



Mahi a Atua: The art of liberating minds

Diana Kopua¹, Mark Kopua², Michelle Levy³, & Lisa Cherrington⁴

¹Ngāti Porou, Te Whare Wānanga o Te Kurahuna

²Te Aitanga a Hauiti, Ngāti Ira, Ngāti Porou, Te Whare Wānanga o Te Kurahuna

³Waikato, Ngāti Mahuta, Independent Kaupapa Māori researcher

⁴Ngāti Hine, Ngāpuhi, Te Whare Wānanga o Te Kurahuna

Correspondence: michellelevy007@gmail.com

Abstract

Mind-set liberation is critical to transforming the racist systems within which we live. Although we may understand injustices resulting from colonisation, including how the racist ideology of psychology has indoctrinated Indigenous imaginations, becoming critically conscientised to how we as Indigenous health practitioners perpetuate institutional and systemic racism is vital. Informed by Kaupapa Māori theory, this paper describes how Rangi Parauri training acts as a creative, liberatory praxis which moves practitioners beyond limited understandings of racism towards collective and embodied sense-making in which practitioners are able to simultaneously heal from, resist, act against, and transform systems that uphold racism. As our minds are liberated and we grow in order to remain curious and in relationship with each other, profoundly different, limitless possibilities for whānau to discover their own hīnātore emerge.

Keywords: Mahi a Atua, Kaupapa Māori, institutional racism, liberation, system healing, Māori health inequities, critical collective consciousness

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Noho Tatapū

Ranginui and Papatūānuku held over 70 children in their embrace. Frustration had grown amongst some of the children who felt cramped and confined, restricted in the darkness of their parents embrace. There was however a tiny speck of light in the blackness - te hīnātore. Two conceptual houses formed. Those who wanted to stay the same, fearing the hīnātore and the change it represented, occupied the house of Tūteāniwaniwa. With their way of being particularly influenced by whakapapa position and the views of Whiro, those in Tūteāniwaniwa were stuck, unable to even be curious about other potential possibilities. The conceptual house of Huaki Pouri was occupied by those who viewed the hīnātore as a small glimmer of hope, representing flexibility, possibility and change.

Institutional racism is a long-known determinant of health and wellbeing in Aotearoa (Reid et al., 2019). It is also widely accepted that institutional racism across the health system in Aotearoa is perpetuated and sustained by deeply embedded dominant narratives and practices (Blanchard & Mukerjee, 2022; Waitangi Tribunal, 2019). As Indigenous health professionals we are often inspired into our professions by a desire to serve our communities. However, very rarely, if at all, are we encouraged to think about how being embedded within these deeply racist systems impacts our practice. Because we are part of a population for whom colonisation has disrupted connection to mātauranga Māori and who face deeply entrenched institutional racism on a daily basis, the way we think will always be impacted by colonisation. Although we may understand injustices which have resulted from colonisation, becoming critically conscientised to how we as Indigenous health professionals contribute to inequities by perpetuating institutional and systemic racism is vital to authentically operationalising Kaupapa Māori theory. Irrespective of good intentions and hard work, it is impossible to escape the fact that all who work within dominant systems upheld by entrenched institutional racism will in some way be contributing to the ongoing reproduction and maintenance of that system (Mercier, 2020; Smith, 2017). Lying at the heart of Kaupapa Māori theory, the transformation of systems, structures, and institutions always begins with the liberation of our own minds (Coombes, 2017); a 'freeing-up of the Indigenous imagination stifled by colonisation' (Smith, 2017, p. 72).

The first and second authors are the creators of Mahi a Atua training programmes. All authors are Mataora trained in the Mahi a Atua kaupapa.

Combined, we bring perspectives as Mahi a Atua content creators and facilitators, Mahi a Atua taura, and registered health professionals in psychiatry and psychology. The intention of this paper is to articulate how mind-set liberation is critical to the transformation of the racist systems and structures within which we live, including those which underpin the psychology discipline. Drawing on the experiences of Māori health practitioners who have participated in Mahi a Atua Rangi Parauri training, this paper illuminates the ways in which Rangi Parauri operates as a creative praxis for mind-set liberation, enabling Māori health professionals to simultaneously resist, as well as heal from, racism.

First appearing in the 1980s, Kaupapa Māori theory was an intentional form of resistance which emerged from within Māori communities as a response to the impacts of the dominant mainstream education system in Aotearoa (Smith, 2005). Importantly, long-lasting impacts of colonisation were being brought into wider consciousness at this time via seminal reports such as The Māori and the Criminal Justice System: A New Perspective - He Whaipanga Hou (Jackson, 1987) and Puao te Ata Tu (Māori Perspective Advisory Committee, 1988), both of which highlighted how embedded institutional racism across monocultural systems, structures and institutions created disastrous consequences for Māori communities.

