

ÄTA: GROWING RESPECTFUL RELATIONSHIPS

Taina Whakaatere Pohatu

Te Waitara (*Abstract*)

Kai te reo ōna ake whakaaro e pupūtia ai ngā take pū Māori. He mea tuku iho tēnei e ngā mātua tīpuna ki ngā whakatipuranga o naianei. Ki te kaha te tangata ki te raparapa haere, ka kitea tonutia te hōhonutanga o ngā take pū nei, hai arataki paitia i a ia. Ko te kaupapa o te tuhituhi nei, he arotahi i te take pū o te ‘Āta’. Kai konei ka kitea ētahi tauira, hai whakamahitanga ki ngā wāhi maha, kai reira te hunga tangata. E whakapaetia kai konei ngā take pū hai mahinga mā te tangata i a ia e tupu ana.

The Māori principle (*take pū*) Āta is a behavioural and theoretical strategy employed by Māori in relationships. This paper will discuss cultural definitions and interpretations of Āta and its potential as a transformative approach to advance ethical social service practice in Aotearoa today.

Hai Timata (*Introduction*)

Hai tauira mo ngā reanga katoa (As an example to all generations).

Māori have a wealth of *take pū*, created and applied for wellbeing and advancement. *Take pū* provide Māori preferred ways of engaging with others and them with us. Āta is the take pū that is explored here, in the pursuit of ‘*legitimate counter hegemonies, which are intended to provide for more human existence for those who are marginalised, oppressed and exploited*’ (Smith, G.H. 1997:32).

In the context of social services, practitioners engage with people who have been marginalised and dis-empowered in a range of their relationships. Therefore, negotiating domains of negativity is an ongoing reality for practitioners and the significance of revalidating personal practice. Understanding how these domains function and interconnect, suggest cultural approaches of how they may be safely navigated. Āta, in dealing with tensions within relationships will be the prime focus of this paper, although other take pū will be included to deepen the dialogue.

Te Hāngaitanga (*Approach*)

The Āta template here has been fashioned from Māori thinking, participating in the advancement of developing ‘parallel columns’ for Māori, as proposed by Tā Apirana Ngata in 1929, (Sorrenson, M.P.K. 1986:201). The enduring challenge left by Ngata to Māori is a commitment to deliberately centre Māori thought and knowledge, in our practice. Not doing anything will be the marginalisation or even disappearance of such uniquely Māori-constructed column.

The potency of Māori language (*te reo Māori*) is considered, an opportunity to focus on Māori words, as holders of cultural bodies of knowledge. Exploring the transformative potential within Āta is then tracked, these being the:

1. constituents of Āta,
2. identification of Āta phrases and the mauri possibilities within,
3. interconnected relationships Āta has with other Māori words and some sets of phrases,
4. potential within Āta when engaging in relationships.

Three narratives from a specific *kāwai whakapapa* (*genealogical/geographical specific grouping*), traversing three centuries are recounted. These narratives offer messages, patterns and interpretations of Āta for possible application into a range kaupapa and relationships. Other take pū are also incorporated into the narratives, offering their unique points of view to further re-interpret Āta. Verses from *kāwai whakapapa waiata moteatea* (*genealogical/geographical specific sung poetry*), these being holders of valued events and expressions, will then exemplify how the ‘felt’ messages of earlier generations can be used in activities. Clustered together, these construct understandings of Āta and the way it executes its socialisation strategies in pursuit of respectfulness in relationships.

Te Reo Māori

As Māori apply cultural practices exhibited in whakapapa and kaupapa legacies, the significance of language for oral cultures is more clearly understood. Language fulfills multiple roles, it being

