

Māori World-views: Source Of Innovative Social Work Choices

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Te Waitara (*Abstract*)

In social work, practitioners engage with people who have been marginalised and dis-empowered in their relationships over a period of time. An ongoing challenge for practitioners is the negotiating of these layers of negativity in an ethical manner. Understanding how these layers interconnect and function grant ways of 'seeing' boundaries and how they may be safely traversed. Māori world-views, this paper will argue, opens options of ethical approaches to engage in relationships.

Hai Timata (*Introduction*)

Māori social work practitioners are constantly faced with questions like; 'what place do Māori cultural templates have in guiding my practice?' and 'how safe are these cultural templates in my workplace?' The recurrence of such questions suggests that cultural integrity, constantly strives to be acknowledged, in the framing of social work practice and theory in Aotearoa. Associated with such questions is a hidden yet never-ending campaign, ultimately for the heart, mind and soul of every Māori practitioner, the contenders being Māori and non-Māori world-views.

When activated Māori world-views immediately place Māori thinking, knowledge and application at the centre of their processes when 'selecting in' and 'selecting out' knowledge and practice. This is the activating of *tino rangatiratanga* (absolute cultural integrity in this context). Unique bodies of Māori cultural knowledge with their depths of definition and application are privileged, having being tested over generations, in the full range of human endeavour. The ability and willingness to construct apply and defend Māori social work options in this context, while scary, can have exciting and liberating possibilities. Māori world-views it is proposed here, demonstrate the '*ka hao te rangatahi*' angle of the *whakatauki* (valued and wise cultural sayings), line in action. Rangatahi or the 'new' in this context is Te Ao Māori (Māori thinking and its world-views) and what it offers social work theory and practice, especially in Aotearoa. '*Ka pū te ruha*', the first line of the *whakatauki*, in its dialectical role, is consequently interpreted here as recognising the limitations that exist within current social work theory, practice and so their educational learning pathways. The need to respond proactively to the social work reality within Aotearoa is the constant companion in this dialogue.

This paper assumes the 'taken for granted' notion of Māori world-views as articulated by Graham Smith, in his writings on Kaupapa Māori Theory (1990, 1991, 1992, and 1997). There is also a growing group of Māori writers including Linda Smith (1992, 1995, and 1999), Leonie Pihama (1993, 2002), Russell Bishop (1996, 1999), Cheryl Smith (1994), Ranginui Walker (1990), Kuni Jenkins (1994), Tuakana Nepe (1991) and others that engage from this culturally constructed space. Occupying

such space actively engages us in the process of reinterpreting the states and consequences of inter-relationships between Māori and dominant Western traditions. These divergent traditions are in fact, 'two intellectual bodies of knowledge that irritate one another' (perscom, L. Smith, 10 February, 2002). The consequence for Māori is to always work hard to guarantee space, where we can be affirmative in our own way. This paper is an integral part of that mosaic, working to the same cultural heartbeat and rhythm yet from its particular perspectives, contextualised to social work practice today in Aotearoa.

Māori world-views are portrayed here as kaitiaki (responsible stewardship: see Pohatu, *Āta: Growing Respectful Relationships*, 2003) of a wealth of concepts, principles and 'voices' created, nurtured and applied through time. Such wealth however, requires each generation to engage in cultural obligations, adding their layers of experiences and analysis, informed by the reality of each 'new' time. Kaitiakitanga-type features implicit in such recurring questions as, 'kai whea te wāhi mōku' (what/where is the place for me) and such statements as, 'waiho, māku au e kōrero' (let me represent myself), are highlighted. These disclose the timeless requirement by Māori to struggle for tino rangatiratanga and its integrity, in all of our kaupapa (issues in this context).

Te Hāngaitanga (*Approach*)

The pattern employed in this paper has four parts. Firstly, the crucial role of Māori language as kaitiaki of cultural bodies of thinking, knowledge and application will be tracked. Secondly, constructed frameworks encapsulating the cultural world-view will be shared. Thirdly, the significance of supportive theory to authenticate Māori world-views, in this time, will be tracked. Finally, an example will be brought forward to demonstrate the potential that are within Māori world-views. Throughout the paper the whakatauki, '*ka pū te ruha ka hao te rangatahi*' will be recreated to illustrate how flexible and yet supportive whakatauki is in any kaupapa.

Te Reo (*Language*)

The power of language to inform, describe and construct behaviour is implicit in all cultures. Simple words used daily within social work environments, example this force. The words, 'client' and 'customer' have their own bodies of knowledge and rationalisations. These engineer the nature of relationships with their associated behaviours and attitudes between those in need and those who attend to that need. Tracking the source of energy of these 'simple words' unlock important patterns and deeper understandings of the true nature of inter-relationships, where power sits, how, where, with who and why.

