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THE BOTHERSOME BUSINESS OF CURRICULUM IN DOCTORAL EDUCATION

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The PhD ... is a research training. ... [T]he relationship with a supervisor is different from that between two academic colleagues working on related research projects. It has to be seen as a form of teaching. Like other forms, it raises questions about curriculum, method, teacher/student interaction, and educational environment. (Connell 1985:38)

INTRODUCTION

Curriculum is a bothersome business that is, perhaps, nowhere as elusive in higher education as it is in the doctoral zone. To illustrate: During a recent dinner conversation with a friend in the last weeks of a PhD, he exclaimed vehemently, "The first year of the PhD should have been compulsory taught courses." (In Aotearoa/New Zealand, as in South Africa, the PhD follows the British model and consists of three to four years of full-time research.) When I asked him what he thought such courses should include, the main thing on his mind was the importance of a system for referencing. Enter curriculum at its most basic – an indubitably necessary but also fairly simple skill to be learned and arguably one that should have been mastered long before entering a doctoral programme. In the same conversation, my friend described how he had written a couple of years earlier to an international expert in his field with a complex methodological question and had received a disappointingly short – in fact, slightly angering – answer. Revisiting the e-mail recently, however, he had realised that the expert's brief comment contained a version of the insight that his doctoral work had finally led to. In other words, he now saw a pearl where before he had seen an unpalatable breadcrumb. Enter, again, curriculum, but this time at its most difficult – as complex ideas for which we may not be ready and the attendant emotional (over?) reactions. Curriculum in this form can afflict any student (with repercussions for the teacher) but we might especially anticipate it in a form of education – the doctoral programme – that takes the work of producing new knowledge to heart.

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This anecdote raises some of the pesky issues that surround the idea of curriculum in relation to the most advanced stage of higher education – what Connell above and many others describe as ‘research training’. I prefer a less technical-sounding term: research education. Debates over nomenclature notwithstanding, by and large we do not talk much about the curriculum of doctoral research education. There are many reasons for this, but a significant one is that raised by Connell: we don’t often think of supervision as teaching or, if we do, we fantasise that it’s of the more dialogic (conversational) kind. More likely though, perhaps because we want students to engage actively with the demands of becoming a scholar/researcher, we often emphasise the *independent* dimension of research education and underplay the weighty *disciplinary* expectations that are curriculum and, as such, are the proper object of teaching. In order to be successful, a doctoral candidate must submit (*submit*) a thesis that demonstrates a range of attributes such as knowledge, skills, dispositions, modes of address to the satisfaction of an existing body of scholars/researchers.

In earlier work (Grant 2003), I argued that graduate – master’s and doctoral – research supervision is a pedagogy involving dynamic power relations between three “active, changing and changeable agencies” (Lusted 1986:3): supervisor, student and curriculum *qua* thesis. I wanted to make a case against a view of supervision as simply a top-down power relation between supervisor and student; I also wanted to foreground the way in which the thesis, as a “dynamic artifice [that] continually exerts disciplinary power” (Grant 2003:187), mediates the supervision relation in complex ways. Moreover, a thesis is not just about what we think we know but also about how we came to know it. In other words, it is about how we have conducted ourselves in relation to other researchers in the field and the knowledge being formed and transformed. In that work my focus was on analysing the relations between supervisor and student.

In this chapter, I turn to the third agency, thesis-as-curriculum, to explore its significance in relation to doctoral education. Drawing on institutional documents from my own university, and acknowledging national drivers, I will examine the nature of a doctoral curriculum and the pedagogies that might best be employed in its teaching. I will also address the ever-present but problematic politics of doctoral, indeed any, curriculum, drawing on an illustrative case study from a project that explored the supervision of indigenous doctoral students in Aotearoa/New Zealand. I am confident that this case will resonate with the South African context where, if anything, these politics are likely to be more salient.

The curriculum of doctoral education can be described as a blend of knowledge, skills and dispositions that are typically learned through a relatively intense face-to-face pedagogical engagement between a novice and mature scholar/researcher (or two), sometimes supplemented by a research group comprising ‘colleagues’ with different levels of experience. If a student is lucky, there will be other doctoral students nearby to talk to, maybe form writing and/or reading groups with; their department might

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provide seminars or journal clubs or even writing retreats. The student may learn much through participation in a wider network of national and international scholars in her/his research area accessed via conference attendances, on-line discussion lists, reviewing work and/or supervisor introductions. Crucially, a doctoral curriculum differs significantly from any other in higher education because a core expectation is that new knowledge will be created by the student. Such a creative process is in its nature unpredictable and demanding: new knowledge does not emerge on command and, sometimes, when it does emerge it is not recognised as such.

