

## CHAPTER 2

## Research Through Imperial Eyes

Many critiques of research have centred around the theory of knowledge known as empiricism and the scientific paradigm of positivism which is derived from empiricism. Positivism takes a position that applies views about how the natural world can be examined and understood to the social world of human beings and human societies. Understanding is viewed as being akin to measuring. As the ways we try to understand the world are reduced to issues of measurement, the focus of understanding becomes more concerned with procedural problems. The challenge then for understanding the social world becomes one developing operational definitions of phenomena which are reliable and valid. The analysis in this chapter begins with a much broader brushstroke. Most indigenous criticisms of research are expressed within the single terms of 'white research', 'academic research' or 'outsider research'. The finer details of how Western scientists might name themselves are irrelevant to indigenous peoples who have experienced unrelenting research of a profoundly exploitative nature. From an indigenous perspective Western research is more than just research that is located in a positivist tradition. It is research which brings to bear, on any study of indigenous peoples, a cultural orientation, a set of values, a different conceptualization of such things as time, space and subjectivity, different and competing theories of knowledge, highly specialized forms of language, and structures of power.

In this chapter I argue that what counts as Western research draws from an 'archive' of knowledge and systems, rules and values which stretch beyond the boundaries of Western science to the system now referred to as the West. Stuart Hall makes the point that the West is an idea or concept, a language for imagining a set of complex stories, ideas, historical events and social relationships. Hall suggests that the concept of the West functions in ways which (1) allow 'us' to characterize and *classify* societies into categories, (2) condense complex images of other

societies through a *system of representation*, (3) provide a standard *model of comparison*, and (4) provide *criteria of evaluation* against which other societies can be ranked.<sup>1</sup> These are the procedures by which indigenous peoples and their societies were coded into the Western system of knowledge.

Research contributed to, and drew from, these systems of classification, representation and evaluation. The cultural archive did not embody a unitary system of knowledge but should be conceived of as containing multiple traditions of knowledge and ways of knowing. Some knowledges are more dominant than others, some are submerged and outdated. Some knowledges are actively in competition with each other and some can only be formed in association with others. Whilst there may not be a unitary system there are 'rules' which help make sense of what is contained within the archive and enable 'knowledge' to be recognized. These rules can be conceived of as rules of classification, rules of framing and rules of practice.<sup>2</sup> Although the term 'rules' may sound like a set of fixed items which are articulated in explicit ways as regulations, it also means rules which are masked in some way and which tend to be articulated through implicit understandings of how the world works. Power is expressed at both the explicit and implicit levels. Dissent, or challenges to the rules, is manageable because it also conforms to these rules, particularly at the implicit level. Scientific and academic debate in the West takes place within these rules. Two major examples of how this works can be found in Marxism and Western feminism. Arguably, Western feminism has provided a more radical challenge to knowledge than Marxism because of its challenge to epistemology: not just the body of knowledge and world view, but the science of how knowledge can be understood. Even Western feminism, however, has been challenged, particularly by women of colour, for conforming to some very fundamental Western European world views, value systems and attitudes towards the Other. Indigenous peoples would probably claim to know much of this implicitly but in this chapter some fundamental ideas related to understandings of being human, of how humans relate to the world, are examined. Differences between Western and indigenous conceptions of the world have always provided stark contrasts. Indigenous beliefs were considered shocking, abhorrent and barbaric and were prime targets for the efforts of missionaries. Many of those beliefs still persist; they are embedded in indigenous languages and stories and etched in memories.

### The Cultural Formations of Western Research

Forms of imperialism and colonialism, notions of the Other, and theories about human nature existed long before the Enlightenment in



Western philosophy. Some scholars have argued that the key tenets of what is now seen as Western civilization are based on black experiences and a black tradition of scholarship, and have simply been appropriated by Western philosophy and redefined as Western epistemology.<sup>3</sup> Western knowledges, philosophies and definitions of human nature form what Foucault has referred to as a cultural archive and what some people might refer to as a 'storehouse' of histories, artefacts, ideas, texts and/or images, which are classified, preserved, arranged and represented back to the West. This storehouse contains the fragments, the regions and levels of knowledge traditions, and the 'systems' which allow different and differentiated forms of knowledge to be retrieved, enunciated and represented in new contexts.<sup>4</sup> Although many colonized peoples refer to the West, usually with a term of their own, as a cohesive system of people, practices, values and languages, the cultural archive of the West represents multiple traditions of knowledge. Rather, there are many different traditions of knowledge and moments of history in which philosophical ideas are sometimes reformed or transformed, in which new knowledges lead to new sets of ideas.

