

Indigenous Bodies: Ordinary Lives

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Ōpōtiki

*Red with cold
Māori boy feet speckled with blades of colonial green
Glued with dew
West water wept down from Raukūmara mountains
Wafted up east from the Pacific
Anxiety, ambiguity, madness¹*

Ambivalence is the overwhelming feeling that haunts my relationship with physicality. Not only my body, but the bodies of an imagined multitude of Indigenous peoples dissected and made whole again via the violent synthesis of the colonial project. Like my own ambivalence (and by “ambivalence” I refer to simultaneous abhorrence and desire), the relationship between Indigenous peoples and physicality faces the anxiety of representation felt within Indigenous studies in general.

This introduction to the possibilities of a critical pedagogy is one of biopolitical transformation, from the innocence of jumping for joy, to the moment I become aware of my body, the moment of self-consciousness in the archive, in knowing Indigenous bodies written upon and etched by colonization, and out the other side towards radical Indigenous scholarship. This is, however, not a narrative of modernity, of transformation, of transcendence of the mind through the body.

I didn’t know it then, but this transformation was a genealogical method unfolding through the production of corporeality: part *whakapapa* (genealogy), part comprehension of the biopolitics that placate and make rebellious the Indigenous

body. Plato's cave, Descartes' blueprint, racism, imperial discourse, colonization, liberation, the naturalness of "physicality" and "indigeneity." This madness only makes sense via the centrality of Indigenous physicality. Physicality is that terminal hub, the dense transfer point where competing, contrasting, synthesizing, and dissident concepts hover to make possible the various ways that the Indigenous body materializes through and because of colonization.

My relationship with physicality begins as it does for many young boys of my time in Aotearoa (New Zealand) with rugby.² Icy morning dew upon my bare feet and legs is my lasting memory of playing rugby on Saturday mornings in Ōpōtiki, a small Eastern Bay of Plenty town. The wet was cold and exhilarating, and with the right skill it enabled evasion of captors as they slid one way and I went the other towards greener pastures. The feeling I remember was one of liberation in those moments where speed, deception, dew, and inertia combined to open up the space for a headlong dash to the waste-oil marked try-line.

In the 1970s and 1980s, rugby was a central part of the Ōpōtiki community; a community composed of equal-parts descendants of "settler" ancestors and Indigenous ancestors who earlier travelled westwards across the Pacific to Aotearoa on *waka* (ocean vessels) such as the *Mātaatua* and *Nukutere*. I am not sure how it all worked, this sporting amalgam, this rural community of affluent and working-class Pākehā (New Zealanders of European descent) kids, and Māori (Indigenous peoples of Aotearoa) kids predominantly from a rural underclass. The history of colonial dispossession was not clear to any of us, except in our bodies. Freedom was an embodied experience on a rugby field that, earlier, had been part of a parcel of lands dispossessed by colonial injustice.

The facticity of Indigenous existence is that colonization wrought and continues to wreak havoc on Indigenous peoples' lives and epistemologies. For Māori, estimates suggest that from contact to the 1900s up to 90 percent of the population perished. It is hard to fathom such devastation and inhumanity. Indeed, the task for most, if not all, Indigenous people has since been to reclaim their humanity, to make fully human, to deliver their diseased, immoral, monstrous corpses from the jaws of death. Of course, under the watchful gaze of the colonizer, controlling, manipulating, morphing with the definitive purpose of social cohesion. Part of becoming Indigenous was becoming human in the eyes of the colonizer.

These "facts," these outrages simply added to my drive, my desire to lay waste the evilness of the colonizer. My relationship with my body morphed then, and in its place a hatred grew, fuelled by *ressentiment*. My own lived history told me that colonization was not an abstract thing for Māori people: for me, for my mates whose families ended up scrapping in the state houses of High Street, whilst my other mates owned multi-million dollar dairy farms and kiwi-fruit orchards. Whakari ("White

Island,” a volcanic island 20 miles off the coast of Ōpōtiki) rumbled every now and again, whispering to us of another reality.

And so I set about to right the right all the while, and ironically enough, feeling the desires for counter-history rising in my bones—it felt good. Stumbling on things, blindly walking around, filling a gap, guided perhaps. An accidental genealogy began. Anthropologists were roused like ghosts. Not because I knew why, but because they were there in the archive, and because of my naive will towards origins.

I came to distrust my own physicality, realizing how it had been used against us. It provided those roles in which Māori were acceptable: in war exploits, physical labour, physical education, sport, in the laundry, on the farm, in the kitchen, at the end of a shovel. Therefore, it wasn't mere abstract discourse; these lives, the reality of discourse was the production of bodies. Language was “fleshed out” through bodily cognition. Bodies came to understand themselves through living physically. At the end of a gun, washboard, or in the engine of the scrum, the Māori body was loved, exploited for its physical labour, adored for its performativity in sport and *kapa haka* (dance). At the other end, the non-romanticized end—the end of abhorrence—savage violence reared its head, the whirring bull-roarer telling us of our inherent savagery, the violent Māori criminal—a staple diet for Aotearoa's news media. I came to the uncomfortable conclusion of the agentless Indigenous body. The lies were proven, it was your fault—we are human after all—these assumptions about Indigenous bodies have been dealt with, but to what end? Employing Western academia's tradition of dissent I merely carved a space for further colonial control. Here I want to quote Foucault at length:

