

Bicultural Issues

The National Standing Committee on Bicultural Issues provides regular commentary on bicultural issues. It aims to explain their implications for the activities of psychologists, and for the practices and policies of the Society.

NSCBI Publications Facilitator: **Ray Nairn**

Psychology becoming bicultural – Maori keynote addresses; was there something we missed?

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Tena koutou, tena koutou ehoa ma. E te whaea Ngahuaia, tena koe. Kia ora ki to korero ki a matou. E nga rangatira Maori i korero mai a matou, tena koutou. Kia ora ki o koutou korero a matou. Kia ora tatou katoa.

I am grateful to the National Standing Committee on Bicultural Issues (NSCBI) and the New Zealand Psychological Society (NZPsS) for the invitation to address this conference. At the start I must acknowledge a debt to Philip Zimbardo who reminded us that we humans, at least we English speaking people, routinely make dispositional attributions, not least when interpreting talk. In doing so we act as if we believed talk to be like the products of an ink-jet printer, interpreting spoken words as if they arose from (autonomous) computer-like cognitions, feelings, and attitudes before being 'sent to the printer'.

Thinking about talk (discourse)

For the duration of this address I would like you to try to set aside those discursive resources, and to picture us as living immersed in discourses. It is in our speaking to ourselves and others that we live and are known. The discursive resources, the substance of the discourses in which we live, are social or systemic. Those discourses pre-exist individuals, being constantly developed, cultivated, and modified by members of social groups who are thereby enabled to construct aspects of their experienced world in valued ways.

Pakeha discursive resources

Over nearly twenty years, my colleague Dr Tim McCreanor and I have studied how non-Maori (Pakeha) speakers and writers construct Maori and the relationships between Maori and Pakeha in Aotearoa/

New Zealand. For simplicity, in this address, I include all non-Maori in the category Pakeha, and I refer to all who produce representations of Maori and of Maori-Pakeha relations, including writers and television producers, as speakers.

In that research we have identified the most frequently used words, images, and narrative fragments, and we are confident that those are the building blocks of Pakeha talk about and representations of Maori. The identified resources enable speakers to tell, to reaffirm, and to apply the standard story of New Zealand's good race relations in diverse situations. Writing in 1991 we characterised that standard story as:

Maori/Pakeha relations in NZ are the best in the world, rooted as they are in the honourable adherence to the outcome of a fair fight. Mutual respect for each others' strengths and tolerance of idiosyncrasies has integrated Maori people into a harmonious, egalitarian relationship with more recent arrivals; the whole working constructively for the common good. (Nairn & McCreanor, 1991, p. 248-9)

Within that story, colonisation – the supplanting of the indigenous people, their practices, beliefs, and control of resources – by the settlers – is rendered invisible. As a result Maori can be and often are constructed as 'failing', or being an issue or problem for other NZers, or as resisting or being unable to cope with the modern world. People who protest, who seek to contradict the story, are, within this discourse, cast as stirrers - troublemakers who foment discontent for their own political ends. The Government, in the person of the chair of the Select Committee hearing submissions on the Government's 'Foreshore and Seabed' legislation has used a similar discursive move to disenfranchise

many submissions about the Bill. The Chair defined the issue as involving only 'property rights' and said that consequently they could (and would) ignore any submission that related the legislation to the constitution.

Pakeha discursive resources will be familiar to anyone who lives here, participates in conversations with other Pakeha, or reads "Letters to the Editor" even if the words and images are named as 'resources'. The most commonly used resources are so familiar that they naturalise the outcomes of colonisation (McCreanor & Nairn, 2002). By that I mean that those outcomes appear so obvious, so much commonsense, that speakers feel no need or pressure to justify or explain what they are saying. Rather there is a taken-for-granted quality to those constructions that allow speakers to assume that Maori-Pakeha relationships came about through natural processes that we may regret but cannot change.

The standard story in use

For years, media stories have been framed within that standard story utilising and revivifying the resources that make their constructions appear natural or obvious (McCreanor, 1993a, b, c; Nairn & McCreanor, 1991). Politicians, within and without parliament, and ordinary NZers making submissions to the Human Rights Commission reproduce forms of the standard story using much the same discursive resources in their arguments and policy statements (McCreanor, 1993c; Nairn & McCreanor, 1990). Constructions or representations born in that lineage are widely understood as self-evident, accurate accounts of how the world (of New Zealand society) is (Wetherell & Potter, 1992).

