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GUESTHOOD AS ETHICAL DECOLONISING RESEARCH METHOD

GRAHAM HARVEY

Summary

Debates about research methods have often been concerned with the situation of the researcher in relation to those they research among, about or "on." Reiterating the dualisms embedded in Western culture, many of these have privileged allegedly objective distance between researcher and researched, and worried about researchers "going native." This paper argues that researchers are always more than these dualities suggest, and that an acceptance and outworking of an alternative relational position would greatly enhance research and its outcomes. That alternative position is explored in dialogue with the protocols by which Maori convert strangers into guests, while allowing the possibility that strangers might be enemies. Similar protocols and relationships are available among other indigenous people, and more widely. Ethical and decolonising research might find rich resources for resolving some typically Western problems in the enhancement of dialogues and relationships that, reflection suggests, underpin the research experiences of many people (researchers and researched included). The paper argues that benefits will accrue not only to academic communities but also to those with whom they engage.

Introduction

Even in the earliest sessions with first-year undergraduate students it is common to discuss the academic benefits and problems of being an "insider" or an "outsider" to the religious communities or ideologies that we study. Do you have to be *x* to understand *x*? Does an observer see *y* better than a participant or "believer" in *y*? With post-graduate students beginning research beyond the confines of academic libraries, going out to meet real people, the issues are more acute. We offer them training in research methods, often privileging participant observation over mere ("insider") participation and over distant observation. Research careers are often threatened because someone perceives that a researcher may have "gone native" and books

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can be dismissed as "reductionist." All these are, of course, aspects of larger debates about the possibility, necessity and even nature of objectivity. There are very good reasons why we have, and should continue to have, these discussions and concerns. Even if few of us continue to assert the possibility or plausibility of the absolute kind of objectivity our Victorian scholarly ancestors imagined or claimed, we still identify "academic" work as distinguishable from other kinds of activity and discourse by its "critical distance." Weber (1958) already problematised "objectivity" as referring to two very different kinds of discourse: on the one hand were positivist claims to be able to state the absolute or scientific truth of matters even if this conflicted with experiential knowledge, on the other was "public discourse" taking subjects' views seriously but speaking to a wider audience. Positivism now seems less defensible, and ethnological disciplines are increasingly committed to taking sources seriously. Subjectivity, however, remains contestable — indeed some forms of reductionism or scepticism may mask objectivity gone too far and validating a different, alienated, kind of subjectivity. In the following discussion, "objectivity" refers to the positivist, distant kind rather than the public discourse that appears legitimately central to academia. (For more detailed examples of these and related debates see McCutcheon 1999.)

This article aims to contribute to a particular aspect of discussions about methods, positions, situatedness and approaches. It is not intended to negate what most of us value about academia. It intersects with the challenges proffered by anti-colonial or decolonising projects, and it arises from the celebration of particular dialogical and experiential encounters. In particular, it is generated by a concern that our methods, approaches and outcomes are not only appropriately academic but are also both ethical and decolonising in the experience of those among or with whom we research. My argument is that academics could benefit considerably from considering Maori protocols in which strangers are turned, by careful stages, into guests rather than enemies, and should thereafter enact and perform their part of that complex relational role with integrity and respect.

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Before offering some positive thoughts about such ethical and decolonising research relationships, it may be worth indicating some of the roots of this concern. That is, in the following section I briefly summarise the work of other academics who have made it very clear that the "researched" (or "objects of research") have concerns about the foundations, conduct, discourse and outcomes of academic research that require a response in both methodological and ethical terms. These are not mere background to my proposal. Although my argument follows largely from insights gained in becoming and enacting guesthood among particular indigenous people, Maori, the challenge of considering ethical and decolonising research methods is by no means limited to dialogue with such people. There are other particular, local, but not always necessarily systematised or even fully conscious, versions of expectations about host-guest (and local-stranger) relationships. Further discussion of guesthood protocols as research methods might consider, for example, discussions of Aboriginal Australia (e.g. Jackson 1995; Turner 1997), Native North America (e.g. Mills 1994; Buckley 2000; Grim 2000), Native South America (e.g. Chernela 2001), Africa (Weiss 1996; Kuipers 1991). I imagine that this list could be greatly extended — certainly, the particular community and focus of other researchers' projects should indicate the parameters within which further consideration and application of these suggestions might take place.

