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ABSTRACT

This paper is concerned with the teaching of undergraduate university courses on "women and education" or "the sociology of women's education" in the 1990s to pre-service and practicing teachers, some of whom are fearful of, or even hostile to, feminism. The paper consists of four parts: the first part presents the feminist educational theories of a New Zealand sociologist of women's education within the political circumstances of New Zealand and elsewhere from the 1980s to 1990s; the second part positions pedagogical concerns within the international discourses of sociology of education and critical pedagogy, in particular, the politics of the student's and the teacher's "voice"; the third part takes up this issue by using personal texts as a means of demonstrating how, in a university classroom, feminist teachers and their students can move between personal experiences and sociological analysis; and the fourth part discusses biculturalism, an issue of educational and political concern in New Zealand in the 1990s. It is suggested that the bicultural feminist educational theories which are being developed within the New Zealand situation have a somewhat different emphasis from feminist concerns elsewhere in the western world. Contains 74 references. (GLR)

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TOWARDS A FEMINIST PEDAGOGY FOR THE SOCIOLOGY OF WOMENS EDUCATION IN AOTEAROA/ NEW ZEALAND: A LIFE-HISTORY APPROACH

(NB: TITLE APPEARS IN THE CONFERENCE ABSTRACTS AS 'TOWARDS BICULTURALISM IN WOMENS STUDIES IN AOTEAROA)

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Paper presented in a symposium, 'Feminist Politics and the Struggle for Social Justice in Education: Comparative Perspectives' at the Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Chicago, April 1991.

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This paper is concerned with the teaching of undergraduate university courses on 'women and education' or 'the sociology of women's education' in the 1990s to pre-service and practising teachers, some of whom are fearful of, or even hostile to, feminism. It explores, from the vantage-point of a New Zealand sociologist of women's education, relationships between students' and teachers' experiences in educational institutions, the emergence of feminist and other 'radical' educational theories and the development of a feminist pedagogy. As a means of working through some of the theoretical, political, and pedagogical questions which face today's feminist teacher-educator, I am using life-history methods. This paper demonstrates their use. Its central concerns are usefully framed by Maxine Greene (1986: 440):

> What might a critical pedagogy mean for those of us who teach the young at this peculiar and menacing time?

The paper consists of four parts. The first positions my recent feminist educational theorising within the political circumstances within which it has taken place. I contrast the New Zealand experience of educational restructuring from the 1980s to 1990 with that elsewhere. The second positions my pedagogical concerns within the international discourses of sociology of education and critical pedagogy - in particular, the pedagogical implications for the sociology of women's education of recent writing on the politics of the student's and the teacher's 'voice'. The third takes up this issue by using personal texts as a means of demonstrating how, in a university classroom, feminist teachers and their students can move between personal experiences and sociological analysis. I use this technique to ground my own 'pedagogical voice' biographically, culturally, geographically and historically and as a means of identifying the generative themes (Freire, 1971) in feminist scholarship in the sociology of women's education in New Zealand. The fourth discusses in more detail one such theme - biculturalism - an issue of great educational and wider political concern in New Zealand in the 1990s. Through placing the generative themes of women's studies in New Zealand alongside those of other western countries, I suggest that the bicultural feminist educational theories which are being constituted within the New Zealand situation have a somewhat different emphasis from feminist concerns elsewhere in the 'western' world.

FEMINISM AND THE POLITICS OF EDUCATIONAL RESTRUCTURING - A NEW ZEALAND VIEW

The 1980s saw major changes in the concerns and strategies of feminist and 'left' sociologists of education. Government policies of restructuring altered the various types of educational institutions within which we work and which are our objects of study. There were also significant theoretical shifts within our discipline. During this decade, much of our research

and writing was focussed on the political and ideological changes we were observing and experiencing - in particular, the ascendency of the ideas of the 'new right'. Many submissions, books and papers argued that the atomised competitive individualism of the 'new right' was antithetical to the collectivist notions of social justice or equity which we, as feminist or socialist educators, had taken as our central concerns. In education, as in wider social policies, the past two decades had seen a 'shift to the right' (Apple, 1986; Aronowitz and Giroux, 1987; Lauder et al, eds, 1990; Livingstone, ed, 1987; Middleton et al, eds, 1990). In professional and political forums, many expressed feelings of outrage and loss. For, although they had also been the objects of our feminist and 'left' critiques, the kinds of social-democratic collectivism or socialism which were being attacked and dismantled had characterised the educational and social policies which had made possible for some of us our own education and academic careers.

As children growing up in western social-democracies during the prosperous years of the post- World War Two era, many of those who were to become the 'radical' sociologists and critical pedagogues of the 1990s were members of families who had not previously had the opportunity to attend secondary or tertiary educational institutions - many of us had been children of parents from the working or lower-middle classes, of ethnic/ cultural minority backgrounds, from rural areas or small towns (Heron, ed, 1985; Middleton, 1987, 1989; Walkerdine and Lucey, 1989). As will be illustrated in this paper, our feminist and sociological perspectives on education had been at least partly a result of our own experiences of marginality or alienation within it, although - as individuals who were to become academically successful - we had sufficient cultural capital to enable this marginalisation to become the basis of an intellectual critique rather than of educational withdrawal or failure. The simultaneous experiences of marginalisation and the economic security of full employment created in many western educationists who had been students in the 1960s and early 1970s a sense of both the desirability and possibility of radical educational change.

However, the younger students we teach in the 1990s are entering the work-force in circumstances very different from those in which we began our teaching careers - an economic recession and a political climate which, in many places, is hostile to progressive social movements such as feminism. My students- beginning teaching in New Zealand in the 1990s - face a society which is experiencing alarming political swings where issues of gender are concerned. As a means of explaining the context which has generated my analysis, I shall briefly describe this situation.

New Zealand's Fourth Labour Government (1984-1990) undertook a radical restructuring of school administration. Following

recommendations in the 'Picot Report' (Minister of Education, 1988), policy-makers devolved responsibility for many major educational decisions from central state authorities to elected boards of trustees. The powers of the boards were listed in school charters, which contained detailed statements of broad objectives and specific goals. Schools' successes and failures in achieving these were to be monitored regularly by state Educational Review Officers.

