

Movements

When asked to consider the writing of this introductory article in relation to the theme (“movement”) for this issue of *Junctures*, it seemed that I would have nothing to contribute from the perspective of a Māori understanding of the theme.

However, as I have pondered this i te ata tū (in the wee small hours of the morning)*, there has been a ‘movement’ in my thinking. Perhaps there may be something that might make some small contribution. At this point, I wish to make it quite clear that these thoughts are mine alone and as the thinker of these thoughts I happen to be ethnically Māori and of Kai Tahu (southern tribe) whakapapa or genealogical descent (as well as of Polish and Irish ancestry). Thus, with the understanding by readers of my Māoriness, I should like to roam a little and take readers along on the roam if they so desire. I add here, that I have a particular way of expressing myself in the written word that others have since coined a Māori form of English. It uses the passive voice as does te reo Māori (Māori language) which is based on tikaka or Tikanga as our northern iwi (tribes) call it. This is the idea that the importance is contained in the things being done rather than in the doer of the things. My world view, it should be added, is not like that of many people with whom I have either close or distant relationships or acquaintanceships. It begins with a deliberate movement by me to agree to conception, and travels and weaves through the lives and deaths of others near and far, leading ultimately to my own ending which will take place with my full agreement. I do not mean to suggest that I know the time or the how, only that I am sure that life will require my agreement to leave as it did to arrive.

A not insignificant part of this life and world view has been attached to tertiary study, which moved in upon me very late in life if compared to most of those within the world of academia and within whose working lives, at least, I move. As a consequence of that movement into study, I took my world view and compared it with what Māori Studies had to offer. I also brought my world view to Anthropology, Education, Indigenous Studies and History. What I discovered was that most of those working within these disciplines held fast to their particular

* Note to readers: it is the practice of this journal to translate each Māori word – except proper nouns, e.g. place names, names of tribes, names of people – in the text on its first occurrence; or where longer explanations are necessary, these will be found in endnotes.

world view and jealously guarded their particular theoretical understandings, as well as their methods and methodologies, epistemologies and pedagogies. And, though they borrowed terms from outside of their 'discipline', the inability for movement across and between these academic spheres seemed to me to be unnecessarily rigid. When, in my naivety, I stated that "it was just like so and so", this was seldom appreciated. It was from this understanding of a remarkably high number of points of similarity between disciplines as I saw it, that what stood out for me was Māori Studies, because people there were happy to take something from another discipline into their own.

I most easily adapted to what these Studies offered along with the multiplicity of theories espoused within it from across disciplines. In other words, as an academic subject, Māori Studies seemed more fluid as well as more eclectic in the things it encompassed and enveloped. I better understood that form of movement than I did the theoretical perspectives and seeming lack of movement or accommodation of other views within 'their' subject matter as experienced within other disciplines. There seemed within these disciplines a pronounced preference to holding fast to a more singular approach and a particular way of moving through the academic journey that students travel along. I often heard the term "holistic" but seldom saw it in practice. Of course the term was and continues to be applied to things Māori. Also, among the experiences I had outside Māori Studies was that there was often criticism of 'other' disciplines and 'their' lack of ontological correctness.

When I eventually came to the writing of my own doctoral thesis after five years of moving in, out and through various disciplines as a mature student, I did so from a multi- or cross-disciplinary perspective. I moved in my research through Geography, History, Anthropology, Māori Studies, Education and of course Kai Tahu understandings of place and space.

Like our tūpuna (or ancestors) I also moved physically and through the written word around the Pacific. I caught glimpses of our similarities and differences as we of the Pacific have travelled and settled and return-journeyed and then become who we are today. Today this form of physical movement is academically named "diaspora". In all of the discoveries I encountered about how to move into and through the research journey, the most lasting impression was of the 'cultural othering' of we who are now described as Māori or Polynesian or Pacific peoples or indigenous peoples; of how we have been researched and reported on and theorised about and fitted into 'other' world views; and of how many of us have been so moved from our former homeplaces and landscapes and world views that the only way some of us are now able to recognise our indigenous selves is through the word of a 'cultural other' describing who and what they think or thought we are, were, do and did. Such movement has the ability to move one to tears or to make one marvel at the movement.

I hope your moving through the various contributions within this issue of *Junctures* creates a form of movement understanding that is both familiar and new.

Nō reira ki a koutou kā kaitito o ēnei tuhika, hei hapai te pukapuka kua tito koutou, he mihi. Mauri ora ki a tātou katoa.

Khyla Russell is the recently appointed Kaitohutohu at Te Kura Matatini ki Otago (Senior Manager Māori at Otago Polytechnic) in Dunedin, Aotearoa/New Zealand. Her PhD is in Anthropology and her thesis focuses on Kai Tahu perceptions of landscape and its relatedness to identity.