Comprising processes of conscientisation, resistance, and praxis, and drawing on the work of Paulo Freire (1970) who theorised that the oppressed must liberate themselves, Kaupapa Māori challenges the status quo in order to achieve radical change which explicitly disturbs 'the sense of comfort and complacency that is characteristic of Western epistemologies' (Sefa Dei, 2022, p. 3). Conscientisation is the process of gaining an understanding of the causal links which exist between colonisation, institutional racism, unequal power, and inequity (Smith, 2017). Importantly, Kaupapa Māori recognises that an integral element of becoming critically conscientised is understanding that colonisation can and is perpetrated by and against ourselves (Smith, 2017). Praxis is the process of resistance, reflection and action which combine to liberate and transform (Smith, 2005).

Returning to the original foundations of Kaupapa Māori theory are important because they remind us where the real revolution of the 1980s occurred in Aotearoa. Māori whānau in the 1980s became conscientised to the ongoing failure of the dominant education system for their children. However,



alongside this they became acutely aware of the structural barriers underpinning the systems persistent refusal to act in ways which served the educational aspirations of Māori (Smith, 2005). Whānau therefore became increasingly proactive in asserting control over their own educational aspirations, in the process creating what Smith (2005) refers to as a 'legitimacy crisis' for the mainstream education system in Aotearoa. In this way, the real revolution of the 1980s occurred not so much in the language revitalisation pathways of Te Kohanga Reo and Kura Kaupapa Māori but in the minds of whānau as they came to genuinely believe in their own power to traverse well beyond problem description, to active resistance and liberatory transformative action (Smith, 2005).

For many readers, this article may evoke a strong 'puku' or 'gut' reaction. Like tauria who undertake Rangi Parauri training, these reactions can be confronting, challenging, uncomfortable, and even frightening. You may find yourself feeling reactive, wanting to respond, defend, or attack. This is your hīnāture - where potential and possibility reside. We encourage you, in fact we implore you, to observe these reactions, to sit in the feelings and to keep reading. Keep an open mind and heart, especially if your puku reactions are strong, and get curious about the whakapapa of your own reactions. What else might lie beneath this reaction? Dive deeper. This is the hard work of liberation. This is the journey of a Mataora.

Mahi a Atua

Te Whare Wānanga o Te Kurahuna is the kaitiaki of Mahi a Atua. Culturally-contexted creation narratives have been used for centuries as a way of not only understanding and interpreting experiences, but also for illustrating potential pathways forward (Rangihuna et al., 2018a). Grounded in Indigenous ontology and epistemology, Mahi a Atua is founded on 'He Oranga Whakapapa' (bringing our stories to life), which acknowledges everything has an origin that can be traced back to pūrākau (Māori creation narratives), and that within these pūrākau are signposts to guide us in our endeavours, quests, and challenges.

Although first introduced as a therapeutic healing intervention for whānau in the 1990s, Mahi a Atua has evolved its training to focus more directly on the connection between institutional racism and inequity for Māori. This recognises that systemic institutional racism can be addressed by a collective critical consciousness on the part of both Māori and non-Māori, and that liberating the mind is necessary if

Māori health practitioners are to recognise and address their complicity in perpetuating the institutional and systemic racism which exists within the health system. Mahi a Atua therefore is more than a static framework, culturally-derived therapy, or individually focused competency acquisition programme (Kopua et al., 2024). Central to critical consciousness is the premise that the reinstatement and embedding of Indigenous knowledge systems found in pūrākau actively supports critical reflection and grows our way of thinking in order to act differently (Kopua et al., 2020; Rangihuna et al., 2018b). Embedding our own Indigenous knowledge systems includes a deliberate reclamation of our understandings of distress, both individually and collectively, which have been colonised by language centered in diagnosis and disorder.

Mahi a Atua training aims to create a critical mass of Mataora - 'change agents'. Of importance is that 'change agents' are not discipline, profession, sector or role specific - anyone who liberates their mind has the potential to activate change (Kopua et al., 2024). Currently comprising over 2000, the Mataora workforce includes general practitioners, surgeons, psychiatrists, psychologists, counsellors, nurses, social workers, occupational therapists, physiotherapists, midwives, cultural advisors, community/peer support workers, teachers, lawyers, academics, artists, managers, administrators, and whānau members. Te Kurahuna training offerings include Niwareka training, initially for nurses and midwives but expanded to include all those working in secondary and tertiary healthcare settings; Rangimatauru - virtual Mataora training; Rangi Parauri - three-month hybrid Mataora training; Rangi Mātāwai - Mataora refresher training; and Ranguikātika - Mataora leadership training.

The coloniality of psychology

The significant dangers for Indigenous people of an imported Western psychology which deeply embeds colonial thinking into the basic structure of psychological practice has long been discussed, both in Aotearoa and internationally (Bracken & Thomas, 2017; Levy, 2007; Love, 2003). Several international psychology bodies have formally acknowledged the use of inappropriate diagnostic and assessment systems; ways in which psychological approaches to healing have dismissed the importance of culture in understanding social and emotional wellbeing (Australian Psychological Society, 2017); and the role of psychology in "promoting, perpetuating, and failing to challenge racism" (American Psychological Association, 2021, p. 1). However, of note is that across these statements very little



attention is paid to the fundamentally racist origins and functions, or more specifically, the coloniality of psychological science, which continues to infiltrate our ways of thinking and being (Adams et al., 2015).

