

A Critical Inquiry into Indigenous Knowledge Claims

Presentation to the Department of Education

University of Cambridge

5th May 2011

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Abstract

In this presentation I critically examine the claims made for the inclusion of indigenous knowledge into New Zealand universities. My focus is on the fundamental contradiction at the core of indigenous knowledge. The creation of disciplinary knowledge with its own concepts, content, procedures, and institutions requires that knowledge be independent from the social location within which it emerged. This means separating the 'knower' from the knowledge. But indigenous knowledge, as I will show in a number of examples, is subject to criteria that maintains the link between the knowledge 'producer' and the 'product'. Along with analysing that criteria I ask: What are its consequences of including into the university a type of knowledge that is neither universal, public, nor objective?

1. Introduction

The purpose of this presentation is to argue that the indigenous knowledge being produced in universities in New Zealand is social knowledge (also referred to as everyday, doxic, or cultural knowledge) and not scientific (epistemic) knowledge. For that reason indigenous knowledge should not have a place in the university. I make the argument by putting to the test the claims made for indigenous knowledge.

These claims are:

- That indigenous knowledge is a scientific episteme.
- That the episteme of one socio-cultural group is of equal value relative to that of any other socio-cultural group.
- That the science produced in universities is 'Western' cultural knowledge.
- That 'Western' science is complicit with exploitative capitalism and follows the 'logic of the commodity'.
- That indigenous knowledge offers an alternative – the 'logic of the gift' – an exchange rather than exploitative relationship. This is a way to understand and explain the world, 'the gift episteme', that recognises as the purpose of science the production of the sustainable relationship of reciprocity and balance between the human and natural world and between humans and humans. It is claimed that this exchange relationship is found in people who are closest to nature and whose social relations have not be corrupted by capitalist commodification. Accordingly, these people are in the main indigenous peoples.

The claim to provide a 'post-capitalist' theory of science is not confined to indigenous academics. For example, Kailo talks about 'a new matrixⁱ of incultural knowledge circulation and activism centred on archaic and modern gift economies. The vision emerges from the coming-together of several emerging trends within critical white studies, green feminism and postcolonialism' (Kailo, 2008, p.1). Critical pedagogy, a politicised strand found amongst some sociologists of education, with its claims to have developed a 'post-capitalist theory of surplus valueⁱⁱ' is, no doubt, within the 'critical white studies' mentioned by Kailo.

2. The New Zealand Case

Mason Durie, a leading Maori academic (2003) refers to 'Maori worldviews, [that] like those of many indigenous people, are based on values and experiences that have evolved over centuries. They form the basis for a knowledge system that is distinctly different from other systems such as science and the Judaeo-Christian philosophies' (p. 13). Indigenous knowledge has had considerable success in New Zealand. The story of its inclusion as a discipline in New Zealand universities can be traced to the development of a kaupapa Maori approach to the social sciences developed during the 1990s in education departments,

particularly at Auckland and Massey universities. (Kaupapa or indigenous Maori knowledge is also termed 'tikanga Maori' or matauranga Maori'.) A major event was the publication of Linda Smith's influential book *Decolonising Methodologies* in 1999 and the adoption by the Ministry of Education of the 'Durie Principles'ⁱⁱⁱ several years later. While not officially adopted by the Ministry of Education, the Maori Tertiary Strategy, commissioned by the Ministry in 2004 and still on-going, has played a significant role in incorporating the kaupapa Maori approach into higher education and in shaping the response of the universities to that inclusion.

In the past decade, the numbers of kaupapa Maori informed masters and doctoral theses and articles published in academic journals has grown exponentially. The 2002 establishment of the well-funded National Centre for Maori Excellence, Nga Pae o te Maramatanga, based at the University of Auckland provides the core national infrastructure. The Centre publishes journals, holds national seminars and international conferences, promotes postgraduate courses and masters and doctoral research, and serves as a major international hub in the indigenous knowledges network.

