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Indigenous Maori Knowledge - Kia Whakaarahia Ano!

Maori have occupied these islands of Aotearoa for one thousand years. The process of colonization especially during the years 1800 to 1950 has been the instrument of deliberate subjugation and invalidation of Maori knowledge. It has provided for the systematic destruction of the Maori World View.

The latter half of the last century reveals the fightback by Maori to restore the validity of Maori indigenous knowledge within New Zealand Society. A Maori knowledge cultural resurgence and affirmation reached renaissance proportions during the 1980's and continues to strengthen the drive by Maori to resurrect the status of Maori knowledge as a valid and appropriate knowledge for Aotearoa Society at this time. Accordingly Maori are concerned with reconstructing the Maori World View in the face of considerable political opposition both from within government and from without.

A project pioneered by the Hoani Waititi Marae Committee to establish a Customary Wananga in West Auckland illustrates the nature of this Maori knowledge renaissance. In a bid for authenticity, the Wananga proposal contains: an infrastructure; a course validation process; Maori pedagogy; and an assessment system in accord with tikanga Maori; all of which, lie outside the bounds of current government legislation.

This paper discusses the colonial destruction of the Maori World View and proposes the Customary Wananga as a catalyst informing a path of recovery to restore a measure of bicultural integrity to our society.