Foucault also suggests that the archive reveals 'rules of practice' which the West itself cannot necessarily describe because it operates within the rules and they are taken for granted. Various indigenous peoples would claim, indeed do claim, to be able to describe many of those rules of practice as they have been 'revealed' and/or perpetrated on indigenous communities. Hall has suggested that the Western cultural archive functions in ways which allow shifts and transformations to happen, quite radically at times, without the archive itself, and the modes of classifications and systems of representation contained within it, being destroyed. This sense of what the idea of the West represents is important here because to a large extent theories about research are underpinned by a cultural system of classification and representation, by views about human nature, human morality and virtue, by conceptions of space and time, by conceptions of gender and race. Ideas about these things help determine what counts as real. Systems of classification and representation enable different traditions or fragments of traditions to be retrieved and reformulated in different contexts as discourses, and then to be played out in systems of power and domination, with real material consequences for colonized peoples. Nandy, for example, discusses the different phases of colonization, from 'rapacious banditings' intent on exploitation, to 'well-meaning middle class liberals' intent on salvation as a legitimation of different forms of colonization.<sup>5</sup> These phases of colonization, driven by different economic needs and differing ideologies of legitimation, still had real consequences for the nations, communities and groups of indigenous people being colonized.

These consequences have led Nandy to describe colonization as a 'shared culture' for those who have been colonized and for those who have colonized. This means, for example, that colonized peoples share a language of colonization, share knowledge about their colonizers, and, in terms of a political project, share the same struggle for decolonization. It also means that colonizers, too, share a language and knowledge of colonization.

### The Intersections of Race and Gender

David Theo Goldberg argues that one of the consequences of Western experiences under imperialism is that Western ways of viewing, talking about and interacting with the world at large are intricately embedded in racialized discourses.<sup>6</sup> Notions of difference are discussed in Greek philosophy, for example, as ways of rationalizing the essential characteristics and obligations of slaves.<sup>7</sup> Medieval literature and art represent fabulous monsters and half-human, half-animal creatures from far-off places. According to Goldberg, concern about these images led to 'observers [being] overcome by awe, repulsion and fear of the implied threat to spiritual life and the political state'.<sup>8</sup> Goldberg argues that whilst these early beliefs and images 'furnished models that modern racism would assume and transform according to its own lights', there was no explicit category or space in medieval thought for racial differentiation.<sup>9</sup> What did happen, according to Goldberg, was that the 'savage' was internalized as a psychological and moral space within the individual that required 'repression, denial and disciplinary restraint'.<sup>10</sup> In Goldberg's analysis, modernity and the philosophy of liberalism (which underpins modernist discourses) transformed these fragments of culture into an explicit racialized discourse. Race, as a category, was linked to human reason and morality, to science, to colonialism and to the rights of citizenship in ways that produced the racialized discourse and racist practices of modernity.<sup>11</sup>

Western concepts of race intersect in complex ways with concepts of gender. Gender refers not just to the roles of women and how those roles are constituted but to the roles of men and of the relations between men and women. Ideas about gender difference and what that means for a society can similarly be traced back to the fragmented artefacts and representations of Western culture, and to different and differentiated traditions of knowledge. The desired and undesired qualities of women for example, as mothers, daughters and wives, were inscribed in the texts of the Greeks and Romans, sculptured, painted and woven into medieval wall hangings, and performed through oral poetry. Different historical ideas about men and women were enacted through social institutions



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such as marriage, family life, the class system and ecclesiastic orders.<sup>12</sup> These institutions were underpinned by economic systems, notions of property and wealth, and were increasingly legitimated in the West through Judaeo-Christian beliefs. Economic changes from feudal to capitalist modes of production influenced the construction of the 'family' and the relations of women and men in Western societies. Gender distinctions and hierarchies are also deeply encoded in Western languages. It is impossible to speak without using this language, and, more significantly for indigenous peoples, it is impossible to translate or interpret our societies into English, French or Castilian, for example, without making gendered distinctions.

