Good Science? The Growing Gap between Power and Education

Georgina Marjorie Stewart

University of Auckland, New Zealand

This work uses narrative research, including accounts of personal experiences, to explore the margins of science and ethics. Boundaries between science and other cultural and disciplinary forms of knowledge are illuminated through studying the inter-relationships between identity, knowledge and power, using narratives both in and as a form of philosophical reflection on educational practice.

The story centres on a contemporary real-world context of minority-language science education, showing how this fits into longstanding trans-disciplinary intercultural debates about the nature of science and of knowledge in general. The narrative form is used to bridge and interweave the multiple discourses influencing both the real-world context and the approach to its investigation. This analysis clarifies the linkages between paradigms of critical postcolonial research and post-positivist epistemology, and illustrates how social science, including educational research, may use science and technology to assist, rather than delimit, our understanding of complex human phenomena such as education, culture, language and science.

Those interested in reading this book will include critical scholars, educators and practitioners of indigenous knowledge, critical sociolinguistics and science and multicultural education.
Good Science? The Growing Gap Between Power and Education
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

*For Every Book an Author*

MY STORY

My personal history illustrates some of the complexities, clashes and uncomfortable cultural, socio-economic and gender boundaries permeating contemporary Māori identity. These have been defining issues in my life, since well before I was born in Auckland in 1961, the middle child of three, of parents both having Māori as well as Pākehā heritage.

My father, William Stewart (1927–2007), was named after his Scottish seaman great-great-grandfather (see below). He was among the first generation of children from his rural home area in Matauri Bay, Northland, New Zealand, to attend primary school under national state provision, where he and his peers were ‘given the supplejack’ for ‘swearing’, which was the term used by their teachers for speaking Māori (their home language). When he was 12 and in Standard Two his father required his help on a contract to break a road through to the next bay around the coast (Te Ngaere to Wainui) so he left school. My father was a native Māori speaker - he recalled being well into adulthood (married to my mother, who was his second wife - his first wife was from Rotorua and also a native speaker of Māori) before he became able to think in English, without translating in his head.1

His mother, my grandmother Tangiaranui, was born in around 1900 with no Pākehā ancestry. She could understand and speak only a small amount of English by the time I remember her in the 1970s, after decades of radio, television, children and in-laws speaking it around her. As an only child (her father died young) my grand mother, Tangiaranui, was a major inheritor of ancestral tribal land rights in the area, and her mother, Makanih, disapproved of her choice of husband, my grandfather Nuku Stewart. His mother-in-law Makanih considered Nuku her inferior in genealogical (whakapapa) terms. My father told me she called him ‘a dropkick of a dropkick’. This was because Nuku Stewart’s father, Paraika, was the issue of a casual union between a Scottish ship captain’s son, John Stewart, and Merekuia, from the Tauranga area, one of three sisters likely brought to Northland for early Anglican mission schooling opportunities. Furthermore, neither was Paraika married to Nuku’s mother, Ema, whose parents were a local woman and a ‘Kanak’ or Pacific Islander, perhaps a replacement shiphand, in those days of imperial long-haul sea trade.

Though derided in Māori terms by his mother-in-law, in European terms my grandfather Nuku Stewart proved very successful, opening the first shop in Matauri Bay, running a trucking contract for the local porcelain clay quarry, which is still in the family (operated today by my brother), and turning part of his wife’s inherited land into a dairy farm, also still an extended family operation today. No doubt based
on his own culture-clash experiences, Nuku Stewart encouraged my father and his 15 siblings to ‘marry Pākehā’ in order to better themselves, and to disdain the aspects of traditional culture still operating around them. As a result of these influences, my father William Stewart saw no point in speaking Māori to his children, and self-denigration indelibly marked his thoughts concerning society, norms and culture.

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Born in 1936, my mother was the only child of a single professional woman, my grandmother Dorothy, who was a secondary teacher of English, French, Music, Sport, and the new subject Social Studies. Grandma Dorothy defied the norms of her upbringing by taking her small child (my mother) by train from Wellington back home to Auckland, thus leaving her husband, rather than submit to his patriarchal idea of marriage. Dorothy later taught for many years in Opotiki, receiving 2/3 the salary of her male peers, and it was there my mother went to secondary school. Surrounded by an isolated rural community that still retained, among the older members, the original Māori language, my mother rebelled against learning Latin by Correspondence, and asked if she could learn Māori instead. She thus became one of the first students of Māori as a Scholarship subject (a ‘foreign’ language) in 1952, for which the school arranged a local elder, Peter Baker, to teach her.

My mother earned a scholarship enabling her to attend the University of Auckland in 1953, boarding at O’Rorke Hall, where she was the palest face in the inaugural Māori ‘concert party’. There in 1954 she met my father’s sister, who was also attending teacher training college, and hence met my father. Though she passes for European, my mother is 1/16 Māori, the fifth woman in a maternal descent line from (her great-great-grandmother) my ancestress, Merekaimanu, from the Coromandel area southeast of Auckland. Kin groups to which Merekaimanu belonged include two ‘sub-tribes’ namely Ngāti Hei and Ngāti Whanaunga, her ‘tribe’ i.e. Ngāti Maru (ki Tainui); and ‘canoe’ or ‘confederation’ i.e. Tainui.

In marrying Merekaimanu, settler Edward Davis acquired her ancestral land, and hence wealth. One of their grandsons, Ned Hally, became the mayor of Cambridge, Waikato; and the Māori heritage was suppressed. Generations later, one residual acknowledgement was in the form of a racist patriarchal science family myth. The story, as told to my siblings and me, was that when our mother’s father asked for Dorothy’s hand in marriage, he was warned by her father of mental instability in the women of the family, caused by the ‘mixed blood’ - a useful explanation for why Dorothy’s mother had committed suicide when Dorothy and her brother were teenagers.

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Although teaching was in my family, it was not my first choice of career - that was to help save the Takahe bird from extinction, after reading ‘Two in the Bush’ by Gerald Durrell. I was fortunate enough to grow up in a home with an abundance of books, and a mother who valued literacy and education, and reading became an early passion. Astronomy was part of the cultural riches I absorbed as a child from my mother to complement the respect for common-sense and practical problem-solving
ability from my father’s family, as well as his intimate connection to the land where he grew up. Such a personal experience led to a natural interest in science, and supports a view of science as growing out of everyday practice, rather than as some ‘special’ form of knowledge.7

My mother’s father had emigrated to the US after his marriage to my grandmother ended, where he achieved success as an actuary and became involved in the emerging field of ‘futurology’. He sent us books, which I read, thereby coming in contact with ideas that reflected then-current scientific as well as critical perspectives e.g. Silent Spring, Wild Heritage, The Naked Ape, Future Shock, Supernature. From Durrell I proceeded to read ethology (the study of animal behaviour) and enrolled at Auckland University in 1978, aged 16, in a Bachelor of Science course. After completing an MSc in organic chemistry I worked in Auckland for several years, first as a research technician in the Cancer Research Laboratory in the Auckland Medical School, and later in sales and customer support of chemical analysis equipment.

At the end of 1988, I left Auckland and my job and went to Matauri Bay to reconnect with ‘my Māori side’. From there I went to live with Mangu Awarau at Waimanoni, near Kaitaia, and extended my limited earlier knowledge of Māori language and cultural traditions.8 It was there I first heard about the new Māori schools (Kura Kaupapa Māori) and the jarring idea of teaching and learning science in Māori. Late in 1990 I returned to Auckland with my three-month-old son Nuku, and completed secondary teacher training in Science, Mathematics and Māori at Auckland College of Education in 1991.

After one year teaching Māori language at Onehunga High School, in 1993 I became the inaugural teacher of Pūtaiao/Science and Pāngarau/Mathematics in the newly-established secondary programme (for students aged 12–17 years) of the immersion Māori school, Te Kura Kaupapa Māori o Hoani Waititi Marae, in West Auckland. This was the beginning of my involvement with the fascinating educational context of Māori-medium science (Pūtaiao) education, which over the years has ranged from classroom teaching to contributing to national developments in curriculum and assessment. This work continued after I moved north again in 1996 to teach in Whangarei, and eventually catalysed my enrolment as a part-time distance student in the Doctor of Education degree at the University of Waikato, starting in January 2001.

THE STORY OF THIS BOOK

My doctoral research investigated how the insignificantly tiny real-world context of Māori-medium science education fits into larger international, historical, trans-disciplinary and inter-cultural questions about the nature of knowledge. Nearly seven years later (four part-time), I defended my thesis entitled ‘Kaupapa Māori Science’, on which this book is based. As a chemistry-trained masters graduate, indigenous woman and Māori science teacher, my doctoral journey entailed (among other things) a re-framing from a positivist-influenced notion of science and research, towards a sense of social science, including educational research, as using science and technology to assist, rather than delimit, our understanding of complex human phenomena such as education, culture, language and science.
Mt Eden housewife, Mrs Trixie Stewart, and her 10-year-old daughter, Georgina, have become keen astronomers after attending an astronomy course in Auckland, run by retired secondary school science teacher, Lionel Warner. They’re more starry-eyed than ever now. Georgina topped the girls in their end-of-term examination and Mrs Stewart was top mother and top parent. They are pictured above working on an assignment at home.

**Teacher’s dream**

Mr Warner began his course in 1967. He knew he was close to retirement, yet he wanted to maintain the teaching contact. But there were three prerequisites for children wishing to attend. They had to be keen; they had to be from a “fairly superior intellectual stream”; they had to have a written character reference from a head teacher and be accompanied by an adult. It was a teacher’s dream,” he said. “And the first course was so successful that I continued.”

Two years ago pictures and an article by Mr Warner on his project had a double-page spread in United States astronomy magazine, “The Sky and Telescope.” Said Mr Warner: “They recognized the intellectual companionship between child and parent here as being of social significance.” The pupil-parent course was held at the observatory in the Auckland War Memorial Museum once a week last term, and will continue this term.