New Zealand's 'left-wing' critics identified similarities between these reforms and those in Britain, North America and Australia (see various chapters in Codd, Harker and Nash, eds, 1990; Lauder and Wylie, eds, 1990; Middleton, Codd and Jones, eds, 1990). They claimed that 'new right' economic theories were having an undue influence - that the language of competitiveness, efficiency, effectiveness and accountability seemed to dominate educational policy discourse. Education was being increasingly conceptualised as primarily an economic (not a social, political or moral) activity.

However, alongside its libertarian economic policy, the Labour Government had also made a strong committment to 'equity'. In contrast to the individualistic free-market ideas which have been so frequently described as characterising the educational reforms, Labour's view of 'equity' involved conceptualising the population as groups. Certain groups (rather than individuals) were seen as having been disadvantaged educationally -through no fault of their own - in the past. Compensation was owed. Schooling became a site for the bringing about of 'compensatory justice' (Middleton, 1990b). "Equity objectives" were to "underpin all school activities" (Ministry of Education, 1989).

During 1989 and 1990, the boards of trustees of all educational institutions (including universities) were required to write their charters. In this, they were - in the words of the school charter guidelines (Ibid, 1989) - to ensure that their

> policies and practices seek to achieve equitable educational outcomes for students of both sexes, for rural and urban students; for students from all religions, ethnic, cultural, social, family and class backgrounds, and for all students irrespective of their ability or disability (Ibid: 5)

With respect to gender, school boards of trustees were required to develop specific targets for the bringing about of equal opportunities, to provide role-models along non-sexist lines, to develop a non-sexist curriculum and to provide freedom from sexual harassment.

Boards were also required to develop policies on biculturalism:

> The board of trustees accepts an obligation to develop

> policies and practices which reflect New Zealand's dual cultural heritage (Ibid, p 6).

For teacher-trainees, taking courses on Maori education or women's education could be seen, in this context, as being a smart career move.

However, in October 1990, New Zealand had a general election and Labour was defeated by a landslide majority. During the election campaign, Lockwood Smith (now Minister of Education) announced that

> Under National schools will be free to re-negotiate their charters if they wish to do so. They will no longer be compelled to adhere to Labour's 'Orwellian' social agenda (N. Z. National Party, 1990, p 8).

During the first weeks of its administration, National announced that 'equity provisions' in educational institutions were to be optional. In terms of National's view of society as consisting of autonomous competitive individuals, Labour's 'collectivist' requirements to bring about social equity for disadvantaged groups were constituted as 'social engineering'. In describing their paramount educational aim as being the creation of an 'enterprise culture', National constituted education as an economic, not a social, activity (Middleton, 1990a). At the time of writing (January 1991), the National Government is attacking other women-oriented social policies: pay equity legislation is being repealed and social welfare benefits cut. The new right have gained ascendency.

For feminist students and teachers the political and educational climate with respect to gender was thereby suddenly and radically changed - within the final few weeks of 1990. While Labour (with its strong feminist membership) had heeded many feminist concerns, National rejected these as unimportant (in all but the most individualist non-interventionist equal opportunities sense). In 1991, student teachers may decide that taking feminist courses may disadvantage their careers. To many of them, the possibilities and dreams of our generation of 'left' and feminist educationists may seem neither desirable nor possible. Like other forms of academic knowledge, 'our' feminist (and other 'radical') theories can constitute as 'other' their generation. As Ellsworth (1989) and others (e.g. Lather, 1989) have argued, such feminisms and socialisms can appear to our students as oppressive rather than empowering.

SOCIOLOGY OF EDUCATION, CRITICAL PEDAGOGY AND THE TEACHER'S VOICE: FEMINIST VIEWS

What does the literature of our discipline offer us in terms of pedagogical theories and strategies as teachers of the sociology of women's education? (Middleton, 1987b, 1988a)

Until recently, the dominant perspectives in the sociology of education constituted educational institutions primarily as sites of social and cultural reproduction. Rejecting the liberal view that schools and tertiary institutions were agents of social mobility and human emancipation, many sociologists studied how such institutions constructed and reproduced the oppressive power-relations of class, racism and gender in the wider society (e.g. Bowles and Gintis, 1977; Willis, 1977). During the late 1970s to mid-1980s many feminist sociologists of education adopted similar perspectives. Black feminists prioritised racism and colonialism as the basis of their oppression (Awatere, 1984); Marxist feminists asserted the primacy of class (Wolpe, 1978); radical feminists foregrounded patriarchal gender-relations (Spender, 1981); socialist feminists explored interactions and contradictions between women's experiences of class, gender and (in some cases) race (Anyon, 1983; Arnot, 1989; Jones, 1990; McDonald, 1980).

Theoretical debates between feminists, and between feminists and sociologists of other persuasions, were often centred on which of these was the primary oppression - the 'cause' or basis of the others (Eisenstein, 1982; Hartmann, 1981; Segal, 1987). It became customary for feminist teacher-educators to teach students about the various feminist discourses and debates and to expose them to the kinds of educational research such (liberal, radical, Marxist, socialist etc) feminist perspectives had generated. To help in this task, we produced textbooks of readings which brought together examples of studies which represented each of the dominant discourses within the discipline (e.g. Acker, ed, 1989; Arnot and Weiner, eds, 1987; Middleton, ed, 1988; Weiner and Arnot, eds, 1987).

Many of our students - themselves intending, preservice or practising teachers - found the reproduction theories profoundly depressing. If the educational institutions within which they studied and taught merely reproduced existing social and cultural inequalities, they as teachers were mere agents of oppression and preservers of privilege.

Perhaps partly as a response to the pessimism of 'reproduction theories', many 'left' and feminist educators paid increasing attention in their writing to 'radical' (or 'critical') pedagogy. They argued that radical teachers could make visible to students the patterns of power-relations which constrained their own and others' lives and could help make audible the voices of students from oppressed and marginalised groups (Freire, 1972; Giroux, 1982, 1986). Writers such as Giroux (1982: 124) suggested that teacher-educators could teach their students life-history techniques to enable them, as prospective teachers, to develop

> the concepts and methods to delve into their own biographies, to look at the sedimented history they carry

> around, and to learn how one's cultural capital represents a dialectical interplay between experience and history.