AN INCHOATE CURRICULUM?

In 1985, when Connell asserted that supervision “has to be seen as a form of teaching” (1985:38), he was knowingly interrupting a dominant assumption that graduate research supervision, perhaps doctoral in particular, was an aspect of an academic’s research activities. In my own institution, academics typically list their supervision alongside their other research activities and achievements. Moreover, Aotearoa/New Zealand’s national research funding system, the Performance Based Research Fund (PBRF), has a prime focus on “rewarding and encouraging excellence”, including:

- The production and creation of leading-edge knowledge ...
- Supporting current and potential researchers (for example postgraduate students) in the creation, application and dissemination of knowledge. (Tertiary Education Commission 2010:14)

In calculating the research productivity of an institution, the PBRF counts research supervision twice: first, as evidence within the “quality evaluation” measure of an individual academic’s “peer esteem” and “contribution to the research environment”⁷³ and, second, as evidence within the “postgraduate research degree completions measure” of institutional effectiveness (Tertiary Education Commission 2010:17).⁷⁴

Within some disciplinary contexts, the close association between supervision and research makes evident sense as doctoral students are funded from external research grants, assigned a chunk of a larger research project for their doctoral study, and typically work as junior members (apprentices) within vertical research teams led by senior researchers and usually including other mid-career researchers and/or

⁷³ The relevant indicator of peer esteem is “[t]he ability to attract graduate students or to sponsor students into higher-level research qualifications, positions or opportunities because of the staff member’s research reputation.” (Tertiary Education Commission 2010:112). The relevant indicator of contribution to the research environment is “Contribution through students and emerging researchers – supporting and mentoring students to achieve postgraduate qualifications and to develop as researchers” (Tertiary Education Commission 2010:114).

⁷⁴ There is one other measure that is taken into account, the external research income measure. The measures are weighted in the funding formula as follows: Quality evaluation 60%; research degree completions 25%; external research income 15%.

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postdoctoral fellows. This is reflected in the authorship practices of those disciplines where it is rare for an individual to author a work alone. However, in other disciplines, the student's project has anything from a strong to weak link with their supervisors' research, is rarely funded from a larger research grant and, crucially, is seen to belong to the student. Again, this is reflected in a quite different authorship tradition where the inclusion of the supervisors' names on work arising from the research would be questionable, even when warranted (although the current climate of accounting for every research output is ushering in some changes in this tradition).

From the supervision-as-research standpoint, the educational model is that of master-apprentice and the vertical pedagogical environment of researchers with all shades of experience is also a communal one of close proximity between those individuals. Again, within some disciplinary contexts this makes evident sense as a good deal of research skill and insight lies in practical technique and the associated problem solving, much of which can be gained *in situ* by observing others interacting with 'things' or by being coached. But this is not quite the same in others, where there is not the same level of practical knowledge involved nor the social environment of the 'studio', 'workshop' or 'laboratory'.

The curriculum of apprenticeship education is typically a mixture of learning on the job, usually with occasional formal (for example theoretical) input. Initially apprentices work on other people's projects, although to become a master (in the case of doctoral education, an independent researcher), they must produce a 'masterpiece' that demonstrates their advanced skill and creativity. Thus central to an apprentice's curriculum is the development of a sense of what constitutes the hard-to-define qualities that make work original. In the end, though, judgment of whether or not a putative masterpiece meets this standard is reserved to other, if not all, the masters in the relevant 'guild' (in the academic context, read 'discipline').

Over the past 20 years, the implicitness of doctoral education – arising from its origins within the tradition of apprenticeship – has been challenged and has been linked to overlong completion times (Latona & Browne 2001; Leonard 2000). A national response in the UK, driven largely by the funding agencies, has been to extol the dubious concept of 'transferable skills' with the practical consequence of adding a series of compulsory research skills courses to the first year of the doctorate (Leonard 2000). Within Australasia, at least, a common response has been to draw up a graduate profile that details the achievements (often also cast as transferable skills) expected of doctoral students. Such documents allow us to guess at the lurking curriculum. For example, my own university has produced a *Graduate Profile: Doctoral Graduate* that lists 25 attributes grouped under five sections:

1. Specialist knowledge (4 attributes).
2. Effective communication (2 attributes).
3. General intellectual skills and capacities (10 attributes).