Mrs Stewart has long been interested in astronomy. She used to take her three children to the Observatory on public viewing nights and has read as much as she could on the subject. “So when Georgie was keen to attend the course, it was a marvellous excuse for me to go too,” she said. “It’s such an all-embracing subject. It lifts you right out of everyday life.” Son Charles (7) is mad keen to attend too - “he hopes the course will still be on when he’s old enough to go,” Mrs Stewart said.

**Stars in Māori**

She and Georgie work together on homework assignments, and Georgie prepared and delivered a lecturette to the class on the astronomy of the ancient Māori. She is part-Māori - her father is Bill Stewart, a garage and taxi business owner - and spent hours making diagrams and giving constellations on the star chart Māori names.

Astronomy is only one of many interests. Georgie plays the piano, takes creative dance lessons, is a Brownie, soon to graduate to a Girl Guide, and she likes to write. She took two years to save $27 to buy a secondhand portable typewriter, to put out a children’s magazine with the help of her sister Julie (13). She was one of the youngest at the astronomy course, generally for pupils from Form II to Form IV.

*Extracted from 'The Auckland Star' newspaper, 17 May 1971, p. 15.*

In this book I attempt to explore the edges of science, the inter-relationship between knowledge, identity and power, and the boundaries between science and
INTRODUCTION

other forms of knowledge, through storying the experience of working in and co-
constructing a real-world context that has been aptly described as a ‘power/ knowledge nexus’ (McKinley, 1995). These narratives inform critical discourses analyses and philosophical reflections on universal problems and debates relating to knowledge (M. Williams, 2001).

This book is centred around a real world context that is part of science education in Aotearoa New Zealand today. It is written in an epistemological paradigm that takes a critical post-positivist perspective on science and knowledge and the research or methodological paradigm labelled as critical post-colonial, also known at a local level as Kaupapa Māori research methodology. This study employs narrative research methods, including personal narrative, which is closely related to autobiography and auto-ethnography. The personal narratives included in this book are connected to accounts of relevant wider and/or historical academic debates, which are ‘synoptic narratives’ produced by critical discourse analysis (CDA). Commentary on these various accounts forms a meta-narrative which seeks to bring insight on the central epistemological issues being examined.

Narratives are thus used in this book both in and as a form of philosophical reflection on educational practice, following Smeyers and Verhesschen (2001). The narrative form is used to bridge and interweave - to hold in dialectical tension - the multiple discursive dipoles impacting on the real-world context, as well as on the approach to its investigation. For instance, it could be argued that any recognised ‘research’ - such as the work on which this book is based - is by definition Western and therefore non-indigenous. The implications of such a claim will be discussed in more depth in the chapters that follow, but overall this work, both by the nature of the topic and in the adoption of particular research principles and strategies, aims to complicate these defining categories of knowledge, research, truth and science, placing the ‘epistemological yardstick’ of the academic canon at the very centre of the research.

Narrative research methodology opens space for inclusion of traditional cultural narratives, and their tropes. It also supports a role for narrative devices, such as metaphor and analogy, in naturalistic educational research. This sensitivity towards narrative is based on recognition of the centrality of symbolic power and cultural metaphors in language, which connects it with the debate over language relativism associated with the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis. This is also implicated in the use (and misuse) of metaphor and analogy in ethnocentric research and in scientism, such as in social Darwinism.

Narrative research and CDA are complementary aspects of the reflexive ‘semantic anthropology’ approach taken to the material, and align with the critical post-colonial position taken on research and on the issues involved in knowledge, language, culture and education. Narrative research and CDA are used as a means of keeping the local and the universal in play with each other throughout the work, and taken together provide a unifying lens on the wide-ranging cross-disciplinary set of issues this book tackles. The real-world scenarios that inform the personal narratives are located far from the centre of global politics or power, but this work is based on the belief that such localised research can still fully engage with
universal themes, and has the potential to shed light on complex philosophical issues.

English speakers are reminded that ‘the “theory” in critical theory is more like “method” – it is the method of critique’ (R. E. Young, 1989, p. 170). The line between theory and practice is similarly blurred in Kaupapa Māori theory, which is described as ‘praxis’ (G. H. Smith, 1997) and as ‘both less than and more than a paradigm’ (L. T. Smith, 1999, p. 190).

The term used for the primary research strategy in this book is **Kaupapa Māori discourse analysis**. Kaupapa Māori discourse analysis is a local version of critical discourse analysis (CDA), drawing on the traditions of critical and postcolonial discourse analysis, but specifically concerned with Māori interests, rather than looking for universal laws, etc, with an aim to avoid the imposition of replacement ‘grand narratives’. Hence, it could be described as a ‘located’ (McKinley, 2005) or ‘situated’ (Hermes, 1998) version of critical discourse analysis (CDA).

CDA has developed since about 1990 from a ‘strand within linguistics (sometimes labeled ... critical linguistics)’ (Cameron, 1995, p. 232) into a major education research methodology with a substantial scholarship in its own right. In a local introductory text on CDA, the comments of author Terry Locke echo the descriptions of Kaupapa Māori research:

> CDA (critical discourse analysis) might be better described as a scholarly orientation with the potential to transform the modus operandi of a range of research methodologies. In respect of educational research, it has the potential to reveal the way power is diffused through the prevalence of various discourses throughout an education system, at both the micro-level of individual classrooms and the macro-level of large-scale reform. As in other settings, CDA has to be seen as a political intervention with its own socially transformative agenda. (Locke, 2004, p. 2)

The essentially language-oriented nature of CDA, as a derivation from linguistics, is also relevant to the other major distinguishing feature of ‘Kaupapa Māori discourse analysis’, which is the space opened for the inclusion and normalisation of te reo Māori (Māori language) text in the corpus, such that it is treated as equivalent - or, invoking the ‘contra preferendum’ principle of international relations, preferred - to text in English (see the paragraph on te reo Māori below).

The perspective on ‘discourse’ taken in this work shifts, sometimes looking at wider considerations in science and mathematics education, language change processes in society, or Māori education and development in general; to elsewhere focusing closely on the specific details of Pūtaiao and my personal involvement in its development. Due to the latter some ‘personal narratives’ are included, in the form of comments on developments in Māori-medium science education from my own perspective of observation and co-construction. A handbook chapter on ‘autoethnography, personal narrative, reflexivity’ (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, pp. 733–68) begins from the importance of making ‘the researcher’s own experience a topic of investigation in its own right’ (p. 733). The additional details thus provided help to form a more complete picture of the ‘conditions
[and] processes of production and interpretation of discourses’ of Pūtaiao (Māori-medium science education (Locke, 2004, p. 42). In this way, the inclusion of personal narrative supplements the limited corpus of Pūtaiao discourse available for analysis.

Adoption of Kaupapa Māori methodology in the case studies based on Māori-medium science education in Chapters 6–8 below is an attempt to contribute to the emerging pedagogical strand in Māori-medium education research (May, Hill, & Tiakiwai, 2004; Rau, 2005). The emphasis in this strand moves beyond the socio-political and structural analyses in earlier published Kaupapa Māori studies (Nepe, 1991; G. H. Smith, 1990; Sharples, 1994).

In this work the Kaupapa Māori research paradigm is conceptualised as tūrangawaewae or ‘home ground’, once more highlighting the issue of identity. Thus the research methodology might also be described as ‘CDA within a Kaupapa Māori habitus’ (Bourdieu, 1991a).

Te Reo Māori in the Text

In this book, te reo Māori is treated as normal text, in keeping with indigenous research principles and the status of te reo Māori as an official national language of Aotearoa New Zealand. The overall approach to te reo Māori follows the ‘central tenet’ adopted by Stephen May (2001), ‘that the normalisation of minority languages within the public domain is a legitimate and defensible sociological, political and linguistic activity’ (p. xiii, original emphasis). Yet such treatment has only recently and unevenly gained acceptance among book publishers (ibid). This approach to formatting aligns with the research paradigm concerning Māori knowledge and Kaupapa Māori principles, and the notion of ‘attempting to reverse the usual epistemological asymmetry’ by which science/English is taken as the ‘yardstick’ of knowledge/language (Roberts, 1998, p. 69).

Māori words are translated in brackets and the Glossary, or otherwise explained on first appearance in the text, where literal translations are indicated by ‘lit.’. Translations are mine unless otherwise noted, with Williams (1971) used as the definitive reference for traditional words, and Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori (The Māori Language Commission) as the authority for neologisms. Macrons have been added in quotes, particularly to prominent words such as ‘Māori’, or substituted for double vowel orthography.

Feminism, ‘Race’ and Science

There is a well-documented link between feminist and non-white research perspectives (Harding, 1998), with substantial shared interests, including perspectives on science, between feminism and multiculturalism/postcolonialism, to ensure ongoing relevance for each other (McKinley, 2003). These alliances, however, are not always easy. Government policies concerning ethnicity (such as affirmative action) tend to have divisive effects on feminists, when non-white feminists see their interests differently from Euro-American feminists (Murphy & Livingstone, 1993). Such
‘contradictions’ arise when gender is taken to be ‘the most fundamental oppression’ (p. 180).

It is only when the struggle against oppression and against the capitalist system is seen as a tri-partite struggle – against the oppression of blacks (whitearchy), the oppression of women (patriarchy), and the oppression of the working class – that the black struggle, feminism and socialism stand together, autonomous yet inseparable, equal against the common enemy. Racism and sexism would then become irreducible to the oppression of the working class, which depends on them as it depends on each other and on it. (Murphy & Livingstone, 1993, p. 190, original emphasis)

In focusing on the ‘limits’ of feminism, this analysis also points out corresponding limits of an analysis of ‘race’ as the fundamental category of oppression. In the contemporary theoretical concept, ‘race’

operates neither as a signifier of comprehensive identity, nor of fundamental difference, both of which are patently absurd, but rather as a marker of the infinity of variations we humans hold as a common heritage and hope for the future. (Omi & Winant, 1993, p. 9)

Understanding the overlap between these discourses of oppression is key to developing a critical research position from which to ‘read’ the texts and discourses of science education. Issues in Māori-medium science education must be considered within wider policy discourses of Māori education and science education, with these being influenced in turn by the prevailing overall discourse of education policy. Brief comments follow on each of these three policy contexts.