The same format can be used when informing and working to identify with our behaviour ethically as Māori. Te reo is considered a crucial kaitiaki of Māori thinking and how it fashions and energises behaviour. It initiates entry-points to deeper readings of Māori positions for, '*Man cannot tune in so to speak when he is incapable of responding to the vibrations of the language.*' (Te Rangihīroa in Sorrenson 1986 Volume 1:177). These 'vibrations' emphasize the dynamic inter-relationships

between the language, thinking, behaviour and lived reality of Māori, crucial elements for cultural reproduction. It signals that while, '*language is the mediating force of knowledge; it is also knowledge itself*' (J. Spring, 1975:62). This is the 'potentiated' power within language, activating cultural obligations, images and passions within its members. They are timeless 'wake-up' calls experienced by every generation. Reflecting on possibilities within Māori thinking and the energies expended by earlier generations, then locating courage to adjust these options for use in each new time is the challenge. As Tuakana Nepe acknowledged, Māori language is '*a living medium of communication, a vital strand in the transmission of Kaupapa Māori knowledge*' (1991: 55). These writers are signposting the counter-hegemonic strength and so the liberating possibilities in Māori language and specifically te reo Māori.

This leads to another level, where each phrase within te reo is then considered kaitiaki of a unique body of knowledge. As a result, this reinforces the cultural intent and purpose of Te Ao Māori. Te reo Māori holds definitions, explanations, and angles to encourage reflective interpretation and for use in our activities. The ongoing requirement is to develop understandings of the connections that exist between Māori phrases, their bodies of knowledge, thinking and how they undertake their commitment to and with one another. When these phrases are deliberately placed within *take pū* (principle) parameters, they are provided with Māori world-view platforms, filters and intersections. These can support a vigorous, cultural enquiry and representation of any kaupapa, their sets of relationships with their behaviours. Multiple choices for Māori may then be yielded as we engage in and define the state of our relationships. (See examples in Äta article – 2003).

Te reo is in fact 'ka hao te rangatahi' in purpose and action; humanising and is being re-humanised as it is co-opted by each new generational time and its reality. However, it needs to undergo a 'renewing' process to make it relevant and so significant in each new kaupapa and time. Having the courage to create and function to such templates consistently does then place Māori in a constant state of 'renewal' and so 'rangatahi'.

A possible stumbling block however may be found in the resistance of individual mind and heart-sets, to not willingly accept the possibilities of such transformative frameworks. This indicates a 'state of being' highlighted by the first part of the whakatauki, 'ka pū te ruha'. An unwillingness to properly value the potential held within Māori bodies of knowledge, deposited by generations past into the 'library of te reo', will have the effect of limiting our visions, horizons, and so expectations. As te reo is consciously used in personal daily activities, the degree to which each take pū participates in what we do, can then be appropriately re-validated. These help Māori to become familiar with our distinctive cultural choices and the modifying angles they bring into our lives.

The Significance of Te Ao Māori Frameworks

'If we cannot control the definition we cannot control meanings and the theories which lie behind these meanings.' (L.T. Smith, 1995, *Matawhānui Conference*, Massey University).

When we scrutinise and reflect on our efforts, since the arrival of non-Māori, effective Māori responses have always come from the stance of our world-views, their unique positionings in the world and their constructed views of the world. The notion of *tomo mai* is therefore considered here as the permanent yet strategic invitation to Māori to willingly undergo the revitalising processes of thinking in our own cultural referents. As we conceptualise from our world-views, consciously utilising our cultural thinking and knowledge to inform and guide practice so do we discover the transformative energies of *Te Ao Māori*. *Tomo mai* and its established processes of entry therefore open avenues that enable us to comprehend and express ourselves as Māori in our activities.

An essential companion (*hoa-haere*) of the *tomo mai* strategy must therefore be the courage of our 'toa tradition' and its strengths in encouraging Māori to reproduce valued Māori cultural capital (*Māoritanga* - see Mauri, Pohatu, 2003), in our relationships. These collective and individual strength traditions have been fashioned by Māori purpose and reason. The acts of planning, strategising, discipline, committing together, in 'body, mind and soul', being constantly alert and astutely aware no matter what the issue are fundamental. These 'toa' interpretations, grounded in *kaitiakitanga* obligations to cultural well-being, move the dialogue beyond the personal, 'now' and physical realms. Incorporated are the spiritual, emotional, and intellectual reasons of how and why Māori applications happen. The essence of the collective and the individual consequently become more clearly read as summarised in the words, '*We are, therefore I am*' (perscom, J Hinchcliff, 3 April 2003). This is at the heart of the Māori Cultural Order as pinpointed by such *whakataukī* as:

- '*Ehara tōku toa i te toa takitahi, he toa takatini tōku toa*' (my heroism is not individual, it is collective – Tūtohuariki of Ngati Kahungunu in Te O. & W. Kaa, 1994:139).
- '*Na wai e koe, te iti māpihi pounamu, te kumara kōtipu o te mārā o Tumoanakotore*'. (And you the treasured one, who has been nurtured by and within the *whakapapa* grouping [the seedbed] of *Tumoanakotore* - *Whānau Whakapapa Book*).