At first glance, the ideas of the critical pedagogues seemed compatible with feminist uses of personal experience as a basis for generating theory. As many writers have observed (e.g. Spender, 1981; Tobias,1978), the women who spearheaded the second wave of feminism found little published writing which could help them explain and theorise their 'sense of something wrong' (Mitchell, 1973) with their lives as females. Discussion of such experiences in consciousness-raising groups became a means of translating 'the personal' into 'the political' or social. However, as Ellsworth (1989) has observed, such feminist voices were

> made possible by the interactions among women within and across race, class and other differences that divide them. These voices have never been solely or even primarily the result of a pedagogical interaction between an individual student and a teacher (Ellsworth, 1989: 9).

Feminists have been critical of the writings of the critical pedagogy theorists because of the power-relations with which they are inscribed. Although they recommended teaching techniques which required students to analyse their lives, many such writers rendered invisible their own biographies. Similarly, many 'reproduction theorists', many of whom had themselves been empowered and politicised by means of their own education, bracketed out in their writing the conditions of their own intellectual production. Somewhat ironically, several feminist post-structuralist writers of university women's studies textbooks, whose topic was how people's discursive positionings were productive of their multiple subjectivities, addressed the topic at a purely rationalist level and omitted to mention the problem of what made their own ideas possible (e.g. Weedon, 1987). As Ellsworth (1989) expressed it,

> a relation between teacher/ students becomes voyeuristic when the voice of the pedagogue...goes unexamined.

Through bracketing out their own theoretical origins, such author-educators thereby positioned themselves as 'masters of truth and justice' (Lather, in press), as knowers or revealers of the truth about others' oppressions.

A feminist pedagogy requires us as teachers to make visible to, and explore with, our students those aspects of our own life-histories which impact upon our teaching. We must analyse relationships between our individual biographies, historical events and the broader power relations which have shaped and constrained our possibilities and perspectives as educators. As feminist teacher-educators, we must deconstruct the power-

relations between ourselves and our students by exploring the ways in which we, as feminist researchers and teachers, are "produced by what [we] are studying; consequently [we] can never stand outside it" (Dreyfus and Rabinov, 1986: 124). Our academic perspectives are viewed as historically, socially and biographically constructed. As Dorothy Smith (1987) has expressed it, the everyday world is viewed as 'problematic' and is studied as that in which our research and pedagogical questions originate.

Within the academic subject 'education', feminist methodologies subvert traditional social science approaches which, following the dictates of 'natural science', have required what Smith (1987: 146) referred to as " the suppression of the personal." Because such a 'scientific' world-view is said to be detached from the social world and to provide an objective birdseye view of reality (Harding,1987), researchers and teachers are required within such a tradition to 'begin outside themselves' (Smith, 1987). Women's studies' reliance on 'the personal' is antithetical to such approaches and its apparent 'subjectivity' is therefore frequently used by academic gatekeepers as a basis for its exclusion from, or devaluation within, what counts as high-status or 'proper' academic knowledge (Acker, ed, 1989; Bowles and Klein, eds, 1983; Martin, 1987; Spender, 1981). Making visible to students aspects of one's biography lays the feminist academic open to accusations (from students as well as colleagues) of being unscholarly. Developing a feminist pedagogy involves taking professional, as well as personal, risks.

A TEACHERS VOICE

In this section, I have written up what I do in the form of an oral presentation and colour slides (reproduced here as black-and white photographs) in an early part of my course. This precedes students' directed reading of formal theories in the sociology of women's education. For the first few sessions, the students read published personal accounts of women's educational experiences. In this, I hope to avoid the 'partiality' or fragmentation of experience which comes about when the various 'grand narratives' (Marxism, radical feminism etc) dominate personal accounts. For example, because of its neo-Marxist orientation, the literature of critical pedagogy has often constituted class as the primary oppressive social relation and rendered invisible or marginal people's experiences of other power- relations. As Walkerdine and Lucey (1989: 206) have observed,

> It is only the left and the women's movement which splits and fragments our history this way, as though we did not live our class, our gender and our race simultaneously.

In this respect, my approach is compatible with those post-modern, post-structuralist and socialist feminisms which focus on

peoples' simultaneous positionings in multiple power- relations and on the personal experiences of contradiction which such multiple positionings bring about (e.g. Arnot, 1989; Henriques et al, 1984; Walkerdine and Lucey, 1989).

i. Theoretical Beginnings

When I was a child growing up in small-town rural New Zealand I knew of few New Zealand writers, intellectuals or artists. At the age of thirteen I read Spinster by Sylvia Ashton-Warner (1958). Sylvia, I gathered, was the subject of much adult disapproval. Although she was a married woman with a 'good husband', she 'worked' and neglected her husband and children. A 'selfish' woman. She also drank. And, I suspected from the hushed innuendoes when her name was mentioned, she was associated with 'immorality' (her novels did not condemn sex outside marriage). Inevitably the book captivated me and stimulated fantasies of imaginary futures. Like Sylvia herself and like the central characters in her novels, I loved to write, to paint and to play the piano, dreamed of becoming an artist and escaping to the enchantment of big and glittering cities. Her books portrayed aspects of Maori life - which then seemed to me romantic, but which now appear condescending. But I knew of Maori life only through its portrayal in my book of 'Maoriland Fairy Tales' and the stories told me by the local district nurse, a neighbour, about the Maori children who lived up the valley in distant bush-clad hills.

Like so many 'bright' rural girls from unpropertied families without 'means', Sylvia had 'had to earn her living through teaching'. But, rather than 'give up her art', she turned teaching itself into an art form. Many rural girls wanted to be artists - writers, painters, musicians, actors, dancers - but knew that instead they would 'have to' go teaching or nursing. Sylvia seemed to 'have it all'. "Asylums", she wrote, "are full of artists who failed to say the things they must and famous tombs are full of those who did" (Ashton-Warner, 1960:169). She inspired in me, and in many of my contemporaries, a sense of possibility in realising our fantasies and dreams.

Today I would regard her work as my introduction to feminist pedagogy (although Ashton-Warner would not have used the term 'feminist' to describe herself). For, like contemporary feminist educators and researchers, she urged that we 'start with the personal', that we explore our 'native imagery'.