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4. Independence, creativity and learning (5 attributes).
5. Ethics and social understanding (4 attributes).

Generally speaking, most of the attributes are carried over from the University's *Graduate Profile* (the expected attributes of a "student who has completed an undergraduate degree", which in turn provides the basis for the postgraduate coursework and master's research profiles).⁷⁵ The changes between the postgraduate (master's level or equivalent) research and doctoral profiles are worthy of some examination here for the light they throw, or not, onto the institution's curriculum expectations for doctoral-level education.

In total, there are 14 textual changes, of four kinds. In the specialist knowledge section, two attributes are now qualified by the phrase 'high level':

- A *high level* understanding and appreciation of current issues and debates in the field of study.
- A *high level* understanding and appreciation of the philosophical bases, methodologies and characteristics of scholarship, research and creative work.

In the same section, another attribute has been modified by the inclusion of the word 'original':

- An understanding of the relevance and value of their *original* contribution to the local and global communities' knowledge of fact, theory, and/or mastery of practice.

In sections 2, 3 and 4, ten attributes have been modified by the addition of the word 'advanced', a synonym for higher level. Here is an example from each section:

- An *advanced* ability to communicate effectively using written and spoken English and/or Maori, or other languages where appropriate (effective communication section).
- An *advanced* capacity for critical, conceptual and reflective thinking (general intellectual skills and capacities section).
- An *advanced* capacity for creativity and originality (independence, creativity and learning section).

Lastly, one attribute has been modified by the addition of the word 'strong':

- A *strong* willingness to seek continuous improvement in research skills and quality of research (general intellectual skills and capacities).

Of the 14 amendments, 12 are tautologous: doctoral education is a higher or more 'advanced' level of education than master's, but the substance of this higher level remains unarticulated. The remaining two additions, 'strong' and 'original', are just as problematically vague. Even though the latter is recognised as the crucial hallmark

⁷⁵ All four profiles were sourced from the staff intranet at Auckland University on 28 January 2011.

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of the successful doctoral thesis, the profile does not explain it at all. To find out more about originality, the student will most likely have to turn to other sources such as the plethora of 'how to' guides for undertaking doctoral work (see, for example, Barbara Lovitts's 2007 book, *Making the implicit explicit: Creating performance expectations for the dissertation*, or Estelle Phillips and David Pugh's 2010 *How to get a PhD: A handbook for students and their supervisors*).

As a source of insights into what comprises a distinctively doctoral curriculum, this particular student profile offers little. This failure is not unique to my university – indeed it is difficult to unambiguously define the qualities of advanced scholarship and creativity.⁷⁶ But, in an age where we increasingly expect explicitness from teaching staff with respect to educational outcomes, institutional inarticulacy irks students like the one in my opening anecdote – and, from my experience, it worries new supervisors too.

Another institutional site where we may find clues about doctoral curriculum is in the (seven) compulsory goals for the provisional doctoral year:

1. Full thesis proposal (normally completed within 6 months).
2. Production of one substantial piece of written work within 12 months.
3. Presentation of research progress to a departmental seminar.
4. Approval of full thesis proposal by the appropriate departmental/faculty postgraduate committee.
5. Ethics approval(s)/permissions obtained for the research (if required).
6. Attendance at one of the Doctoral Skills Programme Induction Days.
7. Undertake Diagnostic English Language Needs Assessment (DELNA) online screening. If a full assessment is advised, complete full diagnostic test and attend any language enrichment recommended by the DELNA Language Advisor.

The explicit message of these goals is that the doctoral student must make a certain amount of progress in the first year of registration in order to have that registration confirmed. This is consistent with the institution's wider message of the importance of timely completion that in turn reflects a more rigorous government funding regime. In terms of curriculum, what this message could be said to be 'teaching' the student is a crucial 'reality' of academic life: research funding – albeit in this case indirect via the government fee subsidy – always entails limited time frames and particular performance expectations. (Students often think that deadlines and word-limits are unfair conditions of studenthood!) Another is that certain milestones should be achieved early in the process as well as a baseline of English language competence (as determined by a particular diagnostic procedure).