Challenging Research

Linda Tuhiwai Smith's powerful book, *Decolonizing Methodologies* (1999), convincingly demonstrates the inextricable link between colonisation and research. Local knowledges, especially indigenous ones, have been the object of research that has rarely either respected or benefited the "donors." Some indication that such "donation" has not always been either willing or reciprocated may arise from consideration of academic uses of words like "primitive," "superstition," "syncretism," and "savage." Researchers have appropriated from people whilst being party to their subjection to a culture that diminishes them. Academics have built and sustained careers by theorising about

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humanity in ways that have made use and/or mockery of their hosts and sources. When some researchers leave "the field" to return to studies, libraries and lecture theatres, they act as if they had no responsibilities to such hosts. Smith demonstrates that it is possible to engage in research *with* people rather than merely *on*, or even *against*, them. She discusses various possible advances, including the seemingly obvious attempt to understand what the hosts might want researched, and how they might best benefit from such research. Will the knowledge of the hosts be extended or enhanced in ways that arise from indigenous discourse and needs (as determined by the hosts and/or in negotiation)? Will indigenous perspectives be allowed to challenge Western, modernist, colonial or other existing academic knowledges, powers and positions? In short, will indigenous research methods and ethics be applied and brought into dialogue with existing academic approaches?

While Jace Weaver (1998) lays some serious charges of complicity with Western hegemony at the door of postcolonial theory, he also attempts to retrieve something of value from its challenges. Alongside attention to the autonomy and sovereignty of researched communities, Weaver challenges the "universalization" of local knowledges, including their appropriation as knowledge about all indigenes or their reification as global facts. However, he makes this argument far more complex by countering the seemingly concomitant atomisation of local knowledges into in incommensurable paradigms. Significantly for the current argument, he does this by contesting the "binary oppositions" of "us" versus "them" (citing Hall 1996). In dialogue with Weaver's discussion, Dale Stover (2001) further argues that there is a "close fit" between postcolonial interpretation and the everyday experience of contemporary indigenous communities, in this case the Wakpamni Lake community on Pine Ridge Reservation, South Dakota, USA. He also concludes that once taken seriously, indigenous knowledge requires the reconstruction of postcolonial scholarly discourses that "disarm and displace the former distinction between 'self' and 'other' and moves towards establishing what Greg Sarris describes as collaborative discourse" (citing Sarris 1993). Thus, Weaver and Stover agree that one significant result of both indigenous and postcolonial approaches

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is the questioning of the role (and perhaps nature) of the researcher and their relational situation. To anticipate a later argument, it is not that researchers must learn to relate to their hosts, it is that they should realise that they are already relating, but not very well, and that something can be done about that.

So far my examples have been drawn from scholarly relationships with indigenous people. The issue is, however, relevant to researchers among any and all communities and to all who host researchers (or perhaps "are subjects of research"). For example, the regularity with which researchers among Pagans (self-identified nature-centred religionists now of growing numerical significance internationally) are challenged about whether they have "gone native" is rather disappointing as a reaction to both Pagans and researchers. It may be true that this is just one aspect of a wider concern about scholarship among "new religions" in which researchers enter a conflictual domain which seems to force them into being either advocates or opponents. Benjamin Beit-Hallahmi (2001) offers a powerful critique of academic "collaborators" with some such movements. However, academics (supervisory teams and ethics committees in particular) certainly seem more concerned for such researchers than for Christians studying Christianity, Jews studying Judaism, or Buddhists studying Buddhism. This might be an unfair criticism: Religious Studies as a discipline has regularly doubted that Theology is an entirely academic subject because Christians studying Christianity are suspected of deliberately (re-)constructing the religion they claim to study. At any rate, in fact, scholars of Paganism have been at the forefront of consideration of the position of researchers among their host communities. On the one hand, for example, Pagans have been avid readers of academic books about Paganism, often (but not always) because the researchers have made sure their publications are available to their hosts. The history of the Pagan revival is the history of popular reading and application of academic texts (even if this sometimes happens after a particular theory has been rejected in the academy). On the other hand, researchers of Paganism (whether they are or are not Pagan) have been necessarily involved in debates about reflexivity, reactivity, insiders/outsiders, objectivity/subjectivity and so