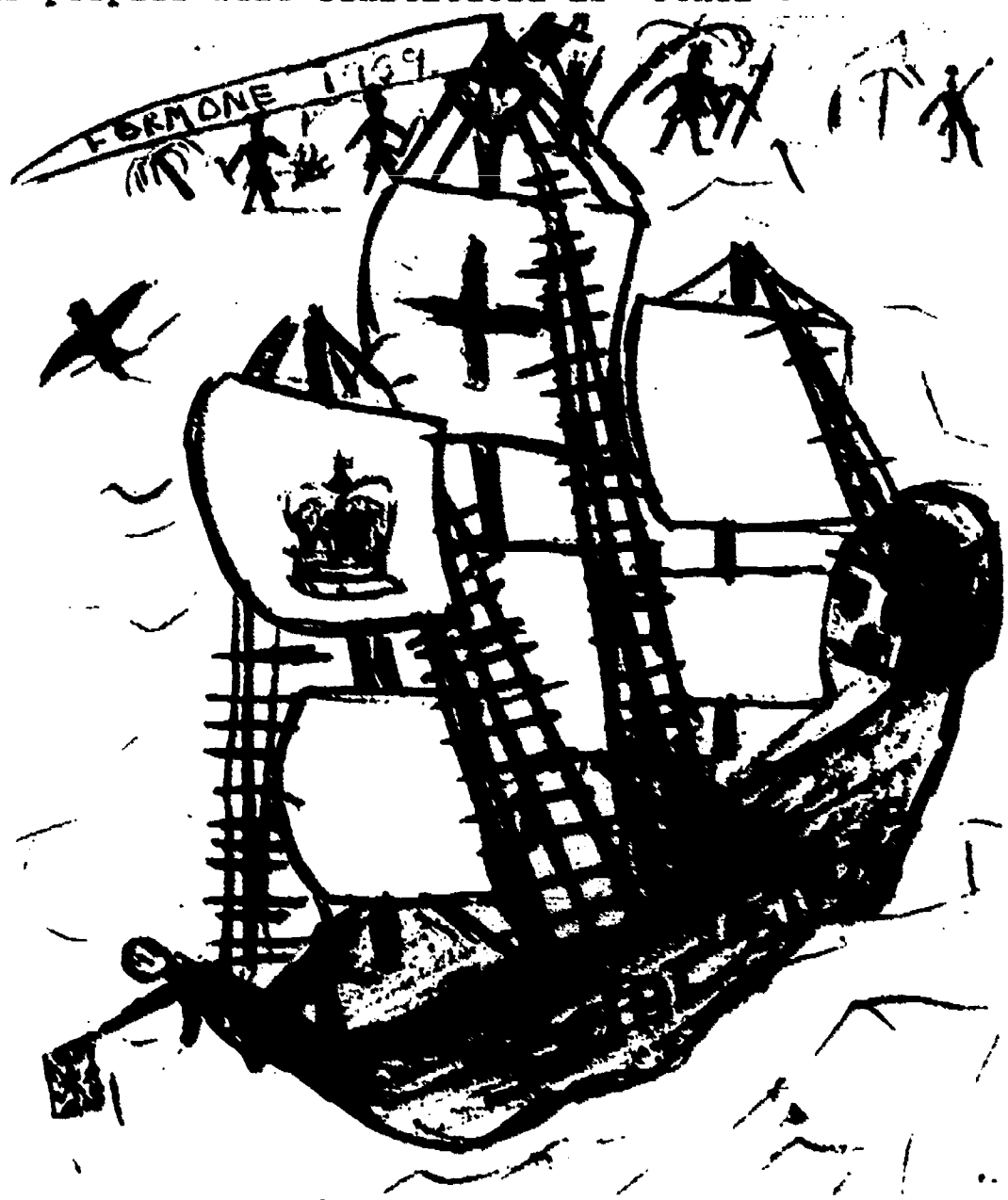
ii. From 'Native Imagery' To Feminist Scholarship

I begin with images from some of the school exercise books and paintings which I produced in the late 1950s and early 1960s during my schooling in New Zealand - in a rural primary school and a state girls' secondary school in a provincial town. These give access to my 'native imagery' - to my interpretations of the world in which I grew up and to my dreams, wishes and fantasies.

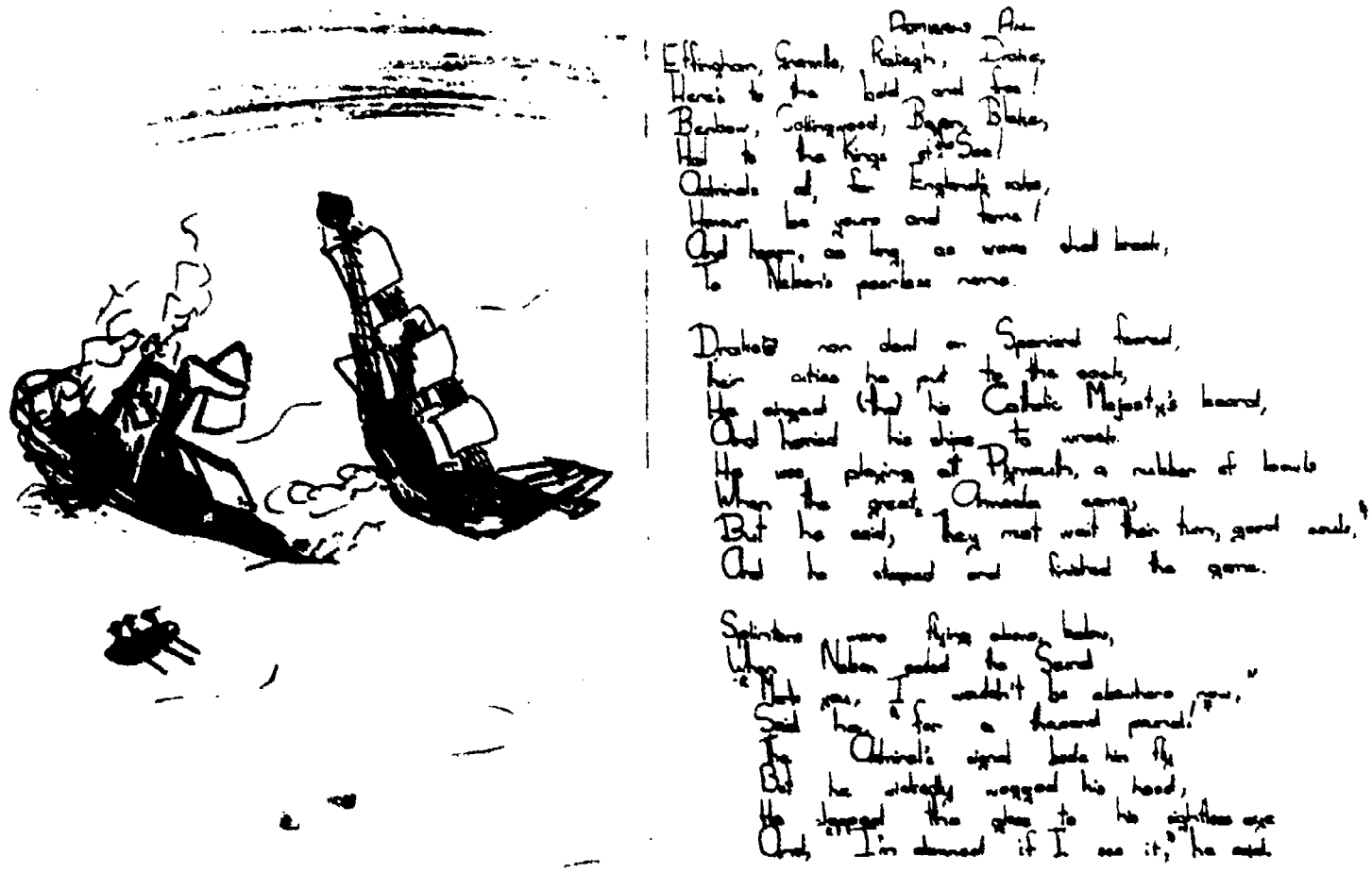
They are of interest in this academic paper not as personal memorabilia, but as examples of ways in which the 'grand narratives' and historical events of my childhood and adolescence contributed to the development of my adult perspective as a feminist educator. More broadly, they identify several of the generative themes of the academic women's studies created by my (post-World War Two) generation of Pakeha (New Zealand- born white) academic feminists.

