

# An Indigenous Reality Check

Catherine Love

A whanaunga of mine – at the suggestion of his wife - had his eyes tested. He found that he had impaired vision – probably present from an early age. He was overwhelmed when he got his prescription glasses and saw the world fully for the first time. He could not believe that he had gone through his life to that point totally oblivious to the fact that he was seeing only half of the whole, missing out on vital pieces of the total picture.

This commentary on Professor Evans' vision for the future of psychology in Aotearoa is based on my perception that Evans is seeing only half the picture. I attempt here to fill in the gaps that I believe Evans is missing, and to create – through the addition of an indigenous perspective - a more comprehensive, realistic vision for psychology in Aotearoa in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

As Evans looks at Pleiades and the Southern Cross, I look at Matariki and Puanga. Do we see the same thing? In part we may well do, in part however, I don't think so. I see a part of Ranginui, of who I am and where I come from. I see the constellations that my daughter and her classmates learned of, observed, sang about and acknowledged in daily karakia from the age of 5 years at Te Kura Kaupapa Māori o Ngati Ruanui. My own view of these constellations also encompasses and acknowledges Western traditions of astrological discovery, naming and navigation, as well as more recent globally developed scientific narratives and theories. I do not know what Evans sees and feels when he looks at or thinks about these same constellations. I think it likely that his view includes, perhaps is limited to, western tradition and scientific narratives. I am blessed, as a bicultural

background provides me with bifocal vision – a vision that is lacking for many - and a vision that allows me to see perspectives and pictures that are apparently invisible to those operating without the benefit of bicultural lenses. I am also burdened because this vision highlights alternatives, and demands that I make constant choices of courses to follow - choices that carry with them the burden of psychological, spiritual, professional and familial/intergenerational consequences.

This commentary on the course for clinical psychology as plotted by Professor Ian Evans focuses less on an analysis and critique of particular coordinates and more on an examination of the 'skyscape' from which Evans has drawn his bearings (ie. the sub-text underpinning Evan's conclusions).

Attempts to generate understanding grounded in one way of being, while standing-under a discursive frame rooted in another, risk minimizing and transforming the very nature of what it is that is being depicted. My way of being is difficult to articulate in a language system grounded in self-contained individualism; even more so within clinical discourses that do not provide a satisfactory framework or space for the fullness of our being,

our realities, our whakapapa, mana and mauri to be recognized as what they are. As one Māori client commented "*There was nowhere to fit me*" (Milne, 2005, p.15).

With that caveat in mind, I accept that this commentary will inevitably be framed by the nature of my spectacles, and that of those with whom I share similar lenses.

Although there are many statements in Evan's treatise with which I agree or partially agree, there appears to be a blind-spot operating. This blind spot renders invisible such fundamental realities as the ongoing effects of racism, colonization and 'historical' injustice; the implications of sociocentric (or ensembled, Sampson, 1993; indexical, Landrine, 1992) conceptions of self; and the models of racial/cultural identity development that are so much a part (albeit an unacknowledged part) of the experience and being of every citizen in a colonizing nation such as ours. Drawing distinctions between "day to day unfair treatment and humiliations... and historical injustices" (p. 21) fails to recognize that the day to day unfair treatment and humiliation is not only a consequence of historical injustice, but also a part of the ongoing injustice of colonization, racism and oppression. The injustice is not historical at all. Nor is the injustice an 'event', a time or a place...it is like a river with many tributaries, flowing through the systems, structures and relationships with which we live, through which we are constituted. Like the water

that makes up much of our bodies, the streams of racism and colonising mind-sets are absorbed into our beings, often unseen but always present.

Evans' assumption of historicity fails to take into account the ensembled individualism (Sampson, 1992) of sociocentric conceptions of self – where, according to our tikanga - the wrongs (and rights) are personally and familiarly borne (consciously or unconsciously) until they are set right or the balance is restored. An advantage of this conception of self and other, of course, is that 'historical' injustices can be set right...they do not need to be carried forever.

This way of being and of viewing is difficult to explain to 'others' who, while perhaps holding spiritual beliefs, may not hold spiritual realities in at least the same esteem as scientific realities. A linear, compartmentalised system of rationality is not the only source of rationality that exists. Nor is it necessarily the best, most accurate or otherwise preferable.