The success of the 15th century and beyond European colonial project depended on the construction of cultural superiority 'truths' used to justify conquest, exploitation and domination (Adams et al., 2015; Bracken & Thomas, 2017; Mignolo, 2009). These 'truths' needed to contain not only the innate inferiority of Indigenous peoples inhabiting their own lands, but more importantly how this inferiority demanded European civilisation (Adams et al., 2015; Mignolo, 2009). Central to legitimating these imperial truths was the positioning of Indigenous knowledge as folklore and myth (Mignolo, 2009). Led by the epistemic influence of Christianity, and reinforced by the secular knowledge of philosophy and science which was underpinned by 'superior' notions of Western reason and rationality, people and places started to be organised using reductionist forms of classification (Bracken & Thomas, 2017; Mignolo, 2009). Supported by the conceptual paradigm of positivism, universal, normative measures of human behaviour and experience were now able to be 'scientifically' discovered (Bracken & Thomas, 2017; Teo, 2022).

Although the needs of the colonial project may seem far removed from the present day, scholars describe how this legacy is reproduced in the present (Adams et al., 2015; Bracken & Thomas, 2017; Teo, 2022). Continuing to be underpinned by particular configurations of the 'self' considered vastly superior to other knowledge traditions, it is not only the elevation and exportation of knowledge traditions founded upon Euro-American concepts, curricula and practice which is problematic. It is that the elevation of one knowledge tradition requires intentional subjugation of another (Bracken & Thomas, 2017). Long-held resistance to the inclusion of Indigenous knowledge in the psychology discipline is well documented (Levy, 2002; Milne, 2005; Tamihere-Waititi, 2019), with such resistance justified on the basis of objectivity, neutrality, and universality and therefore superiority, of 'scientific' knowledge and method (Tan et al., 2023). The perceived incompatibility of Indigenous knowledge bases with the 'scientific' orientation therefore not only relegates and invalidates Indigenous knowledge and ways of healing, but it also intentionally preserves the white epistemology of psychological science (Bracken & Thomas, 2017; Kopua et al., 2020; Russell et al., 2018; Tamihere-Waititi, 2019; Timimi, 2013). Adams et al. (2015) refer to this as

'epistemic violence', whilst Mills (2014) identifies the attack on Indigenous understandings of healing as 'epistemicide'. As Dr Catherine Love concluded over 20 years ago, "the imposition of a body of Western cultural practice known as professional psychology, no matter how polite, sensitive or competent the imposition, is ultimately destructive in its effect on Indigenous peoples" (Love, 2003, p. 15).

From epistemic violence to epistemic disobedience: Changing the terms of the conversation

Aiming to challenge mechanisms which serve to maintain dominant ideologies, Kaupapa Māori theory focuses not only on critiquing deficit colonial worldviews and understanding structural and systemic barriers, but also on how colonisation continues to form and reform in the present (Mikaere-Hall, 2017; Smith, 2017). Recognising that simply inputting mātauranga Māori into an otherwise unchanged system does not lead to transformative change, Smith (2003) refers to the false consciousness which occurs when focusing on the most obvious forms of colonisation, as opposed to the underlying hegemony responsible for holding systems firmly in place. An example is ways in which the state and its institutions have, by claiming power of definition over 'Kaupapa Māori', diverted attention away from the original intention of Kaupapa Māori theory as a disruptive liberatory praxis (Coombes, 2017; Russell et al., 2022; Smith, 2017). Some argue the very willingness of the dominant group to embrace 'Kaupapa Māori' is itself evidence of the extent to which Kaupapa Māori has come to be understood solely as a 'cultural add-on', bereft of any real threat to dominant systems and power arrangements (Hoskins, 2017). Genuine transformation therefore demands more than replicating colonising structures, or inserting 'Indigenous' into otherwise unchanged, fundamentally flawed systems, structures and institutions (Mercier, 2020). Critical conscientisation from a Kaupapa Māori perspective examines the extent to which deeply colonial foundations of systems and structures will in reality even permit the possibility of innovation (Mercier, 2020; Smith, 2017).

A growing body of knowledge collected over the past 40 years has consistently identified the need for psychology to increase its responsiveness to Māori (Abbott & Durie, 1987; Levy, 2002, 2007; Nikora, 1989; Waitoki et al., 2023a). Over that time, the strategies and actions prioritised have been what Love (2003) described over 20 years ago as



reformatory. That is, they seek solutions only within the parameters of the existing discipline, for example, increasing the number of Māori studying and working in psychology; providing more Indigenous and cultural content as an add-on to the mainstream curriculum; and cultural competency-oriented solutions for safe practice. Such solutions have persisted despite ongoing evidence clearly showing not only little progress in relation to the meaningful inclusion of Māori worldviews within psychology training programmes over the past 20 years, but continued resistance to its inclusion (Berman et al., 2015; Levy, 2007; Love, 2008; Waitoki et al., 2023a; Waitoki et al., 2023b).