More recently, with Maori colleagues (Professor Linda Smith, Dr Fiona Cram, and Wayne Johnson), we conducted a bicultural study of portrayals of Maori health. Dr McCreanor and I interviewed and analysed the views of general practitioners while our Maori colleagues interviewed and analysed the views of Maori service users. Analysing the GP's talk we confirmed the social constructionist prediction that these trained professionals were using or

struggling with the same production processes earlier identified in lay talk (McCreanor & Nairn, 2002a, b). For example when accounting for the much higher rate of morbidity among Maori most of the GPs relied on a blending of their professional talk – genetics, immunity, and poor patient compliance – with resources associated with the standard story. For example, they spoke of Maori culture – which in those interviews roughly meant 'how they live' – representing it as incompatible with modern health care systems. Maori were said to put the collective before the individual, to be overly mobile thereby undermining continuity of care, and to transmit health risks to their children. Those representations closely parallel constructions we had reported 10 years earlier in which Maori were depicted as burdened by a 'stone-age culture' and an inability to fit in or measure up to the modern liberal society in which they were now to live.

Psychologists and change

I thought about those GPs after I accepted the invitation to be a keynote speaker and I thought about the group of professionals with whom I identify. As a professional body we psychologists have taken some steps. We have spoken of making our practice bicultural, and some of the Maori keynote speakers (e.g. Nikora, 2001) have identified and celebrated signs that we seeking to fulfil those commitments. As did many of the speakers at yesterday's AGM. Of course having Maori keynote speakers at our annual conferences is one of those signs. We (psychologists) intentionally expose ourselves and our profession to the informed and informative comments and critiques of Maori. In case there are any misconceptions, I am a Pakeha New Zealander of Scots and English lineage who is honoured by being asked to provide one of those keynote addresses this year.

Do we have the resources to hear?

Earlier I said that, in the absence of alternatives, we hear and understand what a speaker says by means of the standard story and the associated discursive resources. I need to clarify that point as it underlies my belief that, although we may have listened to our

speakers, we may not have heard what they were saying. Philomena Essed (1990) provided a clear description of the way resources (or their lack) constrain thought. She described and compared experiences of Surinamese women in Netherlands and African-American women in the U.S.A. Women in both these groups are often exposed to race-based harassment and discrimination in their everyday lives.

Setting the scene Essed explained that the Dutch emphasise and pride themselves on being tolerant. For them words like 'racism' and 'discrimination' are regarded as extreme and provocative, only applicable to:

"[acts that are] public, blatant, or violent [and that intentionally target] black people" (p. 141).

Consequently, the women who live in the Netherlands lack discursive means to interpret or understand "the frequent [instances of] humiliation, harassment, insults, sabotage, discouragement, imputations, accusations, and aggression as painful obstacles [that are deliberate acts of fellow citizens]".

Lacking the vocabulary and framework provided by a systemic analysis the women find that, despite what they feel, they have to describe and understand those experiences as somehow being their personal fault. That interpretation disempowers them and, as they seem to be responsible, increases the stress occasioned by those incidents of everyday racism.

In contrast, Essed found her US informants had access to a vocabulary for identifying and understanding racism and discrimination. And she found that they used those discursive resources selectively. Consequently, although they were exposed to very similar levels of everyday racism, they were able to distinguish incidents they experienced because they were black from incidents arising from things they had said or done. Those women felt empowered by being able to recognise when "The script is constant [whites are still putting blacks down]" (p. 236) and being able to distinguish such situations from those where they had 'caused' or 'triggered' the actions, as they could learn to avoid offering such

provocation. That empowerment cushioned some of the impact of racism though it is still a heavy burden affecting all aspects of health and wellbeing (Feagin & McKinney, 2003).

Essed's work demonstrated that similar experiences could be read or understood in different ways depending on the interpretative frames and resources available. I am arguing that if, when we (Pakeha) listen to a Maori speaker, we adopt the standard story frame and utilise the commonsensical resources of Pakeha discourse, we may fail to hear what is being said. That is the point of the tag question in my title – "Was there something we missed?"

Let me be crystal clear at this point. I am not seeking or claiming to re-present what Maori keynote speakers have said to us in our conference. Rather, I went back to the keynote addresses of which I or the society have a record, and sought to hear what was said from outside the standard story. In doing so I was attending to the way the speakers constructed the world of Maori New Zealanders, particularly to those points at which the speakers related that world to the world I inhabit and help reproduce as a Pakeha psychologist.