kaitiaki of knowledge and thinking, in which our actions can be immersed and intertwined. This template is a reminder of just how ‘lived’ and embedded Māori theory in fact is in our daily activities. Language is the source of Maori wisdom that holds explanations of safety and respectfulness. It also initiates entry-points to deeper readings of Māori knowledge because language, ‘has been created and moulded to express our feelings and sentiments and no other medium of speech can take its place.’ (ibid, Te Rangihiroa in Sorrenson:182). ‘Feelings and sentiments’ it is argued here, are underpinned by cultural theory, reasoning and interpretation. They are vehicles that convey yet at the same time assess applications. This draws attention to the dynamic interrelationship between the language, thinking, and lived reality of Māori, signaling the significance of cultural reproduction as, ‘collecting and recording is livened up by the fact that the material is new or an old friend in a new place’ (ibid, Te Rangihiroa in Sorrenson:226). Here is the timely reminder that knowledge and its meanings are travelers in perpetuity. As they are invited into kaupapa and relationships (‘a new place’) so are they revalued as vital companions (‘new or an old friend’), becoming once again, active participants. This is the ‘potentiated power’ within te reo, ‘cracking’ cultural bodies of knowledge and images for use in kaupapa and relationships. Having the courage to reflect on the boundless possibilities within Māori thinking and the energies of earlier generations for application in our time is the never-ending hope, entrusted by Ngata when he wrote in 1940, ‘*mehemea e kaha ana te hinengaro Māori ki te mea, kia mau ki tōna reo, ōna tikanga, ngā mahi a ōna tīpuna, te whakahī ki tōna Māoritanga, ka mau tonu.*’ (‘If the Māori mind is steadfast in its intent to maintain its language, its values and ways, the undertakings of its ancestors, to elevate its cultural capital, they will be retained - unpublished letter). Tuakana Nepe reaffirms these attachments, reminding us that, ‘*Māori language as a living medium of communication is a vital strand in the transmission of Kaupapa Māori knowledge*’ (1991:55). These Māori leaders recognised the counter-hegemonic energy held within Māori language and how it could create liberating frameworks to enable Māori to engage with integrity in any issue. The ongoing process of consciously using te reo and its bodies of knowledge to inform our practice, is one of the templates that they have bequeathed to ensuing generations.

Te Take pū - Āta (*The Āta Principle*)

Āta is considered a vital cultural tool created to shape and guide understandings of relationships and well-being. The endeavour to gain meaningful insights into the integrity of Āta and its applications has led to the constructing of its following constituents.

Āta Constituents	
1.	Āta <u>focuses</u> on our relationships, negotiating boundaries, working to create and hold safe space with corresponding behaviours.
2.	Āta <u>gently reminds</u> people of how to behave when engaging in relationships with people, kaupapa and environments.
3.	<p>Āta <u>intensifies</u> peoples' perceptions in the following areas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It accords <u>quality space</u> of time (wĀ) and place (wĀhi). • It demands <u>effort and energy</u> of participants. • It conveys the notion of <u>respectfulness</u>. • It conveys the notion of <u>reciprocity</u>. • It conveys the requirement of <u>reflection</u>, the prerequisite to <u>critical analysis</u>. • It conveys the requirement of <u>discipline</u>. • It ensures that the <u>transformation process</u> is an integral part of relationships.
4.	Āta incorporates the notion of <u>planning</u> .
5.	Āta incorporates the notion of <u>strategising</u> .

(Figure 1)

These constituents should be considered individually in order to fully appreciate them. When brought together however, their true worth and value can then be felt and experienced. A willingness to use this process requires a special discipline of critical reflection and when applied to any context, creates its own uniquely fashioned signposts. They help guide what and how we do things. These are reflected in the following phrases.

Take pū	He WhakamĀramatanga – Definitions
Āta-haere	Be intentional and approach reflectively. Be deliberate and move with respect and integrity. This signals the act of moving with an awareness of relationships, their environments and requirements.
Āta whakarongo	To listen with reflective deliberation. This requires patience and tolerance. It gives space to listen and communicate to the heart, mind and soul of the speaker,

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	kaupapa and environment. It requires the conscious participation of all senses. It signals the elements of trust, integrity and respectfulness of what is being shared.
Āta-kōrero	To communicate and speak with clarity. This requires quality preparation and a deliberate gathering of what is to be communicated. The purpose is to ensure a quality of presentation (<i>kia mārama ki te kaupapa</i>), to speak with conviction (<i>kia pūmau ki te kaupapa</i>), to be focussed (<i>kia hāngai ki te kaupapa</i>).
Āta-tuhi	To communicate and write with deliberation. The need to be constantly reflective; to know for what reason, writing is being undertaken. The significance of consistently monitoring and measuring quality is implicit.
Āta-mahi	To work diligently and with the conviction that what is being done is correct and appropriate to the issue and relationships involved. That the validity of the task is understood and accepted.
Āta-noho	Giving quality time to be with people and their issues. To give this time with an open and respectful mind, heart and soul. This signals the level of integrity required in relationships.
Āta-whakaaro	To think with deliberation, considering possibilities. It allows space for creativity, openness and reflection. The consequence is that action is undertaken to the best of one's ability.
Āta-whakaako	To deliberately instill knowledge and understanding. There are clear reasons why knowledge is shared; it is given in the required manner to appropriate participants, at the appropriate time and place.
Āta-tohutohu	To deliberately instruct, monitor and correct. Grounded knowledge is a constant and valued companion. Cultural markers such as kaitiakitanga come forward to guide when appropriate, how it should be formed, applied and why.
Āta-kīnaki	To be deliberate and clear in the choice of appropriate supports to enhance positions taken.
Āta-hoki mārire	To return with respectful reverence, with full consideration of possible consequences.
Āta-titiro	To look and study kaupapa and their many relationships, with reflective deliberation.
Āta-whakamārama	To explain with reflective deliberation. However, in order to enlighten, it is vital

	that the channels of communication at the spiritual, emotional and intellectual levels of the receiver and deliverer are mutually respected, understood and valued, within any relationship.
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(Figure 2)