Evans considers that the effects of colonization, racism and oppression are "too remote" to have explanatory power or clinical utility. I conclude that he considers that this is as true for himself and other members of dominant groups, as it is for the members of indigenous and colonized peoples. The problem here is that this position effectively denies recognition, not only of the real, current effects of ongoing inequity and injustice for oppressed peoples, but also the ongoing privilege afforded dominant cultural group members. Does it then follow that the privilege experienced by dominant group members is considered by Evans to be irrelevant; or somehow justified, perhaps attributable to their personal behaviours, actions or qualities (supplemented perhaps by those of their parents)? And likewise, that the "personal problems" disproportionately experienced by indigenous peoples are also justified and deserved? Without making a particular value judgement about this position, it is worth asking how this fits with the *Code of Ethics*, and *Standards of Cultural Competency for psychologists*? How does such a position relate to the development and portrayal of genuine positive regard, empathy and respect? If my whanau, hapu, iwi

and I are somehow 'doing it wrong', and Evans and other psychologists are 'doing it right', what do we have to do to 'do it right', like Evans? What would it take for us to share the privilege taken for granted by many of those in possession of it? Might 'doing it right' involve imitating the Evans family, or the families of other clinical psychologists? For those who doubt the existence of this privilege, it may be worth listing the outcomes or symptoms of this privilege – from living longer, being treated and served with respect in shops and restaurants, getting to go to flash restaurants, not being stopped by police when walking home after a night at the movies or on the town, having a working and legal car so you don't have to walk anyway, enjoying school, being treated with respect at school, sharing the same language and learning style at home and at school, finding psychology sensible, helpful and rational etc. Or the list could be done the other way round, listing the symptoms of a lack of privilege, of oppression... what is it that you or your client get ... from a shorter life, high chance of early termination of education, no space for the kinesthetic learning style that works for you, being watched constantly in shops, people crossing the street when you and your friends are walking home, continuously being stopped by police when you are driving a flash car etc.

In a related vein I wonder: If my (beautiful, brown) children went to the same schools as Evans' children (and other beautiful, middle-class white children) would they be treated the same? Should they be treated the same? Would they turn out the same as the children of privileged white parents? Would I want them to? When making decisions for my children's education I need to ask: Will my children really be valued in the classroom, as the future of our whanau hapu, iwi? Will their culture, their identity, be valued and affirmed – every day? How much might they have to compromise their values and our whanau beliefs and traditions? Will they be required to operate like an automaton from the head; to mediate everything from emotions to spirituality through their minds? Will they be required to squash their spontaneity and exuberance, their

physicality and kinaesthetic learning talents? Will it be squashed for them? How much might going to a particular school lead them to reject our whanau values, and effectively, reject their own identity? Will their teachers or school counselors be teaching them that they are independent individuals? That their futures are totally in their hands? That we live in a wonderful, and just, society? What will they do, how will they react when they realize that this is not necessarily so? The questions are many. They are questions asked every day by Māori parents and grandparents wanting to protect the mana and mauri of their tamariki/mokopuna; wanting to see them succeed, and wanting most of all to prepare them for life in a world and a nation that can be harsh and unjust. They are questions that are equally relevant for a twenty year old considering studying within a School of Psychology.

Evans proposes that "*if we concentrate on the principles [of clinical psychology] rather than its products, we might be better able to use psychological knowledge to forge practices more suited to all our local needs*" (2004, p.30). Sounds nice, but what are the principles that Evans is referring to? And how do we separate the principles from the products that are derived from or produced by them? If, as decades of international research affirm, the very fundamental values of individualism, secularism, consumerism (Waldegrave, 1990) form the foundation of clinical psychology's principles – will not the products of these principles unavoidably reflect these same principles?

I do not mean to dismiss all of the accumulated and often valuable knowledge base of Western psychology. However, I am suggesting that a critical review of the foundations of clinical psychology – its basic principles and hidden assumptions – is essential. A touch of paint here and a patch there, to make the product 'blend in' better in our environment (or more effectively disguise its foreign nature?), will not do. As indicated above, Evans takes a view, familiar to most psychologists, that emphasizes the self-contained individual (albeit influenced by context) and, whilst acknowledging some of the more comfortable products of our

tikanga or Māori culture, discounts other fundamental principles of Maori and other indigenous sociocentric or ensembled identity and reality.