Marie and Haig (2006) are amongst the few critics^{iv} in New Zealand analysing 'the development of Maori science, paradigms and methodologies'. They argue that

'it should be of considerable concern that KMR [kaupapa Maori research] is described as "world-class" when its methodology has not been subject to critical evaluation and that little of the research has been published in peer-reviewed journals'. Statements requiring research scientists to endorse this methodology are now variously found in government science policies, national-level research funding guidelines, national and university ethics committees guidelines and professional bodies' research codes of conduct. Further, many departments in the state services sector have commissioned KMR and a wide range of disciplines within the tertiary sector now teach KMR methodology as a stand-alone, fully-fledged conception of inquiry' (Marie & Haig, 2006, p. 18).

Perhaps the full extent of the institutionalisation of Maori indigenous knowledge into higher education can be seen by its acceptance into the Performance-Based Research Fund (PBRF) system (similar to the British Research Assessment Exercise [RAE]) which is used to audit

research in New Zealand universities. Indigenous research has its own category within which indigenous epistemologies and methodologies are judged according to specific criteria which include the recognition of the tribe as the Maori socio-political entity and kinship as a structuring principle of social group categorisation. An article written by the PBRF Education Review Panel refers to this.

In accordance with TEC (Tertiary Education Commission) guidelines, the review panel members considered the impact of Maori research on iwi, hapu and whanau [tribe, sub-tribe and extended family] in forming a judgement on the quality of the research. Perhaps the most obvious feature of the success of Maori academics in education lies in developing alternative and critical epistemological models and research methodologies (Alcorn, Bishop, Caardno, Crooks, Fairburn-Dunlop, Hattie, Jones, Kane, O'Brien and Stevenson 2004, p. 281).

In addition, kaupapa Maori has been taken up as a legitimate form of science by government departments. An example of this is the New Zealand's Energy Safety Services household safety pamphlet, which outlines the current electrical code of practice recently issued for household use:

From a Maori perspective, the term 'earth' or Papatuanuku translates as Earth Mother—
the source of all energy. When aligning this concept to the flow of electricity, a useful parallel can be made to the 3-pin plug

Electricity Maori

Active (phase) Spiritual element, active, tapu

Neutral Physical element, neutral, noa

Earth Mauri or life force derived from Papatuanuku or Earth Mother

(Deputy Secretary, Energy Safety Service, 2004)

The comprehensive way in which Maori indigenous knowledge is incorporated into the New Zealand university owes much to the enabling context of biculturalism – which I discussed in yesterday's presentation on Maori education^v. Like the university, government research funding agencies not only recognise but require a Maori indigenous knowledge approach.

According to the Ministry of Research, Science and Technology (MoRST), the government agency responsible for major research funding until 2011:

Maori Development relates to research concerning Maori as tangata whenua [indigenous people] and considers, particularly, research by Maori, for Maori and possibly employing Maori methodologies (MoRST, 2004, p. 2).

'Various New Zealand acts of legislation including the *Health Research Council Act 1990*, the *Crown Research Institutes Act 1992*, and the *Foundation for Research, Science and Technology Amendment Act 1993* all express relevant provisions for Maori research' (Marie and Haig, 2009, p. 120).

3. Maori Indigenous Knowledge

Two stages may be identified in the development of indigenous Maori knowledge. The first stage is from Anne Salmond's^{vi} influential 'Maori epistemologies' (1985). Direct references to mythology appear during this stage both as content and as a way to authorise the writer as someone who identifies with the social group, and for that reason, is eligible to write about the sacred content.