We came out of the shadows, we had no glory and we had no rights, and that is why we are beginning to tell of our history...the misfortune of ancestors, exiles, and servitude. It will enumerate not so much victories, as the defeats to which we have to submit during our long wait for the promised lands and the fulfillment of the old promises that will of course re-establish both the rights of old and the glory that has been lost. (Foucault, 2003, pp. 70–71)

This chapter largely deals with episteme, the radical component of critical pedagogy and, by extension, Indigenous studies. I proffer this discussion in the hope that the “critical” in critical pedagogy is not inherently read as neo-Marxist (i.e., how critical pedagogies might serve to liberate Indigenous peoples from the ideology of the colonial oppressor), but can also refer to a praxis that inherently critiques Western reason itself as the solitary “true body of knowledge” (Foucault, 2003, p. 9); for if a critical praxis simply accepts the realm of possibilities it exists within then

it will merely continue the epistemic violence of, for instance, colonialism. Indeed, sport and physical activity have been constantly envisioned as emancipatory for Indigenous communities where, in reality, they have historically served to condition Indigenous peoples to be further assimilated. Critical pedagogy, thus, should not be read as “making better” those who are different by making them the same. Critical pedagogy in relation to Indigenous peoples should at least be read as the praxis that rejects Western reason’s claim to reason itself, whilst organizing life via Indigenous taxonomies.

The Order of Things: Epistemological Warfare

Dis-ease

*...and from this tension, this dis-ease, this violence
An invalid ontology springs
Its power holds rivers at bay, muffles ghosts
Holds her, Papatūānuku, the earth hostage, a resource
Its power binds taxonomies strewn together on foreign forms
Whisper: the sutures will unravel.*

It was a good strategy to delve into the archive to prove my innocence, to protest for Indigenous humanity, to fight for glory. I wanted to prove myself, my intellectual self, my capacity to resist within the confines of the Western academy. My project began with voicing the silencing and violence of colonialism. These underpinnings are important, for if we are to conceive a critical Indigenous physical pedagogy, then we must first comprehend the unnatural compartmentalization of the physical. Without wanting to be essentialist, it is clear that key to the success of the colonial project was the deconstruction of interwoven epistemic knowledge based on fleshy metaphysical cognition or, in the parlance of our times, “mind/body/spirit.”

Enlightenment reason, as the determinant of truth and falsehood, was applied to the untranslatable—the epistemologies of other cultures. The process involved, firstly, authenticating Indigenous knowledge by reconfiguring the incomprehensible into comprehensible forms. The authentication element in this equation is crucial because from the premise of the Enlightenment reason, knowledge was only authentic if it was known to the mind. That is, the embodied cultural concepts from “other” epistemologies were only authentic if they were comprehensible to Western cognition. The first principle of colonizing the Indigenous body, then, was to bring

the philosophical underpinnings of the savage under the logic of the colonizer.

The presence of an alternative metaphysical reality in Indigenous cultures signalled an allegorical monster in relation to Western rationalism. Indigenous culture was not the monster per se, rather its inexplicability reached beyond the depths of the rational European mind that demanded empiricism. The determination of “savagery” helped veil what the Enlightenment project failed to comprehend via a Western scientific taxonomy. The allegorical side-product of such certainty was the construction of “other” cultures as immoral, monstrous, and mythical:

The native is declared insensible to ethics; he represents not only the absence of values, but also the negation of values. He is, let us dare to admit, the enemy of values, and in this sense he is the absolute evil.... All values, in fact, are irrevocably poisoned and *diseased* as soon as they are allowed in contact with the colonized race. The customs of the colonized people, their traditions, their myths—above all, their myths—are the very sign of that poverty of spirit and of their constitutional depravity. (Fanon, 1963, pp. 41–42, emphasis added)

As opposed to the rational European subject, Indigenous subjectivity was not divorced from the body, nor the rationale from the passions, and so forth. In part, White colonial patriarchy (and there is no doubt that colonialism was a gendered project) effected colonization because it claimed to embody the power of reason and, consequently, universal interests. Key to Enlightenment rationalism and its reliance on reason to know and to authenticate the objective world was its faith in the mind/body dichotomy orated by Plato and canonized by Descartes. In his 1871 book, *The Descent of Man*, Charles Darwin emphasizes the key differences in intellectual development (that is to say, language, observation, curiosity, memory, imagination, and reason) between primitive and civilized peoples. Darwin and other evolution theorists played an indirect but nonetheless significant role in the tainting of European accounts of Indigenous peoples. Indigenous cultures as unenlightened were, from an occipital logic, inherently more “physical,” ruled by their passions, and less intelligent than their civilized brethren. The apparent lack of division between the indigene’s mind, body, spirit, and the external world only served to augment European colonizers’ belief that they were indeed encountering savage races, with “minds like children.” Moreover, Enlightenment philosophers avoided questions of inconsistency in equality and autonomy arising from colonial subjugation by locating the Indigenous being in the realm of the physical and irrational, so as to deny full humanity and, accordingly, access to the same privileges bestowed upon the European.