1. Colonialism and Racism.

The first paintings illustrate my positioning in the 'grand narrative' of colonialism as reproduced in my reading of what the social studies curriculum of the late 1950s was about (McGeorge, 1981). This was the title page of an eleven year-old rural schoolgirls' social studies exercise book in her Form One year in 1959. The 'good ship social studies' bears- in descending order- the signs of the Christian cross, the British crown, the Union Jack - God, King, Country. On the beach stand 'hostile natives' - black men in grass skirts brandishing spears. What counted as 'school knowledge' (the social studies curriculum) rendered legitimate this 'way of knowing' colonisation. Indigenous peoples were constituted as 'other'.



We learned about the history of exploration- how Europe 'discovered' and 'took possession' of much of the rest of the world. The poems we studied reinforced the ideology of 'our glorious empire' and male battles. We learned that New Zealand had been part of this process. However, during the years of my schooling - the 1950s and early 1960s - it was believed that modern New Zealand was a truly egalitarian society. We were taught that equal rights and opportunities for Maori and Pakeha had been guaranteed in 1840 with the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi by Maori chiefs and the colonial government (McGeorge, 1981).



At primary school we never questioned the 'rightness' of colonialism. However, during our secondary schooling, 'our glorious empire' was to collapse. These momentous changes led many of my generation to question taken-for-granted ideas about the 'nature' of 'races' and the legitimacy of Pakeha domination.

It has proved very useful to discuss in classes these 1950s images of a child's interpretation of colonial relations. This

was particularly true in 1990, for this marked the sesquicentenary of the signing of the Treaty. Unlike Australia, which had marked its bicentenary with a huge celebration, New Zealand 'commemorated' rather than 'celebrated' its anniversary. For many Maori, as for Australian Aborigines, the birth of the colonial state was not cause for celebration. The 1980s had seen strong protests by Maori that the Treaty had not been honoured, that they had been dispossessed of their lands, forests and fisheries. The Treaty became one of New Zealand's most contested political issues (Orange, 1989). Today its clauses are interpreted as including Maori rights to be educated in the Maori language and to cultural autonomy. The text of my exercise book is not accurate ('all the chiefs' did not sign it, for example). In New Zealand university education and women's studies courses, as in other educational and feminist settings, the Treaty has been a central issue of debate. Issues of Maori- Pakeha relations and biculturalism have become increasingly prominent in New Zealand Pakeha feminist theory, and in women's studies courses. Some of the contradictions this raises will be addressed in a later section of this paper.

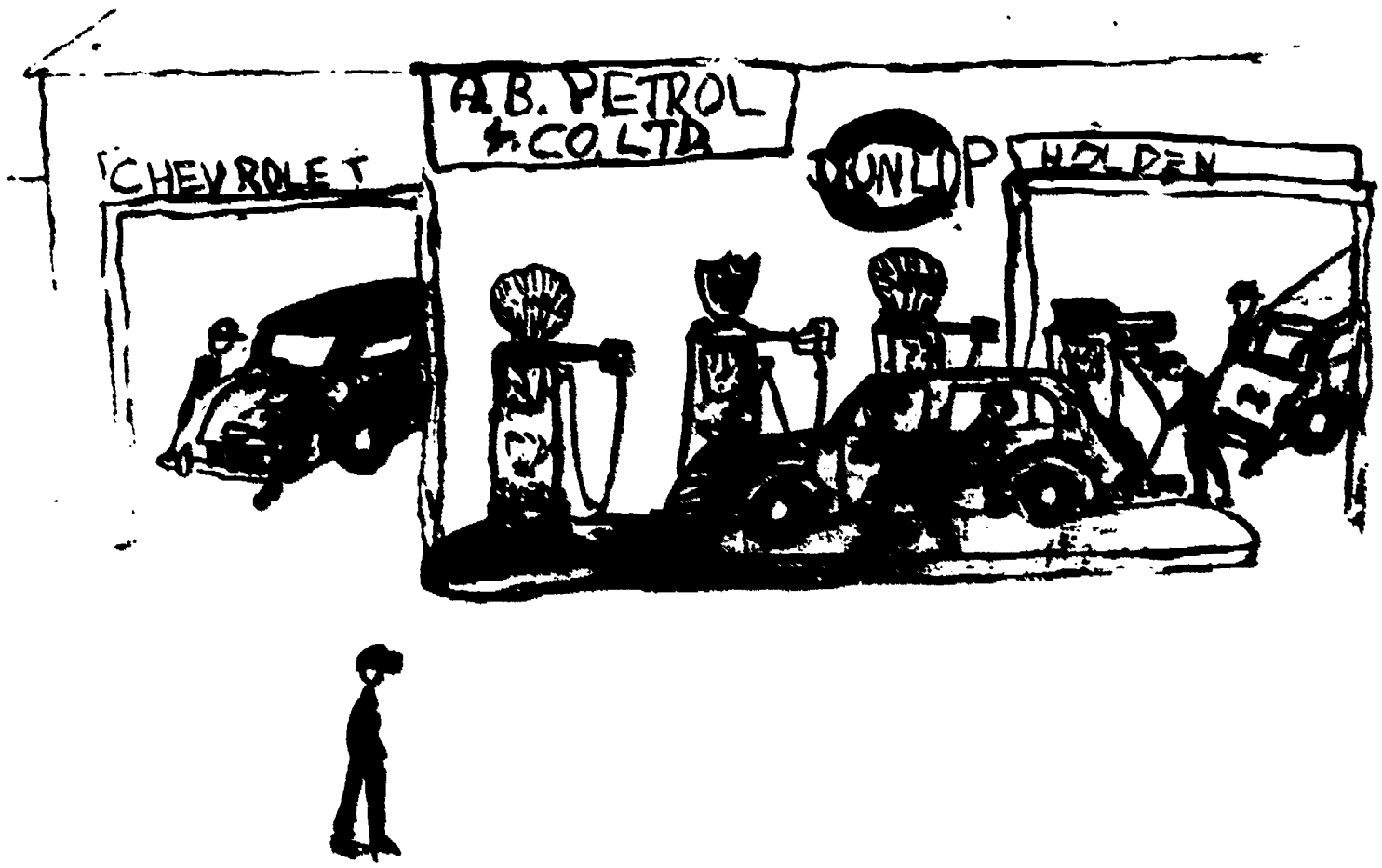
1. The Maoris recognized Queen Victoria as their Queen.
2. The Maoris could sell their land only to the Queen, (the government).
3. The Maoris were promised the Queen's protection and the rights and privileges of a British Subject.