The lack of progress comes as no surprise. Our now substantial evidence base shows we have long-been aware of how the underpinning value base of psychology, with its deep-rooted epistemic superiority, continues to ‘uphold a white racial hierarchy’ (Tan et al., 2023) which is harmful for both Māori participating in psychology training, as well as those consuming its products (Love, 2003; Milne, 2005). The extent to which a ‘professional’ versus ‘cultural’ hierarchy continues to be maintained within psychology practice frameworks is seen in competency-focused statements such as “a psychologist already has their own professional knowledge, expertise and experience. But on the other hand, they need to begin developing their cultural competency through training, guidance and support.” (New Zealand Psychologists Board, 2024, p. 1). We also know that narrow individually-focused cultural competency frameworks not only perpetuate individual deficit discourses by endorsing oversimplified understandings based on cultural stereotypes, they also entirely ignore systemic drivers of inequity, including the role played by health professionals in creating and maintaining these inequities (Curtis et al., 2019).

And lastly, we know the underpinning value base of psychology serves to disempower the capacity which resides within whānau to activate their own rangatiratanga (Kopua et al., 2020; Milne, 2005; Tamihere-Waititi, 2019; Timimi, 2013). The ‘professionalising’ of both distress and wellbeing whereby Western-credentialled ‘psych’ professionals are positioned as the single source of specialist technical knowledge continues to overtly marginalise and invalidate the power which lies within Indigenous structures, practices and ways of healing, again further strengthening the white epistemology of psychological science (Bracken et al., 2012; Tamihere-Waititi, 2019; Tan et al., 2023; Timimi, 2013). All these ‘knowings’ logically lead us to the

central question of why there continues to be a focus on reformatory solutions in psychology when the evidence clearly tells us these have not worked?

As outlined earlier, the real revolution of the 1980s in Aotearoa occurred in the minds of whānau at the flax-roots. It was the ‘freeing-up of the Indigenous imagination stifled by colonisation’ which reinstated whānau belief in their capacity to reflect and act (Smith, 2017, p. 72). The ‘collective envisioning of new possibilities’ (Coombes, 2017, p. 40) is foundational to generating transformative actions and solutions able to move us beyond what Smith (2003) calls the ‘politics of distraction’, whereby as Māori we are forever positioned reactively, limited only to responding, engaging, and explaining. Irrespective of intention, epistemic violence will be reproduced if knowledge creation, interpretation, or application functions in ways which impact negatively on the colonised Other (Adams et al., 2015). Reflecting the importance of not being falsely conscientised because we are ‘watching the wrong door’ (Smith, 2003, p. 4), the question must be asked whether a discipline in which the invalidation of Indigenous worldviews, knowledge and ways of being is not only deeply embedded but embodied in its teaching and practice is truly willing to address the fundamental problem of its own ‘white epistemology’ (Teo, 2022)? Can this even be a possibility in a discipline which was fundamentally created to be a tool of the colonial project?

Understanding how embedded systemic racism underpins inequity for Māori is an important element of the conscientisation process. However, also essential to engaging in counter-hegemonic thinking able to unequivocally prioritise Māori aspirations is becoming conscientised to our own complicity in upholding the very structures, institutions, disciplines and professions we are challenging (Curtis et al., 2019; Smith, 2017). This form of conscientisation recognises that as Māori in a colonised country, the way we think will always be impacted on in some way by ingrained systemic racism. A central challenge in the application of Kaupapa Māori theory is uncovering how that is occurring for ourselves as Indigenous health practitioners. Without this specific type of conscientisation, the same systems of dominance are at high risk of being reproduced across all aspects of our problem-solving and decision-making processes (Opara, 2021).

Fully exploring the extent to which colonising processes are being perpetuated includes understanding not only how one explicitly contributes to producing, reproducing, and



upholding systems of embedded systemic racism, but importantly, how one is benefitting from those systems (Curtis et al., 2019; Opara, 2021; Smith, 2017). Genuinely moving beyond the legacy of colonial knowledge necessitates a deliberate ‘unlearning’ of not only the hegemonic assumptions which have been ingrained via centuries of colonial ideology and systemic erasure, but also of one’s own privilege which resulted from that (Bracken et al., 2021; Rameka & Paul-burke, 2015). Integral to this ‘unlearning’ is understanding the origins of one’s resistance to actioning truly transformative kaupapa Māori responses which in order to be owned by and make sense to whānau ultimately require a relinquishment of power by professionals. This notion of ‘unlearning’ is not unfamiliar. We have long known tauira Māori in psychology must engage in a process of ‘unlearning’ on completion of their degree if they are to successfully work with Māori communities (Baker & Levy, 2013; Milne, 2005).