If savagery is understood from the perspective of Enlightenment rationalism, then it is apparent that it portends a state of unenlightenment, where reason is ruled by physical impulses and/or superstition. What Foucault refers to as the invisible “breath” that inhabits discontinuous discourses, even as they mutate, I conceive of as “physicality” with reference to the colonized Indigenous savage. As a sub-theme of the primitive/modern dialectic, physicality describes a complex of interconnecting discourses that enables unitary discursive knowledge to develop around the colonized Indigenous subject. The thematic of Indigenous physicality in the colonial state was “capable of linking, and animating a group of discourses, like an organism with its own needs, its own internal force and its own capacity for survival” (Foucault, 2002, p. 39). Darwin’s evolutionary theory, for instance, “directed research from afar” acting as “a preposition rather than named, regrouped, and explained...a theme that always presupposed more than one was aware of... forcibly transformed into discursive knowledge” (ibid.). Such discursive knowledge underpinned Indigenous “savagery” and was transcribed into physical terms, onto the Indigenous body and about Indigenous bodily practices. Physicality, thus, is one of those “dense transfer points”³ that enabled the production of the Indigenous body as a discursive formation, a lynchpin that strategically enables the imprint of history upon the Indigenous body.

For the present chapter, it is critical to establish that the collision of supposedly embodied Indigenous epistemologies and disembodied Enlightenment rationalism left an inauthentic void that European settlers, at least, desired to chart through authenticating disciplines such as anthropology and archaeology. The earliest European recordings of Indigenous physical activities (and those since) can tell us very little about the philosophical underpinnings of these cultural practices for, typically, they came from the ignorant, self-absorbed opinions written within the tales of the first European voyagers, missionaries, and, later, anthropologists. In Aotearoa for instance, Elsdon Best *re-interpreted* Māori “physical activities” in the volume, *Games and Pastimes of the Maori* in 1925. I emphasize *re-interpreted* here to point out that, even though Best’s “recordings” are useful because they are more detailed and, thus, aid in the re-inscribing alternative epistemologies, his ideological interpretation of the data stemmed from what Lyotard referred to as a “scientific narrative of emancipation” (1984, p. 60) and, hence, was seldom concerned with interpreting Māori tribal practices from an Indigenous epistemology.

The incomprehensibility between Enlightenment rationalism and Māori epistemologies can be seen in the interrelationship between Māori physical practices and death customs. *Pōtaka tākiri* (spinning tops), *moari* (swings), and other “games” were used in the contexts of both death and leisure. For example,

when a clan had been defeated in battle, and visitors came to condole with them, all assembled on the plaza of the village, and there chanted the lament of the dead. At the conclusion of each couplet of the song, many tops were spun, and these wailing tops helped to avenge the defeat, as the Maori puts it. (Best, 1925, p. 161)

“The humming tops that remained spinning for a considerable time were said to possess a long breath, which was considered desirable” (Best, 1925, p. 157) and, thus, it was the association of *pōtaka tākiri* with breath and breath’s interconnectedness with *mauri* (life principle) that was of importance. Another example of the inter-relationship between death and “leisure” activities can be seen with *moari*. In the narrative below, two *moari* were erected following the killing of several members of one *hapū* (sub-tribe) by another. The members of the aggrieved *hapū*

decided to equalise matters by means of one of those singular procedures that mark the Maori character, and which puzzle the European enquirer. Said old Piatini: “Our people were much concerned over this matter. The death of their relatives grieved them. Then the desire grew, and from the desire sprang the thought: we would avenge that disaster. Tu-kairangi, chief of the clan Tawhaki rose, and erected those two Moari, Tama-te-ngaro, and Tara-kai-korukoru. Then was composed a song to be chanted by the swingers when whirling round the staffs. And this would be the revenge for the death of our friends. No! Of course it was not blood vengeance, or even a real equivalent for our loss; it was simply to dispel our grief and end the brooding over the trouble, hence it was looked upon as avenging or equalising matters.” (Best, 1925, pp. 51–52)

In this discussion of epistemological collision and void, it is obvious that Descartes’ mind/body dichotomy is omnipresent. It does not seem that Māori conceived of physical activity as “leisure” or a “pastime” (as defined by Best) divorced from other realms, such as the mind or spirituality. The holistic epistemologies of Māori tribal societies determined the non-compartmentalization of the physical. As opposed to the rational European subject, in the communally oriented Māori subject the mind was not divorced from the body, nor the rationale from the passions. Indeed, it has been said that Māori located their thought in their gut. Here I refer to the “communally defined subject” to make a distinction between the Western “individual subject” (who has prevailed in Western thought since the Enlightenment), whose person is comprised of a central and unique core, which determines their distinct

identity. The dissimilarity is important because, as opposed to a singular “self,” it indicates Indigenous subjectivities that incorporate multiple identities across time, including genealogical and spiritual associations. As an example, *manu tukutuku* (kites) were sites of genealogical significance:

Kites were given special names, in many cases the names of ancestors of the owners. It would also appear that, at least in some cases, special names were assigned to the cords by which such kites were flown. Many such names of kites and their cords, of former generations, have been preserved by oral tradition.... Te Matorohanga, of Wai-rarapa, repeated a list of forty such names that had been preserved by the tribal whare wananga...some of these names were those of kites (*manu pakau*) made at Hawaiki, prior to the settlement of Māori in New Zealand. (Best, 1925, p. 131)

To the European observer, kites belonged to the realm of the mundane and pastimes of children. Accordingly, in Best’s (1925) compilation of Māori physical activities, kites were placed alongside tobogganing, swinging, skipping, and the like, in the chapter entitled, “Games and Pastimes of Children,” even though such a definition is clearly inept given the integration of oral history within the practice. To be fair to Best, however, how could his system of subdivision (i.e., “the anthropological book”), which required classification into “chapters,” ever hope to echo or indeed comprehend the complexities of the Māori metaphysical/corporeal nexus? The systemization of Māori cultural concepts within an ideologically Western translation creates the illusion of compatibility between Western and Māori physical practices where in actuality they are “worlds” apart. The organization of Indigenous knowledge into a “true body of knowledge” refers to “synthesis,” the violent amalgamation (authentification) of one culture into another.

The colonial synthesis of Indigenous practices and the inevitable epistemological transformation that Indigenous people must have undergone (i.e., as they began to see the world differently) implies that what survived the onslaught of colonization has been fundamentally altered and, indeed, it could be argued that any semblance of pre-colonial thought has been lost to most. I freely admit I have been colonized, or rather I have failed to be decolonized. As a consequence, the feeling of “being post-colonial” resembles a state of anxiety, a state of tension, a state of *dis*-ease that Indigenous people ingest in the pursuit of an unrealizable dream, that of decolonization. Being post-colonial is thus the realization that decolonization will not return Indigenous people to an imagined pre-colonial purity, and living within the tension of the colonizer/colonized binary.

For a society ensconced and founded upon the desire for universal knowledge, there is a fundamental investment in coding alterity within the realms of rationality, in disavowing the monsters of the unfathomable; to make what is irrational, rational and what is incomprehensible disappear. From the universal mindset, the inability to contain the irrational, the unfathomable, to the boundaries of a universal epistemology leads to cancerous tension, *dis*-ease, neo-colonial cultures racked by the unease of producing their own form of normality by veiling the monstrous, and the incomprehensibility of indigenous lands and peoples that they now possess via imperialism.

Body History

There is a certain stereotype for Māori and Pākehā that you have to face up to... Māori are good at PE.... [Teachers need to] ensure that the structure of courses are [*sic*] shaped around their interests, such as sport, so there is a practical application they can relate to. (Palmer, 2000, p. 275, emphasis added)

The brief description of epistemological warfare described above suggests that any analysis of indigeneity and physicality must first be cognisant of the subjugation of “local knowledges.” Yet, the more typical narrative of dispossession, death, oppression, and violent synthesis is also important, especially when focused on the role education, physical education, and sport played in the production of Indigenous bodies within settler/colonial biopolitical landscapes.

In *The History of Sexuality: Volume I* (1978), Foucault argues that the biopolitical regulation of a population operates beyond the conscious production and control of knowledge. That is, crucial to biopower is internalization, the profound molecular imposition of regulatory mechanisms so that the material, the corporeal, and ethos function in unison. In the context of the present chapter then, it could be argued that the conditioning of the Indigenous body throughout colonization has not only a symbolic genealogy, but also a material existence. Here, the etiological importance of the word “genealogy” should not be underestimated, for it does not merely mean a textual genealogy. Foucault’s nomenclature is literally referring to the material and biological descent of corporeality, where the body is “totally imprinted by history” (Foucault, 1991, p. 83).

The profound weave of mind/body duality into the fabric of colonialism has in part enabled the “biopolitical management of life” within the normalizing neo-colonial state. The production of the colonizer/Indigenous, self/other dialectic has functioned through the bodily enactment of that dialectic. What it means/meant

to be an authentic and tradition-abiding Indigenous subject was materialized and reified by the bodily enactments of authentically Indigenous bodily practices. What it meant to be a bona fide Indigenous person, for example, became intertwined with institutional discourses that located indigeneity within the physical realm, which, in turn, disciplined through limiting and employing the Indigenous body in physical labour. Sites of work, leisure, home-life, and schools, and practices such as eating, cleaning, and exercising disciplined the Indigenous body throughout colonization.

Pierre Bourdieu's (2001) notion of "capital" is also useful in thinking of the Indigenous body, especially in relation to mind/body duality in that symbolic meaning etched onto the Indigenous body determined inferior mental capacity, and thus only contained capital in an allegorical sense (i.e., it was given worth and meaning within the self/other binary). For many Indigenous people of my grandparents and parents' generations, Bourdieu's analysis is important because of its concern with the body in relation to the working class, who through bodily cognition as a necessary effect of a physically intensive life, acquired different relations to their bodies than the "educated" middle or dominant classes. In many Indigenous communities, subcultures developed based on relationships with a physically labouring body that, in turn, came to symbolize an ontologically authentic indigeneity. The production of the uneducated savage trope was crucial to Indigenous subservience and subjugation, for it largely debilitated the ability of Indigenous peoples to function as equals in society. Indeed, such was the internalization process that a Western-educated Indigenous person could be at times rebuked by some in their own communities as inauthentic and even as an interloper made foreign—an agent of the colonial state. In Aotearoa, "plastic Māori" was a common term used for educated Māori in the 1970s and 1980s.