Every Māori must therefore constantly revisit cultural templates to reassess the rigour of our personal commitment to this elementary feature of *Te Ao Māori*. Encouraging Māori to let our cultural thinking at its deeper levels assume greater participation in our lives is argued for here. Doing so however, can result in those 'war of positions' articulated by Gramsci in G.H. Smith, (1997:28). This is the reminder of a continual struggle between ideas and ideologies that drive and sustain groupings of people in their uniqueness, through time and circumstances. The same template also drives how groupings view and choose to live in the world it is suggested here. For Māori these positions can always be filtered through our de/re/colonisation reality, a consequence of choosing to be Māori today.

Likewise, Māori social work practitioners should also deliberately reflect on such *toa* traditions and their constructed patterns when fashioning personal models of practice. Social work practitioners have their own experiences that offer examples to help make sense of these traditions and their founding ideas in action. They each have their 'mārā' within which are unique relationships that acts as reminders that in their 'takitahi' state of being, they must always be influenced by the 'takitini', 'we are therefore I am' notion. Being willing to consider such approaches, introduces the possibilities of personal world-views. For Māori, developing a vision for our lives from the ethical standards created by our cultural thought and rationale is an essential de-colonising framework and tool for well-being.

Accepting such possibilities open us to the transformative vigour of our culture, encapsulated in such thinking as, *takakawehia te ara poutama, kia whakareia koe ki ngā tohu o mātauranga o te Ao Māori*: traverse the pathways of learning, be transformed by potential enlightenment, through the pursuit of knowledge of Te Ao Māori.

Development of This World-view: How Did It Happen?

The following experience is one of a number of important sparks that led to the creation of the world-view advocated here. I asked my uncle, ‘what is kaitiaki?’ His response was, ‘*hai tiaki, hai pupuri, hai arataki, hai tautoko, hai tohutohu i a koe. Ko tāhau, he kimi ko tēhea*’. (‘To take care of you; to be a holder of values and ethical behavioural patterns, to guide, support and correct you. It is however, for you to consider as to which one it is’).

With reflection, the recurring thought was, ‘this is in fact a view of the world’. It gives a timeless reason for being; it signals obligations of each new time to its past and future. Each word has many latent options that need to be explored to locate their significance in the construction of this world-view. It seems ‘deceptively simple’, the ‘taking care of’ idea in kaitiakitanga. However, as we enter, the complexity of such an undertaking is then appreciated. The obligations we have to who, what and why are always with us, our life’s purpose. Although every context in time (wā) and place (wāhi) is different, the intent of life’s obligation must never waver. Re-interpreting Māori principles as an evolving application is considered an integral requirement. This realisation requires ‘new courage’ to sustain our cultural ‘peace of mind’ in all of our activities.

The essence and purpose of life that my old people strove for in their time and what I have been struggling to make sense of in my time are in such words and their constructed practices. The following highlight some of the critical aspects in the cultivating of this ‘courage’.

1. Becoming of the tipuna (grandparent) generation, Te Ao Māori conferred on me, an inescapable obligation. This was, to be the first and prime transmitter of cultural templates of identity, values, knowledge and interpretations to my mokopuna (grandchildren). Timeless questions connected to the relationship assume a facilitating role. Such questions as, ‘what will your time be like e moko?’ ‘how will you be in your time e moko?’ ‘what can and must I do to ensure your future cultural well-being, e moko?’ guide tipuna towards appropriate responses. I am *kai-pupuri* (holder) of elements crucial to their well-being just as my tipuna were in their time. This gives a deep, personal purpose and source of revitalising energy to maintain the rigour needed for this life-long commitment.
2. This brings the realisation that by drawing primarily from my own *kāhui whakapapa* (genealogical and geographical-specific groupings of people) sources clarifies the interconnectedness of world-view philosophies, principles, ‘lived’ experiences, and the importance of safe space (*āhurutanga*). *Āhurutanga* processes and systems give purpose, informing our behavioural and socialisation templates. It also reinforces the intent within ‘*waiho māku au e kōrero*’.

3. There is the realisation that there are universal Māori philosophies and take pū which Māori as a 'Body' mutually value and understand. Therefore, *whakapapa* (genealogical and geographical-specific groupings of people) is an essential cornerstone of Te Ao Māori that gives expression to layers of definitions of *motuhaketanga*, (cultural uniqueness, intactness and completeness and their many shades of definition). Here is the *āhurutanga* process in action, a 'state of being' that is required by any issue and relationship, in any time (wā) and place (wāhi). Interpreting and reshaping take pū to inform and guide our practice in each new activity give time and place for the active re-engagement with the thinking and voices of earlier generations. The possibilities are immense and boundless if there is the will to respectfully 'engage'.
4. The realisations that just as many Māori words and phrases have multiple meanings so do Māori principles. All can be tested and validated by cultural experiences. As long as ensuing generations add their interpretations, informed by the reality of their time, then does the renewing and revalidation processes crucial to Māori well-being have the chance of a supported future.
5. The recognition that in order to create our own *āhurutanga* we must consistently undertake to develop our own frameworks, informed by our cultural obligation, purpose and thinking.