Again each Āta phrase is considered as a unique body of knowledge, offering options of how to enter, engage and exit relationships. These phrases need to be further explored, to locate deeper appreciations of their transformative potential. Applying such patterns is a developmental approach in tracking how to recognise and acknowledge the integrity of ‘other’s’ exclusive space, through being able to ‘read’ deeply, our own exclusive spaces. Discovering and understanding the textures within relationships then becomes a possibility. The ongoing challenge is to develop understandings of the connections that exist between Āta phrases, their bodies of knowledge and how they undertake their obligations within the Āta constituents to and for one another. These constituents can act as filters, through which any relationship and activity can be decoded, when these phrases are knowingly placed within them. Interacting with other take pū with their unique filtering processes create further opportunities for the wholistic and multi-dimensional nature of Āta to be experienced, the chance to experience its ‘renewing’ possibilities. As it is consciously applied in personal daily activities, the degree to which Āta participates in what we do, may then be continuously reviewed. Acknowledging these phrases from the ‘Āta system’ into our personal patterns of practice can then generate preferences when engaging in relationships. To reinforce Āta in relationships and to emphasize the discipline required, Te Ao Māori has other sets of words, with their cultural intent and function. Āta always connects with the following cultural notions, with their entrenched behavioural strategies and disciplines.

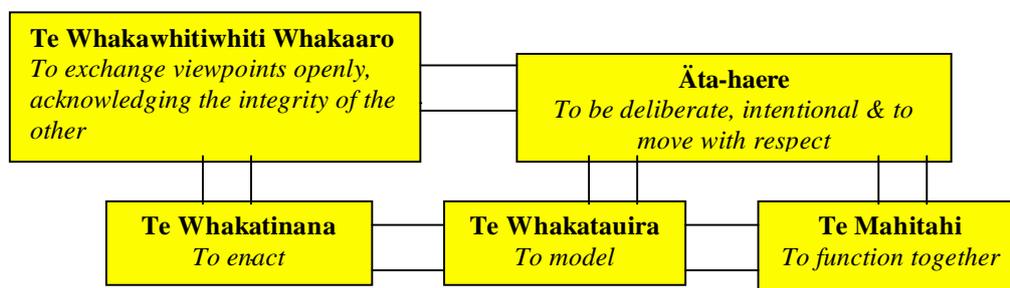
Phrases	Translation	Intent
<i>Kia tōtika</i>	To be correct	To aspire towards standards of quality
<i>Kia tika tonu</i>	To act responsibly	To respect the integrity of others
<i>Kia pai</i>	To be careful	To be considerate & deliberate
<i>Kia rangatira te mahi</i>	To act with utmost integrity	To consider the unique positions of others
<i>Kia tūpato</i>	To carefully consider the	To ensure integrity within all

	consequences	actions
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(Figure 3)

The visionary, emotional, spiritual and intellectual features, inherent in the wholistic nature of Māori are further encapsulated in such phrases. These provide more positions of reflection that help guarantee standards, quality, space and boundaries as defined by Te Ao Māori. It strengthens the importance of ‘pausing’ implicit in Āta, when engaging with others. Figure 4 then underscores the significance of *tūhonohonotanga* when giving weight to the true worth of the Āta process.

A complimentary cluster of phrases contextualised to Āta, further emphasizes the wholistic nature of Te Ao Māori. These are *te whakatinana* (to enact), *te whakatauirā* (to model), *te mahitahi* (to function together), *te whakawhitiwhiti whakaaro*, (to exchange viewpoints openly acknowledging the integrity of the other). It highlights the socialising and humanising intent expected by Te Ao Māori when we engage in relationships and kaupapa. Here is affirmation of the pursuit of security and respectfulness, implicit in Āta.



(Figure 4)

Contextualised to kaupapa, these sets of words deepen the ways in which Āta can manage behaviour and performance. They ensure that appropriate levels of ‘respectfulness’ required, especially important when relating effectively with those who have been dominated, damaged and controlled in some way.