The rural "physical education" of Indigenous peoples spawned the Indigenous body that was to become, under the conditions of neo-liberalism, a symbol of deviance within the urban setting, the Indigenous urban nightmare. Indeed, the threat of physical proximity that urbanization consummated determined that the urban Indigenous subject needed to be reconstituted as a corrupt, inauthentic aberration that has since been fetishized by the mainstream media. Urban Indigenous peoples are constantly represented as deviants, that is, as alcoholics, drug addicts, rapists, prostitutes, wife beaters, child abusers, gang members, criminals, and, generally, members of society not to be trusted.

Importantly, this construction of colonial power accounts for Hegel's (1899) modernity in that it speaks to how post-colonial Indigenous subjects became self-conscious and constituted within the colonized self/other dialectic, through and because of their bodies and bodily practices. Foucault's determination of the body's passivity as a symbol of the contested terrain can be translated to describe the colonized Indigenous body and, in particular, Indigenous bodily practices, where the

workings of history “incest it, mark it, train it, torture it, force it to carry out tasks, to perform ceremonies, to emit signs” (Foucault, 2006, p. 352). Hence, one emerging criticism of post-colonial Indigenous subjectivities is that the forms of indigeneity produced, far from challenging the settler colonial narrative, have in fact reified it.

Thus, in the context of this chapter, we must question whether any focus on physicality as a “critical” (read modernistic) proposition leading to the promised land is simply another form of neo-colonialism. I question on what metaphysical grounds a physical pedagogy can move towards deeply challenging colonization’s “relentless constitution” of indigeneity. Far from being the beacon of Indigenous advancement that many purport, the increasing focus on Indigenous integration through sport and physical education resembles the continued production of discourses centred on savagery. As a consequence, the complicity of the “physical education” (i.e., the biopolitical production) of Indigenous peoples with colonial biopower demands that the question be asked: How can a critical physical pedagogy exist that does not simply further imbricate Indigenous peoples within the colonial project?

The project of embodied sovereignty, therefore, must be at once deconstructory and existential, for it would be fraught with danger to merely accept the overarching principles of “physical education” discourses as worthy in terms of Indigenous sovereignty. We need to tread carefully, for no better reason than it was the naturalization of biological racism through the scientific age that gave credence to the atrocities of colonization and imperialism. Indeed, the compartmentalization of the “physical” within the present book suggests mere tinkering at the edges of a metaphysical Indigenous epistemology and, as a consequence, the coinage of an “Indigenous critical physical education pedagogy” is oxymoronic. As we have learnt from Fanon’s (1963) decolonial recourse to violence, for instance, an existential “decolonization” without the materiality of violent revolution to effect an *epistemological* “break” from the subjugation of colonialism is deemed pointless.

The genealogy provided here *absolutely* demonstrates the subjugatory tactics of colonial endeavours, the corporeal colonization at a molecular level that suggests little space for individual agency. Yet, I must hold the view that the discursive formation of the Indigenous body need not necessarily be conceived of as terminally oppressive. Certainly then, any “critical Indigenous physical pedagogy” must be reflective on how it mediates recourses to “rights” and represents claims to recognition via essentialized notions of culture, tradition, and authenticity. Thus, I want to begin to re-feel my positioning in relation to colonization and the Indigenous body. I look to Fanon for inspiration:

The dialectic that brings necessity into the foundation of my freedom drives me out of myself. It shatters my unreflected position. Still in

terms of consciousness, black consciousness is immanent in its own eyes. I am not a potentiality of something, I am wholly what I am. I do not have to look for the universal. No probability has any place inside me. My Negro consciousness does not hold itself out as a lack. It is. It is its own follower. (1967, p. 103)

Thus, I conceive the nexus “critical” *and* “Indigenous” to mean that form of knowledge unintelligible to the Western academy, that knowledge that refuses Western classification via its lexicon and taxonomic cataloguing. I seek a form of “critical” *and* “Indigenous” that strikes bedridden the imperative to be “part of the same.” How does critical/Indigenous move beyond the confines of Western rationalism to produce learning environments where Indigenous metaphysicality is presented in a form without having to be translated into dominant codes of understanding?

I refer to such knowledge production as “monstrous,” a hyperbolic device to force attention to the peril unintelligible knowledge poses to the universalization project of the Western academy: the monster that lurks in the metaphysical landscapes coded as “resources,” epistemologies coded as “myth,” cultures coded as “traditions,” and peoples coded as “other.” Although colonization has temporarily succeeded in suppressing and disfiguring Indigenous peoples and the way we order the world, it fails to understand the shallowness and foreignness of its own imperial discourses: the shallowness of its claims to universality, which only survive in an imaginary form, for without them rivers will speak, ghosts will appear, the earth will move in retaliation; the taxonomy of Western knowledge strewn together on foreign forms will begin to unravel.