In this way access to sources of cultural encouragement and clarification within 'a paradigm that stems from a Maori world-view' becomes a possibility. (ibid: 184)

Te Kaupapa Tau-Mauri (*Philosophic Foundations*)

Claiming space to safely explore depths within Māori world-views is essential. Such space contains primary sources of creative and re-energising possibilities for the contemporary social work context. Māori world-views have fashioned through time, foundational principles built around purpose and obligation to cultural well-being. Visions centred on the take pū, *āhurutanga* (safe space), *te whakakoha rangatiratanga* (respectful relationships), *tino rangatiratanga* (absolute integrity), *mauri ora* (progressive energy towards well-being) and *te taukumekume* (tension), constantly shape the terrain here upon which relationships and kaupapa are developed. These and other take pū are therefore fundamental as they to are *kai-pupuri* of cultural bodies of accumulated thinking and knowledge, 'the central systematisation of conceptions of reality to which members of its culture assent and from which stems their value base', these lying, 'at the very heart of the culture, touching, interacting with and strongly influencing every aspect of the culture'. (M. Marsden, T.A. Henare, 1992:3).

For Māori this demonstrates that we do function in unique ways, within an Order that has clear patterns, systems and codes developed from cultural logic. The underpinning philosophies to this world-view are straightforward yet act as powerful reminders of cultural purpose and obligation. These philosophic formations propose that Māori World-views:

- are culture-specific, it been informed, developed, nurtured, articulated and defended by Māori;
- are the sources of primary beginnings of Māori knowledge;
- are pathways for Māori well-being;
- affirm that Māori are part of Nature;
- affirm that Māori have celestial beginnings;
- affirm the obligations placed with each generation to undertake their trusteeship contracts to ensuing generations.

Each formation has to be explored; tracing understandings held in bodies of knowledge and lived interpretations situated there. In the process they affirm the timelessness of relationships. They disclose the inseparable nature that Māori have with our many worlds; the past, present, future, generational, physical, emotional, spiritual, symbolic, contextual and the myriad of levels within. Activating these philosophies is to consciously integrate them into our kaupapa and relationships. Incorporating them however, requires the development of an ability to understand them and their interconnectedness, according to Māori philosophies valued place in our behaviour and practice.

These philosophic positions in turn, have fashioned for Māori, our timeless cultural purpose and obligation. The constructed cultural cornerstones (*papatūiranga*) shared here signpost this view. These are:

- kai-tiakitanga - cultural guardianship;
- kai-pupuri - cultural holder ship of valued thinking, knowledge and practice;
- kai-tuku - transmitters of valued thinking knowledge and practice with the requirement of being fully literate, of having grounded knowledge of world-views and their applications;
- kāwai tangata whenua - cultural integrity, uniqueness and heritage.

These signal epistemological and ideological territories of Māori, sanctioned as touchstones of integrity for informing our activities through time. In order to make better sense of the logic behind the construction of this world-view, two general questions are posed. Firstly ‘what is the place of Māori interpretations of how and why we should live in the world?’ Secondly, ‘what is the place of our activities and experiences in developing understandings of our obligations to relationships and environments?’ As a consequence, the frameworks of humanisation and contextualisation have been ‘selected in’ to compliment the philosophic and epistemological arrangements of this constructed world-view. Placing these into social work contexts will allow their angles and patterns to help us make sense of what is going on in our issues and relationships.

Te Whakatangatanga (*Humanisation*)

In ‘making sense’ of reality, Māori have always preferred frameworks, created from our thinking, in the pursuit of explanation and solace. Turning to what is central to our ‘cultural well-being’ in order to humanise our environments, the transformative possibilities in the conceptual framework of *te whakakoha rangatiratanga* (respectful relationships) is introduced.

Comprehension of messages from our reasonings and experiences are vital to sighting the dynamics within *te whakakoha rangatiratanga*. Respectful relationships with its strategies and disciplines are located in the understandings of the phrases, ‘respect of’, ‘respect for’, ‘respect with’, ‘respect by’ and ‘respect through’. Within every context therefore, fundamental questions can be posed, such as, ‘what should we have respect for?’ ‘why should we consider respect?’ and ‘how would we construct and

apply respect?’ These frame and reflect an ongoing determination to do ‘our best’. As these are incorporated into our relationships and activities, so do they have the chance to become vigilant participants in our daily lives. This disciplined intent is encapsulated in the notions of *koha* and *rangatiratanga* with their shades of interpretation. *Whakakoha* is represented here as the genuineness of thought and action, in the manner of giving and receiving. Integrity and respectfulness with their range of meanings, in the way of giving and receiving, is vital to understanding the notion of *rangatiratanga*. Together these notions are exemplified in the following phrases:

- ‘kia rangatira te mahi’ - *Carrying out activities with integrity and respectfulness.*
- ‘kia rangatira te haere’ - *Responding and engaging in activities with integrity and respectfulness.*
- ‘kia rangatira te noho’ - *Engaging in relationships with integrity and respectfulness.*
- ‘kia rangatira te whakaaro’ - *Engaging in deliberations with integrity and respectfulness.*

‘*Whakakoha*’ is sited here in the acts of *mahi*, *haere*, *noho* and *whakaaro*, the giving and receiving. How these acts are carried out, are harnessed within the rationale of ‘rangatira’. To achieve *mauri ora* in any kaupapa or relationship, the essential ingredients of integrity and respectfulness must always be at their core. They are basic; they are *hoa piritahi* (inseparable companions). Framing these phrases in this way, engineer’s space for Anne E. Berthoff’s words to enter, participate and become a ‘selected’ companion in our life’s journey. She wrote that language ‘*is the means to a critical consciousness, which, in turn, is the means of conceiving of change and of making choices to bring about further transformations.*’ (P. Freire & D. Macedo: *xix*). Her words according to the interpretation in this paper are in tune with the vision and obligations of Te Ao Māori.

Using other take pū, such as ‘*arataki*’ (to guide) examples further how culturally-enhanced filters, can shape how people’s responsibilities can be more precisely contemplated. Te Rangihīroa said, ‘*there are finer shades of information that can only be grasped through the medium of a thorough knowledge of the exact weight and meaning of phrases and idioms.*’ (Sorrenson, 1986:60). His is a timely reminder, to always seek out the integrity and respectfulness within the legacies of others. In this way, the dynamics and rhythms of being human, shaped by Te Ao Māori have a better chance to be more accurately located and understood through time. Letting us be human in our own cultural way then accepts that Māori can make our own constructions, choices, mistakes, self-corrections and critiques, just like everyone else.

For social workers, being willing to examine their constructions of te *whakakoha rangatiratanga* in their routines is crucial. Using their own experiences if wanted provide ‘tested’ avenues of te *whakakoha rangatiratanga*. With conscious application it can become a key component in their practicing wisdom. Involving take pū, point out ways of detecting and analysing pre-emptive alternatives; after all, practitioners do want to, ‘alter the natives’; (al/ter/na/tive). Natives in the context of social work are those people, in various states of ‘*pōhara*’ - states of need be these emotional, spiritual, psychological, intellectual, economic, cultural or political. Their *mauri* needs to be awoken, activated, nurtured and maintained to participate in ‘their’ lives optimistically. For Māori practitioners collectively, when they assert te *whakakoha rangatiratanga* and te *whakatangatanga* as valued elements in their practice, the liberating potential within will have real opportunity to be incorporated alongside other methods of constructing safe and ethical social work frameworks. Crucially, these again require courage to freely

scope options from Māori bodies of knowledge at deeper levels, in the evolving pursuit of refashioning social work frameworks and practice.

Te Horopakitanga (*Contextualisation*)

Complimentary to *te whakatangatanga* is its crucial companion (*hoa-haere*), *te horopakitanga*. Contextualisation is important space where interpreting cultural concepts into activities and vice versa can happen. As the world-view cornerstones are employed as *take pū* into contexts of our choosing, so is it possible for their cultural shape and nature to be re-interpreted, re-articulated and re-applied. With constant application and the employment of the full range of *take pū*, then will the real worth of Māoritanga be fully welcomed. One consequence is that the applications of previous generations are then accorded a valued place in everything that we their descendants do, in our time. Its dialectic consequence (*hoa-haere*) is the fashioning and instilling frameworks of those applications for future generations.

The processes within *te whakatinanatanga* (the act of implementation) and *te whakatauiratanga* (the act of modelling) are culturally fashioned frameworks that recognise just how central contextualisation is in our daily lives. This affirms that there are many sites where we have 'lived' our lives, where multiple dimensions exist for us to investigate the 'inside angle' that Te Rangihiroa talks about, so that we as Māori do not '*miss things that are significant to us.*' (Sorrenson, 1986:48). Developing understanding of transformative preferences is vital to the process. *Te horopakitanga* reaffirms the essence of fashioning something from 'below', '*the natural growth rooted in the Māori heart and mind and shaped to suit the characteristics of the people*' (ibid: 87). It constantly acts as sites to filter the 'real state' of Māori values and knowing in any circumstance, it's strong alignment with the '*organic development and nature of Kaupapa Māori Theory*' (op cit, L. Pihama, 2002). At another level, they are sites where engagement and contestation with the dominant culture's structures and processes are undertaken. Examples in the articles, *Mauri: Rethinking Human Development* (2003) and *Names: Distance Travellers* (1998) show how 'struggle' at a range of levels is engaged. The transportability of world-views as *hoa-haere* (valued travelling companions) to inform and guide social work practitioners wherever they go, in whatever they do, whenever they do it, also has the chance to be galvanised.