⁷⁶ Like South Africa, Aotearoa/New Zealand has a national educational qualifications framework. However, unlike South Africa, the eight universities are not required to register their programmes onto it, sharing instead a separate process for defining standards for each level of higher education and approving new programmes.

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On the other hand, the subtext of these goals is that there is a larger set of sometimes baffling skills that the student must be able to demonstrate to an acceptable standard by the end of the first year: the ability to undertake an adequate literature review, design an appropriate methodology, display sufficient academic literacy and referencing expertise; give a persuasive oral presentation. And then there are all the expected organisational, technological and self-motivational skills that underlie the completion of complex and sizeable academic tasks. Such an implicit curriculum often seems to presuppose a certain kind of student, as illustrated by this doctoral student's comments (Harrison, McKenna & Searle 2010:190):

We're supposed to be so self-motivated that you just kind of set your own deadlines and you meet them and, if you don't, well that is your problem and nobody else's problem. And that's just so not the way I work ...

Entangled with all these expectations is the ability to work successfully with a more or less available, skilled and confident supervisor (or two), receiving and responding to their guidance and feedback, which is not uncommonly contradictory. In the end, tolerance of ambiguity may well be the key disposition required of successful doctoral students!

Many of these implicit aspects of the doctoral curriculum can be seen as generic knowledges and skills of the kind that can be taught in centralised extra-disciplinary contexts. For example, at my university there is a substantial programme of workshops and fora that address a whole range of skills and understandings relevant to doctoral education.⁷⁷ Underpinning this provision is an argument that many of the skills a doctoral student needs – especially the ones described above – are common across disciplines and arise from the shared genre of the doctoral thesis (Carter, in press) and the parallel trajectories of research activity in a wide range of disciplines. In a context of concern about the aging academic workforce, my university has also recently launched a pilot limited-access programme for 20 doctoral students entitled the Doctoral Academic Career Module.⁷⁸ Through a series of seminars that draw on the expertise of university staff, participants explore aspects of research, teaching and service/citizenship. The programme explicitly teaches a wide range of knowledges and skills associated with what it means to be an academic – arguably, this curriculum has long been an implicit part of doctoral education because of its central role in credentialing the next generation of academic staff. That there is a need for such a programme suggests that doctoral education, *per se*, is not teaching such capacities effectively (and that pre-doctoral education has not done so either). More likely, perhaps, access to learning these knowledges and skills has been quite uneven, depending in large part on the grace and favour of supervisors. For example, access to this kind of informal learning has often been more difficult for non-traditional students in particular (for example part-

⁷⁷ The interested reader can find more about this programme at <http://www.cad.auckland.ac.nz/index.doctoral>

⁷⁸ Again, information about the programme can be found at http://www.cad.auckland.ac.nz/index.doctoral_academic_career_module

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time, women, indigenous, impaired, international) who are increasingly making up the body of doctoral students. In addition, significant increases in numbers of doctoral students overall have put pressure on limited professional development resources such as participation in undergraduate teaching.

Generic skills and capacities could and should possibly be taught within disciplinary contexts: Chris Golde, for example, claims the most important site of socialisation – what she and others have termed “academic integration” (Golde 2005:671) – for the doctoral student is the academic department, as the instantiation of the *disciplinary* community. Yet many departments do not have a critical mass of doctoral students to warrant such programmes and, perhaps more importantly, there are benefits for students both in mixing with others outside their departments and in being taught by staff who specialise in academic literacies. Discipline-based academics, typically recruited themselves from the most highly successful doctoral cadre, often take such literacies for granted and do not have the expertise to name them, let alone teach them, particularly to students who struggle to attain them. This lacuna in supervisors’ skills is pertinent in Aotearoa/New Zealand and no doubt so in South Africa, given the rapid and massive changes taking place in higher education.

Looking back at what I have explored so far, it is clear that while institutional documents only obliquely point towards a doctoral curriculum – and it is not common to talk about such a thing – it is surely present and in more than one sense. Most obviously, there is the formal body (or bodies) of knowledge that must be explored and critically engaged with. There are also advanced (professional) research skills encompassing “political, social and aesthetic elements” that are best “caught rather than taught” (Leonard 2000:187), preferably through immersion in a *habitus* and the pedagogy of coaching. Ultimately all must be embodied in the cumbersome doctoral thesis that functions as a “‘master-piece’ in the old guild sense of the carefully-done job which shows that an apprentice is now qualified to practice his [sic] trade” (Connell 1985:38).