Metaphysical Possibilities

[Genealogy] is a way of playing local, discontinuous, disqualified, or nonlegitimized knowledges off against the unitary theoretical instance that claims to be able to filter them, organize them into a hierarchy, organize them in the name of a true body of knowledge, in the name of the rights of a science that is in the hands of the few. Genealogies are therefore not positivistic returns to a form of science that is more attentive or more accurate. Genealogies are quite specifically, *antis-ciencies...the insurrections of knowledges...an insurrection against the centralizing power-effects that are bound up with the institutionalization and workings of any scientific discourse.* (Foucault, 2003, p. 9)

I came to realize late why Māori culture is highly ritualized, for without the unnatural divide between transcendent forces and the body, the everyday becomes enchanted and, as the story goes, unimaginable to Western secular thought. This realization provoked a simultaneous feeling of loss. I felt this loss profoundly as I came to grasp the depths of colonization; the implication of the Indigenous body in all of this, the implication of my own body, the bodies of my children, my father. The everydayness of the metaphysical had left us. And partly, this was my own fault—there is no jumping for joy, there is no freedom in tumbling down a cliff. Demonstrating Descartes' folly is my own folly—the folly of intellectual pursuits—the folly of thinking, the folly of thinking bodies without agency. Foucault's conception of biopower, where individuals become unconsciously aware of themselves and their place in the world through the disciplined nature of their own body, speaks to the material depth of colonization and the forlorn nature of a decolonial project. That is, to a large degree Indigenous people cannot deny the embodiment of colonization. Many try, many delude themselves into thinking this is possible, many develop a schizophrenic envisioning of an authentic Indigenous self, divorced from a self located in the here and now and even their material genealogical reality. Inevitably, such schizophrenia detracts from an Indigenous existentialism that embraces the present. Yet, I must believe in the possibility for insurrection.

In turning to Foucault's genealogical method, I seek material practices that uncover how local knowledge is ordered within generalizing scientific knowledge, and that reinstate local knowledge systems. It is important to note here that Foucault does not merely see this project as an abstract one, rather he argues genealogies are "insurrections of knowledge." Read alongside the conception of biopolitics, insurrections of knowledge can be viewed as intelligence that propagates resistance through bodies to produce dissenting subjectivities. In settler/colonial states, the potential for insurrections of knowledge and the production of dissenting subjectivities remains (for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples) in the largely subjugated (i.e., hidden or disfigured and re-woven within a Western taxonomy) Indigenous intelligence that remains to haunt post-colonial lands.

Indigenous studies, as with feminist cultural studies, best positions itself outside the Western, White, masculine intellectual tradition of mind/body dualism: "an approach which refuses to privilege mind over body...and which assumes that the body cannot be transcended, is one which...emphasises contingency, locatedness, the irreducibility of difference, the passage of emotions and desire, and the worldliness of being" (Ahmed & Stacey, 2001, p. 3). Such a positioning is double-edged, however, as the colonial project "limited the identity of the colonised to the materiality of their bodies" (Featherstone, 2005, pp. 65-66) and thus the analysis must be at once deconstructory and existential. Meaning, it is dangerous ground not to first problematize

Indigenous theorization stemming from the body, prior to foregrounding the body as a realm of study from which Indigenous knowledge insurrections can consecrate.

Ironically and dangerously, then, it is the *immediacy* of the Indigenous body, which must take centre stage within this insurrection. In the condition of post-coloniality it is difficult to disengage with a mind/body duality, but it is at this fundamental level where theorizing towards critical physical pedagogies must begin: the thinking body; the conceptualization of the body as a material producer of thought; and the body as a holistic notion where physiology and the interplay between history, present, and future interact to flesh out social meaning. This will demand an epistemological leap. Of course, as already stressed, the epistemological mind/body dualism of the Enlightenment must be exhumed prior to conceptualizing such an insurrection. Indeed, the first step to analyzing the existential and metaphysical possibilities of the Indigenous body is to activate (de-pacify) its materiality beyond binary oppositions such as traditional/non-traditional, authentic/inauthentic, civilized/uncivilized and self/other. This transference is an opportunity to move beyond Hegel's dialectic of self and other that has informed and underpins so much of the analyses of colonization (e.g., Frantz Fanon's colonizer/colonized, Paulo Freire's oppressed/oppressor). It is "logical" that through colonization itself and recourse to a victim mentality, the dialectic of self and other has consecrated Indigenous studies, and that the analyses of the Indigenous condition constantly reverts back to this dialectic to gain the moral high ground, but such a position is merely a step on the path to insurrection.

While many Indigenous scholars have challenged the mind/body dichotomy by describing holistic Indigenous epistemologies that typically include the physical, spiritual, mental, and material truth of place, almost without fail such holistic theorizing seeks to authenticate an Indigenous tradition. Thus, the Indigenous body has remained a traditional spectre in Indigenous scholarship while lacking any material immediacy. Accordingly, a preface to such an insurrection is an analysis of how the spectre of tradition remains written upon the Indigenous body. For instance, we can consider how the location of indigeneity in the primitive past marks the Indigenous body in tourist sites and voyeuristic cultural performances of Indigenous culture, whilst determining "culture" as that which existed prior to now.