Another influential text which drew on Salmond's work stated that

'Māori epistemology is based on a view of the world in which the unifying ontological principle is whakapapa (manifesting mauri and wairua)^{vii} rather than matter (driven by mechanism). Manifestations of mauri and wairua arise as a result of influences and "laws" whose meaning cannot be expressed in terms of pure mechanism or contingency. It is tempting to make a comparison with the Western concept of teleology, but any "purpose" apparent in the unraveling of Māori whakapapa is driven by knowledge of the past, rather than being directed towards some future goal. For this reason it is sometimes said that Māori are a people who walk backwards into the future, meaning that it is the deeds of the ancestors (real and mythical) that control

and guide the present generation and help determine the fate of future generations' (Roberts and Mills 1998, p. 61).

Such irrational mysticism does nothing to develop scientific credibility however. In the second stage of the production of Maori indigenous knowledge, mythological references disappear to be replaced by a 'sustainability' discourse.

Initially the strategy appears to be doing what science did in the 17th and 18th Centuries - eradicating magic and belief in the supernatural from Europe's intellectual culture (Israel, 2001, p.4). While science's 'sacred' status, a status which, as John Beck discusses in his chapter in *Social Realism, Knowledge and the Sociology of Education*, was the means by which science first emerged as it separated itself from profane or everyday social knowledge. To complete that task however required moving from the authority of the knower to authority intrinsic to the science discipline itself.

In addition, Maori indigenous knowledge is creating a credible disciplinary infrastructure based at the Centre for Maori Excellence. It would at first appear then that Maori indigenous knowledge is making the transition from social knowledge with its instrumental tasks of cementing social bonds and maintaining the group's socio-economic polity, to epistemic scientific knowledge. The latter is – to use Popper's description of theories that make up the logic of scientific knowledge - 'Theories are nets cast to catch what we call "the world": to rationalize, to explain, and to master it.' (1972: 59).

However the project is doomed to fail. Creating the discipline's infrastructure of content, concepts, procedures, and institutions depends, as Rob Moore and Michael Young (2010) argue, on the creation of intrinsic knowledge that can remain independent from the social location within which it emerged. That independence comes from separating the knower from the knowledge. Maori indigenous knowledge *has not because it cannot*, for reasons I will outline, separated knowledge from the knower. Without the independence that enables criticism, scientific knowledge does not become different from social knowledge.

There is no doubt that the task of removing mythology for a more scientific discourse is relatively successful. The sustainability rhetoric that is increasingly visible in indigenous knowledges promotes indigenous knowledge as an innovative approach to sustainability

science, something of interest to the world wide scientific community and beyond. In addition, it maintains the distinction between indigenous knowledge and 'Western' knowledge required for the former's own claims to be a separate knowledge. It does this by conflating science and the economy, in other words by instrumentalising science, something that proves to be its Achilles heel. 'Western' science is considered to be aligned with a rapacious capitalism in which the relations between humans and nature and between humans and humans are reduced to the commodity. The science claimed for indigenous knowledge is similarly inherently tied to the economy but to a supposed 'post-capitalist' economic system that uses the best of a romanticised traditional redistributive economy – the 'logic of the gift' with the fruits of technology^{viii}.

The error in this logic is the reduction of knowledge to the economy. Science is of course used for economic purposes. That is the purpose of technology. However instrumentalised knowledge is social knowledge. Its economic and social purposes are tied to the interests of the society it serves. This will always restrict its critical capacity. What indigenous knowledge has done by insisting on the 'logic of the gift' is to insist upon the instrumental purpose of knowledge and to develop criteria concerning who, what, and how Maori indigenous knowledge can be developed that maintain that instrumental function. In this way, indigenous knowledge remains social knowledge.

There is a fundamental contradiction at the core of the claim made for indigenous knowledge as science. The creation of scientific knowledge requires that knowledge to be independent of the social location within which it emerged. The independence comes from separating the knower from the knowledge. But Maori indigenous knowledge, as I will show in a number of examples, is by Maori, for Maori and about Maori. The contradiction cannot be resolved because the claim made that Maori indigenous knowledge is a scientific episteme is not matched by its true character as the social knowledge of a racialised socio-cultural group. Its purpose is to serve the interests of the group to which it is tied.