Māori Education Policy

A generally accepted version of the history of Māori education policy as a series of phases from assimilation through integration, multiculturalism, biculturalism and taha Māori, to tino rangatiratanga, has been developed and rehearsed over many years (see e.g. Ewing & Shallcrass, 1970; Barrington & Beaglehole, 1974; Jenkins & Ka’ai, 1994; Walker, 1996; Bishop & Glynn, 1999). In such accounts it is important to remember that one phase does not disappear as the next phase is entered, and to recognise the remaining influences and ideologies from earlier phases. Others have argued that the purposes and results of the education system on Māori have included encouragement of the loss almost to extinction of the original language and knowledge systems (D. Williams, 2001a).

Contemporary Māori education policy, as reflected in the annual report on Māori education, ‘Ngā Haeata Mātauranga’ (M.O.E., 2005), attempts to balance the following policy considerations, all of which are important (if not always explicated) in the processes that contribute towards the development of Pūtaiao:

– Indigenous legal rights: Te Tiriti o Waitangi (Treaty of Waitangi) as a foundation for the nation-state of New Zealand;
– Social equity: Māori under-achievement in the education system of New Zealand;
– Epistemological and cultural diversity: the preservation of Māori language and knowledge.

Science Education Policy

There is tension in contemporary science curriculum policy between ‘science for all’ versus ‘science for future scientists’ (Haigh, 1995). This dialectic is related to the perceived need for high science achievement to maintain international competitiveness, and the importance of scientific literacy for the citizen of today’s world. These considerations lead to policies that increasingly place Science (along with Mathematics and Technology) at the core of the compulsory curriculum. Schools (and teachers) grapple with the resulting difficulties, caused in part by a traditional science curriculum based on positivist principles, and resistant to reform efforts, that is incompatible with the personal culture of all but a tiny minority of secondary students (Aikenhead, 2000).

Over the last few decades, a substantial international research literature of multicultural science education has developed, in response to these issues. In Aotearoa New Zealand as in most of the world, however, multicultural science education has nevertheless made little or no difference to the disparity of outcomes in science education experienced by indigenous students (G. H. Smith, 1995). While a great deal of this literature comprises philosophical reflections on the nature of knowledge, little has changed in science education classroom practices (McKinley, Stewart, & Richards, 2004b). Innovative approaches to school science teaching, including constructivism, narrative (Gilbert, 2001) and Science-Technology-Society, or STS approaches (Blades, 1997), which aim to improve success for the majority of students, invariably meet with opposition in powerful academic, political and socio-economic contexts that are served by the gate-keeping role school science plays, both for the privileged classes and also for science’s monopoly on truth (Hodson, 1999). Promotion of Māori science education has met with opposition on similar grounds (Dickison, 1994; Matthews, 1995).

Education Policy

The neo-liberal discourse of marketisation is possibly the most significant contemporary stream in global discourses of education policy. Marketisation is concerned with the construction of school education as a private good to be commodified, for distribution in society by the forces of the free market. This policy direction is informed by both neo-liberal and social conservative ideologies, and regarded by some commentators as an integral part of current developments in capitalism (Apple, 1997; Chubb & Moe, 1997). Market policies in general, and in education in particular, were implemented from 1984 onwards in Aotearoa New Zealand. Since ‘parental choice’ is part of the politics of introducing such policies, marketisation has been argued to work in favour of Māori-medium schooling. Analysis of the effect of more than 10 years of market policies in education in Aotearoa New Zealand, however, has shown that wealthy families are advantaged, while neither
the national interests, in terms of the meritocratic principle - whereby educational success is determined by individual ability and motivation - nor the interests of relatively disadvantaged groups in society, such as Māori, are well served (Lauder & Hughes, 1999).

Allied to marketisation is the growing use of ‘managerialism’ to attempt to improve quality in education, such as an emphasis on appraisal and quality management systems throughout the school sector. Curriculum content has been atomised into achievement objectives, and assessment for qualifications into stand-alone standards. These characteristics in both the administration and content of education have been identified as resulting from the domination of ‘instrumental rationality’ in state institutions (Coxon, Jenkins, Marshall, & Massey, 1994), a way of thinking which can be viewed as a manifestation of the underlying economistic philosophy that defines both instrument and rationality (Fitzsimons, 2001).

NOTES

1 See the discussion of language death and revival in Chapter 7 below.
2 See the discussion of identity and ethnicity in Chapter 2 below.
3 This history echoes the discussions about curriculum innovation and the new Māori-medium curriculum presented in the case studies in Chapters 6–8 below.
4 This statement is analysed in Chapter 2 below, ‘Fractions of Māori-ness’.
5 The name ‘Merekaimanu’ is interesting since Mere is the Māori version of Mary, and the first thought today on hearing this name; but in traditional language a ‘mere’ is a greenstone club that was a favoured weapon in pre-contact times, with status as a treasure due to its utility and rarity (greenstone was found only in the West Coast rivers of the South Island, and traded between groups throughout the country). The adjectival phrase, ‘kai manu’, most transparently means ‘eat birds’ - but ‘manu’ also refers to prowess in combat, meaning ‘slain enemy’, and the verb ‘kai’ (to eat) is also used metaphorically. For a long time I understood the name to mean ‘Mary who eats birds’, but a more informed translation suggests she was named after a prized lethal weapon. This is an example of the type of jeopardy concerning the notion of ‘authenticity of knowledge’ in an endangered indigenous language undergoing modernisation and revitalization, and of its promotion as a language medium for science education. See Chapters 6–8 below.
6 This story is an example of science ideology in the service of racism, discussed further in Chapter 2, ‘Fractions of Māori-ness’.
7 See the discussion of the nature of science in Chapter 4 below.
8 See other references to Mangu in ‘Fractions of Māori-ness’, Chapter 2, and the last section of Chapter 3, ‘Old Sayings’.
CHAPTER 2

BEING INDIGENOUS NOW

DE-ESSENTALISING ETHNICITY

Modern indigenous citizens inevitably grapple with the ‘primordial/situational dichotomy of ethnicity’ (May, 2003, p. 107). The dissonance between these two understandings of ethnicity, which are explained in the following paragraphs, often translates into an uncomfortable experience at a personal level that has been described by the term ‘fragmented subjectivities’, or conflicting aspects of self-identity (McKinley, 2003).

Primordialism views ethnicity as inherited, more or less immutable categories of identity, based ultimately on biological kin groups and evolutionary arguments. The weaknesses of the primordialist position are its tendencies towards both determinism, in which ethnicity is held to determine group and individual behaviours (and therefore culture), and essentialism, which sees ethnic groups as internally homogeneous, and rigidly separated from each other (May, 2001). Bearing similarity to the scientifically outdated notion of ‘race’, the primordialist notion of ethnicity is contested on the grounds that it underplays the ubiquitous processes of cultural change, and the role of individual choice in ethnic identity. Nevertheless, the importance of heritage and kin groups is undeniable in indigenous self-concepts, such as the importance of whakapapa (genealogy) to Māori identities. Primordialism is not wrong, as far as it goes, but on its own it is inadequate as a complete concept of ethnicity.

Situational understandings of ethnicity, on the other hand, view the ethnic group as defined by its socio-historical relationship to others. According to this position, ‘shared culture [is] best understood as generated in and by the processes of ethnic-boundary maintenance, rather than the other way around’ (May, 2001, p. 31). But the situational position has been criticised for understating the social and cultural constraints on an individual’s ethnic choices, which are reduced to those of ‘a market, or cafeteria’ (p. 32). Situational views on ethnicity lead to cultural and linguistic instrumentalism, in which identity choices are made for utilitarian reasons. Instrumentalism, in turn, is a key aspect of cultural imperialism, which has had deleterious effects on many indigenous cultures and languages, including Māori. The situational view on ethnicity has appeal for social constructionists (e.g. (Hanson, 1989; Rata, 2000), and rational choice theorists, linking these views to postmodernism as well as to the political New Right (Devine, 2001; Devine, 2004; May, 2001, p. 38–9).

Thomas Eriksen (2002) discusses the ‘deeply problematic’ relationship between culture and ethnicity, noting the following four points:

Even if ethnicity may be widely believed to express cultural differences, there is a variable and complex relationship between ethnicity and culture; and there is no one-to-one relationship between ethnic differences and cultural ones.
Ethnicity is a relationship between two or several groups, not a property of a group; it exists between and not within groups. (Culture, of course, may perfectly well exist within groups.)

Ethnicity is the enduring and systematic communication of cultural differences between groups considering themselves to be distinct. It appears whenever cultural differences are made relevant in social interaction, and it should thus be studied at the level of social life, not at the level of symbolic culture.

Ethnicity is thus relational, and also situational: the ethnic character of a social encounter is contingent on the situation. It is not, in other words, absolute. (p. 58, original emphasis)

May (2003) posits Pierre Bourdieu’s notion of ‘habitus’ as a useful way to understand ethnicity, and overcome the apparent dichotomy between primordial and situational accounts. The habitus notion encompasses ‘four key dimensions ... embodiment, agency, the interplay between past and present, and the interrelationship between collective and individual trajectories’ (p. 107).