Te Hangatanga Aria (*Theoretical Framework*)

Theory is an integral component in the development of this world-view. It is intervention at another level that offers additional dimensions of how and why valued knowledge and practice is chosen. This is part of the endeavour to gain a more accurate reading of the variables in our lives as Māori. Taking the time to always be aware of what is real to us as Māori, accords safe space to identify and comprehend the embedded theory in what we as Māori do in any context. We begin to be 'in charge' of 'what is meaningful' in life, in relationships, in knowledge, in thinking, in every context in which we engage. We deliberately choose to align with theory more connected to our reality. Putting our bodies of knowledge and thinking into our kaupapa, permit Māori to evolve further as a people,

relevant to each new time, (the 'ka hao te rangatahi' notion). Consequently, Kaupapa Māori Theory has been deliberately chosen as the main theoretical framework here, because it accepts the integrity and potential within Te Ao Māori. It has grown out of the distinctive historical, political and social contexts of Aotearoa, privileging Māori ways of knowing, validating for Māori first, Māori thinking, knowledge, language and application. Kaupapa Māori is a platform to engage with other theories, 'a doorway' to reflect and draw from, 'a critical theoretical lens' to exam the positions and views of others and ourselves. It is a space that allows the display of what we can't say through Western Theory. This highlights our never-ending journey through time, towards tino rangatiratanga as we pursue our collective and individual cultural obligations. Tino rangatiratanga in this context is consequently constructed as a meticulous and recurring fashioner of characteristics deemed crucial to the characteristics of Māori in our 'natural growth' as articulated by Te Rangihiroa.

Kaupapa Māori strategies are as Graham Smith says, the involvement of, '*a complex arrangement of conscientisation, resistance and transformative praxis which collectively seeks to transform*', (1996:27) in this context, social work practice and culture. At another, yet connected level, Tuakana Nepe articulates Kaupapa Māori as the conceptualisation of Māori knowledge, as '*a way of abstracting that knowledge, reflecting on it, engaging with it, taking it for granted sometimes, making assumptions based on it and at times critically engaging in the way it has been and is being constructed*' (L. Smith, *Decolonising Methodologies*, 1999:188). Recognising that Kaupapa Māori is '*continuously been made and remade within a critical cycle of reflection and reaction*', (op cit, G. Smith, 1996:26), Linda Smith contends that Kaupapa Māori allows Māori to select in or select out, what counts or does not count as knowledge. This is the collective process of affirming the integrity of Māori approaches as being systematic, ethical, respectful and culturally scientific. These are givens, creating āhurutanga within debates as we articulate our positions and interpretations.

Kaupapa Māori strategies are counter-hegemonic approaches to Western forms of market-driven, competition-focussed ideologies. They again remind Māori that only we can create our own āhurutanga. Important angles and insights, when fashioning our preferred options move Māori away from being subservient or reactive in our relationships with others. As a result, proactive Māori positions are assumed when engaging with non-Māori knowledge, structures and applications. In the process Māori move from being merely the 'waiters' at the 'table of life'. We consciously participate in the forming of the 'menu' frameworks and then taking an active part at every layer. Here is the argument for '*critically informed pathways which develop active and meaningful, transformative outcomes of the existing conditions*' (ibid: 38). Te Kohanga Reo and Kaupapa Māori interventions are the genesis of Kaupapa Māori Theory example this. The imagery within 'ka pū te ruha' therefore, recognises the different rhythms and pulses between earlier and following times to those 'existing conditions'. 'Ka hao te rangatahi' encapsulates the new time with its responses to issues of concern. The point between the two lines of this whakataukī is the intersection where 'transformative responses' are engineered. Here is the space where obligation, reflection, tension and practice meets, mixes and recreates. Considered from this angle, the whakataukī opens huge possibilities towards '*the growth of strong critical kaupapa based analysis*' (L. Pihama, 2002:114) 'Ka hao te rangatahi' can then be seen as the results of new ways being applied in pursuit again of fulfilling obligations. This whakataukī is a reminder of this 'fact' and points out undertakings that must always be embarked on, to ensure that we

are 'relevant' and 'safe' in each new generational time. It reminds Māori that it is our ongoing purpose to seek out relevant 'active, meaningful, transformative outcomes' to ensure the well-being of our culture, in 'our time'.

Here is the reminder that absolute cultural integrity is something that must always be striven for. We are a minority group in the contest for what counts as valued and important in these times. Who gets the resources and who decides who does, is largely out of Māori hands. Unequal power relations is therefore, something that we have to always consider, all about evaluating, challenging, and liberating, the never-ending requirement of what Leonie Pihama calls, '*an analysis of existing power structures and societal inequalities*' (Smith, L., 1999:185). Russell Bishop also reminds us of those, '*prevailing ideologies of cultural superiority, which pervade our social, economic and political institutions*' (op cit, L. Smith: 184). These are voices that fulfil an important purpose of constantly exposing the underlying assumptions of how dominant groups in society shape thinking of what are 'common sense' and 'natural'.