Looking after our past

Attempting to gather those earlier addresses I was immediately confronted by our Society's patchy efforts to record and disseminate what had been said. As a check I went looking for records of other keynote addresses and, in case you didn't know, we (New Zealand Psychological Society) are quite even-handed, we retain very little of what our invited speakers say to us.

That carelessness with the words and wisdom of invited speakers seems ironic. In our thinking and practice as psychologists we constantly look to the past:

- What a person did and the consequences of their actions.
- A person's experiences and the ramifications of how those experiences were understood.
- Events and the ways they were interpreted or introjected by the participants.

It is as if that that emphasis on the past applies only in our professional work

with other people; our clients, our subjects, and our students. As a Society, we demonstrate little collective commitment to recording and circulating the wisdom of our invited speakers. We behave like errant library staff, regularly adding new books while ignoring those pushed off the shelves by the newcomers

Because of that collective carelessness, I was able to locate texts or recordings of only 7 Maori keynote speakers. They were, Donna Awatere-Huata (1993), Professor Mason Durie (1997), Honourable Tariana Turia (2000) and Linda Nikora (2000), Dr Averil Herbert (2001), Professor Mason Durie (2003). There are some glaring gaps and, apart from those, I was distressed to find that, in moving to Tamaki campus, I had mislaid my copy of the address given by Linda (now Professor) Smith at the Auckland conference in 1989. I believe I have located about half the addresses the Society has been given.

Common features in the keynotes

Re-reading those addresses it was clear they touched on a number of points in common. Two of those commonalities stood out because they were prominent in each address. First, people were depicted as inherently and centrally cultured, and second, colonisation was portrayed as a process that is still damaging Maori people's cultural core. Clearly those features are related although how strongly they were related and how prominent the relationship was depended upon the speaker's topic. For two speakers, Mason Durie in 1997 and Tariana Turia in 2000 this was the heart of their address. Tariana said:

... as psychologists, you frequently have as your clients, Maori people. The challenge I put to you is – do you seriously believe that you, with the training you get, are able to nurture the Maori psyche? (p.27)

Mason Durie said:

Loss of land had more than economic implications. Personal and tribal identity were inextricably linked to Papatuanuku – the mother earth – and alienation from land carried with it a severe psychological toll, quite apart from the loss of income and livelihood. (p. 33)

All people are cultured

To examine those two features I have chosen to start with the assertion that all people are enculturated – that who and what they are is grounded in their culture. When people are invited to speak as Maori and proceed to locate themselves as Maori and talk about Maoriness, Te Reo (language), tikanga (practices), and whanau (social relations) as central to their being a hearer might gloss that as a form of credentialing. As if the speaker were displaying their authority to speak, but that would miss much that was being said. When Professor Durie (1997), spoke about "security of identity" he spelt out the relationship between culture and personhood.

Alienation of people from their land and their culture subjects them to a fragmentation of identity and, along with loss of possessions, a loss of spirit. (p. 32)

I chose to focus on 'culture' first, because, within Pakeha discourse and the standard story 'culture' is a burdensome, past oriented feature of Maori and other non-mainstream peoples. Discursively that is a very convenient representation. It allows us Pakeha to deny that 'our culture' shapes the institutions, the values and the practices that are considered right and proper in this country. If we are to hear what the Maori speakers said we need to have and consistently utilise a clearer understanding of culture and its roles in our lives. In particular we need to mark our own culture as we mark the culture of Others. To do so we need to understand culture as Charles Waldegrave, who with Donna Awatere-Huata and Kiwi Tamasese, launched our 1993 conference, did:

All cultures carry with them history, beliefs and ways of doing things. Cultures carry meanings. We experience all the most intimate events in our life, within a culture. Within our families or intimate groupings, we learn the rules and the accepted ways of doing things. Public life is also determined by the meanings created by cultures. (p. 4)

Culture is about the meanings we give to experiences, the ways in which we understand and structure situations. Those of us who are Pakeha, who are

part of, or can 'pass' within the dominant group in New Zealand, live in a world that reflects our culture back to us, confirming both its own and our rightness. In that sense we are paid-up members of a speech community:

[A] Group of people who share at least one valued way of speaking and interpretive resources within which that way of speaking is located. (Fitch, 2001, p. 57)

Those of us who are monolingual speakers of English are cribbed, cabined and confined within that Pakeha speech community. We do well to remember that some of our forefathers were so wrapped up in the language and attendant worldview that they established Native (Maori) Schools to civilise Maori by means of their perfect language (Nairn, 2002). Here is Mr Carleton an inspector of Native Schools, seconding The Native Education Act (1867) that specified that instruction was to be in English.