Like Evans (2002, p.30) "*I am... talking about clinical psychology with its emphasis on the individual and the complex interaction between the individual and the social environment*". Where our perspectives may differ is in where we see the boundaries between the individual, whanau and tupuna being drawn; and the degree of past, present and future overlap between social and individual contexts. In addition I view an understanding of racial/cultural identity development – our own included – as an essential part of the competence requirements for clinical psychologists. Ditto for culturally constituted conceptions of self, and for the culturally constituted principles underpinning psychological education and training, theory and practice. I also include matauranga Maori, tikanga whakaaro, tikanga a iwi as an essential for me. My whakapapa is my most valuable resource. Understanding of this and the tikanga identified above provides me with links at a variety of levels to many people, including clients. Whakapapa grants me the privilege of seeing clients and others in their wholeness – as part of much wider networks and as elements within a much bigger storyline than that of their 'presenting problem'.

Racism, and its consequent inequalities, may not be subjects that members of dominant groups enjoy being reminded of. "When the perspective of the subordinate is shared directly, an image is reflected to members of the dominant group which is disconcerting" (Tatum, 1997, p.27). Miller (1976; in Tatum 1997) points out that dominant group members "can avoid awareness because their explanation of the relationship becomes so well integrated in *other terms* (sic); they can even believe that both they and the subordinate group share the same interests and, to some extent, a common experience". While Evans acknowledges, through the voices of Māori researchers, some 'historical' inequalities (eg. Bishop's (2003) analysis of the power inequities in Western research traditions; p. 18) his argument seems to be that these

observations are historical in nature. The clear implication being that therefore they should really be left in the past as things are different now, or at least are improving. I agree that things are improving, to an extent. However – while we no longer have signs outside hotels in Wellington stating 'no dogs or Maoris'; the sentiments underpinning these blatant manifestations of racism are still present but more effectively disguised than previously, perhaps even hidden from ourselves. They still represent an insidious threat to Māori wellbeing, and in fact to our wellbeing as a nation. Changing overt behaviors and maintaining compliance, whether for the colonial constabulary, publicans, teachers or psychologists (Evans, p.23) can be enforced if monitored closely; changing attitudes, deeply held assumptions and ingrained beliefs is, as clearly illustrated by New Zealanders' responses to Brash's Orewa speech, a more difficult proposition. Delpit comments that "Liberal educators believe themselves to be operating with good intentions but...these good intentions are only conscious delusions about their unconscious true motives". Or in the rather more prosaic turn of phrase of one participant in a John Gwaltly study cited by Delpit; "The biggest difference between black folks and white folks is that black folks know when they're lying" (Delpit, p.29)

I have frequently had young people referred to me, of Māori and Pacific Nations descent, who are on the verge of being expelled or stood down from school because of their behavioural problems. When they come to me they may already have undergone anger management, relaxation training and various forms of counseling, therapy, discipline and punishment. More often than not, when I listen to their stories they refer mainly to teachers, sometimes to fellow students, with 'attitude problems'. As we explore their stories, their experiences and perceptions we co-construct a shared understanding of the issues. If necessary I help them to name the problematic issue or dynamic. Often racism, monoculturalism, injustice, disrespect etc. are fitting labels. Following this we explore the problem in more detail, looking at the dimensions and contexts in which it arises and in

which it may appear again. If racism and injustice are part of their experience, and if they are likely to continue to experience this in a variety of situations, perhaps throughout their lives, then this needs to be acknowledged. The issue then becomes validating their emotional and spiritual reactions, and looking for strategies that will be constructive for them and their whanau, strategies that will maintain their mana and their mauri. Picking up a chair and throwing it across the room, swearing at or jostling the teacher does not cut it as a smart strategy. As noted above, the greatest taonga that I take into any meeting with a troubled youth or whanau is my whakapapa; it is my whakapapa that connects with theirs. As I meet them, it is never a meeting with a 'problem child' or 'case', but a connection with a significant link in a long ancestral and familial chain. As this walking talking embodiment of the ancestral whakapapa meets me as carrier of my whakapapa or ancestral chain, we can link together. In large part, my job is to assist to strengthen the linkages in their kinship chain, to find ways for them to maintain mana and reclaim rangatiratanga.