The treaty could not come into force until all the chiefs had signed it and it took several months for this to be done.

2. Gender, Work and Female Sexuality.

The next set of pictures give access to the 'possibilities and constraints' experienced by Pakeha rural girls of the time and place. The paintings construct images of 'genderedness' in work and leisure activities. In these childhood impressions of everyday life in a rural town in the 1950s clear gender relations are apparent in the work force. Although the details in the paintings suggest a childhood fascination with machinery, the images I presented were of a gender-segregated workforce. Access to certain kinds of technical knowledge and occupations was not at that time seen as suitable for girls.

For example, this painting of a small-town garage (an eight year-old girl's impressions drawn from memory) suggests a great fascination with machines and technology. As the daughter of a stock agent (a person who buys and sells livestock on behalf of farmers), I was around farms and machinery a great deal. However, the painting suggests (from the absence of women figures) that the garage was a man's domain.



The local Agricultural and Pastoral show was a highlight of the country child's year. Again, my fascination with machinery is evident - but the person looking at the machines is male. In the foreground is a woman on a horse - showjumping. As young girls, many of us read books by Pat Smythe, the British Olympic champion, who wrote novels about girls our age. Her central female characters possessed great physical courage. Fantasies about sporting success were acceptable for New Zealand girls. Sports, however, were in general segregated. Competitive horse-riding - showjumping, one-day-events, dressage - were a rare exception and provided girls with models of equality between the genders.

The following two paintings were done at secondary school. To be able to take the 'academic' subjects which had at the time high status (Latin and French), I had to leave home and board at a state girls' school in a nearby provincial city. During this time in our adolescence, 'sexuality' became an important concern. 'Sexuality' and 'intellectuality' were often constituted as being in conflict or contradiction (Middleton, 1987a), as is evident from this painting done when I was a junior at the boarding hostel. "Seniors swotting" shows girls reading 'love comics', setting one another's hair in rollers and perfecting their suntans.

We were prepared for 'heterosexual coupledom' through regular school dances. In this picture, only heterosexual couples are dancing. At school our sexuality was closely regulated and monitored (Foucault, 1980)- we were taught very specific modes of conduct and of dress. Although I was a keen 'pop' pianist, it is evident from the painting (and from documented histories) that dance bands were a male preserve. Being part of a rock band was 'closed' to girls.

As children of the post-World War two baby boom, we were members of the first generation to be promised equality of opportunity in education. Children of both sexes, all races and classes were promised 'equal opportunities' to what the policy-makers had described as "a free education of the kind for which he is best fitted and to the fullest extent of his powers" (cited in Beeby, 1986: xxxii). The promise was one of 'meritocracy'. However, at the same time, it was believed that the morality, stability and cohesion of society rested on women's domesticity. Girls' experiences then were contradictory. On the one hand, within the discourse of liberalism, we were equal to (the same) as men. On the other,within the discourse of patriarchy, we were expected to become domestically feminine. Our intellectuality and our feminine heterosexuality were constituted as contradictory (Middleton, 1987a).

3. Dreams, Wishes and Fantasies.

My fantasy life was centred on 'escape to the city'- many rural daughters of the petit-bourgeoisie in the 1960s joined the 'rural-urban drift' - in search of tertiary education, work and/or glamour. As a young child, I adored ballet and theatre and other activities I associated with the city. My mother had been brought up in a city and had a love of 'urban culture'. As a primary school child, I was therefore taken to ballets, galleries and concerts. I was given bourgeois intellectual 'cultural capital' (Bourdieu, 1971).

Although being a professional full-time artist was not financially possible for women like me, 'escape to the city' was made possible by the educational provisions of the First Labour Government. 'Academic girls' could attend tertiary institutions on salaries if they were prepared to commit themselves to nursing or teaching. I went teaching because I wanted to go to university. My image of this had been shaped at secondary school, through role-models like my French teacher, through whom I had discovered existentialism, beatniks and 'the left bank'. The following painting was done in my first year at Victoria University. 'The cafe' is a place for intellectual debate rather than eating!

4 Pedagogical Applications

As a middle-aged, middle-class white feminist teacher, I am aware of my 'otherness' to many of the students to whom I am presenting this material - younger students, Maori students, students from overseas, working-class students beginning university study at a mature age. As Ellsworth (1989: 8) has observed,

> there are things that I as a professor could never know about the experiences, oppressions and understandings of other participants in the class.