Ētahi Kōrero Tauira (Narrative Examples)

Narratives are treated here as sites where voices are articulated, heard, reflected upon and responded to. Being prized ensures that these are considered holders of powerful messages, informers of future activities. Developing understandings of the messages within narratives open unique

possibilities for their continuing reapplication. Incorporating such thinking into everyday practice heightens our personal appreciation of *Māoritanga* (Māori cultural capital). Such a process draws Māori closer to values and principles, crafted by earlier generations. While these are especially effective at the ‘local’ level, they can also be effective at all other levels. This is because they incorporate templates and patterns that can be reshaped to inform our practice in any context, the idea implicit in Freire’s notion of ‘read the word, read the world’ (Freire, 1987). The following narratives are exercised to track Āta, to assess how it guides and informs practice.

‘Āta Hoki Mārire Ki Ōku MĀtua’ (Te Paea in Ngata, 1985:210-211). (figure 9)

‘During the Hauhau conflict within Ngati Porou in the 1830’s, Te Paea (of Ngati Porou) accompanied her partner, Te Ngoungou when he returned to Taranaki. She was later abandoned and so composed her waiata tangi (lament of loss)’.

The pain of being alone, in a place far away from affirming supports is a timeless reality in the social services context. Isolation of te tuakiritanga, (the inner being – see Pohatu, *Mauri*, 2003) can be emotionally, spiritually, psychologically and politically paralyzing, resulting in immobilisation at one or more of these layers. To break out of these states of ‘imprisonment’, Te Paea reached into a personal reservoir of inner cultural strength and created this waiata, ‘Muriahiahi’. ‘Muriahiahi’ hold some cultural options for dealing with issues of pain, anguish and despair. These issues are underpinned by the take pū ‘*koingo*’ and ‘*mokemoke*’. The cultural interpretations of these take pū help increase awareness of the shades of meanings of ‘human feelings’ when considering what the ‘pain of being alone’ is. The take pū *koingo* therefore signify, yearning and longing of the whakapapa heart and soul, in this instance, for its home-place and people, embedded in the terms, ‘*tai whenua*’ and ‘*ōku mĀtua*’ (figure 9). These terms signal the importance of known valued environments and cultural legacies, as fashioners of future socialisation patterns. *Mokemoke*, the companion of *koingo*, is the felt expression of loneliness that accompanies the yearning and longing for ‘*tai whenua*’ and its special groupings of people.

These raise questions such as, ‘what elements are required to restore personal, emotional, psychological and spiritual integrity?’ and ‘where do I go to for such elements?’ In this way, space is claimed to reflect on how and why to respond. Āta, this paper suggests, can be used as a ‘selection tool’ to inform us as we trawl through cultural options before making our choices.

Te Paea proposes options of coping with ‘*kōingo*’ and ‘*mokemoke*’, when facing crisis in unfamiliar and even ‘hostile’ environments. The significance of valuing memories and recognising their potential to move people pro-actively forward through and past numbing and immobilising experiences is one. Being able to identify appropriate sources and critical mobilising supports as represented in the phrase, ‘*he manu koia au*’, is another. Here it

symbolises the transformative representation of flight with the concept and act of moving forward. Āta with its reflective practice, this paper suggests, encouraged Te Paea to construct her responses to emotional, psychological and spiritual dilemmas and thus her looking to the future, to, – ‘*te pae tuangĀhuru*’, as another option. Being consciously aware of the state of her position and then being willing to always look for the liberating possibilities inherent in pursuing distant horizons and their challenges, of both the future and the past, offered Te Paea proactive and regenerative choices. All it needed was courage that only she could provide.

Consequently, her legacy to social service practitioners is in the revalidating of identity, its cultural connections and proactive possibilities, when working with marginalised and disempowered people. In the revalidating of identity sits the Āta constituents of figures 1 & 2. The inviting in of components such as reflection, planning, strategizing and discipline brings with it the bodies of knowledge and tools of Āta. One component of this legacy is constructed around the sheltering images implicit in whakapapa groupings, ‘*ki ōku mātua, e moea iho nei*’ (the security of templates sculptured by earlier generations). Another part is the significance of whakapapa lands, when addressing emotional and spiritual pain, ‘*noho ana taku iti te tihi ki Hikurangi*’. For those who claim genealogical connections to Hikurangi, reflecting on its physical presence signals strength, stability and generates restorative possibilities. Through their unique bodies of exclusive, yet connected legacies of memories, events, names, songs and so energies for well-being, the tūhonohonotanga promise within every whakapapa grouping to a specific piece of land can be pursued by each generation. It accords space for deeper reflection, seeking a more precise and so decolonising definition of whakapapa. This is achieved through the incorporation of terms like tūrangawaewae and urupā with their affirmed cultural purpose and intent as sculptured by Te Ao Māori. Interpreting tūrangawaewae as whakapapa-centric places that give Māori inalienable rights of place to represent ourselves before others is one part of the equation. Tūrangawaewae also provides frameworks of behaviour and interaction with others when on ‘their place’. This affirms that Āta is the essential tool in the constructing of appropriate patterns of engagement. Urupā (burial place) is also returned to its whakapapa-specific function. The practice of returning to the ‘beginning places’ of our whakapapa groupings revalidates dimensions of ‘belonging to’, crucial to the collective well-being. When consciously applied, Āta processes play their part in the successful transmission of cultural practice. This reconfigured significance of land and the reworked template of Āta, run hand in hand, in sustaining Māori cultural obligation.