Also relevant to our own complicity in the problems we are trying to solve is becoming conscientised to the limitations of our existing mindsets, or as was referred to earlier, the extent to which our imaginations have been smothered by colonisation. Mignolo (2009) talks about how if we are to move from being propagators of harmful epistemic violence to propagators of epistemic disobedience, it is the terms of the conversations which much be changed, not the content. When discussions are held only within the confines of existing system rules, the fundamental control of knowledge and power will always remain unchallenged. There is a strong body of knowledge showing transformative solutions able to address long-standing inequities for Māori do not lie within professional workforces, instead requiring alternative ways of working which move beyond outdated and ineffective professional boundaries (Boulton et al., 2020; Health & Disability System Review, 2020; Māori Perspective Advisory Committee, 1988). This was clearly highlighted during the COVID-19 crisis when Māori communities authentically activated their own transformative solutions for all, as the dominant siloed systems were forced aside unable to effectively respond (Russell et al., 2023). As Dr Kiri Waititi-Tamihere says, reigniting the power that lies within our whakapapa is central, with generational histories illuminating how we have coped under the most extreme pressures with our own experts; tohunga, nannies, aunties, and uncles (Tamihere-Waititi, 2019).

The relevant question again becomes why has psychology been unable to act on this evidence?

Returning to the central importance of understanding our own resistance to engaging in genuinely transformative actions, there is no doubt that responding to the evidence base regarding the importance of ‘de-centring’ the professional will require our own power acquired as a result of our ‘professional’ status be surrendered in some way.

Rangi Parauri: Liberation through healing

Rangi Parauri is a three-month online and ā-tinana Mataora training programme. Including an intensive five-day ā-tinana wānanga delivered on marae, Rangi Parauri is facilitated by a highly skilled team of Mataora including tohunga, moko artists, taonga puoro practitioners, musicians, storytellers, weavers, mirimiri/romiromi practitioners, maramataka practitioners, karetao artists, educators and health professionals. Emphasising āta whakarongo (listening carefully), kōrero, co-creativity, and reflective communication, these wānanga fully encase tauira in pūrākau, rituals, mātauranga and creative processes. Taken on a journey through the phases of Te Pō, Te Whai Ao, Te Ao Mārama and through to Te Ao Hurihuri, tauira learn to apply the three Mahi a Atua mātāpono as a way of being. Tēnei te pō nau mai te ao has a conceptual translation of indigenising your space. This mātāpono promotes the embedding of te ao Māori into our entire way of being and privileging of mātauranga Māori, as opposed to the deficit-based ‘culturally-appropriate’ services model, as the means by which to mitigate institutional racism. Ka mā te ariki, ka mā te tauira speaks to the importance of being an active learner, encouraging us to be responsive to each other and to our environment. As we learn to be open to other perspectives we grow our ability to expand our thinking. The ariki, seen as the teacher or the tohunga, is actively learning in the presence of the student, while the student is open to learning from the teacher. The final principle is hongihongi te wheiwheia, inhaling the unusual. By collectively interrogating the common sense, creating space, seeking feedback, leaning into and expecting discomfort, Mataora are continually striving to do better.

The following section describes how Rangi Parauri operates as a creative, liberatory praxis which shifts tauira beyond limited academic understandings of systemic racism towards the individual and collective critical consciousness which is necessary if we are to genuinely change the terms of our conversations. These descriptions are supported with tauira feedback from 13 Māori health practitioners,



including psychologists, which was collected as part of the Rangi Parauri training.

Tēnei te pō nau mai te ao

*I think I went through the whole pūrākau emotionally ...
I was definitely in Te Pō. Ngā mihi for that.
And I've come to the actualisation that I don't want to be
in Te Pō anymore. So, I'm going after the Hinātore.
(Tauira, Rangi Parauri)*

Tēnei te pō nau mai te ao views institutional racism as being firstly addressed by actively reinstating, embedding, and practicing Indigenous knowledge across every element of personal and professional spaces. The process of Indigenising occurs alongside processes of anti-colonialism; that is, a reassertion of self-determination, and a reclamation of Indigenous ways of knowing, doing, and being (Jones et al., 2019; Kopua et al., 2024). The hauora Māori workforce face the daily challenge of surviving not only within a wider institutionally racist society, but an institutionally racist health system (Levy & Cherrington, 2024). In this way, as health practitioners for whom colonisation has disrupted our connections to mātauranga Māori, and who face deeply entrenched institutional racism on a daily basis, we are important members of the very population being served.

There is increasing awareness of the way in which individual, intergenerational, and collective mamae (hurt) impacts across systems, and ways in which unrecognised mamae will block movement towards the collective healing required for system transformation (Calderon de la Barca et al., 2024). Calderon de la Barca et al., (2024) also highlight how ingrained and unhealed mamae which results from cultural disconnection acts as a significant barrier to the healing needed to transform the systems around us. Hauora Māori workforce development aimed at addressing embedded systemic racism therefore cannot be separated from the context of the wider healing journeys which are necessary for personal, whānau, and system transformation (Levy & Cherrington, 2024).