They [the MPs] could never civilise them [Maori] through the medium of a language that was imperfect as a medium of thought. ... civilization could only eventually be carried out by means of a perfect language. (p. 862-3)

He spoke nearly 140 years ago, yet there were many echoes of his words in materials Dr McCreanor and I analysed from 1979. And, there are many New Zealanders who still consider Te Reo to be an imperfect medium of thought and seek to replace it in schools with 'useful languages'.

Psychology's culture

All of us here, by subscription, practice, training, or some combination of those, are concurrently members of the (speech) community or is it communities of the discipline and profession of psychology. In New Zealand the societal and the professional speech communities have significant overlaps. That's hardly surprising as our discipline, as we recognise and practice it, was nurtured in Anglophone societies, constructed within their dominant tropes as when people are represented as autonomous, individualised selves (Herbert, 2001, Gaines, 1992). Mason Durie has often spoken of how alien to and destructive

of Maori identity that de-socialised picture of personhood is. Unsurprisingly, that same image of the self-sufficient person has disabled efforts to generate and sustain a sense of ourselves, psychologists or citizens, as members of a collective.

Our Pakeha selves are not culturally experienced as part of a collective. You may like me have had the experience of being part of a group that sought to become and to persist as a collective. Its not that we can't but that it does not come naturally to us and we have to work continuously to make it happen. However, while we don't routinely experience ourselves as members of a collective from the perspective of non-Pakeha we appear to act as a collective. Several of the keynote speakers (Herbert, 2001; Nikora, 2000; Turia, 2000) reflected that back to us.

There is plenty of evidence to support my contention that we don't experience ourselves as part of a collectivity. One example from close to home – responses to early drafts of the new Code of Ethics – included fierce criticisms of our efforts to strengthen awareness that, as a profession or discipline, we share a common fate and therefore ought to act in ways that strengthen and improve psychology. We, (the Working Party) were accused of 'invading people's (private, autonomous) lives'. Another example, this time from the realm of the Society, that as New Zealanders we talk of, or rail against, 'welfare'. It appears that everyone does that but, in doing so we appear to have forgotten that we, in New Zealand, created a system of Social Security. Social Security, as a system was predicated on the belief that we were all responsible for each other. It was a system that sought to realise collective responsibility for the provision of care to those who experienced misfortune. However, New Zealand has been colonized by welfare talk that originated in the English class system amid British notions of 'charity', and of 'the deserving poor'. Consequently, our thinking about social and financial support has been individualised and we are all the poorer for it.

Perhaps this is the point to conduct a thought experiment. I'm serious, I want you to try to imagine your life if the

Psychologists Board (and our Society) had created and imposed a collective identity on psychologists in this country. Think about it. Think about your daily work, your practices and how they might be affected by the requirement that we support and protect that collective identity. I guess most of us here would struggle. We would be operating within a code that did not reflect, was not congruent with, our previously unquestioned ways of being and practising. There would be frequent feelings of vulnerability, of disorientation and of feeling, THIS IS NOT HOW IT SHOULD BE.

Those feelings would be a consequence of being caught between our Anglophone socialisation in which we were autonomous individual practitioners and the possibility that we would be disciplined for acting like that. For me that experience of being punished for or prevented from being 'who we are' resonates with what Mowbray, Lord of Norfolk said when King Richard II sent him into permanent exile:

My native English, now I must forgo,
And now my tongue's use is to me no more,
Than an unstringed viol, or a harp,
...
That knows no touch to tune the harmony:
Within my mouth you have engaol'd my tongue,
Doubly portcullis'd with my teeth and lips,
And dull, unfeeling, barren ignorance
Is made my gaoler to attend on me.

(Shakespeare, Act I, Scene III:
Ure, 1959, p.31)

Mason Durie would recognise that as the loss of spirit and with that loss the possibility of a healthy, human existence.