The process of en-gendering descriptions of the Other has had very real consequences for indigenous women in that the ways in which indigenous women were described, objectified and represented by Europeans in the nineteenth century has left a legacy of marginalization within indigenous societies as much as within the colonizing society. In New Zealand many of these issues are the subject of a claim brought by a group of prominent Maori women to the Waitangi Tribunal. The Waitangi Tribunal was established to hear the claims by Maori relating to contraventions of the Treaty of Waitangi.<sup>13</sup> Before this Tribunal, the Maori women taking the claim are having to establish and argue, using historical texts, research and oral testimonies, that the Crown has ignored the *rangatiratanga*, or chiefly and sovereign status, of Maori women. To argue this, the claimants are compelled to prove that Maori women were as much *rangatira* (chiefs) as Maori men. At a very simple level the 'problem' is a problem of translation. *Rangatiratanga* has generally been interpreted in English as meaning chieftainship and sovereignty, which in colonialism was a 'male thing'.

This claim illustrates the complexities which Stuart Hall raised. Several different and differentiated sets of ideas and representations are to be 'retrieved' and 'enunciated' in the historically specific context of this claim. In summary these may be classified as: (1) a legal framework inherited from Britain, which includes views about what constitutes admissible evidence and valid research; (2) a 'textual' orientation, which will privilege the written text (seen as expert and research-based) over oral testimonies (a concession to indigenous 'elders'); (3) views about science, which will allow for the efficient selection and arrangement of 'facts'; (4) 'rules of practice' such as 'values' and 'morals', which all parties to the process are assumed to know and to have given their 'consent' to abide by, for example, notions of 'goodwill' and 'truth telling'; (5) ideas about subjectivity and objectivity which have already determined the constitution of the Tribunal and its 'neutral' legal framework, but which will continue to frame the way the case is heard; (6) ideas

about time and space, views related to history, what constitutes the appropriate length of a hearing, 'shape' of a claim, size of the panel; (7) views about human nature, individual accountability and culpability; (8) the selection of speakers and experts, who speaks for whom, whose knowledge is presumed to be the 'best fit' in relation to a set of proven 'facts'; and (9) the politics of the Treaty of Waitangi and the way those politics are managed by politicians and other agencies such as the media. Within each set of ideas are systems of classification and representation; epistemological, ontological, juridical, anthropological and ethical, which are coded in such ways as to 'recognize' each other and either mesh together, or create a cultural 'force field' which can screen out competing and oppositional discourses. Taken as a whole system, these ideas determine the wider rules of practice which ensure that Western interests remain dominant.

### Conceptualizations of the Individual and Society

Social science research is based upon ideas, beliefs and theories about the social world. While it is acknowledged that people always live in some form of social organization (for example, a family unit, an efficient hunting and gathering unit, a pastoral unit, and increasingly larger and more effective and sophisticated variations of those basic units), Western forms of research also draw on cultural ideas about the human 'self' and the relationship between the individual and the groups to which he or she may belong. Such ideas explore both the internal workings of an individual and the relationships between what an individual is and how an individual behaves. These ideas suggest that relationships between or among groups of people are basically causal and can be observed and predicted. Some earlier accounts of how and why individuals behave as they do were based on ideas which often began with a creation story to explain the presence of people in their specific environment and on understandings of human behaviour as being connected to some form of external force, such as spiritually powerful beings, 'gods' or sacred objects. Human activity was seen to be caused by factors outside the control of the individual. Early European societies would not have made much distinction between human beings and their natural environment. Classical Greek philosophy is regarded as the point at which ideas about these relationships changed from 'naturalistic' explanations to humanistic explanations. Naturalistic explanations linked nature and life as one and humanistic explanations separate people out from the world around them, and place humanity on a higher plane (than animals and plants) because of such characteristics as language and reason.<sup>14</sup> Socrates, Plato and Aristotle



are regarded as the founders of this humanistic tradition of knowledge.