*Yesterday when I got up and spoke, I was surprised that
impacts are available in my body. I spoke what I thought
was my full truth until some things started to arrive ...
If I was being real honest with myself, I realised that the
uncertainty and assumptions I had made about how
others were feeling was unworthiness that still sat with
myself - that I didn't realise was there. (Tauira, Rangi
Parauri)*

Liberation requires becoming conscientised to the ways in which one's cultural identity has been impacted on by marginalisation from dominant culture society, differential access to the resources of te ao Māori, and internalised racism (Baker & Levy, 2013). Fundamental to Rangi Parauri training is that not only does the exclusion and delegitimising of te ao Māori and mātauranga Māori in a world dominated by a colonised worldview impact on one's sense of self-worth, it also impacts the extent to which one believes a connection to te ao Māori is even possible. Consistent with Smith's (2017) emphasis on a 'reawakened Indigenous imagination', learning to believe, both individually and collectively, in the very possibility of transformational change is also necessary for liberation.

*Now I can connect it to racism - why I think the way that
I think. I had a really big sense of, I don't even know what
you would call it - I really thought I knew what racism
was and how it affected me, and how I fit into this
westernised world. But I actually realised that I know
nothing. I didn't realise how much of an old tradition it is
... How embedded it is. (Tauira, Rangi Parauri)*

Johnson et al. (2024) identify how the dynamics underpinning systemic racism will be disrupted by the "intentional re-storying of narratives about us and our centring of Māori and Māori lives", with this re-storying constituting a deliberate act of mana motuhake (p.65). Deliberately created, embodied learning experiences support tauira to move beyond understanding racism as a purely theoretical concept. Immersed in mātauranga Māori as the norm for five days, tauira are not only provided with points of connection to te ao Māori, they are also nourished in ways meaningful from an Indigenous worldview - pūrākau, maramataka, taonga puoro, tā moko, mirimiri, and rāranga; rituals and processes such as pure, ahi and Hinekauorohia; and creative processes such as waiata, whakaari, and toi kupu.

*What I found enlightening, powerful and healing for me is
that I realised pūrākau was probably my way of, not fully
decolonising, but going away from the things that I learnt,
being indoctrinated. Because I am going back to my stories
and my whakapapa. (Tauira, Rangi Parauri)*

Combined with new knowledge such as the Doctrine of Discovery, tauira are supported to not only learn about, but to feel the origins of their whakamā about that which has been stolen by colonisation. They are then able to begin the process of collectively seeing their own worth and the possibilities for



transformative healing which exist for them and their whānau. Rangi Parauri understands how the concept of whakamā and the uncomfortable emotions it brings is a critical opportunity for transformation.

I sadly don't speak te reo and my tummy flip flops when everyone is speaking it and I don't ... I feel behind the eight-ball and little bit left out. And that's where my heart yearns for that loss. It's a sense of mamae. But I'm hearing it around me and it's like music to my ears. My soul is going 'this is it ... this is what you've been missing' ... the next part of this journey is to go and learn my te reo. (Tauira, Rangi Parauri)

Integral to Rangi Parauri wānanga is that personal journeys are navigated as a collective. The deep exploration and critical reflection required to deepen understanding of one's own taken for granted assumptions and the behaviours which result occurs via a collective wānanga process.

I think it was the learning style that stuck with me more ... Moving it out of the intellectual was really powerful, but there were really neat people in the process who shared different ways of doing things as well. So wānanga style where you were learning off the people as much as you were learning off the facilitators. (Tauira, Rangi Parauri)

Fundamental to liberation, and a central element of the embodied learning experiences which prioritise te ao Māori is uncovering the internal coloniser that lies within (Mercier, 2020). Often requiring a process of 'unlearning', tauira become conscientised to how their own responses and reactions operate as barriers to acting transformatively. A critical step in ensuring attempts at system transformation do not simply result in the reproduction of western ideology with a different face (Smith, 2017), the process of 'unlearning' requires bold critical reflection on how embedded systemic racism has impacted our own beliefs, often manifesting as unconscious internalised racism resulting from layer upon layer of colonised mindsets. Rangi Parauri encourages tauira to be open to the possibility of thinking differently about situations, including identifying more clearly how their current perspectives, reactions, and behaviours, including deeply rooted issues, are preventing them from moving forward and activating change.