‘Habitus’ refers to a set of embodied meanings that do not determine how individuals and groups might act, but nonetheless constitutes a powerful frame of reference, which influences and shapes, at least to some degree, how the world is seen. (May, 2003, p. 107–8)

The multiple dimensions of habitus straddle ‘a fundamental duality in the social disciplines’ (Eriksen, 2002, p. 55), reflected in the dichotomous concept of ethnicity described above: the sociological versus the psychological perspective, ‘sometimes described as the distinction between a Weberian and Durkheimian view of social life’ (ibid). The contemporary consensus holds ethnicity choices in tension or balance between primordialist and situational explanations (Fenton & May, 2002) - ‘neither ascribed nor achieved: they are both. They are wedged between situational selection and imperatives imposed from without’ (Eriksen, 2002, p. 56).

The same idea can be expressed in more typically postmodernist or post-structuralist terms, seeing ethnicity more adequately conceived as a ‘hybrid’ or ‘bricolage’ of different elements from both primordial and situational explanations. This more complex understanding of ethnicity is used below to re-read relevant historical and contemporary discourses, such as in the following personal narrative about concepts of indigenous ethnicity.

**FRACTIONS OF MĀORI-NESS**

My mother is 1/16 Māori, the fifth female in a maternal descent line back to my ancestress, Merekaimanu, though over the years knowledge of the Māori heritage was suppressed. Generations later, the story my siblings and I were told was that our grandfather was warned of mental instability in the women of his fiancée’s family, caused by the ‘mixed blood’ - *from the previous chapter.*
To attribute to the ‘mixed blood’ a propensity towards mental illness in the family’s womenfolk, as my maternal great-grandfather did, indicates a proto-genetic framework of understanding about heredity and health. This story dates from the 1930s (told to me in the 1970s), and its details have a scientific tone. It indicates belief in a fundamental physical difference between Māori and European people, involving the ‘blood’. This was considered good science at the time.

Consider the statement, ‘my mother is 1/16 Māori’. Such ‘fractions of Māori-ness’ were the terms in which ethnic identity was spoken about. I recall as a child having a family discussion about ‘how much Māori’ we were. My father counted himself 3/4 Māori, so I inherited 3/8 from him. Adding the 1/32 inherited from my mother, we agreed we were ‘three and a bit eighths’ Māori - or ‘just under half’. It was a potent fractions lesson: straightaway I resolved in my mind to ‘marry a Māori’ so my child’s ‘blood’ would not again be halved. All three siblings (my brother, sister and myself) now have children to full Māori partners.

This intentionally throw-away line would be regarded as nonsense by most non-Māori New Zealand readers, hence linking a personal narrative to issues of national (if not international) concern. In the following discussion I interrogate the idea, long accepted as factual in the societal discourses of this country, that no ‘full-blood Māori’ remain alive. I was taught this in primary school along with the rest of the nation, believing it to be so, even though my grandmother was still alive at the time. At a societal level it reflects the ‘fractions of Māori-ness’ idea - a similar primordial understanding of ethnicity as biological difference, associated with blood and (by implication) genetics.

One important way science was deployed in the European colonisation of Aotearoa New Zealand was Social Darwinism, a potent form of scientific racism (Gould, 1997), in which notions such as the ‘family tree of man’ (McKinley, 2003, p. 54) endorsed belief in the superiority of all things European over all things Māori, as inherent justification, both for the entire imperialist project, and for specific anti-Māori acts that it entailed (Moorehead, 1968; Numbers & Stenhouse, 1999).

The concept of the ‘survival of the fittest’, used to explain the evolution of species in the natural world, was applied enthusiastically to the human world. It became a very powerful belief that indigenous peoples were inherently weak and therefore, at some point, would die out. (L. T. Smith, 1999, p. 62)

The ready acceptance of Darwin’s theory of evolution in Aotearoa New Zealand and Australia, by comparison with Europe and North America, has been attributed to religious tolerance and the lack of a pre-Darwinian scientific establishment, as well as ‘racist purposes’ (Stenhouse, 1999, p. 81). Stenhouse cautions against exaggerating the political significance of evolutionary racism or social Darwinism, however, noting ‘some [Māori] leaders, like Pākehā humanitarians before them, argued that Pākehā sinfulness, not science, lay behind the [dying Māori] theory’ (p. 85–6).

Supporting the overall colonial enterprise, but mitigating the extent to which murder/genocide (L. T. Smith, 1999, p. 62) could be justified as means to an end, were several factors, including the important missionary influence, which sought to
save (living) souls, the lateness in the overall era of British empire building, which meant it was more planned and thought out, and the nature of Māori society at the time of contact (Webster, 1998). Māori tribal groups responded quickly and positively to European influences, adopting and adapting technologies of war, literacy and money in particular, in ways which nuanced the cultural interface and bilateral balance of power from the start, by comparison, for example, with indigenous Australian ethinies, who shared much colonial history in common (Moorehead, 1968).

It was widely held by 19th century colonials that Māori were ‘superior natives’ (Salmond, 1985). Developing out of the philosophical level of scientific racism, as part of the elaboration of the modern academy (Becher, 1989), another important colonial role for science was to construct Māori as an object of study, in which the disciplines of Linguistics, Anthropology, and Education, among others, were heavily involved (L. T. Smith, 1999). The Bishop Museum in Honolulu was the first scientific institution to study the problem of measuring living Polynesians (Buck, 1938, p. 15).

The subaltern position of Māori as a marginalised population has therefore been an inevitable and deliberate result of the premises on which the nation-state of Aotearoa New Zealand has emerged (Lankshear, 1990), in which science and economics, as integral parts of the imperialist complex, have had significant parts to play. The contradictory colonising message to Māori – simultaneously saying ‘you must become like us’ - the ‘command’ to ‘turn toward the West’ (Spivak, 1990, p. 8) - and ‘you will never be like us’ is revealed in analysis of early Māori-language newspapers:

While [British colonists] believed that any human group had the potential to be redeemed from barbarism, European notions of levels of civilisation were inseparable from ideas on racial hierarchies.

Try as Māori might to abandon their māori practices ... they remained unchangeably ‘native’ and kiri mangu [black skin] in the colonial milieu. (Curnow, Hopa, & McRae, 2002, p. 92)

Despite the ending of war between Māori and Pākehā, and the dismantling of overt racist structures such as legalised discrimination, such psychologically debilitating effects of colonisation have gone largely unrecognised as part of the ‘epistemic violence’ of the discourses of the Other (Spivak, 1987) that continues to impact strongly on Māori today (Wetherell & Potter, 1992).

So Darwin’s ideas about genetic variation and species formation were (mis-) applied to New Zealand society in the late 1800s. Victorian science informed the view that Māori were dying out, as biological losers in competition against the stronger European ‘race’. This was supported by ‘empirical evidence’: as is frequently noted, the recorded Māori population declined over the second half of the 19th century, reaching a nadir of approximately 40,000 in 1896. The scare quotes around the words ‘empirical evidence’ point to the question that must be raised about the accuracy of these numbers, since their collection depended on subjective judgments (by whom? on what criteria?) of the very matter here under discussion, i.e. who ‘counts’ as a ‘real Māori’?
As the ‘Māori population’ (even such an apparently objective term becomes suspect when put under the knowledge microscope) underwent its early-20th-century resurgence, the myth of extinction could no longer be maintained. By the 1930s, as the above family story indicates, it had been replaced by a primordialist proto-genetic explanation, and thus by 1970 the idea that no ‘full-blood’ (i.e. ‘real’) Māori remained had entered the canon of truth and the school curriculum. The point here is the use, or rather abuse, of science in support of these sequential ideologies, whose most apparent purpose is to reinforce a European sense of domination and hence security in Aotearoa New Zealand.

This is still very much a live national issue, which featured in the short but colourful political career of Dr Don Brash. In 2006 Brash publicly questioned the status of Māori as an ethnic group, citing the long-held myth. In response the New Zealand Herald newspaper set its reporters to track down a ‘pure’ Māori - and Mangu was the first one they found, under treatment at Auckland Hospital. The resulting article, shown below, was cited by Witi Ihimaera in his editor’s introduction to a recent anthology of Māori fiction, *Get on the Waka* (Ihimaera, 2007). In the newspaper article Mangu’s photograph had been tightly cropped, as the comparison with the original headshot shows. The cropped image has a curiously de-humanizing effect: somehow this editorial act objectifies the face, presenting it trapped in a box like a specimen, as if to reinforce the suggestion made in the article that it ‘belongs in a museum’. The dramatic emphasis on Mangu’s illness in the brief text is also suspect, as if to hint at the old evolutionist spectre of biological/‘racial’ inferiority.

Mangu’s testimony countered the claim that no full-blood Māori remain alive. As is well-known, knowledge about one’s ancestry is very important in Māori culture, and still widespread. Someone who is 50 today has only to go back to grandparents or great-grandparents to reach the era before inter-cultural marriage in this country was fully acceptable (either in Māori or European society). One generation further back and the two groups were at war. In the early post-contact era, tribal groups commonly encouraged an early settler to become ‘their’ Pākehā, including the offer of their women, but children of such unions usually lived as Māori, less commonly achieving passage into Pākehā society. Such processes do not invalidate the previous point. If there are no non-Māori antecedents in those generations (as in the case of Mangu, and my paternal grandmother) the claim to be literally full-blood must be considered valid. Does the existence of one family who know themselves to be full-blood call this claim seriously into question? Obviously not: as a social ‘truth’ it has a counterfactual power, resistant to reason, that can only be described as ideological. And if the claim that there are no living full-blood Māori is objectively unsustainable today, *how much more false* must it have been when it was taught to me at school in 1970?

Irrespective of proving that one is literally ‘full-blood’, there is a sense in which percentages are not particularly relevant in determining one’s ethnicity. Dominant notions about Māori or indigenous identity, such as this one, bear re-consideration from the perspective of current ethnicity theory, as discussed in the previous section, employing Bourdieu’s notion of ‘habitus’. For the purpose of this discussion, cultural
‘habitus’ can be approximated by the term ‘ethnic self-concept’, turning once more to my own family for examples. My mother, despite her Māori great-great-grandmother, was brought up to consider herself a Pākehā (European New Zealander), but chose to complicate her self-concept by acknowledging and exploring her suppressed Māori
heritage. My father, despite his Scottish great-great-grandfather, considered himself a Māori, internalising various negative stereotypes. In the Herald article Mangu pointed out that although his cousins could boast a Pākehā ancestor, while he could not, they all considered themselves ‘equally’ Māori. In the contemporary era, ethnic identities such as ‘half-n-half’ and ‘touch of the tar-brush’ have become socially accepted in this country as new forms of habitus, but in generations past, social choices were more limited, and ethnicities correspondingly simpler.