Alongside such an explicit curriculum, there are many more or less hidden processes that mould the research student into a recognisable scholar/researcher/advanced professional – that one noun won’t suffice is suggestive of the multiple outcomes sought from research education and consequently the multiple sources from which curriculum flows. These include “messy affective processes” (Harrison *et al* 2010:193) that are often unacknowledged in higher education generally. And, to return to an earlier point, if we think of curriculum as what is currently known, there is the expectation that the doctoral student will produce an original insight or finding. In other words, she or he will redefine the existing boundaries of curriculum-as-knowledge, of what could be taught in the future.

TENSIONS BETWEEN KNOWLEDGE AND IGNORANCE

The requirement to produce new knowledge in doctoral education foregrounds a rather more taxing aspect of curriculum: namely, a tension produced in the expression of

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positive knowledge. In committing myself to ‘knowing’ something, in the academically valued sense of staking out the space of my authority and owning some small parcel of knowledge, I inevitably eschew ignorance of other explanations of that thing – at best, temporarily. And if my ‘ignorance’ is spotted (for example, in a conference presentation or the viva – which is not called the oral defence for nothing!), it creates a moment of shame or fear.⁷⁹ Yet the tension between ignorance and knowledge can be symbiotic and generative: “Ignorance fuels knowledge production, which in turn creates new areas of ignorance to be investigated” (Singh 2010:31).

Under certain circumstances during doctoral education, however, the tension between ignorance and knowing may become overbearing for either supervisor or student or both, producing different kinds of unhappy effects within the individuals and/or the supervision relation. At times, for example, students may feel as if their supervisor or institution is deliberately withholding knowledge from them – as the student in the opening anecdote felt with respect to both kinds of curriculum mentioned in our conversation. Or, in another situation, students may begin their doctoral research thinking they already know the answer their thesis will provide (refusing ignorance) and so present themselves as unwilling to take advice or rethink their assumptions: such students can present as quite ‘unsupervisable’. Or sometimes supervisors may feel anxious about a student’s inability to forge a clear case for the contribution their work will make to the body of knowledge and be inclined either to dismiss the student as incapable or, in their concern, begin to do the thinking for the student. Another possibility is that, in some circumstances, supervisors *in their ignorance* (Singh 2010) will not be able to recognise the knowledge contribution that the student is making – this kind of circumstance is what I will consider now.

THE POLITICS OF CURRICULUM

Advanced knowledge within universities around the globe by and large proceeds out of the disciplines, Western-originating formations of knowledge/power that embody particular histories and truth-producing procedures.⁸⁰ One of the tensions within such knowledge formations arises from the need to police the boundaries – the norms and conventions – of the discipline while also allowing for new insights that might reconfigure the discipline in unexpected ways. The PhD, in particular, is the qualification that prepares and approves the new scholar/researcher both to teach and to research – and both to represent *and* shift the boundaries – within the discipline. For these reasons, curriculum as an artefact of disciplines is indubitably political (Bakker, Eskell-Blokland & Ruane 2010): certain forms of knowledge and modes of academic being

⁷⁹ These ways of knowing and defending knowledge via adversarial argumentation are culturally specific – and not all that attractive when you think about it!

⁸⁰ In response to a range of provocations, more and more doctoral research is transgressing traditional disciplinary boundaries with associated pedagogical challenges – see Barbara Adkins’s work (2009).

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(subjectivities) are taken for granted while others are excluded. In post-colonial countries like South Africa and Aotearoa/New Zealand, there are significant challenges to the dominant disciplines/curriculum from students who do not identify with the knowledges and subjectivities produced there (Bakker *et al* 2010; Grant 2010a; Middleton & McKinley 2010) and who seek supervisors to support them in producing other kinds of knowledges and selves (Grant 2010b).