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on. The high value put on pluralism and diversity within Paganism has tended to diminish the scholarly temptation to collaborate in the construction of a "better" version of the religion and permitted a considerable degree of critical dialogue between researchers and researched. This is not to say that all academic writing about Paganism offers excellent models for other researchers or authors: there are well-known examples of both reductionism and advocacy in writing about Paganism. The point is, however, that research among Pagans has typically been dialogical.

Despite the polemics of Religious Studies scholarship, some theologians too have been concerned with the presence and absence of various voices within the debates that construct Christian theology. Liberation Theologians insist on the prioritisation of the experiences of the poor. Feminist Theologians begin with the experiences of women. Womanist Theology begins with the experiences of black women. The voices of gay, lesbian and bi-sexual people are heard in gay, lesbian and bi-sexual theologies. Queer Theology, in particular, has been concerned with the position not only of host communities but also of the researcher in relation to both them and other scholars. That is, "queer" refers not principally to essentialised sexual identities, roles or performances, but with the anomalous position both of particular, usually marginalised and/or demonised, communities and of researchers in relation to them and to the academy. (A variety of other academic disciplines are also being "queered" in similar ways.) However, even less contested theological approaches are relevant here. By engaging with the voices of "ordinary" Christians, Practical Theology has immersed itself in consideration of the relational and power-political nature of theological research, writing, lecturing and preaching. Sometimes these various styles of theology cross-fertilise one another. Thus, in order to research the "reconnection of desire and immortality in the shadow of AIDS," David Sollis (2002) adapts Melanie Shelton Morrison's (1998) model of Practical Theology, itself an adaption of Riet Bons-Storm's (1984) approach. His title, *Queering Death*, resonates both with experiences of those he researched among and with these evolving theological approaches. In parallel with my own re-

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flections arising from encounters with indigenous peoples, Sollis situates himself as visitor who seeks to be a guest among men living with AIDS.

A comment near the end of T. Minh-Ha Trinh's (1989) trenchant criticisms of some (dominant) ways of doing anthropology (or being anthropologists) may be seen in a fresh light following consideration of *marae* protocols. She writes:

> The other is never to be known unless one arrives at a suspension of language, where the reign of codes yields to a state of constant non-knowledge, always understanding that in the Buddha's country (Buddha being, as some have defined, a clarity or an open space), one arrives without having taken a single step; unless one realizes what in Zen is called the Mind Seal or the continuous reality of awakening, which can neither be acquired nor lost; unless one understands the necessity of a practice of language which remains, through its signifying operations, a process constantly unsettling the identity of meaning and speaking/writing subject, a process never allowing I to fare without non-I.

Perhaps, however, taking a step into an open space *when invited* — and then in order to follow protocols established and conducted by sovereign hosts (hosts whose sovereignty one respects and wishes to enhance) — is different to that project which attempts to write (down or up) the "native" while fearing "going native." Perhaps it is the first step in learning the language of mutuality that Trinh's critique requires.

Although I will say no more about it, it is important to note that it is not only and always researchers who make research relationships difficult (but see Metcalf 2002). The present proposal to engage as guests is no more straightforward than the more common encouragement to engage in respectful dialogue when researchers encounter communities whose own ontology only recognises insiders and outsiders. Those for whom outsiders can only be "potential converts" or "wicked rejecters" can be particularly difficult and interesting. Quite how it might be possible to find a way to relate even to such hosts as guests is a task that may require considerable effort, but may still prove immensely rewarding.