Kaupapa Māori therefore incorporates being Māori, being connected to Māori philosophy and principle, the taken for granted validity and legitimacy of Māori thought, language and culture, the constant concern with the struggle for autonomy over cultural well-being, and self-determination. Here is the incorporation of the '*well-ried practices of Māori as well as being tied to a clear and coherent rationale*' (ibid: 185), the deliberate effort to compete for safe space to create theories for 'our ways'.

Kaupapa Māori therefore, is a crucial catalyst in that it moves us away from deficit questions to ones about knowledge. It sits at the intersection of any Maori issues when we engage with other bodies of knowledge, their intent and applications. This is praxis, with its components of conscientisation (development of thinking), resistance (attachment to a reality) and theoretical action (engagement in change), (perscom, G.H. Smith, 14 May, 2002). Praxis provides opportunities where people gather, keenly share thinking, discussion and debate and other energies, undertaking to together remake dreams into creations that we are willing to strive for. Freire constructs this as 'dialogue' (1990:60-95): Māori recognise these as the given parameters and constituent processes of 'hui' (Pohatu, 1999:21-40). At another yet integrated level, Graham Smith indicates that praxis does not happen in a tidy or linear fashion but that these weave into and out of one another. He sees it as a circular process, with a raft of 'tihe' points (Pohatu, *Mauri*, 2003), constantly revealing themselves, at critical times and in decisive ways. Kaupapa Māori therefore privileges practices that encourage participation at whatever level people wish to begin from, at whatever level that is right for them, on multiple sites, with the prospect of numerous transformations. In this way, meaningful contributions at a personal level in kaupapa can be clearly highlighted and internalised, indicating techniques to harness the varieties of pro-active energy (mauri ora) in all of our interventions. The potential within Māoritanga are subsequently advantaged.

The education field provided the initial domain where Kaupapa Māori approaches were developed, trialled and deliberately 'taken' to the world. These efforts in fact have created proactive space and templates for dialogue, to be refashioned and appointed across disciplines. Accepting that every social

work situation has these dimensions is the vital ‘doorway’ to always inviting Kaupapa Māori strategies, patterns and theories as *hoa-haere* into social work practice.

Kaitiakitanga – He Tauira (*An Example*)

The *take pū* kaitiakitanga is an example of the potential within Te Ao Māori. It is an essential element of Māori Cultural Order and with reflection, a crucial tenet of good social work practice. At its most basic yet most profound level, kaitiakitanga is about fulfilling the vital obligation for ‘taking care of’. Placing kaitiakitanga obligations within Te Ao Māori requirements of safe space, respectful relationships, absolute integrity and well-being lays out the environment upon which taking care of can be constantly assessed. Introducing the philosophic frameworks of Te Ao Māori opens up another layer and its dimensions that have to always be incorporated. With the companion *papatūranga* of the world-view being invited to engage and participate, draws in another layer for our reflective consideration of how and why to take care of. Contextualisation and humanisation layers can then bring these obligations to a very personal level where our individual experiences and applications can be filtered to be internalised. Here is the *whakapapa* notion in action, the layering one upon the other, signalled by Apirana Ngata and reinterpreted into today’s kaupapa (Pohatu, 1998:58). Five elements of kaitiakitanga are identified here; these in fact being other *take pū*, reiterating again the multi-dimensional and interconnected nature of the Māori Cultural Order.

They are:

Take pū	He Whakamāramatanga (<i>Definitions</i>)
Te tiaki	The undertaking of responsibility for guaranteeing appropriate trusteeship in all of its constructions, as defined by Te Ao Māori.
Te pupuri	The conscious and responsible holder ship of knowledge, thinking and experiences for use as and when appropriate, as defined by Te Ao Māori in this context.
Te arataki	Valued and respectful guidance in all sets of relationships and kaupapa, as defined by Te Ao Māori.
Te tautoko	Valued and respectful support in all sets of relationships and kaupapa, as defined by Te Ao Māori.
Te tohutohu	To ensure the fulfilling of responsibilities in relationships and kaupapa, as defined by Te Ao Māori.

(Figure 6)

Such constructions clothe kaitiakitanga with its cultural purpose and obligation. They define boundaries in relationships where spiritual, emotional, psychological, social and intellectual sentinels must be considered, re/shaped and re/positioned. Pursuit of integrity and respectfulness in

relationships and their boundaries is fundamental. When appropriately contextualised and engaged in social work situations, these can 'select' and energise behaviour and their associated practices. In this way, these elements allow the filtering of facts, messages and interpretations for considering, how well 'taking care of' is and has been undertaken. As these elements and their bodies of knowledge are applied and connected, more preciseness and understanding is invited into our activities. Being adaptive and constantly informed by our cultural bodies of knowledge is inherent.