From this perspective the claim at the start of this discussion about my siblings’ partners is more reasonable. The de-essentialised concept of ethnicity balances primordial notions such as ‘blood quantum’ (or ‘fractions of ethnicity’) against situational choices and histories, suggesting another science analogy, this time from physics. Here ethnic self-concept is likened to the ‘net force’ resulting from the sum of vector forces on a moving object. Mediated by social context (and with cognisance that choices in this country have generally been far more freely available than in most others), the circumstances of an individual life history generate personal identity vectors (primordial and situational) that influence, according to their strength and direction, how an individual identifies their own ethnicity.

My family history and experience is not unusual, so the effect of this potent item of scientism (i.e. that ‘no full-blood Māori remain alive’) must be widespread in this country. In the modern era it is exceedingly common for non-Māori New Zealanders to have a ‘Māori connection’ somewhere in the family, which lends credibility to the ‘no full-blood Māori’ claim. An enormous range of inter-cultural possibilities for making families and happy marriages are portrayed in the social history of this country, especially since World War II - to a greater degree, and in a safer environment, than in most other places. We could imagine other plausible national ‘truths’, e.g. ‘no full-blood Pākehā’, and reflect on the effects of such a change on the national psyche. Such a ‘thought experiment’ brings into clear focus the strategic ideological nature of this historically-accepted truth-myth, within the discourses of nation-building.

It is important to tie this analysis to the larger questions about knowledge being addressed in this book. We do not need to go to the atomic level to find science or to compare Western/science truth claims against those of Māori knowledge. On the other hand, if we are going to ‘take science on’ with an indigenous perspective, a convincing argument must be on science’s own terms, i.e., acceptable in terms of the core cognitive values of science. This narrative has investigated the accepted ‘fact’ that no full-blood Māori remain, and compared it with an indigenous perspective. The question left here to hang is this: which knowledge claims in this narrative count as ‘good science’?

**RESEARCH AND IDENTITY: THE EMERGENCE OF KAUPAPA MĀORI**

Something called ‘Kaupapa Māori’ has developed within the last few decades, as part of the ‘Māori renaissance’ (see final section, this chapter), motivated by a quest for self-determination, and fuelled by the urgency of the need to retrench and revitalise Māori as a living language and culture. Recent wider acknowledgement
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of historical injustices against Māori people, language, culture, and material economic bases, such as in the education system, has contributed towards more favourable conditions for its development.

The term ‘Kaupapa Māori’ is best known in relation to Kura Kaupapa Māori (KKM), a Māori-medium schooling movement that began in approximately 1984, building on the success of Te Kōhanga Reo (Māori-medium early childhood education centres) (Nepe, 1991). More recently, the term ‘Kaupapa Māori’ has begun to appear in wider social discourse such as job advertisements and institutional policies, signalling pro-Māori strategies in spheres such as health, justice, media, etc (G. H. Smith, 1995, p. 119). It has a dedicated website: www.kaupapamaori. com. This discussion focuses on Kaupapa Māori in the academy: first looking at Kaupapa Māori theory, then at Kaupapa Māori research.

Education has been the main academic discipline within which Kaupapa Māori has developed, with its emergence dependent on achieving a critical mass of Māori education academics. Kaupapa Māori theory is sometimes viewed as a localised version of critical theory:

Kaupapa Māori theory therefore aligns with critical theory in the act of exposing underlying assumptions that serve to conceal the power relations that exist within society and the ways in which dominant groups construct concepts of ‘common sense’ and ‘facts’ to provide ad hoc justification for the maintenance of inequalities and the continued oppression of Māori people.

(Leonie Pihama, cited in L. T. Smith, 1999, p. 185–6)

In contrast, Bishop describes Kaupapa Māori as a ‘resistance to critical theory’, and a response to the ‘failure of critical pedagogy in relation to its emancipatory goals’ (cited in L. T. Smith, 1999, p. 186). This apparent contradiction possibly reflects varying individual perspectives on Marxism and critical theory.

The term ‘critical theory’ originated in the Frankfurt School, founded in 1923, and refers to a tradition of critique of modernity at all levels, including empiricism, positivism, and Marxism. Leading names in the Frankfurt School include Max Horkheimer (1895–1973), Theodor Adorno (1903–69) and more recently Jürgen Habermas. Habermas (and others) argue that science already embodies value judgements, such as the desirability of technological domination of nature, and resulting ideological thinking. In response, Habermas introduced the notion of the ideal speech situation (ISS) as a ‘methodological standard of critique’ (R. E. Young, 1989, p. 75). The ISS ‘is a critical reconstruction of the assumptions of everyday speech communication’. It was part of Habermas’ effort to ‘found critique in the postulation of a counter-factual process of reaching uncoerced consensus among inquirers’ (p. 79). While later acknowledging its limitations (below), the ISS remains central in Habermas’ account of critical theory.

The ‘central problem for critical theory’ arises from ‘Habermas’ acceptance that the ISS cannot provide a basis for judging whole ways of life’ (p. 170). To overcome this, Young argues, a ‘meta-decision’ must be made, through which an ‘aesthetic and moral vision [with] genuinely theological content might be reinstated. If so, the possibility of a Jewish, Christian or Muslim critical theory must be taken seriously’
In this sense, Kaupapa Māori theory can be viewed as modifying the philosophical basis of traditional critical theory, limiting its scope, and hence strengthening its emancipatory potential. This interpretation accommodates the comments of both Pihama and Bishop, quoted above.

While some authors emphasise its uniqueness compared with both traditional and contemporary approaches to research, Kaupapa Māori research aligns with other international research traditions such as indigenous, feminist and postcolonial social science. These traditions share an historical origin that includes a critical examination of how the notion of the ‘other’ in research reproduces the existing disparities in societal power of the historically-researched group. A critical, emancipatory stance is thus built into each of these traditions, as part of its reason for existing (Ladson-Billings, 2000). Kaupapa Māori research has been described as:

– related to ‘being Māori’;
– connected to Māori philosophy and principles;
– taking for granted the legitimacy of Māori, the importance of Māori language and culture; and
– concerned with ‘the struggle for autonomy over our own cultural well being’.

(Grāham Hingangaroa Smith in L. T. Smith, 1999, p. 185)

Thus, Kaupapa Māori research is defined in terms of its political stance (rather than, say, data collection methods) in a very similar way to ‘standpoint theories in the USA for example African-American, El Movimiento Chicano, American Indian Tribal Nations, etc’ (Lopez, 1998, p. 226). The political orientation of Kaupapa Māori research is an anti-racist one of emancipation from the historical oppression of Māori people, knowledge and culture that is inherent in mainstream social science research philosophies and practices. As such, Kaupapa Māori research could be said to arise out of ethical and political concerns relating to traditional mainstream research on or about Māori people (Bishop, 1998). The emergence of Kaupapa Māori research is linked to the specific socio-historical circumstances described above, in that it is a response and a protest made by Māori against dominant detrimental stories told by Pākehā research about Māori.

Russell Bishop (1998) discusses the role of various participants in Kaupapa Māori research in terms of traditional Māori roles in society, such as the leadership of kaumātua, and the right to speak being dependent upon the social standing, in traditional Māori kinship terms, of the individual who wishes to speak. This emphasis on the role of old people with cultural standing also appears in descriptions by Native American researchers: ‘our Elders ... have been replacing the expected academic role of “informant” with a leadership role of directing research and teaching’ (Rains, Archibald, & Deyhle, 2000, p. 339); and ‘I am extremely aware of the cultural traditions that position the Elders as teachers and authorities’ (Hermes, 1998, p. 161).

Several writers suggest the importance of the concept of ‘whānau’ (family) in Kaupapa Māori research, referred to by Bishop as a ‘research whānau of interest’ and by Irwin as a ‘whānau of supervisors’. Bishop argues that all stages of the research are in the control of the research whānau, within which the researcher is a participant, not necessarily the leader. In a Native American analogy, Hermes also
draws attention to the re-positioning of the researcher in cultural contexts: ‘in Elders’
meetings, at moments I was the “organizer” or facilitator and could control the
agenda, but when it was time to eat I was just as easily a “waitress” or, at the meeting’s
end, a “driver” (Hermes, 1998, p. 163). Her research journal entries include other
whānau references: ‘What’s it like to suddenly become “Auntie” to 300 kids and
know that in three years I’ll have to write something about them?’ (ibid).

Hermes’ overall description of her ‘situated response’ research, however, stops
short of Bishop’s assertion that Kaupapa Māori research must be conducted within
existing culturally constituted practices and ‘hierarchically determined’ positioning,
with the limits this would impose on research possibilities. In response to Bishop,
African American scholar Linda Tillman (1998) notes ‘several unresolved issues’
and asks, ‘can we realistically expect that all power relations will be eliminated?’
Chicano scholar Gerardo Lopez (1998), while ‘inspired by the potential for a
group to direct the entire research process’, queries the absence of the voices of the
research whānau: ‘your text offers no insight into how the text was actually co-
constructed according to Kaupapa Māori’ (p. 229).