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Ancestors, Neighbours and Descendants

It should already be clear that I enter this debate as something of a latecomer, but I hope it is also clear that I have no pretension that I could possibly untangle all the knots and then present a definitive solution to all the problems and possibilities. Attempting to contribute to a debate is what academia is about. Since it is but one mode of human discourse, academic debate is best achieved with reference to what has been said by a wider community inclusive of our ancestors, neighbours (some of whom are kin and some are potential hosts of our further research), and those yet to speak.

The ancestors of the current debate include a myriad authorities, some of whom are cited above, and many more of whom will be obvious. Many are either foundational or contributors to Young and Goulet (1994) and Spickard, Landres and McGuire (2002). (Perhaps I should note that among many indigenous communities "ancestors" is not synonymous with "dead," at least, being dead is neither generative or interesting. "Ancestors" refers to greatly respected authorities.) Among those whose research engages with elements of *Maoritanga*, Maori culture, I am most grateful to Marshall Sahlins (1997) who offers a more careful reading of Tamati Ranapiri's discourse on *hau* than Marcel Mauss's otherwise deservedly famous discussion of "gift," and Peter Mataira (2000) who offers considerable clarity about Maori understandings of *mana* and *tapu* (taboo).

The primary inspiration and provocation of this argument arose within my continuing experience of trying to learn to be a respectful guest, *manuhiri*, among members of Ngati Porou (on Aotearoa New Zealand's east coast) and Ngati Ranana (in and around London, UK). Engagement with the latter group, a diaspora or translocative community, has alerted me to the powerful convergence of the possibilities of "guesthood" with Thomas Tweed's (2002) argument that "scholars, like Transnational migrants, are constantly moving *across*." Although his title suggests a discussion of "the Interpreter's Position" it makes a considerable difference to recognise that such positions change and, especially, that they are relational. I should note, too, that in both Ngati

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Porou and Ngati Ranana gender does not determine rights to speak on the *marae* as it does among some other Maori groups. Similarly, the latter group self-consciously (but not without occasional contest) engages in deliberate expansion of traditional protocols for new situations. But, as the following discussion should make clear, it is of the essence of Maori culture to evolve in dialogue with new situations and possibilities. However, I acknowledge that my experience of guesthood may have been different in encounter with more conservative contexts (see Bloch 1975).

Those yet to speak will include those who refine and/or reject the current proposal in favour of something more just, more ethical, more deconstructive of colonialism, and more constructive of better ways of being human together.

Marae Protocols

This section highlights key features of the protocols by which Maori provide the opportunity for strangers to express one or other side of their potential to be enemies or guests. It is important to the argument of this article that these protocols, and the constructed environment in which they occur, evolved significantly consequent to the arrival of Europeans in Aotearoa New Zealand. The protocols and their enactment are described after a broad view of the location in which they take place, *marae.*

Maori are the indigenous people of Aotearoa New Zealand. They identify themselves as various localised *iwi*, perhaps "tribes," *hapu*, perhaps "clans," and *whanau*, families (in the widest sense that is typically human rather than the truncated sense that predominates in modernity). Each group traditionally has a place in which significant events are celebrated or ritualised, and in which guests are made. These places consist principally of an open space, full of potential, the *marae atea*. This may be more or less securely bounded but usually has, at least, an identifiable entry point. Across the space is a carved or decorated meeting house to which a number of different names might be attached. The generic names include *whare nui*, meeting house, and *whare tipuna*, ancestral house. Each *whare* also has a name

