

## Keynote Address: Dr. Catherine Love

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**Dr. Catherine Love**

*The Open Polytechnic of New Zealand*

It is exciting to stand here and see so many faces, some known, others new - and looking fresh and bright. I see you as Māori psychologists and psychologists-in-waiting, as pioneers, exploring new horizons. The programme over the next two days makes it clear that there is a lot happening for Māori in psychology, and the potential for a lot to happen within psychology through the efforts of Māori working in the field.

I want to take this opportunity to pay particular tribute to some of the people who are here or will be here over the next two days. In particular, I would like to acknowledge Professor Mason Durie, who – although a ‘non-psychologist’ – has led the way and opened doors for so many of us: both personally through providing support and counsel during student days, and collectively, through the very effective writing, speaking, research, advocacy and policy development work that he has done over many years to validate Māori worldviews, and to allow Māori voices to be heard, and Māori models and perspectives to gain standing and credibility in the health and mental health arenas of this country.

To Professor Ngahua Te Awekotuku, a hero of mine for her stand against oppressive systems, her refusal to be confined by some of the narrowness within academia and one who continues to demonstrate leadership through her pioneering work.

Greetings and thanks to Michelle Levy, and the energetic team who have organized this symposium. To Linda Nikora, who has provided guidance, leadership and friendship for many of those who have come through the doors of the psychology department at Waikato University, and who, together with Maynard Gilgen, organised an early Māori in psychology

hui: which was for me, and others at that time the first opportunity that we, as Māori pursuing studies in psychology, had to talk, discuss, and debate the ‘fit’ between us, our world views, and those propounded in the area in which we were pursuing our careers. Importantly, to me, that hui provided the opportunity to connect with other Māori facing similar issues and explore options for addressing those issues. I hope this will also be an outcome for many of us here today.

The hui that I am speaking of took place probably a decade and a half ago, the faces of Māori studying in psychology at University were few: I see some of those faces here today, looking somewhat older and more battle weary, or should I say wiser. We were fortunate at that time to be supported and led throughout the hui by several ‘non-psychologists’. People who had worked as ‘unofficial’, non-registered psychologists, and as counsellors, therapists, advocates, and activists in Māori communities. The input of these officially ‘non-registered psychologists’ was invaluable. I would like to emphasise the importance of continuing to dialogue and strategise with those who do not have formal academic psychology training, but who have a lot to offer to those who would listen, through their experience and knowledge bases as observers and analysts of human minds and behaviours, Māori and non-Māori relations, and community realities. I am thinking here of the Aunty Meres, Aunty Junes, Uncle Sams and Koro Toms, that I have, and that many of you probably have, whose knowledge of psychology I respect enormously. And none of whom have an academic qualification between them. This raises an issue that I will return to: that of the definition of psychology and upcoming protection of title. Because, if psychology

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is viewed in its broad sense, as the study of nature, human nature, our minds, motivations, needs and aspirations, then these aunts and uncles that I spoke of have enormous expertise and are eminently qualified in these areas. So why then are they excluded from recognition within the profession of psychology? And why does the more limited expertise of their niece and moko carry more status and credibility, in Western systems anyway, than is given to them?

Three themes to think about today.

Where have we come from?  
Where do we want to go?  
How will we get there?

A confession: I don't feel qualified to answer these questions for the profession of psychology, but I will give you a run down of my own thoughts.

Let's look briefly at the fairly recent international history of psychology, from a marketplace perspective. In the 1960's, the President of the American Psychological Association, urged psychologists to spread the psychological word, to take psychology out and deliver it to the world. That exhortation has been enthusiastically pursued over several decades: with American and Western based psychological theories, concepts, models, and practices being enthusiastically exported and marketed around the world. In effect, there was a mass migration or exportation, of Western derived psychological concepts, ideals, models, theories, and practices, to other shores.

During this process, 'culture', and cultural differences came to be seen as somewhat problematic factors. In response to criticisms and critiques (by people such as Edward Sampson who has been deconstructing psychology and exposing an empty shell which echoes loudly when tapped, since the 1970's), it was decided that there may be a need to modify psychological packages destined for export to non-Western peoples, in order to maximise their attractiveness and marketability. The process of modifying psychology, making it more cross-culturally, or inter-culturally, or trans-

culturally, palatable became a busy industry in its own right. Modifications developed typically took the form of 'sweeteners', added to the psychological package: the sweeteners that I am speaking of include the addition of cultural awareness, sensitivities, and competencies to psychological theories and practices, and the engagement of indigenous practitioners to more effectively deliver psychological products to their compatriots.