I didn't realise how colonised I still am. I represent being Māori but there's still lots of stuff that I need to change – and I've learnt all of that. It's going to be a process in practice. It definitely makes you look within, and I've started critiquing a lot of the things that I do, my colonised beliefs, my own beliefs. (Tauira, Rangi Parauri)

On the final day of Rangi Parauri there is a mokopapa where Mahi a Atua is collectively celebrated through the inking of skin. The concept of embodied learning experiences has been previously referred to. Embodied healing also occurs as tauira come to feel the liberation that occurs when they deliberately Indigenise the spaces they occupy, none more so than their own bodies. Receiving a moko kauae during a Rangi Parauri wānanga exemplifies the mind-set liberation that occurs as a result of being able to feel the origins and impacts of systemic racism in Aotearoa. Reflecting the notion that Kaupapa Māori processes of conscientisation, resistance and transformative praxis are not linear (Smith, 2017), feedback from tauira shows how the act of receiving moko is a reclamation of not only of one's tinana, but of one's hinengaro, and wairua. Indigenising spaces via the marking of one's skin allows tauira to simultaneously resist racism as well as heal from it.

I cried. Because I knew it [moko kauae] was there before I was born. I knew that ... And I felt like the wind. So free. There were no barriers in front of me. And behind me, above me or below me ... And there still are no barriers. The only barriers are the ones I will put there. I felt like yesterday was created for me ... And it's an unshakeable knowing in my place now ... Me being me ... And I have a place in te ao Māori. For a long time, I never thought I ever did. (Tauira, Rangi Parauri)

Consistent with Kaupapa Māori theory which understands whānau as a key site of resistance and activation, Rangi Parauri is not only focused on individual healing. Adding another layer of understanding to system transformation, Rangi Parauri training sits within a wider context of whānau healing and transformation. As tauira moved to Indigenise their spaces and embed Mahi a Atua principles, they gave priority to implementing new learnings with whānau first, often before the wānanga had even concluded.

My ahi kaa, are my children and not in a 'I need this so I can implement it with my children', but it was more 'how do I implement this for me, so I can personify this so my children will follow'? So, it's not a foreign concept to them that I have to physically teach, how do I embody this for me, so it becomes my families new normal. These atua conversations become normal conversations for my children, so they are not sitting in judgement of themselves. That was ultimate ahi kaa. (Tauira, Rangi Parauri)



Ka Ma te ariki; Ka Ma te tauira

A gentle safety of being placed into our uncomfortable and brought back. (Tauira, Rangi Parauri)

Ka mā te ariki ka mā te tauira focuses on the development of active learners who are responsive to whānau and the community. Consistent with the fundamental principles of cultural safety (see Curtis et al., 2019; Ramsden, 2002), change always begins firstly within oneself. Alongside being important members of the population they serve, tauira learn about how the decisions they make as practitioners contribute to inequities. Without engaging in processes of conscientisation, as practitioners we will be unaware of the extent to which we continue to sit in the house of fixed thinking, Tūteāniwaniwa, perpetuating institutional and systemic racism within the health system. This in turn impacts on the extent to which it's possible to grow a critical way of being which is underpinned by deliberate curiosity. As has been demonstrated in the cultural safety field, critically interrogating our own assumptions and layers of privilege and power, alongside how these contribute to ongoing systemic racism always requires difficult inner work (Curtis et al., 2019; Freeth et al., 2023). Unsurprisingly the process of dismantling and 'unlearning' is often experienced by both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people as not only uncomfortable, but confronting (Baker & Levy, 2013; Freeth et al., 2023). Of direct relevance to psychology, this is particularly the case for health professionals who have been trained within and credentialed by the very system and knowledge base which is sustaining ongoing systemic racism.

The type of journey necessary for conscientisation is frightening for everyone, both Māori and non-Māori. As has been previously identified (Baker & Levy, 2013; Blanchard & Mukerjee, 2022; Hakio & Mattelmäki, 2019; Senge et al., 2014), Te Kurahuna recognises that becoming conscientised to our own role in upholding systemic racism requires opportunities for shared critical reflection and learning within environments which, although at times will be unavoidably uncomfortable, are also experienced as trusting and focused on tauira wellbeing.

I was scared. I came here with an impression of what I thought I knew and to just have everything shaken and to come to the realisation that you actually know nothing. I was 'nah I can't know nothing – that's not ok with me. Why am I here'? And then it wasn't until we were on the beach and doing our pure that I started to question myself – why do you feel like that? Why are you scared of not

knowing? Why is it bad to not know sometimes? (Tauira, Rangi Parauri)

Confronting the reality that one has fixed beliefs, seeing the impacts of that illuminated, and having to unlearn in order to let go of privilege is a turbulent process. When we are content-focused the gaze is outwards. However, when the focus is intentionally on the terms of the conversation, we ourselves are in the spotlight. For example, the language habitually used to encapsulate distress, such as disorder and diagnosis, can illuminate places of potential bias. In Rangi Parauri, the language used by tauira provides perfect opportunities to engage in real-time wānanga to not only deconstruct and dismantle assumptions and biases without fracturing relationships, but to also teach the application of Rangi Parauri mātaōpono.