It is common in Indigenous studies that colonized societies remain divided along colonizer and colonized lines, and that the historical and contemporary subjugation of Indigenous cultures is where such a division gains its currency. Hence, amongst Indigenous studies units there remains a now outdated strategic attention to "preservation." To use Māori as an example, when "culture" is employed in Māori studies it typically refers to either customary concepts or practices. Seldom does "Māori culture" refer to everyday practices, and never does it coincide with those colonial cultural practices welcomed by Māori, which now hold a great degree of

meaning within everyday or “ordinary” Māori culture. *Tikanga* is now referred to as “custom” or “culture,” yet derives from the word “*tika*” meaning to be correct, true, just, fair, accurate, and/or permitted. Thus, action was good, and delivered upon its good intentions (in metaphysical ways) when devoid of the need for correction. Intelligence as insurrection is also written into Māori culture itself, as embodied by the demi-god Māui-tikitiki-a-Taranga (Māui), the Nietzschean-like *Übermensch* figure common to many Polynesian cultures, whose knowledge transgressions necessitated change. Although a *pōtiki* (youngest child),⁴ Māui’s tenacity, creativity, and desire to go beyond the limits of truth established his leadership qualities. His metaphysical presence suggests the possibility of insurrection in the present.

Critical Indigenous studies needs to pay attention to the past, future, and, most significant to this paper, the *immediacy* of the here and now, the everyday, the ordinary. The idealism Indigenous people locate in the pure past limits how we conceive of ourselves through the *immediacy* of experience. The “everyday” in Indigenous scholarship, for example, is either positioned in terms of Indigenous political struggles, especially in regard to jurisprudence, or in terms of “victim-hood,” conceived of as the genealogical descendant of the trauma of colonization. Such scholarship is necessarily reactionary as opposed to existential. From my own context, insurrections of Māori knowledge reveal spiritual immediacy, that is, metaphysical practices ingrained within the immediacy of the *everyday*. From this epistemological understanding, there is no genealogical distance between nature, corporeality, and knowledge. There is no distance between the ordinary and supra-culture, between the superstructure and the material.

Elsewhere (Hokowhitu, 2014), I introduced the notion of “body-logic” as an insurrection of Indigenous intelligence that disrupts the physical/metaphysical binary and mind/body duality. I define body-logic as that corporeal intelligence willingly residing beyond rational thought, willingly producing subjectivities able to live beyond the taxonomies ascribed by colonization, and willingly fleshing out and unravelling the madness that overlays the post-colonial world. Such an analysis, I argue,

should be driven towards an Indigenous existentialism that confronts and theorizes the everyday materialism of the Indigenous body, whilst encouraging an epistemological leap where a body-logic is made possible. Here, then, body-logic refers to what culture “feels like” as opposed to the production of Indigenous culture to be viewed, or Indigenous knowledge to be “preserved.” (p. 44)

Within this framework of what culture “feels like,” we might begin to think a “critical Indigenous pedagogy” consecrated by an “ordinary metaphysicality,” or the propagation of an everyday Indigenous metaphysicality as part of a broader desire for Indigenous sovereignty. Here, Indigenous sovereignty is defined as the determination of Indigenous peoples to live their knowledge beyond Western taxonomies and the violent will to synthesize.

So much focus in the Indigenous social movement and Indigenous scholarship has been on juridical and political forms of struggle, which has of course been necessary, yet we have forgotten that Indigenous peoples live their lives. The notion of “ordinary” is important to understanding the *immediacy* of the Indigenous body because it locates the body outside the disciplinary complex. It acknowledges at least the existential possibility of freedom beyond disciplinary constraint. As Foucault states, people “are much freer than they feel, that people accept as truth, as evidence, some themes which have built up at a certain moment during history, and this so-called evidence can be criticized and destroyed” (Martin, 1988, p. 9). This idea speaks to a variant philosophical imperative that counters the rational and utilitarian foundations that pervade desires to “fix the Indian problem.” Rather, the philosophical imperative is determined by a *metaphysical economy* invested in the desire of Indigenous peoples to live ordinary lives underpinned by their own epistemology and unencumbered by the violent will to synthesize.

Indigenous life is an everyday experience, and it is possibly at this level that Indigenous sovereignty might most effectively occur. This everyday sovereignty may fly under the radar of the neo-colonial state unwilling to imagine nations within nations, and too unimaginative to notice the biopolitics of an “ordinary” revolution. Here, then, I want to reread Fanon:

This struggle for freedom does not give back to the national culture its former values and shapes; this struggle which aims at a fundamentally different set of relations between men cannot leave intact either the form or the content of the people’s culture. After the conflict there is not only the disappearance of colonialism but also the disappearance of the colonized man. (2010, p. 496)

Undoubtedly Fanon is referring here to the existential and decolonial possibilities of violent struggle, yet is it also possible that an “ordinary metaphysical revolution” might achieve the disappearance of colonial taxonomic order?