4. Different types of Knowledge

Following Durkheim, Popper, Munz and the social realists in the sociology of education such as Michael Young, Rob Moore, John Beck, Johann Muller, Karl Maton, and Leesa Wheelahan, I argue that indigenous knowledge is social knowledge and that social knowledge and

scientific knowledge are different types of knowledge. Durkheim states this plainly and explains why. 'In the history of human thought there are two kinds of mutually contrasting truths, namely, mythological and scientific truths. In the first type, all truth is a body of propositions which are accepted without verification, as against scientific truths, which are always subjected to testing or demonstration' (Durkheim 1983, p. 86).

The difference between the two types of knowledge lies in content, function and purpose and in how the knowledge claims are authorised. I develop these points in the following discussion:

Scientific knowledge requires all these four features:

Conceptual. According to Kant 'All rational knowledge is based either on concepts, or on the construction of concepts' (Kant, 1781, 1993 p. 535). Two centuries later, Emile Durkheim agreed. 'If we are to think in concepts, we have to put aside the emotions which cause us to act, and reject feelings which would prevent us isolating the intellectual element. Concepts are isolated from acts, and they are posited for their own sake' (Durkheim, 1983, p. 82). In other words, concepts separate us from the world of experience, and while the concept may sometimes be useful in explaining our experience, concepts are what Peter Munz calls the 'simple act of reason' (Munz, 1985, p. 84), not observation from sensory experience.

Objective. Karl Popper (1972) referred to his 'use of the terms "objective" and "subjective" as not unlike Kant's'. He (Kant) 'uses the term "objective" to indicate that scientific knowledge should be justifiable, independently of anyone's whim: a justification is "objective" if in principle it can be tested and understood by anybody' (p. 44). Where Popper departs from Kant, is in his view that 'scientific theories are never fully justifiable or verifiable, but that they are nevertheless testable' (Popper, 1972, p. 44).

Public. In universities, knowledge is produced, in what Karl Popper calls the 'public character of scientific method' with its 'free criticism' (1945, 2003, p. 241) and 'the various social institutions which have been designed to further scientific objectivity and criticism; for instance the laboratories, the scientific periodicals, the congresses' (p. 242). Similarly, Rob Moore and Michael Young (2010, p. 30), refer to 'the public arenas of collective judgement' where the 'objectivity of knowledge' is guaranteed by 'the specific practices of the

disciplinary field - procedures, codes, systems'. That concept of the 'public' judgement of knowledge production through testing and criticism is at the heart of the process.

Universal. All people can engage in 'the simple act of reason' regardless of age, gender, race, religion, or culture. Whether people do so is another matter. As Munz points out, 'the growth of knowledge is very intermittent and discontinuous' (1985, p. 74). The conditions in a society must be those that allow trial and error, challenge and criticism for that engagement to occur.

5. Testing Maori indigenous Knowledge

What I want to do in this section is to test the indigenous knowledge and research approach against the four identified criteria of what is science: conceptual, objective, public, and universal.

Universal and public

What happens when science and social knowledge are confused? I use an example from my own institution to demonstrate this. The example is from a published source. It concerns the research methodology used by Dr Melanie Cheung, a scientist at the University of Auckland (University of Auckland News, 1 April 2011, p. 8) who identifies herself as affiliated to two tribes: Ngati Rangitihi and Te Arawa. Under the guidance of several kaupapa Maori academics (whose names are followed by their tribal affiliations), Dr Cheung explains how she practises her science (the neuroscience of Huntington's Disease) in accord with 'Tikanga Maori'. Following consultation with her whanau [extended family] and kaumatua [elders] from her iwi [tribe] Dr Cheung describes the way she has developed 'Tikanga Maori methodologies for working with human brain tissue and primary human brain cells'. She prays, by mourning 'the person who's gone and I use some cultural practices from tangi to say goodbye to that person, to farewell them to Hawaiki, the place we go when we die. And then I welcome the cells to their new function, which is not feeling or thinking any more but growing in a dish to help with my research, which I hope will ultimately help other people'.