For example, as a white middle-class woman, I cannot know directly what it means to experience racism as a brown working-class woman. For this reason, at this early stage of the course, the students read life-histories of other women of my age-group whose experiences have differed from mine. We study each woman's voice as an

> often contradictory intersection of voices constituted by gender, race, class, ability, ethnicity, sexual orientation, ideology etc (Ellsworth, 1989: 9).

My own personal account, together with published life-histories, are used to orient my students to a research assignment on women's educational life-histories. This assignment requires them each to interview two women, one of whom is to be of the post-World War Two generation (aged in her late thirties or early forties), the other either about twenty years older or twenty years younger. They are to compare and contrast the two women's experiences of education taking into account not only their individual biographies, but the historical events, educational policies and provisions, and the relevant power-relations (e.g. race, class, gender, town/ country) characteristic of the time and place. In C. Wright Mills' (1959) terms, the focus of the assignment is simultaneously on "biography, history and social structure".

I use my own generation as a reference- point for several reasons. First, today's remnants of the kinds of collectivism or 'socialism' which had influenced the educational policies and provisions of the post-war era are coming under attack from 'the new right' of the 1980s and 1990s and an understanding of these helps students to come to terms with present-day educational debates. Second, many of my 'mature' students are themselves of this age-group and many of my younger students have parents of the post-war generation. In fact, many of the students choose to interview their mothers and/or their grandmothers for this assignment.

Third, studying the experiences of other women of my age-group gives students a counterbalance to my life-history - a means of testing "the voice of the pedagogue" (Ellsworth, 1990). I tell the students that I am sharing with them my understanding of my own theoretical origins - developing a sociological

analysis of my own sociological position as a feminist educator.

Fourth, it was the educational experiences of our generation which in part generated the ideas of the second wave of feminism as a mass social movement. If students are to understand feminist educational theories, it is important that they understand the educational conditions, and wider social circumstances, of their production. By means of further case studies (women's autobiographies, biographies, sociological life-history research) I contextualise the origins of my own feminism historically, generationally and in terms of my social class origins.

I show them how at the time generous incentives from a benevolent welfare state enabled many of my generation and class -unlike our parents or previous generations - to attend both secondary schools and institutions of tertiary education. However, although promised equal opportunities which would be limited only on grounds of merit or ability, many were to experience marginality or alienation from the culture of the academic. As rural, as Maori, as working-class, as female - as combinations of all or some of these - many experienced a distancing, an exclusion from what counted as advanced educational knowledge. We lacked some of the academic cultural capital of the urban bourgeoisie. We sensed 'something wrong' (Mitchell, 1973), something unfair, about the education we were receiving. In the late 1960s, some gained access to 'radical' ideas - about class, about race, about gender, about sexual orientation - through academic studies or through radical social movements of the times. Within these movements, people's personal experiences of discrimination or oppression were translated from mere personal problems to broader public, or political issues (Mills, 1959). The sense of discomfort people felt made change seem desirable. The social theories to which we gained access and the security of times of economic prosperity and full employment made such change also seem possible (Middleton, 1985; 1987a).

Fifth, I offer aspects of my educational life-history as an example of a technique which they might like to explore with respect to their own lives. I tell them that if they wish, they can use themselves and/or each other as case studies for the essay. But I do not require them to do this because I respect their right to privacy. I do not wish to 'pry', to engage in the monitoring and surveillance of their private lives (Foucault, 1980). I do not wish to be what Ellsworth (1989) termed a pedagogical 'voyeur'.

However, immediately after my session on my schooling, I run one class based on the students' 'official personal' texts- photographs, school reports, exercise books. As 'official records' these 'depersonalise', objectify, make public aspects of personal biographies. Because I have used such texts as part of my own biographical narrative -made aspects of my schooling

visible to them - the students do not seem shy about doing this. They choose whether, or what, to provide. We discuss these documents in small groups whose membership is determined by the age of the student. This enables the younger students (aged nineteen or twenty) to speak freely - many in previous years had felt intimidated by what they saw as the greater experience of the mature students. As a woman in her early forties I found that my own life- history and my writing about the radicalisation of post-war feminist teachers spoke to the mature students, but alienated, constituted as 'other', some of the younger students. I have tried to provide for them a space in which my generation's analysis and experience does not silence or distort theirs. Within the groups the students discuss how their educations were similar to and different from one another. We then 'report back' and bring together the experiences and documents from the different generations. This becomes a basis, a grounding for our theorising during the course.

In our feminist pedagogy, as Dorothy Smith (1987: 127) has argued with respect to sociology,

> Opening an inquiry from the standpoint of women means accepting our ineluctable embeddedness in the same world as is the object of our inquiry.

FEMINIST EDUCATIONAL THEORISING IN THE 1990S: A NEW ZEALAND VIEW

An understanding of our own and other women's life-histories involves going beyond the personal. It requires that we also make accessible to our students the various theoretical tools which are available to feminists and to sociologists. However, it is important that such teaching does not take the form of an initiation into feminist theory as a disembodied form of knowledge. We must devise ways of teaching students the various feminist 'grand narratives' in ways which focus them on students' everyday personal, intellectual and political dilemmas. There is space here briefly to address only one example of such a problem: the issue of biculturalism in the New Zealand feminist classroom.

The sociological and other 'disciplinary' theories available to social scientists have been shown to constitute as 'other' people who are not middle-class white men (Greene, 1978; Martin, 1987; Smith, 1987). Similarly, some western feminist theories have rendered invisible or marginal women who are not of the dominant class, race, culture, sexual orientation, generation etc. In emphasising 'sisterhood' - the shared nature of women's experiences - some radical feminist discourses neglected or underemphasised the 'politics of difference' (Jones <u>et al</u>, 1990).

Socialist feminists have sought materialist explanations of differences between groups of women - those of different classes and, to a lesser extent, ethnicities/ cultures. Post-structuralists and postmodernists emphasise the multiple and

contradictory power-relations experienced by individual human subjects - "the fractured identities modern life creates" (Harding: 1987: 28). By means of a brief discussion of biculturalism, feminism and education in New Zealand, I shall argue, like Lyn Yates (1988:1) that

> we should not always defer to the class to look at 'class, sex and race' in interaction. Studies of the interaction of these issues are needed, but there is a need also to attempt to isolate issues and to attempt to theorise each as an issue in its own right.

