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No BioNote

Knowledge of Whiteness and the Alter-native: Knowledge of Maoriness and the Native Reality

In the fast track world of change and evolution, old traditional knowledge and values have been replaced by modern techniques and technology. In the world of the Maori, there was no written language but an articulate form of oratory has developed.

Drawing on oral sources, this paper examines some of the factors that determine the strengthening of generations and contributes to creating healthy environments for Maori and indigenous communities. These knowledge connections were called 'whakapapa' or genealogy, a founding theme and continuous framework of transmission of Maori knowledge. It allows each person to have the potential to produce the next genealogical line, and actively participate in the evolution of knowledge and identity, and is the methodology for Maori ways of knowing, based on a cosmogenical sequence of whakapapa (genealogy) ideology. Within these traditions are contained the living testimony of innumerable links or connections with humanity, nature and God, a way of knowing the land, the people, and the universe. Maori have relied on these connections. Through these connections, Maori are able to explain who we are and the world around us.

The author draws upon these reflections of the past, i.e. traditional practices and principles of the Maori, to present the practice and application of a traditional Maori model of management for social and economic transformation. The model is based on the traditional methods of preparation and the cultivation of the Kumara, a staple root vegetable of traditional Maori. Central to this is how the priorities and functions of the different stages of preparation, planting, growth, harvest and storage are reflected in their application to traditional life as well as present day social and economic practice.