I do not criticise her obvious desire to be sensitive and respectful to the families of those human brain tissue and cells with which she works. That is an ethical approach to research.

However, what can be criticised is the socio-cultural form that the respect takes. If scientists can only use human body parts from Maori participants in accordance with prescribed socio-cultural practices, what happens to scientists whose own race or beliefs prevent them from using a culturally prescribed methodology? Research ethics of respect, disclosure, and accountability should operate regardless of a scientist's personal beliefs.

Not only is the inclusion or exclusion of religio-cultural beliefs a problem for the secular science community, so too is the criteria applied to those who undertake research using Maori participants. In this example, Dr Cheung identifies her membership of a tribe. She is authorised by senior researchers whose tribal affiliation is also included. The problem here is that membership of the group is exclusive. Not anyone can join. Tribal affiliation is established by genetic links to the past. (The real puzzle is why New Zealand has embraced tribalism, given that it is a 'blood and soil' social organisation – however explaining that would take all my time.)

Practices that control who can do Maori research are well institutionalised in New Zealand universities. In a popular textbook used widely for over a decade now in research methods courses throughout New Zealand, the chapter on Maori research draws on a number of authoritative Maori researchers. The writers describe the criteria for undertaking Maori research. 'Maori researchers are differentiated according to iwi [tribe], hapu [sub-tribe], or whanau [extended family] links. Furthermore, age and gender may also be a factor in the research process. In terms of empowerment, it cannot be assumed that it is the researcher who is necessarily doing all the empowering. Within a Maori context, mana or power remains with an individual and is not something that can be given' (Jahnke and Taiapa, 1999, p. 48).

The single most important mechanism controlling research involving Māori is the university ethics process which approves who researches what and how. All universities have these policies. The example I use here is from my own institution, The University of Auckland.

Maori research is profoundly instrumentalised. Its purpose is:

to empower and build capacity' (which) 'may be by means of: Developing a partnership between whanau, hapū, or iwi and the university researchers and

Involving Māori in the organisation, management, and conduct of the project (Applicants' Manual, 2009, p. 20).

The Ethics Manual gives detailed instruction about the appropriate Māori groups with whom researchers must consult. The researcher must identify the group(s) with whom consultation has taken place, describe the consultation process, and attach evidence of the support of the group(s).

The researcher's race is a criteria in the process – an extremely disturbing development. 'If the research involves participants who are recruited because they are Maori (*or the research involves a topic of particular interest to Maori*) the Māori researcher should list his or her *tribal affiliations* (pepeha)' (my italics). Tribal affiliation cannot mean anything other than 'genetic heritage' (i.e. race). While a person can become a New Zealander, one cannot become a Maori. That is determined by one's biological descent. No amount of fudging about 'cultural identification' and 'affiliation' can disguise that fact. For example, in order to be on the Māori electoral roll, one must be a 'Māori', which is defined as 'the descendant of a Māori'. Another example is the requirement of Māori educational scholarships for evidence of genealogical descent as well as cultural identification. The evidence is a genealogical chart authorised by a family kaumatua.

A third criteria that restricts Maori research is the requirement that Maori ethics approval be acquired if '*the research involves a topic of particular interest to Māori*'. (Applicants' Manual, 2009). The implications of this phrase are deeply problematic. Potentially it could refer to all research whether or not Maori participants are involved.

The combination of such tight control over who can undertake the research and what can be researched means that the Maori indigenous knowledge fails the test of science – that research be public and universal; that it be produced, tested, scrutinised and criticised by anyone in accordance with procedures developed within a discipline, and as a result of this scrutiny and criticism, be accepted, rejected, or changed.