Human nature, that is, the essential characteristics of an individual person, is an overarching concern of Western philosophy even though 'human' and 'nature' are also seen to be in opposition to each other. Education, research and other scholarly traditions have emerged from or been framed by debates relating to human nature. The separation between mind and body, the investing of a human person with a soul, a psyche and a consciousness, the distinction between sense and reason, definitions of human virtue and morality, are cultural constructs. These ideas have been transformed as philosophers have incorporated new insights and discoveries, but the underlying categories have remained in place. From Aristotle and Plato, in Greek philosophy, the mind-body distinction was heavily Christianized by Aquinas. French philosopher Descartes developed this dualism further, making distinctions which would relate to the separate disciplines required to study the body (physiology) and the mind (psychology). His distinctions are now referred to as the Cartesian dualism. Hegel reasoned that the split was dialectical, meaning that there was a contradictory interplay between the two ideas and the form of debate required to develop these ideas. It must be remembered, however, that concepts such as the mind or the intellect, the soul, reason, virtue and morality are not in themselves 'real' or biological parts of a human body. Whilst the workings of a mind may be associated in Western thinking primarily with the human brain, the mind itself is a concept or an idea. In Maori world views, for example, the closest equivalent to the idea of a 'mind' or intellect is associated with the entrails and other parts of the body. The head was considered *tapu* for other reasons.

What makes ideas 'real' is the system of knowledge, the formations of culture, and the relations of power in which these concepts are located. What an individual is – and the implications this has for the way researchers or teachers, therapists or social workers, economists or journalists, might approach their work – is based on centuries of philosophical debate, principles of debate and systems for organizing whole societies predicated on these ideas. These ideas constitute reality. Reality cannot be constituted without them. When confronted by the alternative conceptions of other societies, Western reality became reified as representing something 'better', reflecting 'higher orders' of thinking, and being less prone to the dogma, witchcraft and immediacy of people and societies which were so 'primitive'. Ideological appeals to such things as literacy, democracy and the development of complex social structures, make this way of thinking appear to be a universal truth and a necessary criterion of civilized society. Although eighteenth- and nineteenth-century forms of colonization brought Christian beliefs

about the soul and human morality to indigenous peoples, these concepts were discussed in Western traditions prior to Christianity. Christianity, when organized into a system of power, brought to bear on these basic concepts a focus of systematic study and debate which could then be used to regulate all aspects of social and spiritual life.

The individual, as the basic social unit from which other social organizations and social relations form, is another system of ideas which needs to be understood as part of the West's cultural archive. Western philosophies and religions place the individual as the basic building block of society. The transition from feudal to capitalist modes of production simply emphasized the role of the individual. Concepts of social development were seen as the natural progression and replication of human development. The relationship between the individual and the group, however, was a major theoretical problem for philosophy. This problem tended to be posed as a dialectic or tension between two irreconcilable notions. Hegel's dialectic on the self and society has become the most significant model for thinking about this relationship. His master-slave construct has served as a form of analysis which is both psychological and sociological, and in the colonial context highly political.

Rousseau has a particular influence over the way indigenous peoples in the South Pacific came to be regarded, because of his highly romanticized and idealized view of human nature. It is to Rousseau that the idea of the 'noble savage' is attributed. This view linked the natural world to an idea of innocence and purity, and the developed world to corruption and decay. It was thought that the people who lived in the idyllic conditions of the South Pacific, close to nature, would possess 'noble' qualities from which the West could relearn and rediscover what had been lost. This romanticized view was particularly relevant to the way South Pacific women were represented, especially the women of Tahiti and Polynesia. The view soon lost favour, or was turned around into the 'ignoble savage', when it was found that these idealized humans actually indulged in 'barbaric' and 'savage' customs and were capable of what were viewed as acts of grave injustice and 'despicability'.

Just as in the psychological traditions the individual has been central, so within sociological traditions the individual is assumed to be the basic unit of a society. A major sociological concern becomes a struggle over the extent to which individual consciousness and reality shapes, or is shaped by, social structure. During the nineteenth century this view of the individual and society became heavily influenced by social Darwinism. This meant, for example, that a society could be viewed as a 'species' of people with biological traits.<sup>15</sup> 'Primitive' societies could be ranked according to these traits, predictions could be made about their



survival and ideological justifications could be made about their treatment. Early sociology came to focus on the belief systems of these 'primitive' people and the extent to which they were capable of thought and of developing 'simple' ideas about religion. This focus was intended to enhance the understandings of Western society by showing how simple societies developed the building blocks of classification systems and modes of thought. These systems, it was believed, would demonstrate how such social phenomena as language developed. This in turn would enable distinctions to be made between categories which were fixed – that is, the structural underpinnings of society – and categories which people could create, that is, the cultural aspects of the life-world. It also reinforced, through contrasting associations or oppositional categories, how superior the West was.