Bishop (1998) draws parallels for various Māori cultural terms and concepts,
including hui (gatherings), pōwhiri (formal welcome ceremony), koha (contribution
towards running hui), harirū (greeting ceremony in hui setting), whakawhanga-
gatanga (mutual introductions, identifying genealogical links), mihi (oratory of
greeting) and whakapapa (genealogy), within his outline of Kaupapa Māori research.
In this way, he seeks to define its ‘culturally specific research practices’. Most of
these parallels concern re-defining relationships in and organisation of a social science
research investigation, in order to align them with Māori processes in traditional
kinship groupings. While some of these analogies seem to risk distorting ‘authentic’
cultural meanings, the use of Māori terms, and the reference to Māori cultural
items, is in itself a cultural self-assertion. A similar point is made by Latina
scholar Margaret Montoya: ‘incorporating Spanish words, sayings, literature, and
wisdom can have positive ramifications’ (cited in (Gonzalez, 2001, p. 645).

The positive effect on young Mexicana women of linking cultural practices to
academic achievement is described as a ‘politically relevant education’ for the
Chicana/o youth in California (Gonzalez, 2001). This analysis contrasts with the
older deficit view of cultural knowledge in the same way that Kaupapa Māori
positions itself in opposition to the deficit model of Māori language and culture,
which explicitly informed earlier mainstream educational policies for Māori

Bishop’s description of the Kaupapa Māori research process bears most similarity
to participatory action research, of all the recognized strategies for inquiry, although
Bishop cautions against trying to pin an international research ‘label’ on Kaupapa
Māori research. He focuses on the issue of distance or separation between researcher
and researched, asserting that Kaupapa Māori research demands that this distance
be completely dissolved into a larger, participatory mode of consciousness. He
claims that issues of objectivity and subjectivity in research, along with notions of
paradigm shift, are irrelevant in Kaupapa Māori research. According to Bishop, the
appropriateness of all processes involved in Kaupapa Māori research can be evaluated
by reference to taonga tuku iho (treasures from the ancestors), or traditional Māori wisdom. In this way Kaupapa Māori research practices and texts are judged according to Māori cultural criteria. As pointed out by his commentators, however, Bishop fails to give examples of how such criteria are applied in an ‘actual research project’ (Tillman, 1998).

On balance, these accounts suggest that Kaupapa Māori research methodology is mostly concerned with guiding and framing the research questions one is interested in, and why; oriented largely towards ethics and paradigm, rather than towards specifying the methods to be used for data collection and analysis. This position is consistent with Irwin’s description of her research design as ‘based on kaupapa Māori [and] ‘integrating research methods from qualitative and quantitative research paradigms’ (Irwin, Davies, & Carkeek, 1996, p. 60), and with the tendency, if not the detail, of Bishop’s delineations.

Kaupapa Māori research is a recent construction in the academy by Māori, for Māori purposes, with each new writer contributing to its ongoing co-construction, focusing on certain aspects, and adding particular perspectives, as I attempt to do here. Metaphorically speaking, Kaupapa Māori research methodology is less like a research technology, and more like a whare (house or building) within which to conduct research. One important advantage of Kaupapa Māori, therefore, is as a research position from which to speak. Kaupapa Māori research is a paradigm, tradition, school or community of scientists, in which to locate this work. In this sense the Kaupapa Māori research paradigm is conceptualised as tūrangawaewae or ‘home ground’. So Kaupapa Māori can be described as a research identity or ‘habitus’ for pro-Māori scholars.

Kaupapa Māori research offers the considerable advantage of providing a unifying viewpoint on the various debates, across a range of disciplines, which are relevant in Māori science education. As noted above, Kaupapa Māori theory holds as one of its tenets the validity of mātauranga Māori (traditional Māori knowledge). This stance is clearly vital in order to fairly entertain the epistemological claims of Māori knowledge.

Adopting Kaupapa Māori research methodology is consistent with the context of Māori-medium science education, which is strongly associated with KKM. The framework of philosophical and ethical assumptions and practices relating to culture, language and politics, guiding the research, intentionally aligns with that of the context, so as to avoid ‘othering’ the research topic. Rather than comparative studies of Māori-medium science education with something else (such as mainstream science education), this work is concerned with evaluating Māori-medium science education on its own terms, against its own purposes.

One central principle of empowerment recognised in Kaupapa Māori research is that Māori people ‘should regain control of investigations into Māori people’s lives’ (Bishop, cited in L. T. Smith, 1999, p. 185). Who, though, are ‘Māori people’? Does this mean only Māori researchers should conduct research on Māori? Or does it mean that ‘iwi’ should be in charge of all research on Māori? Or the people whose lives are being investigated? Linda Smith reflects, with the following two questions, on researcher positioning: ‘Can a Māori researcher who is anti-Māori...
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carry out Kaupapa Māori research?’ for which the answer given is ‘definitely not’; and ‘can a non-indigenous researcher carry out Kaupapa Māori research?’ for which two possible answers are given: the ‘more radical’ response: ‘by definition, no, Kaupapa Māori research is Māori research exclusively’; and the alternative response, which is a qualified yes, as long as there was collaboration with others, and on the condition that such a researcher had ‘ways of positioning themselves as a non-indigenous person’ (1999, p. 184).

According to some international scholars, who responded to Bishop (1998) writing about Kaupapa Māori research, such discussion of who is authorised to conduct and control research is ‘essentialist’ in the tendencies both to ‘homogenize a population’ (Lopez, 1998, p. 227), and cling to ‘dualistic notions of insider and outsider’ (p. 228).

Because a culture is not homogeneous, a society is differentiated, and a professional identity that involves problematizing lived reality inevitably creates a distance ... the extent to which anyone is an authentic insider is questionable. (Narayan, 2003, p. 285)

These considerations highlight the need for discourses of Kaupapa Māori research to address the multiple positioning of individuals as Māori (McKinley, 2003), as Smith does for non-Māori, in the paragraph above. With this in mind, Smith’s question about Māori identity bears closer examination:

Can a Māori researcher who is anti-Māori carry out Kaupapa Māori research? (L. T. Smith, 1999, p. 184)

According to the principles of Kaupapa Māori research, anyone who is ‘anti-Māori’ (putting aside the questions of how, and by whom, being ‘anti-Māori’ might be decided), by definition cannot conduct Kaupapa Māori research. In this sense Smith’s question is rhetorical, serving to provoke deeper thought on the complexity of contemporary Māori identity, and indicating a need to evaluate, rather than simply accept, claims made by Māori researchers (as well as non-Māori) about conducting Kaupapa Māori research.

IDENTITY, KNOWLEDGE, REPRESENTATION AND AUTHENTICITY

The ideas about culture and ethnicity, discussed above, draw from fundamental concepts of identity in general. Peter Taubman’s (1993) model of the notion of identity, written within the traditions of multicultural education, contains ‘three separate but interactive registers’ (p. 288) as summarised below.

Although the registers cannot be collapsed onto one another, they can be held in a dialectical tension with each other. They are only useful if they are in tension with each other. If multicultural or antibias education is introduced from within only one register, the result is a distortion in thought and action. (Taubman, 1993, p. 303, original emphasis)
**Taubman’s Model of Identity**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IDENTITY 3 intersecting registers:</th>
<th>Strengths and characteristic qualities of each register:</th>
<th>Drawbacks, consequences of losing dialectical tension:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fictional</strong></td>
<td>Identity as a construct of language; appeals to post-structuralism (Lacan, Foucault, Derrida)</td>
<td>Alien, alienating and oppressive; ‘bloodless’, ‘quicksand’ meaningless, irrelevant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Communal**                      | • Ground for action  
• ‘identity in motion’  
• sense of community  
• cultural literacy | Becomes fixed, immobile; monumentalisation; essentialism; new forms of oppression |
| **Autobiographical**              | Personally meaningful - responsibility, non-determinism; the existential subject (Habermas, Stern) | Naïve, limited, incomplete; leads to self-interested individualism and empty transcendence |

The qualities that distinguish each of the three registers resonate with personal and reported conditions in multicultural schools in this country (including KKM). Taubman contends that most approaches to multicultural and antibias education, while grounded in the communal register of identity, have fallen into the ‘trap’ by ‘relinquish[ing] the tension’ thus becoming ‘the frozen identity emerging in the first register’ (p. 299). He also analysed the conservative criticism of multicultural and antibias approaches, finding they use the autobiographical register from which to decry the ‘particularism’ and ‘ethnic chauvinism’ of multicultural education, which they claim ‘denies the individual and the transcendental humanity of the subject’, while unconsciously fixing the other two registers in the dominant (white male) culture, termed ‘the common culture’ (p. 302). ‘It is a majoritarian particularism masquerading as universalism’ (May, 2001, p. 309). Therefore,

current approaches to multicultural and antibias education are simplistic and flawed. Not only have they failed to address how identity is formed, what it might mean, and how it functions, but they have left unexplored the way the approaches themselves consciously or unconsciously are used to create identities. (Taubman, 1993, p. 287–8)

In another relevant model of identity, Wlad Godzich assigns terms to various notions of agency by era (cited in McLaren, 1995, p. 237–8):

- pre-modern - persons
- modern - individuals
- postmodern - subjects.

For example, in traditional, pre-modern Māori society, the connections in the social fabric (whakapapa links) were known and considered vital in relationships: in other words, people were unique ‘persons’. This contrasts with the modern view,
which envisages individuals as interchangeable ‘atoms’ in the ‘machine’ of society. This view holds that on a ‘level playing field’, individuals who are well socialised and have marketable skills can succeed. The modern identity still prevails, but is morphing increasingly and unevenly towards forms of postmodern identity. The postmodern identity is composed of subjectivities of ‘production and consumption’ – ‘exploited not for collective ends but for private rituals of self-fashioning’ (McLaren, 1995, p. 238). These ideas are particularly relevant to educators in light of the important role played by schools in maintaining and reproducing students’ ideas about identity, society and culture. McLaren argues for the importance of teacher awareness of these issues, as part of ‘critical pedagogy’. His challenge to schools is that they should not become ‘ultimately reproductive mechanisms for new forms of subjectivity based on a merging of identity and the fetishized consumer object’ (p. 238–9).