Conceptual and objective

Because indigenous knowledge remains tied to the knower it cannot be objective; it is subjective. In explaining his use of the term “subjective”, Popper notes that the ‘word “subjective” is applied by Kant to our feelings of conviction (of varying degrees)’ (1972, p. 44). In this way the knowledge product remains tied to its “knower” because the purpose of the knowledge is tied to the beliefs and commitment of the scientist. Indeed, indigenous knowledge is determinedly subjective, a position demonstrated by Linda Smith’s hostility to objectivity. She refers to ‘objectification (as) as process of dehumanisation’ (Smith, 1999, p. 39).

Scientific knowledge is objective because the ideas are separated from the scientist who produced the knowledge. Ideas are not objective when first created. This is the case despite a scientist insisting on his or her objectivity. ‘If scientific objectivity were founded . . . upon the individual scientist’s impartiality or objectivity, then we must say goodbye to it’ (Popper, 1945, 2003, p. 240). Immanuel Kant recognised that the use of concepts was required in order to achieve objectivity so that the concept could be applied by other thinkers to other situations. But concepts are insufficient on their own to guarantee objectivity because while concepts are the theoretical means of abstraction they are also tied to content, and content is socially situated. Something more is needed in order to produce objective science.

6. The Authority to Know

That extra dimension is what makes science and what makes science universal. It is what *authorises* the knowledge claim. Where does the authority for knowledge come from? For science the authority is in its conceptual nature *and* in its procedures. It doesn’t matter who the scientist is – whether he or she declares objectivity or subjectivity. What matters is that the person’s ideas are subjected to the authority of procedures that enable criticism. These include the accurate use of the discipline’s concepts and the accurate application of conceptual analysis to content; the peer review of the ideas so that scrutiny and criticism occur regardless of who said what. For knowledge to be objective, the knower must be separated from the known. The procedures of the separation are the means by which the knowledge becomes objective. Those procedures are also what authorises the knowledge claims to be in accordance with the disciplinary episteme. ‘To be objective is to aspire to knowledge that *bears no trace of the knower* – knowledge unmarked by prejudice or skill, fantasy or judgement, wishing or striving’ (Daston and Galison (2010, p. 17)(my italics).

It is not enough for the social scientist to say that the knowledge is 'true' because it serves the interests of the people that it is about. Maori indigenous knowledge accepts uncritically what people say about themselves. The most infamous example of the distortion of history that occurs when folklore (ie. social knowledge) becomes uncriticised scholarship is the Te Papa Moriori incident. My description of the incident is taken from historian, Peter Munz's (2000), account in the scholarly journal *History Now*. He describes how Te Papa, the National Museum of New Zealand, mounted an exhibition of the Chatham Islands and their Moriori inhabitants without reference to the most important event in the history of the Moriori – their massacre by the invading Maori tribes in 1835 where the invaders, following their customs, 'killed and ate, or enslaved the local population' (p. 13). Nor only was the 'gross historical misrepresentation' (p. 13) a problem for the historians who drew the Museum's attention to that omission, but so too was the Museum's claim that 'there are two equally valid systems of knowledge that may be applied to telling our stories' (p. 14).

Support for the 'two ways of knowing' idea came from eminent Maori academic, Professor (now Sir) Mason Durie. Munz detailed Durie's three justifying points. 'First there are many different standards of knowledge and each standard reflects the cultural situation of the historian. There is no real truth. Second, the Museum is justified in suppressing the truth about the massacre because it accepts the inherent value of matauranga Maori [Maori knowledge]. The Museum is committed to the recognition of different knowledge bases. Third, the exhibition is not about the past, but about Moriori aspirations' (p. 14).