A while ago I was involved in providing post-graduate professional development for professionals working in the field of counselling, therapy and mental health. As part of their programme I provided site visits, spending two or three days with them at their places of work; observing their interactions with clients, providing feedback and on occasion collaborating in sessions and demonstrating therapeutic techniques. On one such visit my student was an experienced and competent professional who had been working with a small group of young Māori women, referred through the school for behavioral problems. My student had developed a good rapport with the young women, and had allowed them to attend sessions in a group as well as individually. This student certainly demonstrated the qualities advocated by Harvey (2003; in Evans, 2004, p.23) namely "knowing them, taking time to get to know them and being interested...allowing them to get to know you as well...". However, there were some areas – areas that had a very significant influence on these clients' sense of self and identity, mana

and mauri, and current beliefs, attitudes and behaviours, that were invisible to my student.

In the interests of brevity I will summarise here: in the course of my conversation with the young women, I was able to establish the nature of their relationship mates **and** whanaunga, with close inter/intra familial relationships, historic and contemporary (hence their relationship was not simply one of schoolmates) they were jointly affected by what was going on in their families. There had recently been a significant and divisive issue in the area (Moutoa Gardens); their shared families were involved. Although my student did not believe that the 'outside' issues had impacted on relationships in the school environment, the young women thought differently. They had long heard their whanau, grandparents and other elders, siblings, cousins and mates, talking about or alluding to experiences of injustice and inequity – large and small. They had absorbed their whanau's (justified) 'cynical distrust' (Evans, 2004, p.23) of Pakeha society, politics, media, education and other aspects of a system perceived as patently unjust; and they had developed their own. We explored their perceptions of their school environment and elsewhere. This was not a remote or theoretical exercise, but a detailed chronology of their experiences and observations. Next we named and acknowledged/honoured their perceptions and experiences (eg. cultural bias, monoculturalism, racism; feeling unsafe, torn, hurt, anger, resentment, cynicism and distrust; whanaungatanga and divided loyalties, threatened mana, mauri, rangatiratanga). Finally, we identified positive strategies for dealing with the environmental factors, honouring their whanau and their heritage, utilizing responses and developing behaviours that would be helpful rather than harmful to them and their whanau.

In summary, Evans considers that colonization as a salient aetiological factor, is "too remote" for his taste. He prefers to examine more "psychological" (individualistic? short-term? short-sighted? partial?) explanations for and understandings of Maori identity, pathology and characteristics of wellbeing. However, for many whanau,

teaching children to survive and even thrive, in a racist environment, whilst growing and maintaining a positive identity, is an essential component of 'parenting' ...and clearly relevant to their current state of mind.

As Evans notes, the New Zealand Code of Ethics for Psychologists (2002, NZ Psychological Society) is a world leader in its up-front recognition of the provisions, spirit and intent of the Treaty of Waitangi, and especially in the first of its four central ethical principles. These are:

1. Respect for the dignity of persons and peoples
2. Responsible caring
3. Integrity of relationships.
4. Social justice and responsibility to society

The Code of Ethics for Psychologists Working in Aotearoa/New Zealand states that: "*The principle of respect for the dignity of persons and peoples requires that each person and all peoples are positively valued in their own right, and are shown respect and granted dignity... In New Zealand, the basis for respect between the indigenous people (tangata whenua – those who are Māori) and others (those who are not Māori) is set out in the Treaty of Waitangi*" (NZ Psychological Society, 2002, p.3). This principle is viewed by Western psychologists with an interest in ethics internationally as highly progressive. The principle of 'Respect for the Dignity of Persons and Peoples' has even been adopted by the International Working Party for a Universal Declaration of Ethical Principles as a primary feature of its proposed Universal Declaration. To me the statement represents progress and opens possible pathways to equality, partnership, rangatiratanga. But it stops short of explicitly prescribing equality of paradigms, theories, practices and perspectives. As an aspirational document, it may be argued that this is not the purpose of an ethical code. However, in reality this usually means that the interpretation of such fundamental tenets as those identified above is left to those (psychologists, academics and teachers) who have benefitted from historical and existing inequalities, from partnerships in which they are undeniably dominant and

from systems that deny the authority of Māori perspectives, processes and paradigms.