In the 1970s and 1980s those of us who were researching, writing, teaching in New Zealand about women's lives found little published local feminist analysis to build on. We therefore 'imported' our feminist grand theories and fitted our analyses into the 'northern typology of feminisms': liberal, classical Marxist, radical feminist, socialist, Black and third world feminisms (Jaggar and Struhl, eds, 1978).

However, these theories - developed in other contexts - did not always 'fit' our local circumstances. For example, British Marxist and socialist feminist perspectives were derived from the experiences of working-class women in a country with a vast urban industrial proletariat. The lives of New Zealand rural women, for example, were difficult to conceptualise from within this perspective. Some Maori women saw Marxism as yet another European discourse which marginalised or rendered invisible their experience of racial/ colonial oppression (Awatere, 1984). Similarly, the northern hemisphere's liberal and radical feminist analyses were in many ways alien to New Zealander's everyday realities. For example, American liberal feminist portrayals of girls' socialisation into a 'sex-role stereotype' of simpering, passive, suburban femininity (Friedan, 1963) did not describe the reality of the boisterous, tomboyish New Zealand girl.

Maori women who had grown up within their tribal traditions argued that white women's analyses of female gender- roles as oppressive and of women as socialised for submissiveness did not articulate their experiences. For example, speaking of her own extended family, Rangimarie Rose Pere stated that

> My Maori female forebears, prior to the introduction of Christianity, and the 'original sin of Eve', were extremely liberated as compared to my English tupuna [ancestors]. With the exception of slaves (male and female), the women were never regarded as chattels or possessions; they retained their own names on marriage. Retaining their own identity and whakapapa (genealogy) was of the utmost importance and children could identify with the kinship group of either or both parents (Pere, 1988: 9).

Maori women who identify themselves as feminists have written of

the multiple marginalities and contradictions they experience- within Maori and Pakeha feminist and non-feminist settings - as Maori, as Maori women, as feminist women, as Maori feminists (rwin, 1989; Te Awekotuku, 1984).

Within the New Zealand feminist movement, contradictions between western feminism, Maori protocol and bicultural politics are central dilemmas. During the 1980s it became increasingly customary for New Zealand educational and feminist gatherings to assume some degree of biculturalism in their procedures. For Maori ceremonial protocol to take place, both genders must be present and play their differentiated parts in the ritual. This means that - in contrast to the gender-separatism (the 'women-only' convention) of western feminist gatherings - men must be present. In most tribal areas only men may speak on the marae (the tribal gathering-place where visitors are received and formally welcomed) (Makerete, 1983; Pere, 1983). In some schools, Maori women who are Principals choose to follow their tribal traditions by having men speak on their behalf in ritual greeting situations. In such settings, western feminism and anti-racism/ biculturalism come into conflict.

New Zealand Pakeha feminists have, in the main, accepted this cultural difference and view issues such as who should speak on the marae as a matter for Maori women and men to resolve. In this, Pakeha feminists have come to accept that western feminisms - like other modes of western thought - can embody 'imperialist' power-relations.

In New Zealand education, biculturalism is a strongly contested issue. Theories of 'pluralism' or 'multiculturalism' in state schools are rejected by many Maori (and some Pakeha) New Zealanders on the grounds that since the object of these is to combat Pakeha ignorance and racism, they benefit Pakeha, rather than Maori, students and do little, if anything, to alleviate the disenchantment, unemployment, and imprisonment of Maori youth (Walker, 1985). Viewing state schooling as reproducing their oppression, many Maori are arguing for separate, Maori-controlled, educational institutions. These are seen as a means of reviving Maori language, protecting cultural autonomy, of developing curricula which teach tribal knowledge and which approach the academic disciplines from Maori perspectives (Awatere, 1984; Smith and Smith, 1990; Walker, 1985).

It is Maori education movements, rather than western-style feminist activities, that the majority of Maori women educators have chosen as their priorities. The kohanga reo (Maori language preschools) have been largely an initiative of Maori women. They have been an outstanding success, not only in the teaching of Maori language to preschool children, but in their empowering and politicising of Maori adults (mainly women) (Irwin, 1990). Maori parents have been able to exert considerable pressure on state primary schools to provide bilingual and/ or total immersion

Maori language classes for children coming through from kohanga reo. However, racism and hostility in some communities make 'integrated' versions of biculturalism difficult (Middleton, Oliver, et al, 1990). Separate Maori language schools ('kura kaupapa Maori') are preferred by many Maori parents (Smith and Smith, 1990). Maori withdrawal from 'the Pakeha education system' and the establishment of separate Maori education systems is the project of many Maori women and men in the 1990s.

Similar trends are evident in university programmes, including women's studies. My own campus, the University of Waikato, has a well-established Centre for Women's Studies. The Pakeha women who run the Centre and the programme are struggling with ways of making the centre and the courses bicultural. A suggestion was made to appoint a Maori woman to a tenured position. She would teach a course in Maori women's studies, and contribute Maori perspectives to the core theory courses. This proposal was discussed by Maori staff (women and men) at a Maori academics' caucus and was strongly opposed on the grounds that Maori women's studies courses should be based in the Maori Department. To employ a Maori woman academic within a Pakeha-dominated women's studies centre would be to isolate her, to constitute her as 'individual', to sever her from the Maori academic community which could provide her with a collectivist epistemological base. Such an appointment, it was argued, would benefit Pakeha, not Maori, women. A structure appropriate to the educational requirements of both groups is in process of being worked out - a structure based on the premise that in our university women's studies programmes, as in New Zealand education more generally, both separatism and bicultural forms of intellectual encounter are necessary. Perhaps in this respect New Zealand women will be able to develop theoretical positions which contribute something unique to the international debates within the discipline.

At present, few Maori women students are attracted to university women's studies courses - including my course in the sociology of women's education. Western feminism is seen as largely alienating. Similarly, younger student teachers, faced with the terrors of unemployment and having to face anti-feminist job-interview panels, may find irrelevant - even 'quaint' - our generation's views of 'women's liberation'. I have argued that the use of life-history methods as pedagogical techniques can help students and teachers understand the circumstances of one another's possibilities. To develop pedagogies which are authentic to our personal and collective histories, we must explore the ideas and imagery which are indigenous to our circumstances - geographical, cultural, historical and material, generational. This provides teachers and students with ways of understanding how our own subjectivities have been constituted and with means of making visible the alienations which result from interpretations of our personal and collective histories purely through the eyes of theorists whose perspectives have arisen elsewhere.

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