To illustrate this scenario, I draw on data collected through a recent research project entitled *Teaching and Learning in the Supervision of Maori Doctoral Students*. A senior Maori academic, who leads a national capability-building programme⁸¹ for Maori doctoral students, pulled together a team of two Maori (indigenous people of Aotearoa/New Zealand) academics with expertise in researching higher education and two Pakeha (descendents of British settlers of Aotearoa/New Zealand) academics with expertise in researching supervision. To pursue our enquiry into the supervision of Maori doctoral students, we interviewed 38 students and 20 Maori and non-Maori supervisors of such students (11 and 9 respectively) from across the full range of disciplines. We wanted to find out about how students and supervisors worked together, what particular issues emerged as a function of the students' identity as Maori, what issues were considered to be important in terms of promoting or hindering their progress, and so on. As an outcome, we wanted not only to contribute to the national and international literature on this topic, but also to offer insights and practical suggestions to current and future Maori doctoral students and all those who supervise them.⁸²

In the group of 38 students, many were individuals who had considerable life and professional experience (their median age was mid-40s and two-thirds were women). Many expressed a strong and explicit agenda to use their doctoral studies to improve the position of Maori within the socioeconomic and political landscape of our country. Coupled with this agenda, for many, was a desire to draw on mātāuranga Maori (Maori knowledge and wisdom) for various reasons. Some students wanted to highlight and to validate knowledge they were deeply attached to. For example, when asked why she enrolled in a PhD, Amiria, a Maori doctoral student, said:

Because I felt that I had something to contribute to the health of our people, and I felt that what I had to contribute may be able to solve a health problem, a current health problem in Maori ... And I was encouraged by the old people at home to complete research to a doctoral thesis level, and particularly by [a well-known elder] when he was alive. And I feel very passionate about the knowledge that I'd acquired, particularly from my grandmother when I was a child, and I felt that definitely I had something to contribute ...

⁸¹ MAI Te Kupenga, the capability programme, is supported by Nga Pae o te Maramatanga (NPOTM), one of seven publicly funded national centres of research excellence.

⁸² We have so far prepared a series of six resources for students, available at <http://www.tlri.org.nz/teaching-and-learning-supervision-maori-doctoral-students>

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Some were using a 'Kaupapa Maori' (Smith 1999) research methodology that was imbued to varying degrees with cultural practices, values and ethics. While these dimensions of curriculum motivated students, they also posed significant challenges. For example, students found a Kaupapa Maori approach to research was met with incomprehension and resistance from some supervisors, as emphasised by Ashley, a Maori doctoral student:

I had to justify all the way what the PhD was about because, no matter who I talked to, they're saying, "What's that ...?" And I was saying, "You're in Aotearoa. You know, can't I just be me, can't I live as Maori?" And every time I saw somebody – they were all positivists so they had no idea about qualitative, let alone [Kaupapa Maori] – they sort of go "Oh, you're doing interpretive research?" And I said, "No, I'm [doing] Kaupapa Maori research." "Oh, you're doing interpretive research, are you doing phenomenological, are you doing grounded research?" And I was going, "Why do they keep boxing me like this?" Because they know nothing else.

Moreover, tensions occurred between Western and Maori epistemologies in terms of access to knowledge and commensurability of ways of knowing. Complex (and, to the non-Maori eye, unfamiliar) accountabilities, not to mention competing allegiances, can arise within Kaupapa Maori research: for example, students may find themselves accountable to individuals or groups within their community – sometimes through kinship relations – who hold strong views that do not easily align with the student's academic work or even the views of other individuals or groups within the same community. Finding helpful supervisors to navigate a successful doctoral thesis through this kind of work was not always easy. Ngaio, a Maori doctoral student, articulated this challenge:

[I]n terms of some of the theoretical directions that I wanted to take, I wanted a supervisor who I wouldn't have to argue with ... 'cause I didn't have the time to do that, working full-time. So it was really important for me to have a supervisor that I did not have to enter into a debate with about everything. ... Later on defending some of the things that were coming out of the research ... but not at the early stages where I was really exploring things. I didn't want to have to defend my complete and utter belief that Maori theory actually exists in whakatauki [proverbs] and what [other kinds of Maori knowledge]. I wanted somebody to say, "That's quite a logical. Okay now, how are you going to ... demonstrate that?"