### **New Zealand Context**

Clearly, New Zealand was one of the recipients of the psychology export business. However, perhaps we are quite discerning consumers. For thirty years psychology in New Zealand has been subject to critiques by Māori and non-Māori. Jules Older soundly criticized the very fabric of psychology in New Zealand. Donna Awatere, after trying for a period to adapt psychological practices and reconcile them with ideals of Māori sovereignty, decided it was all witch-doctoring anyway. Richard Sawrey documented acknowledgements by psychologists that their psychological training did not equip them to work with Māori. In a special edition of the NZ Psychological Society Journal, Māori working and studying in the psychological arena (including some of the people here today) expressed enormous frustration and pain in regard to their experiences as Māori, in relating to psychology. The role, indeed, the purpose of psychological theory and practice in constructing Māori and other non-Western peoples as abnormal was convincingly exposed by Keri Lawson-Te Aho, and critiqued by Tereki Stewart. The list could go on...

The point is that there have long been serious problems identified by Māori and non-Māori within the profession of psychology in relation to its 'fit', or its fitness for consumption by Māori, and indeed other non-Western peoples.

The problems identified may be grouped into three broad categories:

- Cultural Knowledge bases, e.g., the lack of knowledge about how to work with, or for, Māori
- Workforce issues, e.g., the lack of Māori in the psychology profession, or

choices by Māori not to enter into or stay within psychology

- Value base, e.g., psychology is predicated upon a particular culturally based conception of self, other, and the nature of the world that is very different from the conceptions of self, other, and the nature of the world held by most of the peoples in the world.

The way that problems with psychology are conceptualised obviously affects the strategies that will be affected to address them.

#### **Cultural Knowledge Base**

If it is assumed that non-Māori and perhaps Māori psychologists lack the cultural knowledge to work with Māori clients, then strategies to address this may include cultural awareness and cultural sensitivity trainings, inclusion of Māori content into mainstream curricula, the provision of 'cultural supervision', and the development of cultural competency checklists.

#### **Workforce Issues**

Abbott and Durie highlighted the lack of Māori in the profession as a problem and advocated for strategies to rectify this. A variety of programmes in various departments and Universities have sought to increase the numbers of Māori training in psychology through providing scholarships, employing Māori staff, providing Māori content in psychology curricula, and putting Māori names on rooms... Most recently the establishment of Te Rau Matatini by the Ministry of Health seeks to increase the Māori mental health and Māori psychology workforce. Also, the report on incentives and barriers to Māori participation in psychology commissioned by the Psychologists Registration Board and authored by Michelle Levy sought to identify reasons for non-participation, and the conditions under which Māori participation in psychology may be most feasible.

I would classify the strategies adopted to address these two broad categorisations as reformative in nature. They seek to reform, rather than transform the face of psychology.

#### **Value Base**

But, I have to wonder how effective these strategies, in and of themselves, will be in addressing the third category of issues that clearly dog the relationship between psychology and Māori (and psychology and other indigenous peoples)? How many of the concerns relating to the fundamental value base of psychology, which have been identified over the past thirty years will actually be addressed through attempts to increase the numbers of Māori studying and working in psychology?

How many of the concerns about the fundamental mismatch in the assumptions on which psychology is based, and the assumptions prevailing in te ao Māori, will be addressed by providing Māori content in psychology curricula as an addition to the mainstream psychology that dominates? And how much will these fundamental and philosophical concerns be resolved through increasing cultural sensitivities, or adding cultural competencies, or providing cultural supervision, or developing Māori units in our institutions?

For I would argue that the imposition of a body of Western cultural practice, known as professional psychology, no matter how polite, sensitive or competent the imposition, is ultimately destructive and genocidal in its effect on indigenous peoples. This does not mean that people are not doing good work in the field. I know that many are. However, I wonder how much of their success happens despite psychological training, rather than because of it.

I support the efforts that are underway, relating to workforce development and knowledge extension, indeed I think that they are vital. However, I do not believe that the third area, that relating to the value base of psychology has been seriously or sufficiently addressed as yet.