Each of these principles speaks directly to the nature of the relationship between Eurocentric psychology, indigeneity and cultural diversity. 'Respect for the dignity of persons and peoples' is a particularly groundbreaking principle, one that explicitly moves the domain of ethical considerations beyond individuals, and into racial, ethnic and cultural domains.

The questions that we have not yet fully come to grips with, in Aotearoa/New Zealand (and we have this in common with our closest neighbours) include: What do ideals such as equality, partnership, rangatiratanga, and the "bicultural imperative" identified by Evans mean in practice? Is 'respect' a feeling, an intention, an ideal, a set of behaviours? Can it be empirically validated? Who judges the presence, absence, or extent of 'respect' in a given situation or context? Similarly, is 'dignity' definable? Measurable? If so, who should define it, or measure it? Surely any imposition by a dominant group of their interpretation of 'dignity' or 'respect' in relation to oppressed peoples is paradoxical. What would a truly bicultural psychology look like? How might the Treaty partnership be enacted in psychological theory, practice, training and research? How will we know when rangatiratanga, Māori authority, is really and realistically present in any given learning, teaching, or other professional situation?

The New Zealand Psychologists Board is charged with setting and maintaining standards of teaching, research and practice in psychology, consistent with best practice and with the Code of Ethics – this clearly includes consideration of the questions identified above. The Standards of Cultural Competence developed by the New Zealand Psychologists Board, utilise a cultural safety framework to position, define and interpret these terms. Within this framework judgements as to the presence, absence or extent of safety in psychology and amongst psychologists' practices, are the prerogative of those affected by or subject to the work of psychologists in Aotearoa/New Zealand.

The cultural competence requirements for psychologists and the cultural safety standards that lie within these, are not focused primarily on learning about 'other' cultures, researching their identities, or measuring their authenticity in some way. Rather the cultural competencies require that psychologists, their trainers and researchers are educated and understand cultural biases inherent in many of the assumptions, values, methodologies, constructs and categorizations, both within the profession, and those personally held. For many of those with Anglo-European or White American origins, the values, assumptions and principles of Western psychology will be relatively consistent with personal values and assumptions. The vast majority of those reaching the upper echelons of our formal education system are those whose 'cultural capital' (Bourdieu, in Harker and McConnachie, 1985) has value (is the currency of exchange) in our schools and educational institutions. While we continue to insist that there is a single acceptable currency, the currency of Western cultural capital, in our education and credentialing systems – from new entrants to Schools of Psychology – we will continue to fall below the standards required in our own four fundamental ethical principles. We will continue to fail to achieve the 'bicultural imperative' required through our Code of Ethics. And we will continue to bemoan the 'under-representation' of Maori in the profession. The changes required demand more effort than the addition of a lick of paint and a patch up job. Will the profession have the courage to make the changes required to transform the bicultural imperative into a bicultural reality?

Few of the clients of psychologists, particularly those who are clients as a result of legal or coercive processes, are in a position to honestly reflect their experiences back to psychologists; particularly negative aspects. Few Māori in these positions, will risk broaching topics such as racism in psychology or perceived in the psychologists practice directly with the psychologist assessing them and/or their members of their Whanau; nor should helpful perspectives on their experiences as Māori in Aotearoa be expected to be

forthcoming from clients where they are primarily characterized as the ones with the problem; and the clinicians as all-knowing experts. These comments are also true for students and practitioners of psychology, where individuals in less powerful positions may be reluctant to really challenge professors, supervisors, or colleagues out of fear of personal/professional consequences. Our current system of accepting complaints from individual clients, against individual practitioners is one way that we can learn as a profession. However this system is clearly not the most effective way of engaging the perspectives of relatively powerless groups. In the 1990's the Lower Hutt Family Centre utilized 'cultural caucuses' to allow members of less powerful cultural groups to present their perspectives in safety, without the necessity of engaging in individual, and potentially personally dangerous, complaints processes. Some research methodologies do allow us to express a perspective akin to that of cultural caucusing.