### Conceptions of Space

Similar claims can be made about other concepts, such as time and space. These concepts are particularly significant for some indigenous languages because the language makes no clear or absolute distinction between the two: for example, the Maori word for time or space is the same. Other indigenous languages have no related word for either space or time, having instead a series of very precise terms for parts of these ideas, or for relationships between the idea and something else in the environment. There are positions within time and space in which people and events are located, but these cannot necessarily be described as distinct categories of thought. Western ideas about time and space are encoded in language, philosophy and science. Philosophical conceptions of time and space have been concerned with: (1) the relationships between the two ideas, that is, whether space and time are absolute categories or whether they exist relationally; and (2) the measurement of time and space.<sup>16</sup> Space came to be seen as consisting of lines which were either parallel or elliptical. From these ideas, ways of thinking which related to disciplines of study emerged (for example, mapping and geography, measurement and geometry, motion and physics). These distinctions are generally part of a taken-for-granted view of the world. Spatialized language is frequently used in both everyday and academic discourses.

Henri Lefebvre argues that the notion of space has been 'appropriated by mathematics' which has claimed an ideological position of dominance over what space means.<sup>17</sup> Mathematics has constructed a language which attempts to define with absolute exactness the parameters, dimensions, qualities and possibilities of space. This language of space influences the way the West thinks about the world beyond earth

(cosmology), the ways in which society is viewed (public/private space, city/country space), the ways in which gender roles were defined (public/domestic, home/work) and the ways in which the social world of people could be determined (the market place, the theatre).<sup>18</sup> Compartmentalized, space can be better defined and measured.

Conceptions of space were articulated through the ways in which people arranged their homes and towns, collected and displayed objects of significance, organized warfare, set out agricultural fields and arranged gardens, conducted business, displayed art and performed drama, separated out one form of human activity from another. Spatial arrangements are an important part of social life. Western classifications of space include such notions as architectural space, physical space, psychological space, theoretical space and so forth. Foucault's metaphor of the cultural archive is an architectural image. The archive not only contains artefacts of culture, but is itself an artefact and a construct of culture. For the indigenous world, Western conceptions of space, of arrangements and display, of the relationship between people and the landscape, of culture as an object of study, have meant that not only has the indigenous world been represented in particular ways back to the West, but the indigenous world view, the land and the people, have been radically transformed in the spatial image of the West. In other words, indigenous space has been colonized. Land, for example, was viewed as something to be tamed and brought under control. The landscape, the arrangement of nature, could be altered by 'Man': swamps could be drained, waterways diverted, inshore areas filled, not simply for physical survival, but for further exploitation of the environment or making it 'more pleasing' aesthetically. Renaming the land was probably as powerful ideologically as changing the land. Indigenous children in schools, for example, were taught the new names for places that they and their parents had lived in for generations. These were the names which appeared on maps and which were used in official communications. This newly named land became increasingly disconnected from the songs and chants used by indigenous peoples to trace their histories, to bring forth spiritual elements or to carry out the simplest of ceremonies. More significantly, however, space was appropriated from indigenous cultures and then 'gifted back' as reservations, reserved pockets of land for indigenous people who once possessed all of it.

Other artefacts and images of indigenous cultures were also classified, stored and displayed in museum cases and boxes, framed by the display cases as well as by the categories of artefacts with which they were grouped. Some images became part of the postcard trade and the advertising market or were the subject of Western artistic interpretations of indigenous peoples. Still other 'live' and performing examples were put



'on stage' as concert parties to entertain Europeans. Indigenous cultures became framed within a language and a set of spatialized representations.<sup>19</sup>

A specific example of the colonization of an indigenous architectural space and of indigenous spatial concepts can be found in the story of the Mataatua, a carved Maori house built in 1875 as a wedding gift from one tribal group to another. The New Zealand Government negotiated and gained agreement to send the Mataatua to the British Empire Exhibition at Sydney in 1879. The house was displayed according to the aesthetic and economic sense of the exhibition's curators:

Finding that it would cost at least 700 pounds to erect it in the ordinary manner as a Maori house, the walls were reversed so that the carvings showed on the outside; and the total cost, including painting and roofing with Chinese matting was reduced to 165 pounds.<sup>20</sup>

A 'Maori House', displayed inside-out and lined with Chinese matting was seen as an important contribution by New Zealand to the Sydney Exhibition. As argued by its original owners,

the house itself had undergone a transformation as a result of being assimilated into a British Empire Exhibition. It changed from being a 'living' meeting house which the people used and had become an ethnological curiosity for strange people to look at the wrong way and in the wrong place.<sup>21</sup>

Having gained agreement for this single purpose, the New Zealand government then appropriated the house and sent it to England, where it was displayed at the South Kensington Museum, stored for forty years at the Victoria and Albert Museum, displayed again at the Wembley British Empire Exhibition in 1924, shipped back to New Zealand for a South Seas Exhibition in Dunedin in 1925, and then 'given', by the government, to the Otago Museum. Ngati Awa, the owners of this house, have been negotiating for its return since 1983. This has now been agreed upon by the New Zealand government after a case put to the Waitangi Tribunal, and the 'door lintel' of the Mataatua has been returned as a symbolic gesture prior to the return of the entire house over the next two years.

Space is often viewed in Western thinking as being static or divorced from time. This view generates ways of making sense of the world as a 'realm of stasis', well-defined, fixed and without politics.<sup>22</sup> This is particularly relevant in relation to colonialism. The establishment of military, missionary or trading stations, the building of roads, ports and bridges, the clearing of bush and the mining of minerals all involved processes of marking, defining and controlling space. There is a very specific spatial vocabulary of colonialism which can be assembled

around three concepts: (1) the line, (2) the centre, and (3) the outside. The 'line' is important because it was used to map territory, to survey land, to establish boundaries and to mark the limits of colonial power. The 'centre' is important because orientation to the centre was an orientation to the system of power. The 'outside' is important because it positioned territory and people in an oppositional relation to the colonial centre; for indigenous Australians to be in an 'empty space' was to 'not exist'. That vocabulary in New Zealand is depicted in Table 2.1:

Table 2.1 The spatial vocabulary of colonialism in nineteenth-century Aotearoa

The Line	The Centre	The Outside
maps	mother country	empty land
charts	London	<i>terra nullius</i>
roads	magistrate's residence	uninhabited
boundaries	redoubt, stockade, barracks	unoccupied
pegs	prison	uncharted
surveys	mission station	reserves
claims	Parliament	<i>Maori pa</i>
fences	store	<i>Kainga</i>
hedges	Church	<i>Marae</i>
stone walls	Europe	burial grounds
tracks	port	background
genealogies	foreground	hinterland
perimeters	flagpole	

### Conceptions of Time

Time is associated with social activity, and how other people organized their daily lives fascinated and horrified Western observers. The links between the industrial revolution, the Protestant ethic, imperialism and science can be discussed in terms of time and the organization of social life. Changes in the mode of production brought about by the industrial revolution, an emerging middle class able to generate wealth and make distinctions in their lives between work, leisure, education and religion, and a working-class evangelical movement which linked work to salvation contributed to a potent cultural mix. In Africa, the Americas and the Pacific, Western observers were struck by the contrast in the way time was used (or rather, not used or organized) by indigenous peoples. Representations of 'native life' as being devoid of work habits, and of native people being lazy, indolent, with low attention spans, is



part of a colonial discourse that continues to this day. There were various explanations advanced for such indolence; a hot climate, for example, was viewed as a factor. Often it was a simple association between race and indolence, darker skin peoples being considered more 'naturally' indolent.

An example of how integral time is to social life can be found in the journals of Joseph Banks. Banks accompanied Cook on his first voyages to the South Pacific. The Royal Society supervised the Greenwich Observatory which eventually set the world-wide standard of time measurement (Greenwich mean time) and was instrumental in organizing Cook's voyage to Tahiti in 1769 to observe the transit of Venus. Throughout this journey Banks kept a detailed diary which documents his observations and reflections upon what he saw. The diary was a precise organization of his life on board ship, not only a day by day account, but an account which included weather reports, lists of plants and birds collected, and details on the people he encountered. Life on board the *Endeavour* was organized according to the rules and regulations of the British Admiralty, an adaptation of British time. Not only did the diary measure time, but there were scientific instruments on board which also measured time and place. As an observer, Banks saw the Pacific world through his own sense of time, his observations were prefaced by phrases such as, 'at daybreak', 'in the evening', 'by 8 o'clock', 'about noon', 'a little before sunset'.<sup>23</sup> He confessed, however – after describing in detail such things as dress, ornaments, tattooing, house construction and lay-out, clothing, gardens, net making, the women, food, religion and language, and after describing visits he and a companion made at particular times to observe the people eating, carrying out their daily activities and sleeping – that he was unable to get a 'complete idea' of how the people divided time.