The constructing of appropriate questions for every layer and its contexts is important to this approach. In this way the location of Māori cultural standards, their accompanying requirements and rigour becomes possible. Possibilities are exciting. Definitions of kaitiakitanga here, places te whakakoha rangatiratanga at their core. Every time any element of kaitiakitanga is included into any kaupapa, the kaupapa and its energies, 'invite in' the energies of those elements. Here is the 'ka hao te rangatahi' intent revisited. It proposes that reflective methods are crucial to the successful co-option of Māori cultural capital and in this instance, elements of kaitiakitanga. This reflectiveness implicit in the 'hao' notion (to aspire and have aspirations in this context) also requires the undertaking of intentionally trawling for options that can be remade to more precisely respond to obligations and issues faced. Unless this happens, the transformative and ethical possibilities within kaitiakitanga it will always remain in our individual 'margins'. Until there is a conscious willingness to utilise kaitiakitanga in our daily reality, its depths too will always remain, 'over there' in social work application, in this context.

These kaitiakitanga elements are also interrogative processes that can provide ways of examining each moment of any context, if wanted. Each element with their unique frameworks of definition and explanation has the potential to be culturally constructed, objective filters. When used to consider selected 'moments' and the encounters that have occurred in such spaces of time and place, their 'intimacy' and explanations, as filtered by the chosen kaitiaki element in this context, can be revealed. The significance of transition and committing to change is an ongoing feature of these processes. Recognising this is even more crucial now, in a time when Māori-informed applications can be so readily marginalised.

The notion of mahana (closeness/intimacy/warmth) is considered another *hoa-haere* in this approach, stipulating essential components to that 'warmth'. Mahana includes the many forms of shelter for 'well-being', each context being able to identify shelter/s, how and why they are fashioned. These shelters, when located and interpreted, will reveal their kaitiaki purpose and function. As we become more secure and respectful in our relationships, so does our willingness to engage in activities with others become transformative moments. The element of caution is however, a constant reminder of the fragility of courage. Just as courage engages, so can it easily disengage mahana and mātao (isolation/distance/coldness) being constant *hoa-haere*; indicating their special dialectic relationship. Each reason however, is personal, significant and can be individually justified. Every context requires its own form of courage that has to be discovered by participants. Mahana after that is unimpeded and with maturity helps ensure the evolution of abilities, to inform transformative growth not only for social work practice but also most importantly for ourselves in our relationships. For Māori social

work practitioners, mahana/mātao frameworks can be regarded as further culturally objective positions and filters. In this way, practice can always be measured and assessed.

Te Kapinga (*Conclusion*)

While world-views appear to offer only utopian visions for where Māori want to be, vision is what is crucial here. They encapsulate the aspirations, obligations and legacies of groupings of people. The vision held by Māori, shared by all whakapapa and kaupapa groupings is kaitiaki of principles like tino rangatiratanga, motuhaketanga and te whakakoha rangatiratanga. They do however challenge us to craft emancipatory options, encouraging the taking of proactive choices of where we are going, how and why.

Having courage to willingly invite these visions and patterns to proactively participate in social work practice today engages in the process of claiming space for Māori cultural principles and their bodies of knowledge to contribute. Sir Apirana Ngata's words in 1929 have an opportunity to be re-activated into any context, reminding us that Māori thinking, knowledge and applications can exist in 'parallel columns', alongside those of other cultures, all part of the re/validation process, (Sorrenson, M.P.K. 1986:201). Participation in the creation of space puts us in the driver's seat (te mana whakahaere) of choosing what we want to do, how, why, when and where.

'Ka pū te ruha, ka hao te rangatahi' represents the dialectal reality between what the world has been up until now and what the world will be. As every generation brings forward its 'new' challenges, this certainty carries the need to always consider how best to respond. Recurring questions are raised that each generation has to respond to as they reflect on purpose and obligations in their time. How these are carried out and the integrity within their applications is the ongoing objective.

Tomo mai this paper proposes carries the invitation to follow lines of thinking as constructed by Te Ao Māori. Angles, understandings and interpretations of a number of Māori cultural markers are introduced here, crafted to encourage dialogue with other Māori 'voices', their insights and appraisals. Māori preferred options of doing things then has the chance to be re-validated through time. It encourages the articulating and critiquing of our own examples. In this way, comprehension at a personal level of the essence of cultural obligation and accountability is formed and re-formed.

Articulating world-views as categorised through layers of possibilities fashioned by Māori thought is central to the process of re-launching Māoritanga into every engagement that we are part of. In this way, Māori deliberately participate in the decolonising process, enabling us to maintain clarity of our cultural resolve and contract. In this way, the line from a traditional karakia assumes a central consequence in the guiding and encouraging of Māori today, *'Whiwhia ou ngakau, ou mahara, kia puta ki te whaiao ki te ao marama'* – your hearts and minds (passions and intellect) can receive strength and direction to fulfil your purpose (enlightenment).

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