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that identifies it as an ancestor in relation to the local community (inclusive of past, present and future generations). For example, the *whare* Hinemihi now stands in the grounds of Clandon House, UK, and regularly welcomes Maori and their guests, as well as being an object of interest within the heritage industry (see Hooper-Greenhill 2000:49–75). To enter the building is to enter the community in some way. This last phrase ("in some way") is of utmost significance: only a descendant of the particular ancestor is sufficiently intimate to have the right of entry with impunity. The *marae* is also the local people's *turangawaewae*, "standing place," i.e. the premier place where they can stand to participate and be heard in speech-making and other important acts. However, guests are also invited into the *whare* following appropriate completion of protocols of guest-making. Many *marae* complexes also include a *whare kai*, dining hall, separate from the *whare nui / tipuna*, but fully integral to the full process of making guests out of strangers. Two of the most intimate — and cultural — activities in life are sex and eating. (In the light of Eduardo Viveiros de Castro's, 1998, argument about "multinaturalism," it is conceivable that this may be true of all life, not only humanity.) That Maori ancestors sometimes engaged in cannibalism is significant: strangers who became guests ate with their hosts, strangers who insisted on being enemies might either eat or be eaten by the locals. That the ancestor / house also eats / receives visitors either by consuming or embracing them is also made clear in door carvings that more-than-represent mouths and/or vaginas.

In short, locals and guests cannot enter the ancestor / house in the same way. The former are already members of the body of the ancestor from whom they are descended and who they enter by right. Guests cannot become descendants. Even if they reside for a long time in a place, their relationships to the ancestor(s) are different. And if relationships *to* the ancestors are different from those of descendants / locals, this has implications for relationships *with* ancestors, locals (hosts), and place. It is this that is generative of my assertion that consideration of *marae* protocols has value for ethical and de-colonising research. However, to talk of entering the ancestor

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is to move too swiftly past a process which is intended to enable that intimacy to take place appropriately.

Strangers may approach the *marae* for a variety of reasons, none of which make significant differences to the outworking of the protocols of the ensuing encounter. These are aimed at allowing strangers to express and thereby solidify the relationship they wish to have with the locals. Strangers might become enemies or guests, it is a purpose of the *marae* and its protocols to allow locals and strangers to determine which. Strangers are supposed to pause at the *marae* gate to be invited to come further in. When the women's call offers that invitation, the strangers take a few steps into the creative open space. They bring with them differences that require attention: different ancestry, traditions, habits, "normality," taken-for-granted everyday-ness, knowledge and prestige. These are attended to in a series of stages that respect both locals and visitors, but certainly aim to highlight the prestige and precedence of locals. These stages are implicated in *tapu*, the rules that separate differences of various kinds, and especially of prestige, *mana* (see Mataira 2000). At one key stage a local warrior lays a *taki* before the visitors. This symbolises the God of war, and thereby symbolises conflict. This and the performance of *haka*, warrior posture songs, honour the visitors as potentially worthy enemies. However, the visitors are expected to pick up the *taki* and face the challenge of *haka* without reciprocating violence. By this means, locals and visitors initiate the process of accepting the roles and responsibilities of host- and guesthood. (The alternative would be indicated by attacking the warrior who offers the challenge.)

Assuming that visitors have indicated that guesthood is desirable, matters proceed. My argument here requires this assumption because it is founded on the notion that other relationships would seriously undermine the value of any subsequent research. However, that is to anticipate the outworking of these protocols. Now the nascent hosts and guests sit across a smaller space nearer to the *whare nui*. Speeches are made that serve not only to identify the guests but also to honour the hosts and all that is theirs. Such self-identification may sometimes serve the purpose of indicating existing kinship and/or other

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shared interests with the hosts. The recognition of mutual standing on MotherEarth and beneath FatherSky is as important as the recognition of respect to the locals' rights in this place above all others. The precise procedures for speeches and songs vary from place to place — again, it is incumbent on visitors to find out what is expected of them. When the speeches and related songs are completed, the very last space between hosts and guests is closed as people *hongi*, press noses and share breath together. It may be possible at this stage for hosts and guests to eat together, sharing yet another intimacy. This would be significant enough for consideration of research ethics — and some suggestions of its application will be offered shortly. However, the protocols underlying some of what can happen inside the *whare nui* are of considerable importance to the further elaboration of this argument.