Participants in Milne's (2005) study of 'Māori perceptions of ... psychology' noted that the notion of a 'shared understanding' of Māori through the medium of psychology is firmly rejected by many Māori. Participants in this study, commenting on the utility of psychological theory, training and practice for Māori as practitioners, clients and researchers in psychology said that:

*"There is a different way of thinking and the psychology that's there at the moment does not (reflect) Maori psychology...it's unrecognized."*

*"...they do not know how the Maori mind works, they don't."*  
(Milne, 2005, p.13)

Participants overwhelmingly reported limited utility, actively unhelpful, or negative and destructive perceptions of their experiences with psychologists. Also repeatedly noted by participants in Milne's study was the view that, for clients, whanau and Māori students and practitioners of psychology alike, psychological models were not culturally safe;

*"Psychology is actually dangerous for us."* (Milne, 2005, p.15)

Milnes participants, and I, do not accept Evans' view that colonization and it's immediate influence is confined to an historical event or series of events. Colonization and importantly, resistance to colonization, are ongoing processes; arguably as strong today as 150 years ago – albeit in different forms. This is true of our nation and of others, including Australia, that have a similar history – and parallel outcomes for their indigenous peoples today. Evans (p.24) concludes that *"Positive...behavior, ... achievement, and confidence in Pakeha, Maori and Pasifika people ...seem to emerge from roughly the same social context, one in which influential adults in their lives value them and communicate this positive regard."* Now replace the words 'influential adults', with 'powerful others' in this sentence. Let us ask ourselves whether as teachers, researchers, theorists and practitioners of psychology we, and specifically, our profession demonstrate that we value Maoritanga, and other indigenous perspectives? Is the value of Maoritanga and other indigenous perspectives communicated at all levels within our profession/teaching, research and practices? Remembering that verbal communication carries the least weight, particularly amongst oppressed peoples. . In Māori language, there is no real equivalent to 'thank you' – perhaps because, as my kuia remind me - "actions speak louder than words". I would argue that the profession of psychology, through discounting Maori and indigenous models, perspectives and educational systems as of equal value and utility as those developed from and located in Western contexts, is actively engaged in the maintenance of colonization and oppression. As such, the profession cannot claim to be genuinely valuing Maoritanga or communicating meaningful positive regard.

Tatum (1997, pp. 25-26) noted that "In a situation of unequal power, a subordinate group has to focus on survival...Survival sometimes means not responding to oppressive behavior directly...Because of the risks inherent in unequal relationships, the subordinates often develop covert ways of resisting or undermining the power of the dominant group...".

Evans introduces the notion of 'cynical distrust', suggesting that it might be a useful and measurable concept through which to classify those likely to experience relational problems. It is probable that indigenous peoples will score highly on the 'Cynical Distrust' scale. Why? Might this be an adaptive mechanism, albeit with some negative side-effects? Indigenous commentators might view 'cynical distrust' through lenses that differ from those worn by psychological researchers and practitioners.

Tatum (1997, p. 60) discussed the strategies of resistance that develop, often while a child is still in school, to protect identity and integrity in response to the "psychological assault of racism". The strategies vary, with some arguably more constructive than others. Withdrawal from (non-compliance with) dominant systems and processes, the phenomenon of 'not-learning' (Hebert Kohl in Tatum, 1997), and development of an oppositional stance are examples of resistance to racism and oppression. Kohl notes that "Not-learning tends to take place when someone has to deal with unavoidable challenges to her or his personal and family loyalties, integrity and identity. In such situations there are forced choices and no apparent middle ground."

It is no coincidence that the youth 'stood down', 'excluded' or otherwise 'disengaged' from our education system are overwhelmingly disproportionately Māori (or, in common with our colonial cousins in Australia as Aboriginal, and in the Americas as First Nations), nor that over 50% of Māori children/youth leave school with NO qualifications. Therefore, it is unsurprising that we are twice as likely to be unemployed, and most of our population will be in the low income brackets, may well live in sub-standard, unhealthy and overcrowded housing. It is far from coincidental that over half of our prison population are of Māori descent, that Māori are over-represented amongst those diagnosed with serious mental illness (eg. 'schizophrenia' or the 'schizophrenias'), are most likely to enter the mental health system involuntarily (through court-orders), have markedly poorer outcomes and much higher rates of readmission, are

significantly less likely to reach old age, dying prematurely from avoidable and disproportionately violence-related causes (including accidents, suicide and alcohol and drug-related). Similar but not identical dynamics underlie the oft bemoaned under-representation of Māori in the profession of psychology.