Part of the colonising message about identity to Māori was ‘You will never be like us’ (see previous section). Echoing this, Stuart Hall (1996) identifies the ‘mark of difference’ as the essential meaning of ‘black’ in ‘black popular culture’, and by analogy his discussions can also be applied to a consideration of the ‘essential meaning of Māori’ in notions of ‘modern Māori identity’. To Hall, ‘black’ (or ‘Māori’) signifies the ‘historical experience’, the ‘distinctive cultural repertoires’, and the ‘counter-narratives’. Hall argues that cultural politics needs to move beyond the dialectical ‘zero-sum game’ within which the term ‘popular culture’ acquires meaning in the mapping of culture between the high and the low [in] four symbolic domains ... in psychic forms, in the human body, in space, and in the social order. ... It is therefore necessary to deconstruct the popular once and for all. There is no going back to an innocent view of what it means. (Hall, 1996, p. 468–9)

Hall uses ‘innocent’ to describe a view which fails to acknowledge that popular culture is that which is excluded from the canon. Hall goes on to insist that in black popular culture, strictly speaking, ethnographically speaking, there are no pure forms at all. Always these forms are the product of partial synchronization, of engagement across cultural boundaries... Always these forms are impure, to some degree hybridized from a vernacular base... They are not the recovery of something pure that we can, at last, live by ... they are what the modern is. (Morley & Chen, 1996, p. 473)

Hall’s comments concern cultural aesthetics – literature, cuisine, film, music, etc – not science (or ‘cultural knowledge’). Yet ‘Western science’ and ‘IK’ have come to occupy equivalent positions in the knowledge debates, as high (sanctioned/scientific) and low (popular/customary) knowledge, respectively.

DECONSTRUCTING AUTHENTICITY

Some scholars argue that Māori culture and ethnicity is constructed (Hanson, 1989; Rata, 2003) and therefore is not ‘real’ (authentic), so it can/should be
disregarded/ dismissed. An opposing, more widely supported view holds that ALL human culture is constructed, and all ethnicities (Hastrup, 1982); therefore all culture is authentic (Levi-Strauss, 1977). This latter position is more pro-Māori than the former, yet nevertheless it fails to provide grounds for evaluating cultural projects and developments, such as Pūtaiao. The problem remains of defining the required criteria. Both views tend towards the extremes of either instrumentalism or relativism, which are both unhelpful, as explained below, to the interests of indigenous people such as Māori.

Instrumental-only thinking with regard to culture tends to value its economic worth exclusively, with the resultant losses of smaller cultures, concomitant with globalising trends throughout the last three to four centuries. Cultural relativism, while seemingly opposite to instrumentalism, leads to the same result, though less forthrightly, since if all cultures are thought of as being of equal ‘value’, then what ‘counts’ in the world is something other than culture (Borg, Mayo, & Sultana, 1998). This is analogous to the ‘pluralist sciences’ position which holds that all cultural knowledge systems are of equal value, yet fails to disturb the hegemony of, or even to critique, the dominant form (Loving, 1995).

This polarity is expressed in general terms as cultural relativism versus cultural imperialism (out of which instrumentalism arises). Both extreme positions are hostile to Māori or indigenous interests. Putnam notes relativism has ‘respectable appeal [to] those who fear that the alternative to cultural relativism is cultural imperialism’ (Putnam, 2004, p. 45). But his main point is that the dipole is reinforced (if not formed) by the ‘fact/value dichotomy’ characteristic of Western science, and influential throughout most domains of a ‘scientific’ culture:

recognizing that our judgments claim objective validity and recognizing that they are shaped by a particular culture and by a particular problematic situation are not incompatible. And this is true of scientific questions as well as ethical ones. The solution is neither to give up on the very possibility of rational discussion nor to seek an Archimedean point, an ‘absolute conception’ outside of all contexts and problematic situations, but - as Dewey taught his whole life long - to investigate and discuss and try things out cooperatively, democratically, and above all fallibilistically (ibid, original emphasis).

In other words, for both science and culture, Putnam argues that viewing the situation in terms of oppositional either-or polarities is unhelpful and unrealistic. In education, this cultural dipole is listed as one of seven characteristics of ‘traditional pedagogy’ (R. E. Young, 1989, p. 96), which is defined here as ‘teaching a pre-decided curriculum’:

Whether this curriculum is the curriculum of the establishment or a subversive curriculum, its pedagogical structure is the same. It displays teaching methods [which ... either] conceive of the world from the standpoint of a dominant culture or dogmatically reject the possibility of evaluative comparison of cultures altogether, that is, they embrace either cultural imperialism or relativism (R. E. Young, 1989, p. 96–7)
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Said went even further, to suggest that:

‘the real issue is whether indeed there can be a true representation of anything, or whether any and all representations, because they are representations, are embedded first in the language and then in the culture, institutions, and political ambience of the representer’ (Said, 1978, p. 272).

Authentic representation remains a focus of concern in indigenous language education literature (Henze & Davis, 1999). It is problematic in relation to both the language and knowledge content of Pūtaiao programmes. Underlying both of these, however, as the above discussion highlights, is the question of authenticity of modern Māori identity, on which the existence of KKM depends, and which KKM in turn supports. While the ‘identity’ of KKM depends on a specific point of view, the ‘identity’ of the science knowledge content of Pūtaiao programmes assumes a universal truth in speaking for all. This creates a philosophical disjunction that has yet to be widely recognised or debated by practitioners, policymakers and developers of Pūtaiao.

Traditional Māori knowledge, social structures, and language have been increasingly lost since colonisation began, yet Māori cultural roots remain to some degree intact. Despite widespread use, such as in ‘Kaupapa Māori research’, the term ‘Māori’ is understood to be a ‘construct’ in the sense of a recent identity concept, contingent on colonisation. Māori speakers know that in traditional reo it takes a small ‘m’ and means ‘ordinary’ or ‘normal’, as in wai māori (fresh water) as distinct from wai tai (seawater). Its usage for Māori people, and as an adjective meaning ‘belonging to Aotearoa New Zealand’, started in around 1850 (Williams, 1971, p. 179). This is why the part of my identity that is ‘Māori’ can be understood to be a situational form of ethnicity, since it is defined within the social-historical nexus of the relationship between Māori and Pākehā.

Along these lines, a more ‘authentic’ way for me to describe myself is through my identity of iwi (Ngāpuhi), hapū (Ngāti Kura), and marae (Te Tāpui ki Matauri). My ‘race’ or ‘ethnicity’ as Māori may be an ideological construct, along with the notion of ‘race’ itself, but my iwi identity is socially constructed and maintained through processes of discourse known as whakapapa (T. Smith, 2000), based on genetic history (see also John Rangihau, as cited in Roberts, Norman, Minhinnick, Wihongi, & Kirkwood, 1996, p. 8). In this sense, Kaupapa Māori concepts of ethnicity retain some adherence to the primordialist view. Of course this neither necessitates nor justifies regarding primordialism as an adequate concept of ethnic identity. In terms of the models of identity discussed above, modern Māori identity draws more easily than modern mainstream identity on the communal register; while in Godzich’s terms, modern Māori identity retains a relatively greater degree of pre-modern agency or ‘personhood’, in comparison with the contemporary Aotearoa New Zealand mainstream identity. These are important comparisons in notions of ‘authentic’ identity.

Thus the notion of authenticity, applied to aspects of human culture such as language or ethnicity, makes sense only as a relative, rather than absolute, concept; so while some particular examples of te reo me ōna tikanga might usefully be regarded as more or less authentic than others, it is impossible to make ‘objective’
binary judgements (as ‘authentic’ or ‘inauthentic’). This argument for authenticity does not apply, however, to the canon of basic laws of science, which apply equally to all inhabitants of this planet. This invalidates the science-IK high-low bipolarity described above. It also highlights the importance of the boundaries of science, and particularly of its canon, in terms of its legitimate concerns, and its effects in society. These matters are explored further in the following chapters.

MARKETING THE MĀORI RENAISSANCE

As noted at the start of this chapter, it is commonplace to refer to the ‘Māori Renaissance since the early 1970s’ (Webster, 1998, p. 14) in accounts of the improvement in official attitudes towards the Treaty of Waitangi, including its widespread acknowledgement as basis for the legal rights of te reo me ōna tikanga (Harlow, 2003; Nepe, 1991). On the other hand, some commentators suggest the Māori Renaissance exists primarily at an ‘ideological’ level, supported (if not engineered) by colonialist interests, in order to draw attention away from the lack of ‘real’ change for Māori (Webster, 1993). As a population, Māori, while growing faster during these recent decades compared with Pākehā, continue to be over-represented in the negative social indices (Mulholland, 2006). Paradoxically, ‘some of these indices have actually worsened during the Renaissance’ (Webster, 1998, p. 25). For example, the rates of readmission for serious psychotic illnesses increased by 40% for Māori over the decade 1981–1990, while Pākehā rates fell by almost one quarter (Webster, 1998, p. 25).

It is also often suggested that renewed Māori protest from approximately 1975, particularly the Springbok rugby tour protest in 1981, effectively stimulated the social conscience of mainstream Aotearoa New Zealand (Walker, 1996; Webster, 1998). This may have been part of a growing international concern for ethics during the 20th century, particularly following World War II (Spoonley, Macpherson, & Pearson, 2004). Research suggests, however, that racial prejudice in Aotearoa New Zealand has not actually disappeared, but has become more concealed (the ‘geological’ metaphor of subterranean forces described by Wetherell and Potter, 1992, p. 208). Relatedly, discussing ‘the cultural politics of guilt,’ Avril Bell (2004) illustrates how dominant positions of both refusal and acceptance of guilt by Pākehā allow ‘the avoidance of engagement and responsibility’ (p. 90), both hence proving futile for Māori interests.