The waiata represents Te Paea’ thinking, informed and shaped by her cultural, emotional and spiritual states. Her kÄwai whakapapa still sing this song of longing and in doing so, reconstitutes sites for on-going re-internalisation of her messages.

NgÄ Moteatea, Part II, Song 165:210-211.

I whea koia koe i taku tai whenua	<i>While we were still in my home territory</i>
Ka Äta papare ake i ahau e te tau	<i>why didn't you leave me then,</i>
Tuku mÄrie koe	<i>respectfully releasing me</i>
ka roa te hurihanga,	<i>rather then let our relationship linger.</i>
Te mokai puku nei	<i>Allow this enslaved one</i>
Äta hoki mÄrie	<i>to return</i>
ki öku mÄtua,	<i>to the security of my elders,</i>
e moea iho nei.	<i>of whom I constantly dream.</i>
Ma wai e whai atu	<i>Who would accept and traverse</i>
te pae tuangÄhuru?	<i>the many challenges that I face.</i>
He manu koia Äu,	<i>If I had the capability of flight</i>
e ai te rere atu,	<i>I would then go</i>
Noho ana taku iti	<i>In my humbleness to be</i>
te tihi ki Hikurangi	<i>Beneath the majesty of Hikurangi.</i>

These translations emphasize the transformative possibilities within waiata moteatea for guidance in any issue. Being able to trace the original messages and suggest how they may be reinterpreted into ongoing issues is offered.

(Figure 9)

MÄ Wai Ra E Taurima (figure 11)

Where taukumekume (negative tension, in this context) is a core element in issues, the notion of ‘raru’ assumes a domineering position. Raru is perceived here as a concern that creates negative tensions, upsetting the balance within sets of relationships. Over one hundred and fifty years after ‘Muriahiahi’, in 1983, the negative consequences of disconnection and dislocation impacted upon our extended whÄnau. Some whÄnau members, who had been separated from the kÄwai whakapapa pulse, came to our notice through the Department of Social Welfare. Their family unit

was dysfunctional; three generations of that part of the whānau for more than fifty years being shaped, defined and sustained by the State system; collecting ‘benefit/s’, living in a State flat, ‘public servants’ being an essential part of their daily circle. Social Welfare had approached the other two ethnic groups, to whom the mokopuna belonged. When those groupings didn’t respond, we were approached as the last resort. A small part of our narrative is shared.

‘In our first whānau hui here in Auckland, the question was posed, what will guide our practice as we interact with the sets of groupings involved in this kaupapa? The response was, ‘waiho mā te wā kainga e whakarite’ (let ‘home’ set the boundaries for the whānau at all times).

Other sets of questions were asked, namely:

1. ‘ka pēhea ngā tamariki?’ – what about the children?
2. ‘mauria mai ki te wā kainga’ – bring them home.
3. ‘ka pēhea te tipuna me te kōka?’ – what about the grandmother and the mother?
4. ‘mā kōtau e tiaki’ – you (in Auckland), look after them’.

These simple questions and responses established the manner in which we approached every situation, fundamental approaches that we never shifted from. Such questions were in fact spaces where the Āta logic, its processes, constituents and phrases were constantly activated, implicit in our behaviour with one another. Negotiations with whomever, held to the same arrangement. In this way, we were able to maintain our sense of mana-whakahaere at all times. The ability to govern and manage relationships, with ‘others’, was crucial to deliberately assessing the integrity of our whakapapa positions at all times. Āta was a natural facilitator when negotiating these ‘*tihe*’ junctions, (Pohatu, Mauri, 2003), their complexities, and angles. *Mā wai rā e taurima* (who and what will guide practice?) was the constant question at every ‘*tihe*’ point. Questions were other *tihe* and Āta points, consistently reintroduced with every response fashioned for every question posed. The energies required to fashion our responses always engaged the Āta process. The moment it was applied was the activation of *tihe*. During the court hearing to decide where the children should be placed, the decision was made to match every manoeuvre of the Department. Our responses would be framed by what was crucial to our well-being as a whānau.