Rather than *kapa haka* (Māori dance), for instance, being constructed as a “traditional” performance constructed to be viewed by an audience, its impassioned bodily properties in conjunction with its often politically verbalized cultural elements

should be recognized. *Ihi*, *wehi*, and *wana* as overarching concepts of *kapa haka* help explain a body-logic, as outlined by Matthews:

Haka is comprised of both physical and spiritual aspects. The spiritual aspects of haka and its performance are linked to various cultural concepts contained in the Māori world-view. These include the concepts of *ihi* (authority, charisma, awe-inspiring, psychic power), *wehi* (fear, awe, respect) and *wana* (thrill, fear, excitement, awe-inspiring). (2004, p. 10)

It is said that when these aspects are achieved in tandem, they elicit a physiological response, such as the raising of the hair on the back of one's neck. Here, then, body-logic refers to what culture "feels like." The focus is on haka's existential properties as a cultural practice of "the everyday." The key here, however, is to live this culture in ordinary ways, not stuck on a stage to be commodified, nor placed in a do-gooder's manual to "help" the Native.

Conclusion: *Dis-ease*

And so, after what I am sure to you, the reader, has been an utterly unphysical encounter with my ramblings, I want to conclude by imploring you to investigate colonial *dis-ease*, for this is how I think about my bodily history in relation to my upbringing within a settler/colonial state—the inability to be at home, to be secure. Originally at least, the myth of universal knowledge obscured local Indigenous knowledges, giving rise to a post-colonial society ill at ease, a society of the *dis-eased* and *invalid*. The Indigenous peoples etched by death and misfortune will, nonetheless, return to seek the glory of the past. And settlers, unwilling to comprehend the beauty and horror that surrounds them, will have their ontological dominance rendered invalid to that other world. Here, the autopsy of a cancerous victim reveals besieged cells ravaged by tension, emanating from confusion between mind and body, native and alien whilst the underlying truth of unworldly Indigenous epistemologies remains ordinary, unspoken, uninvestigated, but present; the monsters of these lands remain to haunt, to whisper the possibilities of ordinary lives, at ease.

For both Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, the project begins by taking on the full weight of Homi Bhabha's analysis, in which he suggests European rationalism preserves "the boundaries of sense" (1983, p. 24) for itself, meaning that the seemingly simplistic idea of "body-logic" will categorically make little sense to most. Indigenous theorizing cannot fully develop without the possibility for existential

agency and ordinary lives, where Indigenous bodies are infused by metaphysical comprehension. I do not want to believe that the atrocities of colonization were the defining point from which the Indigenous body remains scarred indeterminately, and metaphysical presences remain as whispers. The physical endurance of pain may not be a choice, but Indigenous people can choose to live beyond the genealogical scarring inflicted by colonization. Ordinary Indigenous lives must materialize beyond such embodied and genealogical pain; we can choose to live our lives.

Questions for Discussion and Reflection

- ① How has colonization served to “order” Indigenous physical practices?
- ② The Indigenous body has been central to the project of colonization. Discuss.
- ③ Is a critical Indigenous pedagogy within physical education possible via the taxonomy of “physical education”?
- ④ What is the place of metaphysical ways of knowing within physical education?
- ⑤ Is the body logical?
- ⑥ Can physical education be recast as an insurrection of knowledge?

Notes

1. I have chosen to intersperse my writing with language not typical of academic prose, including thinking about the potential of the monster and *dis-ease* to a critical pedagogy. This chapter demonstrates a will to disrupt codes of praxis by drawing attention to the unintelligible.
2. I use Aotearoa throughout this chapter instead of New Zealand, yet all the currently employed nomenclatures are problematic. For instance, although Aotearoa (a Māori name meaning “Land of the Long White Cloud”) is now commonly used as a translation for New Zealand within the imagined bicultural nation, in actuality the name originally referred to the North Island, whereas the South Island was and is commonly referred to as Te Waipounamu (“The Land of Greenstone”). Many writers choose to refer to this place as Aotearoa/New Zealand in recognition of the supposed bicultural nation. The problematics surrounding the conjunction include its inference that Aotearoa adheres to biculturalism, where, in the main, it clearly does not, and, secondly, it implies that there was, or is, such a thing as a homogeneous group of people who could constitute a “Māori nation.” Such a concept “forgets” that Māori are not one people, rather they are a confederacy of diverse peoples. However, I employ Aotearoa throughout this chapter, first, because these lands have nothing to do with the westernmost province of the Netherlands, after which the neologism “New Zealand” was formed by the Dutch navigator, Abel Tasman, in 1642; secondly, to acknowledge the multiple Indigenous peoples of the lands now referred to as New Zealand, and, lastly, because for many there is disruptive subversion in representing the nation state via the nomenclature “Aotearoa.”
3. In *The History of Sexuality*, Foucault refers to sexuality in similar fashion, where sexuality is “an especially dense transfer point for relations of power[;]...sexuality is not the most intractable element in power relations, but rather one of those endowed with the greatest instrumentality: useful for the greatest number of manoeuvres and capable of serving as a point of support, as a lynchpin, for the most varied strategies” (1978, p. 103).

4. In the system of genealogical power, the last-born is typically accorded a lower rank in relation to older siblings. Both pre- and post-colonial Māori social structures suggest an oligarchy based on genealogy, where certain genealogical branches were deemed more noble and, therefore, held more *mana* (prestige) than others and passed this aristocratic *mana* from one generation to the next, especially to the *mātāmua* or first-born child, who if on a chiefly lineage of first-borns would be granted *Ariki* (high-chief) status.

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