I question how far we have actually come over the last thirty years in this area? And how serious we are about making the changes that need to be made in psychology? Many of us will be able to point to psychology or key aspects of it are inappropriate for Māori, we may be able to draw on socio-political analyses such as those from neo-Marxist theory, we may speak and write of hegemonic discourses,

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cultural capital and credential inflation. However, it is one thing to know the theory, and another to know how to act on it.

I do know, from my own experience, how powerful the 'system', the machine, academia is. How it can force us into a framework, a language, a way of thinking that comes to appear normal to us. Sometimes we have to work very hard to learn the language, the look, to train our thinking so that it fits along psychological lines; to compromise so that we can get through the system, and we hope, to go back to where we came from, older, better and wiser than when we left perhaps. But, what we often find is that being immersed in an environment, learning and thinking 'academic speak' and psychological jargon for a number of years, this language and these thought patterns become ingrained. This language is designed to exclude, exclude those who are not privy to it. So, the compromises that we make can become collusions, and the collusions can end up in self-betrayal. Then we have the job of liberating ourselves from the strictures of some aspects of psychology.

This area, relating to the value base of psychology is fundamentally a political issue. It is a function of colonisation, of the wholesale exportation of Western psychology. I believe that it is also true that political problems require political solutions. This means moving beyond addressing each other, at conferences, through professional journals and bulletins, and engaging in dialogue with our communities, our policy-makers, and political maestros.

In relation to the third area, I believe that there are opportunities now to turn the theory into action if we want to do so. We are at a critical point in determining future directions. There is a political climate, there is pending legislation, and there is a 'critical mass', (that's all of us) that can influence and determine the development of psychology, and of Māori, in future decades. If we choose to, we can grasp opportunities that are there, and try to take it to where we want to go.

Let me note that while our 'critical mass' may not be huge, (Māori are estimated to make up 1.3% of registered psychologists), many of our most effective

leaders were not and are not particularly large either. When it comes to effecting change, strategy and smarts count. Therefore, we need to be clear about where it is that we do want to go, and how we are going to get there.

I want to look at future developments in psychology and the implications for us, in light of this critical juncture that we are at. In particular, I would like to look at the Health Practitioners' Competency Assurance Bill and the role of the Psychologists' Registration Board and us all in influencing future directions.

The legislation that is now pending has the potential to impact greatly upon the profession of psychology, and upon Māori consumers of psychological services. It is critical that we respond to this legislation in a way that will be empowering to us in the profession, but also in a way that will empower, or at least not further disempower Māori consumers of psychological services.

The Health Practitioners' Competency Assurance Bill is currently before the Select Committee. This legislation will introduce some major changes across a variety of health professions, including psychology. The focus of the Bill is the protection of the public, primarily through mechanisms designed to ensure the ongoing competency of practitioners. This in itself is a move away from mechanisms that arguably operated to protect professions more effectively than the public.

The Bill, as it now stands, contains no explicit references to the Treaty of Waitangi, to bicultural directions or cultural considerations. The Psychologists' Board, in a submission to the Select Committee, has expressed concern at the lack of reference to the treaty, bicultural or cultural considerations, and the lack of provision for Māori representation in the various structures to be established by the Bill. Particularly so in light of the strong emphasis this Government has put on Treaty, bicultural, and Māori specific development in other health legislation and strategies.

Whether or not the changes that the Board has recommended are incorporated in the final Act, there are opportunities for Māori-specific and cultural issues

generally, to be addressed at a level that has not been as clearly possible before.

Currently, the Psychologists' Registration Board has the statutory authority to advise the Minister of Health on issues pertaining to the profession, including those relating to the education and training of psychologists. Under the provisions of the Health Professionals' Competency Assurance legislation, the Board will become an Authority with wider powers relating to the definitions of psychology and determinants of eligibility for registration, the accreditation of psychology training courses, and the establishment of criteria for assessing ongoing competence in practitioners. These issues are, or should be, of vital interest to Māori students, teachers, practitioners, and consumers of psychology.

Some key aspects of the Bill that we need to be taking note of and developing responses to include:

#### *Protection of Title*

The HPCA Bill provides for protection of title for psychologists. Currently only the term 'registered psychologist' is protected. The Bill proposes that no-one will be able to call themselves a psychologist who is not registered. This raises questions concerning definitions of psychology, and related requirements for registration. The Bill does provide for the recognition of experience. If psychology is defined, for instance with an emphasis on the study of the human mind and behaviour, and registration requirements reflect expertise in this area, then the informal recognition of Aunty Mere, Aunty June, Uncle Sam and Koro Tom may continue, and may even be formalised. If psychology is defined in terms of achieving certain levels of academic qualification; then their experiential and marae-based learning and expertise will continue to be excluded.