Department	Question/Action	Whānau	Question/Action
Psychologist	How were the	Tipuna – Whānau	How the children <u>would be</u> cared for by

	children cared for, not cared for?	representative	the whānau, where, how, with whom, why.
Children's lawyer	What were the children's rights?	Whānau representative	Whakapapa commitment to kaitiakitanga obligations, 'to take care of' our own, how and why.
Social worker/s	How and why they represented the Department, its policies and approaches to 'take care of'?	Whānau representatives	(Gisborne) Share with the social worker, whānau plans and his whakapapa responsibilities to validating the whānau position. (Auckland) Framing a non-Māori social worker's role in his supporting and validating of the whānau position.
Department's lawyer	Represent Department's position?	Whānau representative	Represent whānau position.
Written Material	Represent Department's position?	Whānau written material	Represent whānau position to counter-balance Department's position.

(Figure 10)

Our *kaitiakitanga* responsibilities to these children activated Āta. Therefore, during the court sessions, the department representatives defined what the likely adoptive home might be like. To counter this, the whānau representatives were able to consider exactly what we had to offer and then communicate accurately, the environment the whānau would provide the children with. It would not be just one home, but a community of homes, that had been imbued by whakapapa legacies, identity and connections for many generations. When the department wanted a particular Māori social worker to speak for them in court, the whānau had one of our own 'talk' to him about what the whānau proposed. With that, he made himself unavailable from the case, his report in fact reflecting support for the whānau proposal. Āta, te whakakoha rangatiratanga and kaitiakitanga were central in these interactions, setting domains of responsibility and accountability upon different sections of our whānau, for different lengths of time. Two years ago, we celebrated the 21st birthday of the youngest mokopuna.

Waiata Tuku iho – Henare Te Owai, Te Aowera hapu, Ngati Porou.

Ma wai ra e taurima

Who will assume responsibility

Te marae i waho nei,

For the challenges that face us

Ma te tika,

Let it be truth

Ma te pono

Let it be honesty

Me te aroha e.

Let it be valued relationships

Further emphasis of the transformative possibilities within waiata moteatea to guide, as long as the ability to reinterpret their emancipatory essence into issues, in each new time remains.

(Figure 11)

‘Pōpō Ē Tangi Ana Tama Ki Te Kai MĀna’ (figure 12)

In this millennium, there is the ongoing challenge to forge for future generations of MĀori, MĀori preferred ways of being. Instilling in them, MĀori take pū and practices for their future use, is a responsibility left to earlier generations. Such undertakings are fundamental to the ongoing reciprocal obligations between generations. Their applicability in our activities, to vigorously support collective and personal well-being is what is being discussed. Two take pū, *whakatō* and *arahina* have been ‘selected’ to act as cultural filters and platforms that inform and manage relationships between generations. When we locate what is in these bodies of knowledge and relate them to relationships between generations we can then see the potential for MĀori cultural capital to be galvanised.

The thinking within *whakatō* consequently, is seen as the instilling of essential learning fashioned from ‘te tuakiritanga’ of earlier generations, to ‘te tuakiritanga’ of future generations. With the constructing of such channels of communication, learning can then be given and received respectfully, without fuss, at any time or place. When the learning received is applied by those future generations into their relationships, then is the take pū *arahina* realised. Here is the ongoing guiding from te tuakiritanga of the tīpuna generations, to te tuakiritanga of their future generations.

Enoka Te Pakaru, A.T. Ngata, Ngā Moteatea, Part II, Song 145:152-161.

Popo e tangi ana tama	<i>Hush my child, your cry is heard,</i>
ki te kai māna!	<i>For your cultural sustenance!</i>
Waiho me tiki ake	<i>Wait while it is fetched from its source,</i>
ki te Pou-a-hao-kai,	<i>that cultural sustenance carefully tended</i>
Hei āmai te pakake ki uta ra,	<i>and brought here in its uniqueness,</i>
Hei waiu mo tama;	<i>To nurture and advance your spiritual, psychological,</i> <i>cultural and intellectual wellbeing.</i>

(Figure 12)

The birth our first *mokopuna* (grandchild) gave the opportunity for his grandmother to be there to *pohiri* (formally welcome) him into his cultural world. The first voice, language and messages that surrounded him as he entered this world were that of his *kāwai whakapapa*. The very first words he heard, '*popo e tangi ana tama ki te kai māna*', was an *oriori* (felt, internalised, spiritualised, *whakapapa*-specific sung poetry) composed by one of his ancestors and still sung by his *kāwai whakapapa*. It is *kaipupuri* of traditions, histories, practices and thinking that is part of his unique legacy and identity. He was being gently introduced from the very beginning, to a select grouping of unique people that he is descended from, reactivated whenever the song is used. This is *whakatō*, *arahina* and *Āta* in action. Taking the decision to have our *mokopuna* raised in a three-generational, *kāwai whakapapa* home, in Auckland, invited traditional patterns when functioning as a *whānau*, away from 'home'. *Kaitiakitanga* and *te whakakoha rangatiratanga* now consciously shaped our daily dealings with one another, *Āta* being a central method that guided and conducted our interactions with ourselves. *Kaipupuri* of cultural blueprints of *mokopuna* according to *Te Ao Māori* are the *tipuna* generation. Activation of *whakatō* and *arahina* obligations require the conscious contemplation of past experiences and embedded thinking within the query, 'how do we make such practice relevant for this time?' Crucial *Āta* questions come forward with suggested signposts like:

- 'ka pēhea a tōna wā?' 'What will his time be like?'
- 'ka pēhea tōna noho a tōna wā?' 'How will he live in his time?'
- 'he aha te mahi ma tāua?' 'What must we do?'
- 'me pēhea e tutuki ai?' 'How will this be done?'

These trigger kaitiakitanga elements and responsibilities embedded in another range of questions like:

- ‘he aha ngÄ taonga kai te kōrerohia?’ ‘what is this cultural capital that is being discussed?’
- ‘ko wai ngÄ kaipupuri o ēnei taonga?’ ‘who are the holders of this ‘cultural capital?’
- ‘me pēhea te tuku atu ki ngÄ whakatipuranga a tona wÄ’ ‘how and when can it be most effectively transmitted to future generations?’

If undertaken for clear kaitiakitanga reasons, these offer real learning and guiding markers for tīpuna generations. At the same time, the parent (*mÄtua*) generation are given the chance to learn anew with their children, the patterns, messages and legacies that are uniquely theirs. Instilling positive memories, relationships, and sources for the future of mokopuna is the energy that drives this approach, again the whakatō and arahina notions in action. The imagery implicit in the opening phrase, '*pōpō e tangi ana tama ki te kai mÄna*' introduces the concept of 'nourishment'. Its quality, when it is given, how and by whom, is understood and so cherished. 'Being cherished' seeks out daily sites of opportunity for whakatō and arahina to be naturally recreated and revalidated in each new time, place and context. Puna (wellspring), another element of MÄoritanga, contextualised to the tīpuna/mokopuna relationship adds other depths to the kaitiakitanga, te whakakoha rangatiratanga, tūhonohotanga templates, to be trialled. This carries the image of two springs in their culturally dialectic relationship. One is at the beginning of its time, (mokopuna), waiting to be filled with its unique heartbeat, soul, rhythm and focus. *Popo e tangi ana tama ki te kai mÄna*, epitomises the image of mokopuna seeking components for their unique identity, their moko, their whakapapa-specific imprints in this context. The other spring (tīpuna), have lived and accumulated through its life, key components to ensure that they can provide identity, whakapapa-specific imprints and well-being, to mokopuna. This at least is the cultural intent. It is however, dependent on factors that would let tīpuna maintain and sustain levels of focus and responsibility to this unwritten yet vital cultural undertaking. Therefore, the tipuna spring can be a wellspring, full of kÄwai whakapapa legacies, space for the constant feeding of whakapapa cultural capital. It can however, be a dry spring, an indicator that these elements have been placed in the margins of tipuna through their daily lives, over their lifetimes. These reflect dilemmas, etched out, especially through our relationships with non-MÄori. Western thinking and bodies of knowledge, created and daily re-enacted as givens today in Aotearoa'¹

¹ There is no letter 's' in the MÄori language. It is therefore, deliberately left off MÄori words

laws, policies and programmes, set the frameworks of these relationships, as exemplified in R. Walker, (1990) L.T. Smith, (1999), G.H. Smith, (1997), C. Smith (1994), H. Greenland in Spoonley, P., Pearson, D., Macpherson C. (1991) example the development of relationship.

Should the heartbeats of the tipuna and mokopuna reach the depth of 'beating as one' however, the possibilities are limitless, affirming commitment with and to one another. The generations, given time to value the thinking and understandings gathered, indicate the importance of time (wā), as a natural companion (hoa-haere). Today our moko say, 'pōpō mama'. It signals to tipuna at one level, the successful internalisation of whakapapa cultural capital, activated with safety by mokopuna, in their time and way. Dynamism of te whakakoha rangatiratanga between generations is displayed at such moments. Here is a 'tūhono' of mutual affirmation of whakapapa mauri ora. Whakapapa-specific cultural capital of identity founded on take pū and cultural reasoning is what is being followed. The Āta factors of reflection, strategising, planning, gently focusing and discipline, creating safe space for transformative action to happen, are also hoa-haere (valued companions). It confirms a process of locating ways to invite take pū in a real way, into our daily lives.