Thus, the ‘Māori Renaissance’ has prominently featured Māori-medium education and media, but shows little sign of translating into improvement of the negative statistical indices of the Māori population overall. Evan Poata-Smith (2004) details how ‘the vast majority of Māori families have borne the brunt of the economic restructuring’ (p. 60) of the last few decades, particularly since 1984. Departure of manufacturing industries to third world countries, and increasing mechanization in agriculture and other primary industries, are recent capitalist trends which have significantly increased unemployment amongst Māori and Pasifika people. New social scourges such as ‘P’ (methamphetamine) and neighbourhood gaming have further debilitated these sectors of the population.
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Steven Webster traces the development of a ‘contradictory and sometimes ideological’ relationship between perceptions and realities of Māori culture back to the notion of ‘Māoritanga’ as a domesticated ‘race pride’ developed by ‘anthropologists and administrators’ in the 1920s (Webster, 1998, p. 74).

If a better understanding of contemporary Māori society is to be achieved, Māori culture must not be understood abstractly in the Romantic tradition as ‘a whole way of life’ somehow unique, integral, harmonious, and Other than that supposedly led by European societies. This preconception sometimes obscures and is even a mystification of the other side of Māori culture as it is lived, more or less consciously by most Māori in their daily lives. ... Few Māori benefiting from the Māori Renaissance are not painfully aware of this other side of Māori culture, and aware that regardless of their more privileged status and opportunities, it is their culture too. (p. 48–9)

Webster’s analysis problematises the ‘Māori Renaissance’, but does not clearly explain why state education policy reversed over 60 years, from paying teachers to ensure children did not speak Māori, to paying teachers to ensure that these same people’s mokopuna (grandchildren) speak only in Māori. Thus, my father, speaking as a kaumātua (tribal elder) at the opening of an immersion Māori high school at Hoani Waititi Marae in Auckland in 1993, recalled his own childhood experience in the 1930s of being punished for speaking his home language (labelled ‘swearing’ by teachers), and contrasted this with the rule of ‘kōrero Māori anake’ (speak Māori only), which today operates in Kura Kaupapa Māori.

Foucault’s perspective on power in society provides a cogent understanding of this remarkable change (Foucault, 2001). Foucault explains power as discourse, likened to a conversation that power holds with itself (not, as I might previously have expressed it, between ‘more powerful’ and ‘less powerful’ in society, a model of discourse essentially as a hui or debate). So what change in the self-image of the Aotearoa New Zealand government would account for the changes in its support of te reo me ōna tikanga over the last one or two generations, yet still explain the marginalised position today of most Māori in society? To answer this question, I will recapitulate the history of the Māori Renaissance, following Webster’s (1998) analysis, and borrowing Peter McLaren’s (2005) ‘ruthless’ political cynicism, from the perspective of Pūtaiao.

The Treaty of Waitangi was signed in 1840, shortly before the major period of armed struggle between the British Army and iwi Māori. In the 1860s, the bulk of military power available to Britain was brought to bear on Māori until they surrendered, and in the process had much of their property confiscated (as punishment for ‘rebellion’) and turned to needs of the colonisers (Stenhouse, 1999, p. 82–3). This historical conjuncture makes it difficult to interpret the Treaty as evidence of sincere British intent to ‘share’ power with Māori in the new nation of Aotearoa New Zealand. As James Belich (1986) and others have noted, it actually supports a view of the Treaty as device, a way to forestall the interests of other European colonial powers, especially France and Catholicism, and also to prolong, for logistical as well as humane reasons, the onset of full British military engagement in her distant new colony.
The history of statutory oppression of Māori (in which the Treaty was only one event) demonstrates that Māori were perceived over an extensive length of time as an actual threat to European power. Science played an important role across the entire gamut - institutional, personal, military, philosophical (Harding, 1998) - of oppression of Māori, because social Darwinism was used as rational reinforcement of Eurocentrist policies and practices (Walker, 1996), a role continued by its re-invented ‘modern science’ (actually, scientistic) guise of catallactics (Devine, 2004).

During the course of the 20th century, as globalisation was increasingly realised, humanity became more aware of ethical issues, concomitant with development for the first time of the technological capability to destroy itself (and the planet) completely (Hannerz, 1991), and with modern genocide on an unprecedented scale (Gaia, 2002). Today, every government is under the spotlight of the TV camera, and governments’ images are of utmost importance. In 1900 it was ‘politically correct’ to mourn the imminent extinction of the Māori race, talk of ‘smoothing down its dying pillow’ (W. Buller, 1884, cited in Stenhouse, 1999, p. 85). Finally, in 1907, the Tohunga Suppression Act, the most blatant piece of legislation against Māori knowledge (Durie, 1996), was introduced – indicating not only that the government finally judged such a law ‘safe’ (i.e. no longer carrying a significant risk of strengthening banned practices), but also that it was still felt necessary (though on largely political/military grounds, not those of knowledge or rationality), to counter the growing threat to the government posed by Rua Kenana (D. Williams, 2001a). Ironically, James Carroll, an MP of both Māori and European heritage, introduced the Bill, and despite reservations expressed by Hone Heke and Apirana Ngata (and possibly others), ‘all the Māori MPs supported passage of this legislation’ (p. 195).

During World War II our new-found national unity was cemented by the successes of the Māori Battalion in defence of nation and Empire. Schools were no longer required to disrupt intergenerational cultural transmission – urban drift and technology had all but completed the process. In discussing this history, Webster (1998) concludes Māori have been ‘sold’ a modern renaissance which is more symbolic than real. Webster’s Marxian analysis indicts educated (and/or naïve) middle-class Māori for conspiring, intentionally or not, to assist the dominant forces of economic exploitation in the hegemonic hoodwinking of the iwi into believing themselves, and the Treaty, re-positioned in the distribution of power in society.

The commitment of the state to these ideological directions in the Māori Renaissance [i.e. its separation from, and contradiction of, Māori social reality] since the early 1980s parallels their reactionary restructuring policies in other social and economic areas. Thus the lie is given to their support of the Renaissance. It was realised that the appearances of the Renaissance served these political interests while obscuring the reality of increasing integration of Māori in capitalist society, either as part of the new elite or, more likely, the increasingly disenfranchised and impoverished. (Webster, 1998, p. 156)
But, as the new millennium approached, a different danger to the nation-state arose, one unimaginable at the beginning of the century. Surveys revealed rapid decline in the number of speakers of te reo Māori (Benton, 1997). As international recognition of severe global language and cultural losses grew, by about 1985 a major policy consideration for the Aotearoa New Zealand government became to prevent the extinction of an indigenous language and culture (May, 2005) which had received much international attention for many years (L. T. Smith, 1999).

This sensitivity regarding its international image and position forms a coherent reason, according to Foucault’s notion of power, for the ongoing commitment by the Aotearoa New Zealand government to fund te reo initiatives such as Māori-medium education and Māori television. Indeed, the most compelling interpretation under economistic thinking for the 180-degree turn, noted anecdotally above, in policy on Māori-medium education, is the value of the ‘Māori brand’ in the global market. For the brand to continue to be useful might well depend on Māori identity (hence language) remaining extant. Is it merely coincidence that the start of KKM funding coincided with the restructuring of our national economy to better suit the needs of global capital?

The knowledge economy is a challenge to us all. The Māori community, including Māori researchers, businesses, educators and iwi groups need to be up with the play, and be leaders in using knowledge to generate and develop new ideas. The recognition and development of traditional knowledge, including respective rights to this, is also a key issue. (Ministry of Commerce, 1999, cited in Devine, 2001, p. 15)

Webster notes how cultural relativity has contributed to the emergence of movements such as Kaupapa Māori:

The convergence of postmodernist interests and ethnic politics has promoted the anthropological principle of cultural relativity to market brokeship: the more esoteric or rarified the definition of a culture, the more expertise or influence is required to affirm or deny the authenticity of a version. Like high art, Other cultures are a long-term investment. (Webster, 1993, p. 237, my emphasis)

In the context of Pūtaiao, the above analysis of its sociopolitical environment calls into question the extent to which government policies for funding Māori-medium science education could ever reflect the same set of interests as those which (individually and collectively) motivate Māori educationalists. Currently, the government provides funding by means of which to contract out to individual Māori educators the bulk of the responsibility for Māori-medium education, a system which, it appears, has in the last few years created a greater disparity for Māori students in mathematics and science education outcomes (see Chapter 8 below.) ‘With these patrons of Māori culture, who needs enemies?’ (Webster, 1998, p. 21).

While the government measures its commitment to social equity by the amount of Māori-medium education funding, the ability for those involved to improve this
system in terms of outcomes for students is limited by its complexity and by orthodoxies such as language purism (see Chapter 7 below). Webster provides an aptly wry concluding comment:

Quite unlike Māori land, only the shadow of Māori culture can ever go to the Governor. ... On the other hand, although culture is in this sense inalienable, by the same token one cannot eat it any more than the Māori can eat the shadow of their land. (Webster, 1993, p. 238)

NOTES

1 My father’s grandfather was half Māori - that was known. Ambivalence comes from his grandmother whose mother was a local and whose father was unknown, but was said to be ‘Kanak’ - which I understand to mean an indigenous ‘Melanesian’ from further north in the Pacific. The question here is whether their daughter, my father’s grandmother, is to be counted as half or full Māori/indigenous. If the former, my father was in fact 3/4 Māori - but if the latter he was 7/8 - a fraction he would not actually have been able to name.

2 This claim can either be taken literally, for which I have no valid evidence, or according to the contemporary understanding of ethnicity, adopted in this work, as discussed below. I do not recall ever talking about this issue (of seeking not to ‘halve the blood’ of one’s own children) with my siblings, and I have no wish to tell their stories or invade others’ privacy. Nevertheless, at a personal level, this fairly recent realization indicates the powerful nature of such ideas, even at a subconscious level, in shaping life histories - testimony, perhaps, to the power of discourse - the ‘moral of the story’.

3 The ‘scare quotes’ signal the debates over the definition of an iwi and the status of groups such as urban Māori. (C. Smith, 2000, p. 47)