In some disciplines or departments there might be only one (Maori or non-Maori) academic, if that, with the necessary background to give the student confidence in the direction of her/his work. Moreover, because Western knowledge formations have consciously excluded many kinds of traditional knowledges as being beyond the pale and only suitable as objects of study rather than as themselves theory-making frameworks, supervisor resistance or refusal to such projects is always a possibility – as Ngaio points to. There are persistent difficulties with bringing personal experiences

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and stories, elder wisdom, and mythological and proverbial forms of knowing into the ambit of research. (Yet, a stronger approach might be to think carefully about how these knowledges can enrich our study of particular research questions and displace exhausted knowledge frameworks.)

From a Maori perspective, supervisor resistance may well be anticipated because the students will most likely have experienced it before. Indeed, in higher education contexts as much as any others, it is often difficult for the dominant group to accept their ignorance of the other without feeling threatened or angry (as Jones 1999 has shown). Acceptance may be particularly difficult for experienced scholars from that group because they are formed, with a role as disciplinary guardians, to be those 'who know'. Yet, as Singh (2010) suggests in relation to Chinese doctoral candidates studying in Australia, in being willing to supervise from a position of *acknowledged* ignorance, supervisors can not only learn a good deal, but they can also stimulate those students' knowledge production through allowing them to draw their diverse intellectual heritages into conversation with those of the West. Out of such conversations, original knowledge contributions are likely to arise.

SOME CONSIDERATIONS FOR PRACTICE

Ultimately, all doctoral students must submit their thesis to the judgement of their examiners, who in turn represent the wider community of researchers and scholars in a particular discipline or field. This submission, which looms over the research project from the beginning, can never be forgotten by student or supervisor: it reminds them that the student's work must conform to an implicit curriculum. In my view, a central consideration for doctoral education is the need for supervisors and institutions to engage actively with the strenuous task of talking about that curriculum, attempting to unpack what is often left implicit and elusive. This is particularly the case where students come from contexts where social and political oppression has framed their sense of self and their familiar orders of knowledge, and where they hope to use doctoral education as a route to bring those selves and knowledge into dialogue with the Western canon and/or to create better futures for their communities.

Because there are no simple answers to matters of doctoral curriculum with their intriguing and contested "political, social and aesthetic elements", to re-quote Leonard (2000:187), active engagement with them is unlikely to be promoted through the necessarily generalised discourse of institutional guidelines. Nor should it simply be left, as in the past, to the privatised space of supervision, because while some students will get good teaching (coaching, mentoring) others will get none. The richest context for such an intervention is the existing collegial forums where students and supervisors meet together – departmental seminars, for instance, or journal clubs: we need to rethink these forums to make them more consciously *pedagogic* spaces. And we probably need to create new such spaces, for example by forming vertical reading and writing groups that include experienced researchers as well as doctoral students, or by drawing students into reviewing work for journals and conferences and coaching

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them as a group in what is required. Such events are well augmented by the invited contributions of academic literacies experts who are usually insightful analysts and teachers of academic culture and expectations.

For supervisors, thinking about the supervision relation as a form of teaching and learning, as Connell suggested back in 1985, may provide a useful conceptual shift that enables thinking and talking about curriculum. Rather, too, than just focusing on the research and the thesis (curriculum-as-knowledge), it is vital to think of supervision as a pedagogic process through which the student's identity will be transformed into that of the scholar/researcher. This opens consideration of the kind of curriculum that would best teach for an often difficult process of personal change. Although the recent research we undertook into the supervision of indigenous doctoral students showed that considering supervision as teaching (and meddling in another's personhood) is not easy, most supervisions would benefit from closer attention to a richer, more confronting even, conception of pedagogy. Such a conception might prompt supervisors to address the nature of our responsibilities more thoughtfully so that we may assist students in surviving the considerable trials of doctoral education: the production of an original contribution to a field of knowledge, the negotiation of often-considerable differences between the worlds of supervisor and student, and the long travail of forging a student self into scholar/researcher.

In post-colonial societies like South Africa and Aotearoa/New Zealand, collegial forums and the intimate dynamics of supervision are equally vulnerable to the painful politics between coloniser and colonised. Working together inside those memories and ongoing realities, while sometimes confronting ignorance, is hard. Making space to include into the fabric of academic knowledge-making – the very curriculum that comprises doctoral education – the knowledges and subjectivities of students for whom our higher education systems were not designed can unsettle even a seasoned supervisor. The test, echoing that for the student in terms of carrying out her/his research, is to find ways to supervise well in spite of that unsettlement.

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