Te Kapinga (*Conclusion*)

The 'three-lettered' word, Āta, reflects the many layered nature of Māori thinking, language and so the complexities of Te Ao Māori. It signals complexity yet simplicity, as long as there is a clarity and purity of intent and commitment. Āta re-images ways of progressing in relationships today, through phrases Māori have developed and utilised consistently, over time. Samples of words and phrases have been interrogated to pinpoint potential within Āta that would help improve and explain behavioural and applied theoretical patterns. It flags the significance of world-views through the lens of kaitiakitanga and te whakakoha rangatiratanga. In this way, safe cultural space for Māori socialisation, behavioural and theoretical processes may be re-founded. Choosing and applying take pū selected from Māoritanga, is the recurring opportunity to add further dimensions consistently when tracking interpretations within any kaupapa. The energies of other take pū to authenticate one specific take pū, Āta in this instance, points to cultural approaches engineered by Māori thinking, knowledge and application.

in the English texts, even though the apostrophe is still employed.

An associated challenge is to tell our own narratives, locate the messages in them and being 'game' enough to validate the messages where appropriate, daily. The narratives shared can offer options for critically re-interpreting our activities for re-use. Deliberately selecting stories that we are part of, seeking messages in them for use, can offer liberating moments, especially if there is a conscious will to do so.

For social service application, this affords space to practitioners to consider and test constructions of Āta within their work. Developing patterns of conscious application and review, gives Āta the opportunity to be included as part of their practice ethic. Incorporating their own experiences through their narratives helps signpost the significance of Āta in their practice. Consciously involving Āta and associated take pū, creates the patterns of detecting pre-emptive alternatives, after all, practitioners do want to, 'alter the natives'. 'Natives' in the social service context are those people, in various states of 'pōhara'. They are in 'states of need' be they emotional, spiritual, psychological, physical, intellectual, economic or political. Their mauri needs, have to be woken, to willingly participate, the notion of 'oho' (Pohatu, Mauri, 2003). Collectively, Māori practitioners, when they deliberately acknowledge Āta as an integral element of their personal methods of application, become more strongly, applicers of Kaupapa Māori models of practice. In this way, Māori templates assume their rightful positions alongside non-Māori models of practice. Crucially, it is vital to remind ourselves that these require courage from practitioners to willingly explore and activate choices from Māori bodies of knowledge at deeper levels in the process of progressing of their practice. Shaping explanations of ethical professionalism then declare 'safe space' for cultural ways and explanations.

Boundaries are constant challenges for consideration of 'diversity' and 'uniqueness' that is the reality of Aotearoa society today. As a result, the acknowledgement of boundaries signifies formality in relationships, layering further cultural justification for the processes, approaches and standards of Āta. It requires the constant application of appropriately constructed questions to every part of any issue. Space can then be petitioned in the seeking of cultural depth in interconnected ways. As a consequence, Māori cultural templates with their accompanying rigour, positioned within Māoritanga, become possible. Definitions of kaitiakitanga and Āta, places te whakakoha rangatiratanga at their core. Unless there is the willingness to fully appreciate

the transformative and ethical possibilities within Āta however, it will always remain in our individual 'margins'. Until there is a conscious willingness to utilise Āta in our daily reality, its depths too will always remain, 'over there'. In addition, waiata moteatea have been explored as kaupuri of potential elements for safe and ethical social service frameworks. They are also kaupuri of ancestral voices that propose ways in which they may be engaged into activities today.

Finally, the reality for Māori today, is that we are born to struggle, the never-ending contestation ultimately, being for our hearts, minds and souls. The contestants are Māori and non-Māori world-views. Fundamental to this engagement is the core kaitiaki responsibility bequeathed to each generation of Māori to continue the drive to maintain the integrity of our cultural uniqueness. However, Ngata also offers timely reminders when he wrote, '*te aronga me nga korero o tua atu i nga kupu*' (A.T. Ngata, *Nga Moteatea*, Pt II, 1985:xliv). The conscientising essence of his words to future generations is to always be mindful of the complexities within Māori knowledge, language and thinking. To seek them out, value, understand then contextualise them into our issues and relationships was crucial to re/establish culturally emancipatory depths. He reminds us that questions are fundamental to this conscientising process as each generation seeks to understand the challenges of their time, '*ka timata hoki te uiui a te hunga tamariki ki o ratou pakeke*', (Ngata, *ibid* p. xlv). In tandem with this is the ongoing requirement of nurturing respectfulness in relationships. As future generations will in time begin to question their elders, so is the Āta process required even more, to inform and shape their frameworks of practice. This pattern is as current and as required now, as it was in his time and earlier. *No reira, kia manawanui tĀtau* (Therefore, let us be of stout heart).

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