Colonisation

From that discussion of the centrality of culture in our being it is a short step to colonisation, the other common element among the Maori keynote addresses. If you performed the thought experiment I described your experience of being out of step, of not being able to get it right, is a pale image of what it is to be

colonised. Because when a people and country are colonised the colonists intend to stay to exploit the resources for themselves and their country of origin, the metropolis. The colonisers impose their ways primarily because it seems natural, they are the civilized, the powerful, the righteous and it follows, in that logic that they should be in charge. (Why do I keep having images of Iraq as I say this?)

In Pakeha discourse colonisation happened; was completed in the past. Colonisation is over and done, part of how the world came to be as we now experience it – it may have been regrettable but it is unchangeable. So Pakeha constantly enjoin Maori to 'put the past behind them', to move on together from where we all are. If we are thinking like that it will be very difficult to hear the keynote speakers who, with one voice say:

We (Maori) are still being colonized

We (Maori) are still being damaged by your practices and institutions.

Settlers in New Zealand appropriated land. Land was no longer Papatuanuku the progenitor and turangawaewae (safe harbour and standing place) of hapu and iwi. Land became a marketable commodity within capitalist economic relationships. Duties of kaitiakitanga, to take care of the world of Tane (forests) and Tangaroa (waters) were hindered or banned (Awatere-Huata, 1993). During the colonising there were battles and there were slow deaths from introduced diseases. Networks of kin and obligations were disrupted and there were systematic attempts to stamp out the "beastly communism of the pa" (Nairn, 2001).

The systematic alienation of those (tangata whenua) who are the upright walking earth from their whenua undercut the foundations of Maori wellbeing. As psychologists we should all know Whare Tapa Wha – the Maori image of wellbeing and health as a house. That image asserts the interdependence of the four walls as a lack or weakness in one makes the whole unsafe (Durie, 1994). To hark back to culture the walls are; Wairua (spirit, spirituality), Hinengaro (mind, psyche), whanau (family, hapu and iwi networks),

and tinana (physical being). The foundation for those inter-relationships is the whenua. It is a very different depiction of persons to that which reigns in our psychology.

Each Maori keynote speaker sought to convey to us the immediate and ongoing impact of colonisation. They did not say, although they could have, that our settler forebears were so successful in devastating Maori economies (Awatere-Huata), marginalising Maori language and tikanga (Herbert, Turia), and disrupting Maori whanau (Durie) that there may now be nowhere where Maori can relax and live as Maori. Maori people, including our keynote speakers have told us that their identity is being continuously called in question by the dominant society. They report that they are subject to intense monitoring to which we psychologists contribute. That monitoring appears to result from our (Pakeha) feeling that, if they (Maori) get the chance, they will 'become too Maori'. In Pakeha discourse there are 'Good Maori' who fit in quietly and don't cause trouble, and there are 'Bad Maori' who refuse to comply, who demand the right to retain their identity, and who make us Pakeha feel bad (McCreanor, 1993b, Nairn & McCreanor, 1991). The monitoring is directed to controlling the latter.

And what does that mean?

As reflected to us by the Maori keynote speakers and other people, this is a toxic society for Maori. Tariana Turia spoke of the "wounds of the soul" (Turia, 2001), Mason Durie likened it to genocide (Durie, 1997). These people spoke to us; how did we as psychologists respond? We have continued with the small steps and signs I spoke of earlier and I think that means we listened but found it hard to hear just what was being said. And of course, because we Pakeha are the inheritors of settler dominance, we have a choice. Although we have been told, we can close our eyes, or our ears, and try to sidestep the issues. A risky procedure if we have closed eyes. Alternatively, we could choose to strengthen our resolve, both as a Society and as members of the New Zealand society to work for change. For us as psychologists that would involve

changing our practices, changing institutions, and changing how we view the world. At this conference, Keriata Paterson became our president, the first Maori person in that post. This could be a very good time to confirm the changes of the last few years and, listening carefully to Maori psychologists and speakers, take significant steps to confront the pain and damage of which we have been told.

In finishing I borrow from Sir Doug Graham, something he said when he was enlisting the National Party support for his efforts to address the need for Treaty settlements. I have paraphrased freely:

Don't feel guilty because New Zealand was colonised or because Maori people were and continue to be damaged by those processes and by our settler institutions. Rather, we should feel guilt if, having been told about that damage and its causes, we do nothing to fix it. (McCreanor, 1993c, p. 56)

No reira, tena koutou tena koutou.

Ka mutu taku korero.

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