Munz devotes the remainder of his article to explaining why Durie's argument is mistaken. He reminds us that Maori matauranga and scholarship serve two entirely different purposes. The former is a 'belief system designed to bond people into a community, and whether or not it gives a true factual account is irrelevant'. 'Scholarship and science . . . are based on the application of unrestricted criticism and scrutiny to all beliefs, especially those alleged to be taboo. Its purpose is simply to obtain the best possible knowledge of the world' (p. 14). In his analysis of the 'advocacy and propaganda displayed by the exhibition, Munz suggests that 'there seems to be a political agenda and a propaganda campaign which, so it is hoped, will be advanced by the distortion of the truth' (p. 15).

Scientific knowledge is constituted according to its own procedures, systems, principles and codes (Moore and Young, 2010). These components are what give knowledge its own epistemological structure. Moore and Young explain that how we produce knowledge within the specialised procedures of codes of practice to create knowledge as a product. In other words, knowledge is not just an ongoing construction in the interests of its producers as with social knowledge. There is an epistemic product that can be known objectively and that is independent of the knower. This is the case, because the epistemic is created within disciplinary requirements that separate it from its socio-historical location. By resisting this separation, Maori indigenous knowledge remains subjective and socially located. It fails the test of objectivity.

7. Conclusion

What are its consequences of including into the university a type of knowledge that is neither universal, public, nor objective?

Because Maori indigenous knowledge is now well-established in the New Zealand university as a valid social science discipline, kaupapa Maori academics can claim that indigenous knowledge has its own disciplinary authority. This means it seems to fulfil a fundamental requirement of 'real' science. As Moore and Young argue, the existence of a canon itself depends upon the creation of intrinsic knowledge that can remain independent from the social location within which it emerged and that the production of such knowledge occurs in the systems and procedures developed within universities. But will the location of Maori indigenous knowledge within the university lead to that independence being developed?

My answer is no. This is the case because the very disciplinary procedures being developed that restrict the criteria for who can produce and who can test and criticise the knowledge will maintain Maori indigenous knowledge as social rather than scientific knowledge. Those procedures do not allow for the separation of knowledge from the knower. Indigenous knowledge cannot overcome the contradiction at its very heart. Its Achilles heel is that to be indigenous knowledge it must maintain its function as social knowledge. This ultimately disbars it from the claim to be science.

Without the separation between knower and knowledge, ideas become a political tool - ideologies. This has three dangerous consequences. Firstly, politicised knowledge closes down the very process of knowledge innovation and rejuvenation. Knowledge develops *because of* the separation between knowledge and the knower. Different types of knowledge structures develop cumulative knowledge because it is the procedures developed in those structures that ensure the means of separating knowledge from the knower. The separation enables knowledge to be tested, criticised, challenged and changed, even if this is unpopular.

The second danger that comes from politicising knowledge by not allowing the separation of the knowledge from the knower is that the scientist is put at risk. Any challenge to knowledge puts the knower 'on trial' in contrast to the scientific method whereby reason puts 'itself on trial' (Habermas, 2001, p. 26). There are numerous examples of the importance of academic independence from politics. I am grateful to a colleague, Chris Tremewan, who drew my attention to the account by De Beer (1952) of the continued interaction between French and English scientists during the Napoleonic Wars. This was despite open hostilities between the two countries. Similarly today, my own experience of inviting a social scientist from Israel enabled the free exchange of ideas despite a small protest from the local Palestinian support group. The protest was part of an international movement calling for the boycott of academic visitors from Israel.

The third danger is that giving scientific credibility to what is a belief system contributes to the re-racialisation of New Zealand society. Popper (1949, 2003) traces the 'attitude which considers the person of the thinker instead of his thought' to the 'abandonment of the rationalist attitude, of the respect for reason and argument and the other fellow's point of view' to the 'stress upon the "deeper" layers of human nature' saying that 'all this must lead to the view that thought is merely a somewhat superficial manifestation of what lies within these irrational depths'. In turn this attitude 'must produce the belief that "we think with our blood", or "with our national heritage", or "with our class",' (p. 260). According to the Maori indigenous approach, it is the belief that we think with our tribal group – a group that includes the ancestors. Indeed the concept of genealogy is fundamental to Maori indigenous knowledge. This is the abandonment of the modern world for pre-modern tribalism. It is a fundamental racial ideology.