On the *marae atea*, the open space in which strangers are made into guests, various conflictual relationships are expressed and symbolised. It is, in some senses, the domain of the God of war. The possibility of conflict, and of being devoured and converted into excrement (more-than symbolising what the victor thinks of the victim), is raised — if only as the remnant of ancestral tradition or perhaps in almost carnivalesque playfulness. However, by the time guests enter the *whare* they have established a level of intimacy. This does not mean that harmony reigns inside. The new intimacy allows hosts and guests to speak freely of concerns and needs, sometimes quite strongly, but always (or so it is intended) on the foundational understanding that a resolution is sought that will not completely diminish either side. Furthermore, guests can seek knowledge or offer skills — both of which might entail change for one side or other, or both. Since this takes place within the ancestor's body (see Harvey 2000) and therefore inside the "body politic," there is strong encouragement to respect the prestige, priority, needs and desires of the hosts. It is, after all, their *turangawaewae*, "standing place," and when they stand they can lean against the ribs or point to the heart and spine of the ancestor who generated them. They can make explicit that which is locally normative. Much of this is descriptively true: for example, hosts and guests are literally "one side or the other" of the *whare*. Inside the

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whare conditions are different to those on the *marae atea*. Differences between the two sides are not erased but are prerequisites underlying particular possibilities expressive of emerging new relationships. In short, being a guest is not the same as being a visitor, and is very different from being a stranger who might be an enemy.

It is the sense that locals hold that which guests need that is particularly relevant to this argument since it underscores what all research (ethical or otherwise, dialogical or otherwise, de-colonising or otherwise) is all about: the seeking of knowledge that researchers and their home community does not (yet) have. It is equally important that the hosts can refuse what guests want. On their land, in their ancestor, with their people, they can insist on their sovereign rights. This much is to be expected of those who have been willing to abide by the protocols that got them to this time and space. It is, of course, possible for enemy aggressors to enter the *whare* having defeated the local defenders. However, we need not consider such acts as they are self-evidently generative of compromised understandings. (Colonial museums, for example, displaying stolen or appropriated "artefacts" are necessarily connected with a poverty of explanatory information.)

Marae as Method

Researchers are people who want information, knowledge, understanding. They seek that which they desire among other people. Indeed, understanding those people, or their "culture," might be the goal of research. Academia has been, almost by (self-)definition, a struggle between objectivity and subjectivity, observers and participants, outsiders and insiders, researchers and natives. The various possible ways of crossing or confusing these boundaries (e.g. going native, becoming a collaborator or an apologist) are the principal threats academics have made against their peers' careers. Recently, matters have improved. The change has been marked by the increasing prevalence of the word "dialogue" in debates and introductions to methodologies. Thus, the ethnological parts of academia might now be defined not as a struggle but as a dialogue between objectivity and subjectivity, and so on. My central argument is, however, that another position is possible and, in

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fact, that it has always been available. Even when "participant observation" and "dialogical research" improved the approaches academics applied, they underestimate or mistake the roles that researchers have always played. Consideration of Maori *marae* protocols promises to greatly improve not only the ethics of research projects but also their intellectual value. That is, the historic goals of academia (knowledge and debate) can be furthered rather than constrained by ethical and decolonising research approaches.

Researchers confront their potential hosts as possible guests and possible enemies. They can never really become "natives" because they cannot share ancestry. They cannot observe a ceremony without changing it in some way, even if only into a ceremony in which there is an observer. Researchers cannot ever entirely take-for-granted what is self-evident to their hosts. Even when hosts are self-reflexive and happy to theorise about their lifestyle and/or practice, they are still more securely "at home" with themselves than visiting researchers will ever be.

Colonialist researchers may assert that their training and their status establishes their right to observe and "discover" whatever they desire to know ("Trust me, I'm a researcher"?). Their insistence on "objectivity" distances them to a degree and sometimes determines (for them and those they observe) conflictual stances and engagements. It should also diminish the value placed on the results and output of their research.

So, all putative researchers arrive at the place where their potential hosts observe them. Both sides then negotiate the relationships between the identities and knowledges which each takes-for-granted. Guest researchers actively seek (sometimes by waiting) the invitation of hosts to enter the process of relationship building. The priority of the locals is fundamental. As is their prestige. This is not to say that researchers must believe everything they are told, far less that the outcomes of their research must broadcast understandings precisely as asserted by their hosts. It is, however, to acknowledge that since researchers seek to understand what their hosts know, or do, or perceive themselves to be, or some similar matter that is the property of the

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hosts, it is imperative that researchers engage respectfully in dialogical conversation with their hosts.