The connection between time and 'work' became more important after the arrival of missionaries and the development of more systematic colonization. The belief that 'natives' did not value work or have a sense of time provided ideological justification for exclusionary practices which reached across such areas as education, land development and employment. The evangelical missionaries who arrived in the Pacific had a view of salvation in which were embedded either lower middle-class English or puritanical New England work practices and values. It was hard work to get to heaven and 'savages' were expected to work extra hard to qualify to get into the queue. This also meant wearing 'decent' clothes designed more for hard labour in cold climates, eating 'properly' at 'proper' meal times (before and after work) and reorganizing family patterns to enable men to work at some things and women to support them.

Lineal views of both time and space are important when examining Western ideas about history. Here, the Enlightenment is a crucial point in time. Prior to this period of Western development was an era likened to a period of 'darkness' (the 'Age of Darkness') which 'coincided' with the rise of power to the east. This era was followed by reformation within the Church of Rome. During these periods of time, which are social 'constructions' of time, society was said to be feudal, belief systems were based on dogma, monarchs ruled by divine authority, and literacy was confined to the very few. People lived according to myths and stories which hid the 'truth' or were simply not truths. These stories were kept alive by memory. The Enlightenment has also been referred to as the 'Age of Reason'. During this period history came to be viewed as a more reasoned or scientific understanding of the past. History could be recorded systematically and then retrieved through recourse to written texts. It was based on a lineal view of time and was linked closely to notions of progress. Progress could be 'measured' in terms of technological advancement and spiritual salvation. Progress is evolutionary and teleological and is present in both liberal and Marxist ideas about history.

Different orientations towards time and space, different positioning within time and space, and different systems of language for making space and time 'real' underpin notions of past and present, of place and of relationships to the land. Ideas about progress are grounded within ideas and orientations towards time and space. What has come to count as history in contemporary society is a contentious issue for many indigenous communities because it is not only the story of domination; it is also a story which assumes that there was a 'point in time' which was 'prehistoric'. The point at which society moves from prehistoric to historic is also the point at which tradition breaks with modernism. Traditional indigenous knowledge ceased, in this view, when it came into contact with 'modern' societies, that is the West. What occurred at this point of culture contact was the beginning of the end for 'primitive' societies. Deeply embedded in these constructs are systems of classification and representation which lend themselves easily to binary oppositions, dualisms, and hierarchical orderings of the world.

One of the concepts through which Western ideas about the individual and community, about time and space, knowledge and research, imperialism and colonialism can be drawn together is the concept of distance. The individual can be distanced, or separated, from the physical environment, the community. Through the controls over time and space the individual can also operate at a distance from the universe. Both imperial and colonial rule were systems of rule which stretched from the centre outwards to places which were far and distant. Distance again separated the individuals in power from the subjects they governed. It



was all so impersonal, rational and extremely effective. In research the concept of distance is most important as it implies a neutrality and objectivity on behalf of the researcher. Distance is measurable. What it has come to stand for is objectivity, which is not measurable to quite the same extent.