When Evans opines that "the psychological issues are the circumstances of the parental partners' dissolution, the availability of suitable adult role models, the daily economic hardships encountered by the solo parent, the ability of the care-giving adult to provide nurturing, authoritative, securely attached parenting, and the support from extended family", I do not disagree with him. However, these are symptomatic of the underlying issues facing indigenous peoples; they are a small piece of the picture. Failing to acknowledge or address the aetiological realities underpinning the symptoms of the distress is ethically questionable. Akin perhaps to sending a depressed client back to an abusive relationship with behavioural strategies for dealing with depression, without addressing the fundamental causes or the glaring safety issues.

While one in three Māori males continue to be unwillingly participants in our Courts before they are twenty years of age; while our indigenous people are proportionately amongst the most imprisoned people in the world (we have this in common with Australia too); while our indigenous youth take their own lives at alarming rates (another similarity with our Australian neighbours), while our indigenous population (like Australia's) is disproportionately over-represented in the ranks of wards of the state - past present and recovering - (over 50% of children in CYFS care are Māori); while our government continues to fly in the face of current research by supporting the 'harm reduction' approaches to alcohol and drug abuse and addiction that have been rejected by indigenous peoples around the world (an this similarity too); while our young men are killed and injured in low skills, high risk occupations while attempting to provide for their families (and this); and while our low educational attainment continues to confine us to low paid and

unstable employment - we will continue to experience high levels of single parent families, financial hardship, parenting by parents raised by an un-nurturing, authoritarian state (all in common with Australia in respect of outcomes for their indigenous population). These are not remote or irrelevant factors for clinical psychologists - or their clients. As Australia has found in efforts to manage the effects of the 'stolen generations': parents who have not experienced secure attachment, perhaps because they were snatched away from the possibility of extended family support when they were taken by the state are unlikely to know how to provide nurturing, secure attachments, and authoritative parenting themselves. Nor are they likely to have access to an extended family network that are in a position to provide these things. The effects are inter-generational. Many, many of the whanau that I have worked with have experienced, in this generation or previously, the whanau fragmentation, loss of support and the unutterable shame of having been taken, or had children taken, to be raised by the state. I do not know of a whanau that has not experienced the taking of children by the state.

While I see and agree with many of Evans' points (eg. the application of psychology should be "*backed by a sense of people's daily lives and social and emotional needs.*" p.25 ) I do not believe that we share the same sense of what this means, where these points are guiding us. I also believe that Evans minimizes the realities of the cultural boundedness of psychological theory, practice and formulation for Māori and other indigenous peoples. He is dismissive of the courageous critiques provided by Māori, other indigenous and non-indigenous commentators from the field of psychology. These critiques are courageous because they present a minority view within the profession, one that does not engender popularity amongst their professional colleagues, and one that may be met with fairly vicious attempts to discredit their professional standing and integrity - particularly when these salutary critiques may be seen to threaten the very bases on which colleagues have built their professional standing, reputations and livelihoods. Tatum

(1997, p.27) comments that “*To the extent that members of targeted groups do push societal limits – achieving unexpected success, protesting injustice, being ‘uppity’ – by their actions they call the whole system into question.*” Miller (1976, p.12; in Tatum, 1997, p.28) further asserts that these individuals “*expose the inequality, and throw into question the basis for its existence. And they will make the inherent conflict an open conflict. They will then have to bear the burden and take the risks that go with being defined as ‘troublemakers’.*”

### The realities in clinical psychology today are:

Clinical Psychologists are still largely trained in the recognition, assessment and interventions of psychopathology.

Clinical assessments, recognition and classifications of clients are still largely based on and bounded by the particular version of DSM that is current at the time.

Despite the disclaimers and broad requirement that practitioners should take into account the cultural boundedness or cultural uniqueness or cultural variables pertaining to individuals; psychologists are not typically well equipped through their training programmes to fully grasp and integrate realistic strategies for dealing with these issues.

