families and communities who share a common ancestor, common protocols and work together on matters of strategic interests |
| Kohanga Reo | Maori language nests |
| Kura Kaupapa Maori | Schools that teach through the medium of Maori language and are based on Maori philosophy |
| Nga Tamatoa | lit. "young warriors", activist group of the 1970s |
| Ngati Awa | tribe in the eastern side of the North Island |
| Pakeha | name for non-Maori, generally white person |
| Tane nui a Rangi | Tane, one of the children of the sky father and the earth mother |
| Tena koe | Greetings to one person |
| Tena korua | Greetings to two people |
| Tena koutou | Greetings to three people |
| Wananga | learning, knowledge, now official name of iwi based tertiary education institutions |