Research 'through imperial eyes' describes an approach which assumes that Western ideas about the most fundamental things are the only ideas possible to hold, certainly the only rational ideas, and the only ideas which can make sense of the world, of reality, of social life and of human beings. It is an approach to indigenous peoples which still conveys a sense of innate superiority and an overabundance of desire to bring progress into the lives of indigenous peoples – spiritually, intellectually, socially and economically. It is research which from indigenous perspectives 'steals' knowledge from others and then uses it to benefit the people who 'stole' it. Some indigenous and minority group researchers would call this approach simply racist. It is research which is imbued with an 'attitude' and a 'spirit' which assumes a certain ownership of the entire world, and which has established systems and forms of governance which embed that attitude in institutional practices. These practices determine what counts as legitimate research and who count as legitimate researchers. Before assuming that such an attitude has long since disappeared, it is often worth reflecting on who would make such a claim, researchers or indigenous peoples? A recent attempt (fortunately unsuccessful) to patent an indigenous person in the New Guinea Highlands might suggest that there are many groups of indigenous peoples who are still without protection when it comes to the activities of research.<sup>24</sup> Although in this particular case the attempt was unsuccessful, what it demonstrated yet again is that there are people out there who in the name of science and progress still consider indigenous peoples as specimens, not as humans.

### Notes

- 1 Hall, S. (1992), 'The West and the Rest: Discourse and Power', Chapter 6 of *Formations of Modernity*, eds S. Hall and B. Gielben, Polity Press and Open University, Cambridge, pp. 276–320.
- 2 Bernstein, B. (1971), 'On the Classification and Framing of Knowledge', in *Knowledge and Control. New Directions for the Sociology of Education*, ed. M. F. D. Young, Collier Macmillan, London, pp. 47–69.
- 3 See for example, Bernal, M. (1991), *Black Athena, The Afroasiatic Roots of Civilisation*, Vintage, London.
- 4 Foucault, M. (1972), *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, trans. A. Sheridan Smith, Pantheon, New York.
- 5 Nandy, A. (1989), *The Intimate Enemy: Loss and Recovery of Self Under Colonialism*,

- Oxford University Press, Delhi, p. xi.
- 6 Goldberg, D. T. (1993), *Racist Culture, Philosophy and the Politics of Meaning*, Blackwell, Oxford.
  - 7 *Ibid.*, p. 23.
  - 8 *Ibid.*, p. 23.
  - 9 *Ibid.*, p. 23.
  - 10 *Ibid.*, p. 23.
  - 11 *Ibid.*, pp. 41–60.
  - 12 Erler, M. and M. Kowaleski (1988), *Women and Power in the Middle Ages*, University of Georgia Press, Athens.
  - 13 The Treaty of Waitangi was signed between Maori chiefs and the British Crown in 1840. The Waitangi Tribunal was established by Parliament under The Treaty of Waitangi Act 1975. This Act established the Tribunal with the brief of hearing claims by Maori that the Crown had contravened the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi. This applied to recent grievances. The Tribunal was given powers to recommend actions to the Crown. The Act was amended in 1985 in order to extend the scope of claims back to 1840.
  - 14 Brennan, J. F. (1991), *Racist Culture, The History and Systems of Psychology*, third edition, Prentice Hall International, New Jersey.
  - 15 Goldberg, *Racist Culture*, pp. 62–9.
  - 16 In the fifth century Zeno, for example, posited a series of paradoxes which centred around two ideas, one which suggests that space and time are continuous, and one which suggests that they are made up of divisible parts. Others have argued since Zeno that there can be no such thing as 'empty' space because, if it is empty, it does not exist.
  - 17 Lefebvre, H. (1991), *The Production of Space*, Blackwell, USA.
  - 18 See for example, Williams, R. (1973), *The Country and the City*, Paladin, London. See also Fanon, Frantz (1967), *The Wretched of the Earth*, Penguin, London, p. 30. Fanon talks about 'zones' where natives live and 'zones' where settlers live. For him, the border between the two are clear and there is no possibility of reconciliation.
  - 19 See also, Gidley, M., ed. (1994), *Representing Others, White Views of Indigenous Peoples*, University of Exeter Press.
  - 20 Appendices to the Journals of the New Zealand House of Representatives, 1880, H5: 2.
  - 21 Te Runanga o Ngati Awa (1990), *Nga Karoretanga o Mataatua Whare. The Wanderings of the Carved House, Mataatua*, Ngati Awa Research Report 2, Whakatane, New Zealand.
  - 22 Massey, D. (1993), 'Politics and Space/Time', in *Place and the Politics of Identity*, eds M. Keith, and S. Pile, Routledge, London, pp. 141–61.
  - 23 Beaglehole, J. C. (1962), *The Endeavour Journal of Joseph Banks*, Angus and Robertson, Sydney.
  - 24 See account of this attempt in *Third World Resurgence*, No. 63, p. 30.



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