Education and matauranga Māori, experience in te ao Maori is not recognized as equivalent to a single psychology paper, let alone a post-graduate course.

There are no recognized, or accredited avenues in this country for those who wish to train in sociocentric models of psychology.

### Summary

There are some basic realities that are missing from many of our conversations, not only in the field of psychology but within our nation generally. These realities represent a ‘white elephant’ - unavoidably present, but too often studiously ignored in non-indigenous, academic analyses of indigeneity and psychology. Yet these realities underpin my response to Evans’ article. For that reason I have outlined key features of the ‘white elephant’ that

I cannot avoid seeing as dominating Evans’ position.

My realities, and those of my whanau, are clearly not the same realities as those experienced by Evans and those reflected in much of the tradition of ‘mainstream’ academic and professional psychology training and practice. While our realities may seem ‘remote’ (irrelevant? inconsequential?) to some, they are close, immediate, highly relevant and of great consequence to us. In fact the ongoing realities of racism, colonization, and monoculturalism in their myriad forms touch, affect and influence each one of us every day. Our wellbeing – mental, spiritual, emotional and physical, as individuals and as a collective – does not reside within an artificially bounded psychology or timeframe straitjacket (relevant for one generation or two? Where is the cut-off point?).

Western feminists have made huge strides in challenging the sexism that pervaded psychological theories, practices and assumptions a few short decades ago. To be female and exhibit ‘feminine’ traits is no longer synonymous with being mentally unhealthy and cognitively challenged. Similarly, homosexuality is no longer classified as a certifiable disorder. While progress is being made on some fronts, we have a way to go before the same can be said for Maori and indigenous peoples who are still viewed through the lenses of monocultural psychology. The rangatiratanga and partnership between equals envisioned in the Treaty of Waitangi has yet to materialize within the profession as a whole. When racism, colonization and monocultural systems and processes continue to promote whanau fragmentation, continue to restrict or impair mana, mauri and rangatiratanga – it is simply unethical to ignore or minimize these fundamental factors in the aetiology of contemporary Māori realities, a feature of the shared indigenous condition in today’s world.

If you are a Māori child born today, you are likely to have young parents who have left school prematurely and with no qualifications. Your father has a better than one in three chance of having been in the youth or adult justice system before he reaches the age of twenty. Your mother may well be classed as a single

parent. Your hapu will be struggling to maintain some semblance of cohesion – with the loss of the land and economic base, your family (and probably at least one of your parents or grandparents) will have been a ward of the state at some time. Your whanau may well be fragmented and decimated by alcohol and drug addiction, imprisonment and poverty. Unless you attend a kohanga reo or kaupapa Māori school, your teachers will almost certainly be White. They will carry certain expectations of you, of your abilities and disabilities with them into the classrooms where you will be required to sit for approximately 33 hours per week. From the age of five to the age of eighteen, you will spend approximately 26,160 hours sitting behind a desk, ‘getting educated’, and you have a better than 50% chance of leaving school with nothing to show for it but mates that are like yourself (you can identify with them, because they too are not ‘the system’). But you will have learnt that you, like most of your mates, are an educational failure, or at least ‘not academic’; and you may well have a school record of disciplinary actions, and a reputation for anger, truancy or ‘disengagement’.

How Rangatiratanga, is a key plank of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and of Māori wellbeing. Rangatiratanga refers to our authority to control and manage resources, negotiate the terms of any partnerships we may choose to enter into, and determine (not necessarily alone, but perhaps in partnership) the nature of our aspirations and goals as well as the methods for achieving these.

### References

- Delpit, L. (2006) *Other People’s Children: Cultural Conflict in the Classroom*. New York: New Press.
- Harker, R. K. & McConnochie, K. R. (1985). *Education as a cultural artifact: Studies in Maori and aboriginal education*. Palmerston North, New Zealand: Dunmore Press.
- Tatum, B. D. (1997) “*Why are all the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?*”: *And Other Conversations About Race*. New York: Basic Books.
- Waldegrave, C. (1990). *Just Therapy. Dulwich Centre Newsletter, No. 1: Special Issue*. Adelaide, Australia: Dulwich Centre Publications.