The process of relationship building may not itself be the required dialogue that explores what researchers wish to know. Such dialogues may follow later. This is, perhaps, equivalent to saying that the ethics committees of universities or funding bodies are, at the very least, matched by reception committees that provide potential guest-researchers with opportunities to explain their purposes and positions. Or, perhaps more significantly, researchers should see their potential hosts as having powerful and non-negotiable rights in determining the ethical value of a project. Guests are made by hosts. The visitor who asserts a right to know, to participate, and even to speak, may meet negative reactions and be provided with inaccurate information. Hosts might refuse to accept a visitor as a guest, they might even decide the visitor is an enemy. Indigenous agency has commonly been expressed in misdirecting and confusing colonising researchers. Thus, researchers should not assume that becoming a guest is as easy as turning up and offering oneself as a dialogue partner.

However, assuming that the researcher has been accepted and converted into a guest by hosts, there are further processes by which hosts and guests elaborate their relationship and, thereby, further the project. This is the equivalent to processes inside the *whare*, the ancestral body of the hosts, where the discussion begins, intensifies and seeks a resolution that benefits all concerned. Perhaps this is "research proper": the attempt to gain knowledge and understanding. The hosts have it (in some way), the researcher desires it. The hosts express it in modes they deem appropriate and arising from what is normal and normative locally. The researcher attempts to translate it for their own community (as Cox 1998 points out: academia has its own powerful ancestors from whom we have inherited a language that requires such translation exercises). Or maybe neither researcher nor hosts know or understand, and only together will they achieve their goals. Perhaps researchers know things that the locals want to know. Almost everything is possible, happily it is not my purpose to explore the parameters and definitions of research. My sole interest here is in

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the further evolution of more ethical and less colonial (or more anti-colonial) methods. Thus, Captain Cook is important.

Guests, Traders and Colonists

Marae protocols and the structures that stage them originated in encounters between different Maori groups (including *iwi*, *hapu* and *whanau*). The ordinary processes of settlement, trade, kinship, conflict and so on determined the nature and frequency of such encounters. The available cultural and physical materials provided the possibilities and constraints of the structures containing, enabling and enhancing them. With the arrival of Captain Cook and his crews, and further European traders and colonists, both the need for and the possibility of elaboration occurred. New visitors could be offered either the same possibilities as Maori visitors: to be guests or enemies. Since etiquette required that guests must be sheltered, it was in some ways a happy coincidence that this increase in the number of potential guests also entailed the availability of metal tools that could ease the production of the necessary physical structures. The cultural evolution continued and still continues — as often it is necessary to say "in spite or because of" continuing colonialism. One aspect of that evolution is Ngati Ranana's performance of *Maoritanga*, Maori culture, in the UK and Europe (see Ngati Ranana 2002, and Harvey 2001).

All of this is important because my argument is not that noble savages could teach us a thing or two about being gracious and long-suffering hosts. It is not that Maori are unique in having methods for converting strangers into more acceptable kinds of role players, and that these roles are emblematic of *new* research relationships. The precise point is that *marae* protocols and structures were elaborated in the encounter with visitors whose motives *and* knowledges were often thoroughly colonialist. Cook's journeys in Oceania were motivated, for example, both by attempts to build trading relationships, by scientific research (tracing the path of Venus across the sun) and by map-making that would deny indigenous sovereignty by transforming islands into colonies. Colonialism might, in this light, be defined as the refusal to accede to the authority of locals in defining guesthood, kinship,

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normality, the application of new technologies, and so much more. Maori, of course, had engaged in journeys of exploration and conflict before Europeans arrived — and developed *marae* protocols in the process. These included possibilities of conflict, refusals of guesthood and the enactment of enemy-hood. Maori had attacked other Maori, taking lands and enslaving enemies. This too could be considered colonialist, except that it typically occurred within a shared culture, and colonialism is more than conflict. In terms of research protocols, colonialism benefits only those who conduct the research and, through them, the community of the researcher. Not only is knowledge power, but the process of acquiring and disseminating knowledge is conducted as an exercise of power. Or, at least, this is often true.

