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**Arguing for the spirit in the language of the mind:  
a Māori practitioner's view of research and  
science**

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degree of Doctor of Philosophy  
at Massey University**

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## **Abstract**

This thesis explores the ways that colonisation has resulted in Māori being cast as different and the other in Aotearoa/New Zealand. It challenges perceptions of relationships between Māori and western knowledge and between science and practice, drawing on a range of theorists, scholarly writings and multiple research and evaluation projects. The study examines how these perceptions, and the definitions arising from them, tend to compartmentalise Māori knowledge and research and, in doing so, serve non-Māori agendas more than they serve Māori aspirations. The thesis looks at the impacts that the world of the coloniser has had on our ways of knowing and ways of practising. Through illustrating initiatives that operate within Māori paradigms and collaborations between Māori and non-Māori, the development of equitable relationships is explored. Key findings are the need for a more inclusive understanding of knowledge and research practice in order to reframe the way we (coloniser and colonised) look at and express our understandings of the world and how these might be operationalised through research relationships. Part of the contribution of this thesis is to provide a framework for more equitable research relationships, focusing on non-Māori development. This is suggested as a counter to the constant examination and defining of Māori as different and in need of development.

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*Māori and the New Zealand Values Survey: the importance of research relationships:*

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*Natural allies: a Māori take on ecohealth* was funded in part through Health Research Council of New Zealand. I would like to acknowledge, in particular, the knowledge and support of colleague, Tim McCreanor in discussing the ideas in this paper. The reflections contained in this paper are made in recognition of the long history of knowledge and diversity of Māori, the indigenous people of Aotearoa/ New Zealand, and other indigenous peoples.

## **Authorship**

The candidate is the sole author of four of the six papers and first author on two.

Moewaka Barnes, H., McCreanor, T. and Huakau, J. *Māori and the New Zealand Values Survey: the importance of research relationships*. The candidate conceptualised, planned, drafted and finalised the paper. Tim McCreanor assisted with refining the survey in relation to Māori, Treaty and resource items, discussed the data and analysis and contributed to the final draft. John Huakau, statistician, provided the data and analyses of the relevant items and read the final draft.

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# Table of contents

Abstract.....	ii
Acknowledgements .....	iii
Table of contents .....	vi
Preface .....	viii
Introduction .....	1
Aims and objectives .....	1
What’s your theory? .....	3
The chapters .....	9
<a href="#">Chapter 1. Transforming Science: How Our Structures Limit Innovation.....</a>	16
Introduction .....	16
Power and knowledge .....	18
Western versus indigenous .....	20
Valuing Māori knowledge.....	22
A place for Māori .....	26
Challenging paradigms.....	29
Summary .....	35
<a href="#">Chapter 2. Forever western? Debating Authentic.....</a>	38
Māori Research.....	38
Introduction .....	38
Research as oppression.....	41
Contesting knowledge .....	42
Research relationships.....	45
Defining indigenous research practice .....	46
‘Authentic’ Māori research.....	47
Challenging research essentialism.....	51
Conclusions .....	52
<a href="#">Chapter 3. Epistemological Domination: Social Science Research Ethics in Aotearoa.....</a>	57
Research ethics in Aotearoa New Zealand .....	59
Tikanga and research.....	63
Stories from the field .....	68
Conclusions .....	81
<a href="#">Chapter 4. Engaging Māori in Evaluation: Some Issues to Consider.....</a>	85
Relevance to Māori .....	86
Engagement .....	86
Involvement.....	88
Accountability .....	90
Research agendas .....	91
<a href="#">Chapter 5. Māori and the New Zealand Values Survey: the importance of research relationships.....</a>	95
Māori and non-Māori relationship frameworks .....	95
Relationship considerations and features .....	96
The decision .....	100
Whāriki input.....	102

The wider context.....	103
Item redesign.....	106
Findings.....	111
Discussion.....	112
<a href="#">Chapter 6</a> . Natural Allies: A Māori Take on Ecohealth.....	118
Introduction.....	118
Māori connections with the land.....	120
Land alienation.....	124
Māori roles in environmental management.....	128
Working for change.....	129
Discussion.....	133
Conclusions.....	135
Discussion.....	135
Shifting our gaze.....	138
Where I got to in the territory.....	143
Arguing for the spirit in the language of the mind.....	146
References.....	150
Glossary of Māori words.....	170
Appendices: Copies of papers as published.....	172

## Preface

My journey as a Māori woman in writing this doctorate has encompassed feminist experiences and critiques in more ways than one. I wrote at home, at work, at T-ball, Chipmunks, Lollipop Land, in the early hours of the morning at the kitchen table, waiting for my daughter outside her primary school, at my mothers, in hotel rooms, at the hospital and other places too numerous to remember. My experiences reminded me of a Room of One's Own by Virginia Woolf, which I studied many years ago and can now more fully appreciate. Like the space fought for by Kaupapa Māori, having a Room of One's Own, is for me, physical, mental and spiritual. The physical is fairly obvious, the mental involves the space to think and focus and the spiritual is about the right and drive to do so; these have all presented many challenges.

As I wrote these papers I became increasingly aware of the words behind the words. It is written in English (or with translations provided) for a largely academic audience. This had many facets. Information was presented in language appropriate to this audience and arguments were couched in terms that would hopefully present the issues and persuade the reader. I was aware that the dominant scientific paradigm has little place for that which is not considered to be evidence based. For example, wairua<sup>1</sup> is presented and contextualised to make it as palatable as possible to 'scientific' audiences. However, wairua is what I believe gives us the strength to survive and to meet challenges. Without wairua why would I bother to do any of this? Wairua is the most important and the least visible force in these papers.

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<sup>1</sup> Interpretations of Māori words and concepts are included at the end of the thesis.

Two of the papers in this thesis have been published and one is in press.

Moewaka Barnes, H. (2006) *Transforming Science: How Our Structures Limit Innovation*. Social Policy Journal of New Zealand, 29, 1-16.

Moewaka Barnes, H., Borell, B., Edwards, S. and McCreanor, T. (2009) *Epistemological domination: social science research ethics in Aotearoa*. In Mertens, D. and Ginsberg, P. (Eds) *Handbook of Social Research Ethics*. London: Sage. In press.

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