Any type of knowledge that authorises knowledge on the basis of who the scientist is cannot meet the requirements of a scientific discipline. It cannot develop the procedures that ensure the knowledge has epistemological integrity. For the reasons I have discussed today, I conclude that indigenous knowledge fails the test of what is science. It may exist in the university as a subject to be studied, as with religious studies, but not as an episteme in its own right.

ⁱ Kailo identifies the development of ‘the matrix of attitudes, practices, rituals and ideas about social arrangements that is referred to now as the feminist Gift Economy (Vaughan 1997, 2000, 2004, 2007), the Give Back philosophy (Caffyn 1994?), the Gift Imaginary (Kailo 2008) or the Indigenous Gift Economy/episteme’ (2008, 1). and a growing number of influential books, including L.T. Smith’s *Decolonizing Methodologies. Research and Indigenous Peoples*. (1999), Marie Battiste’s *Reclaiming Indigenous Voice and Vision* (2000); Grande Red Pedagogy (2004; 2009); Margaret Kovach *Indigenous Methodologies* (2009); and Rauna Kuokkanen’s *Reshaping the University: Responsibility, Indigenous Epistemes, and the Logic of the Gift* (2007).

ⁱⁱ McLaren and Jaramillo (2007) call for a ‘new critical humanist pedagogy’. This is ‘an approach to reading the word and the world that puts that struggle against capitalism (and the imperialism inherent in it) at the center of the pedagogical project, a project that is powered by the oxygen of socialism’s universal quest for human freedom and social justice. When the Bean Chainte (keening woman) announces the death of humanity, it will not be a eerie wail from the flapping criss-crossed jowls of Barbara Bush, but the slow rasp of an emphysemic, dying planet, a planet failed by the human consciousness to which it gave birth’ (2007, p.20). The ideas were also presented by Peter McLaren at a seminar to the Faculty of Education, The University of Auckland, 18th February.

ⁱⁱⁱ ‘Durie Principles’, goals which underpin the development of the *kaupapa Māori* education approach. The goals include ‘to live as Māori’ and ‘to participate as citizens of the world’ (Durie, 2003, 199-200), but do not refer to New Zealand and to national citizenship.

^{iv} See also Nash, 1983, Munz, 1994, 1999, 2000; Rata, 1996; Openshaw and Rata, 2007, 2008; Rata and Openshaw, 2006; Tremewan, 2005a and 2005b.

^v ‘The Unintended Outcomes of Institutionalising Ethnicity: The Case of Maori Education in New Zealand’. Presentation to the Department of Education, Cambridge University, 4th May 2011.

^{vi} Salmond’s post-structural meanings-based anthropology played a significant role in promoting the idea of a binary between Western and an indigenous epistemology despite her holding a simultaneous commitment to positivism. In claiming that ‘thought cannot be separated from observation’ (1982, p. 73), Salmond unintentionally reveals the flaw in postmodern localisation. Finding meaning in the local, as Lyotard (1984) later advised, requires an adherence to a fairly rigid type of inductive empiricism. Perhaps this confusion explains her later shift to the similarly restricted ‘evidence-based research’ that is currently fashionable in education studies.

^{vii} Whakapapa – genealogy; mauri – life-force, spirit; wairua – spirit.

^{viii} In 2010, Sir Douglas Graham, formerly Minister in Charge of Treaty Negotiations during the 1990s, used the timeless and spiritual discourse of indigeneity to justify the transfer of a number of Auckland’s volcanic cones from public ownership to a trust consisting of twelve tribes. According to Graham (2010: A11) ‘Most of us appreciate that indigenous peoples see land as part of their very existence and it gives them a right to belong to that area’.

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