Things can be different. Relationships, especially, can be different. One difference between the trader-as-guest and the trader-colonialist is that the former seeks the potential host's welcome. The colonialist enters by force or deceit. One difference between researcher-as-guest and colonialist-researcher is that the latter refuses to concede that the "object" of their research could refuse to be observed. Some promoters of dialogical research insist that equality is self-evident and thereby challenge colonialist researchers who enact their own power, precedence and profile (e.g. Spickard 2002:246–9). However, the truth is likely to be more complex than this. Equality is, perhaps, a matter of the balance of different powers. Researchers are powerful in ways than cannot be matched by many of those they research. Researchers have access to means and modes of communication denied to many others. Frequently they are funded in ways that certainly privilege them. Nonetheless, the guest-researcher must necessarily recognise the power of hosts whose permission or denial can be absolute. Even to establish the host-guest relationship (and therefore the researched-researcher relationship) requires recognition on the sovereignty, rights, priority and knowledge of the hosts. Gender too can be an important determinative of access to informants or information, let alone relationships (e.g. Bell 1984). Equality is, therefore, a valuable perspective, but that it is a key plank in the platform of the Enlightenment's liberal humanism reveals that it is not universal. As a tool in the scholar's

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self-critical and self-reflexive approach it is invaluable, but it cannot be demanded of, or imposed on, others. To become a guest-researcher is to bow to the power/prestige of hosts and to struggle with one's own powerful position.

Participant observation is a compromise that seeks to help (outside) observers participate (within limits). It is matched by those kinds of reflexivity in which insiders are helped to reflexively observe that in which they participate. Guesthood arises as another relationship distinct from that between insiders and outsiders, or participants and observers. Guest-researchers recognise the powerful priority, sovereignty and intellectual property rights of hosts, especially as they wait to know whether they will be made guest or enemy by hosts/locals. They recognise that knowledge is gained in relationships, performance, negotiation and that these require active presence and a fuller participation than that available even to those who deem themselves participant observers. The recognition that the act of observation changes things, including the observer (Pratchett 1994:8), requires an acknowledgement that researchers change that which they research (however they do it) as well as themselves. The refinement offered by guesthood as research is that such researchers expect to be changed and offer themselves to potential hosts precisely so that the change from visitor (potential guest/potential enemy) can be made by such hosts. And the hosts' main reason for making that change by welcoming the new guest can only be that they too are ready to risk change. If, then, research is precisely about change, it is helpful to initiate it by respectfully performing the protocols which change people. Hopefully, such initiation will lead to outcomes worthy of host-guest relationships, e.g. more fully dialogical, respectful and complex discussion of outcomes to which those researched also have access and the right of response. In other words, research-guesthood widens and enriches the communities of those committed to improving understanding.

Why Is This Postcolonial?

Finally, briefly, and in an attempt to sum up this whole project in answer to one key question (why is guesthood postcolonial?): Guest-

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hood is no longer about "others" (the constructed alterity imagined by a colonising elite) since the host-guest relationship includes "us," and because it is predicated on the host's sovereign power to initiate and/or reject potential guests. This third position that is neither "subjective native" nor "objective outsider" has always been a possibility and, indeed, has often been offered. Only the compromising entanglement of academia in colonial power dynamics has prevented us knowing the full benefits of being guests among or with those we research. If so, one remaining barrier to ethical and decolonising research methods is the difficulty of knowing what processes any particular potential host community might have (or recognise, or accept) for making visitors into guests. However, since Eduardo Viveiros de Castro (1999) and Janet Chernela (2001) make it abundantly clear that even enmity is thoroughly relational and even integral to the continuing evolution of sociality, it should be possible for careful and enthusiastic researchers to find some entry point into communities in which they remain definitely "outsiders."

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