#### *Scopes of Practice*

The above issue relates to the concept of 'Scopes of Practice'. Over the next 18 months or so, the Psychologists' Board, or Authority as it will become, will have the job of defining scopes of practice for psychology. This means that the Board, or Authority, will essentially have to define

psychology, or psychologies, and identify constituents of competent psychological practice. There are a number of possible models relating to scopes of practice.

One model involves establishing a generic psychology scope of practice. This could be much the same as the current system. However, there is an opportunity there to design a scope of practice that recognises, or at least does not exclude, non-Western-based psychological training, and areas of competence. There are also opportunities to advocate strongly for cultural competencies and considerations in some form to be required. THE OPPORTUNITIES ARE THERE IF WE WANT TO TAKE THEM.

A second model relating to scopes of practice is to specify a number of discrete scopes. The parameters around scopes would need to be clear, and people would not be permitted to practice outside the areas specified in their scopes. Scopes of practice might include clinical psychology, community psychology, industrial and organisational psychology, academic/research psychology, and so on. They might also include Māori psychology. There are a number of pro's and con's with this approach, however, IT IS A POSSIBILITY, IF THAT IS WHAT WE WANT.

A third model, again relating to scopes of practice involves a two tier registration process, where there would be generic registration and the option of specialist scope of practice endorsements. Specialist endorsements would relate to specific areas of practice and/or interventions. Practitioners without a specialist endorsement would not be able to practice in these areas or use these interventions. Once again, there are possibilities within this approach for identifying Māori psychology or kaupapa Māori psychology as a specialist scope of practice: if that is what we want to go for.

#### *Accreditation of training programmes*

Another area that is affected by the Health Practitioners' Competence Assurance Bill, is the area of the education and training of psychologists. The current legislation specifies particular University qualifications and supervised practice

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requirements. The new Authority will have the power to accredit training programmes for psychologists. Under the new legislation, there may well be more opportunities for Wananga based training and joint venture packages between Universities and Wananga, or iwi, or non-Government organisations to gain accreditation for the provision of training programmes.

The opportunity to influence either legislation or the regulations surrounding legislation and the composition of the profession may come around once in our career life times. I hope that psychologists and non-psychologists will be able to meet, to draw on the lessons learned over the past few decades and to develop clear strategic directions and action plans in relation to the opportunities which are now before us.

While I acknowledge the diversity amongst us as Māori, I also acknowledge our commonalities. We all share a whakapapa that links us to this land, to Ranginui and Papatuanuku, we are all affected in some way by colonisation, and the racism that underpins it. There is a danger that diversity can be used as an excuse for inaction or the dilution of kaupapa Māori directions.

We have come a long way. When we had that earlier Māori and psychology hui, probably a decade and a half ago, I for one would not have envisaged that in these few years we would have been able to pull together such an impressive range of Māori psychologists and students of psychology, to provide the type of exciting and vital programme that we have over the next two

days. So, although we all know that Māori are seriously under-represented in the profession of psychology, there has certainly been significant growth in our numbers and our strength. That can be attributed in large part, not only to all of our own individual efforts, but to the endeavours of those who have gone down the road before most of us here, and have wedged the gates open as far as possible for those who have followed. However, the next challenge is to participate, in a meaningful and co-ordinated way, in consultation leading to the development of new directions for psychology in this country. There will be lobbyists for the maintenance of the status quo, and for the enforcement of ever-tighter regulation and ever-higher academic requirements. I would question, however whether I would want my child, moko, or myself to be screened, assessed, or treated by a psychologist who had straight As in their post-graduate papers, or one who, while academically able, had a sound understanding of the way my whānau operates, the effect of our whakapapa and the meanings that lay underneath our overt communications. I wonder whether we can continue the work of psychological pioneers and wedge open the gate for those who follow, by picking up on the possibilities to transform at least in some part, the face of psychology in this country.

I hope that these two days will provide us with opportunities to review where we are at: to discuss, dream, and strategise about where it is that we do want to go. No reira, Tenei ano he mihi ki a tatou katoa.