Requiring a highly skilled team, Rangi Parauri wānanga pay deliberate attention to facilitating a secure process in which tauira are able to face their own attitudes and prejudices within the context of historical and contemporary colonialism. Yes, it will be uncomfortable and frightening. However, cultivating the skills required to sit reflexively with a curious mindset in uncertain, uncomfortable, and challenging spaces, including the anxiety which presents for some when immersed in mātauranga Māori, is a deliberate intention of Rangi Parauri.

Tūporeariki are a unique element of the Rangi Parauri experience for tauira. Guided by the atua of healing, Rongomātane, Tūporeariki are Mahi a Atua informed healing wānanga which support tauira to explore important issues in more depth, as well as experience the live application of Mahi a Atua in a therapeutic context (Levy & Cherrington, 2024). De-medicalising healing and pastoral care, Tūporeariki wānanga explicitly recognise the centrality of healing to liberation and the challenges associated with critically-focused conscientisation approaches.

Coming through Te Pō and then uncontrollable emotions ... somebody just grabbed me. They just knew I needed to be there. The tears flowing and I couldn't speak. But they gave me the space and allowed me to do what I needed to do ... And that was beautiful, just being acknowledged that actually what I was holding, me, I'm important. And I've heard it several times – you are enough; you are enough. Through that process and sitting there with some beautiful wāhine, three others – it was really beautiful. That was cool. I felt really supported, held. (Tauira, Rangi Parauri)

Utilising the in-depth learning embedded within pūrākau orokohanga, Indigenous rituals and creative



processes, Rangi Parauri wānanga grow a critical way of being. Mahi a Atua asks tauira to be curious, think differently and explore a wide range of perspectives on pūrākau. For example, why might Whiro be taking that course of action? What might Tāwhirimātea be so angry? Why might Tangaroa have changed allegiances? Reflecting the importance of remaining curious and open, Mahi a Atua recognises the variations of pūrākau which exist across Iwi. Powerful mindset shifts are evident as tauira are supported to understand how being curious, reflective, and observant allows new insights into their thoughts, feelings, reactions, patterns of behaviour, actions and non-actions, to emerge.

I am here to grow and learn. And to be comfortable with not knowing. Because I'm not very comfortable at all with not knowing but I am learning to embrace the unknown and lean more into the uncertainty. Learning to be vulnerable is not something I have ever been introduced to. To be doing it in such a mātauranga Māori way after being disconnected from my culture is such a beautiful thing – it's a very big journey for me. Almost like coming home to myself. (Tauira, Rangi Parauri)

Hongihongi te wheiwheiā

Hongihongi te wheiwheiā emphasises the importance of a workforce who, in positioning the outcomes for those being served as the most important factor, are always seeking understanding in how to do better: giving and receiving negative feedback grows our collective potential. Directly informed by the pūrākau of Hinekauorohia, atua of healing and reflection, hongihongi te wheiwheiā prioritises the importance of developing a culture of feedback - an ongoing practice, individually, collectively, and organisationally, of reflective transparent discussion. Key to prioritising the learning experience of tauira is the integration of real-time feedback from day one of the wānanga. Growing the capacity to remain an active learner whilst 'inhaling the unusual' and continuing to remain curious even when faced with discomfort and negative consequences is a critical element of the conscientisation process.

Sitting in the discomfort – the challenge of what it is which is being fed back. I have awareness of myself and situation ... seeking wise counsel when things are not congruent with your own thought processes, being more reflective. (Tauira, Rangi Parauri)

Tauira are provided with opportunities, supported by rituals and tools, to build their courage, confidence and capacity to activate hongihongi te wheiwheiā. For some, practicing hongihongi te wheiwheiā in a large wānanga group is challenging. Others surprise

themselves, reflecting on how courageous they end up being. And some identify not taking full advantage of the learning opportunities presented, and the possible reasons for this. By providing opportunities to collectively practice how to best sit comfortably in the uncomfortable through modelling the giving and receiving of feedback, tools such as scripting, and being able to experience the real-time application of hongihongi te wheiwheiā, tauira become inspired and motivated to engage in hongihongi te wheiwheiā themselves.

On our second to last day ... I was like, 'it's happening whānau'. We are already in real-time, action-time.

Hongihongi te wheiwheiā in terms of noho tatapū and the tuakana house and the taina house was at play in that moment. Toroiwaho, Kēkerewai, Tangaroa, Tāne – all those different elements were happening in the kōrero real-time ... I was like 'wheeee it's happening whānau'!

'Is anyone else picking it up?' 'Ooooooh Toroiwaho moment!' 'Tāne moment' ... we were seeing te kawa o tau utuutu living and breathing. Our tikanga were living and breathing and we may not even realise it. (Tauira, Rangi Parauri)

Rangatiratanga for whānau: Liberating our minds

Those stuck in the whare of Tūteāniwaniwa feared the change represented by the tiny speckle in the darkness.

Those in the whare of Huaki Pouri saw the tiny light as a glimmer of hope; potential and possibility yet to be bought forth.

When intentionally placed in Te Pō with all its stages of darkness and unknowing, more than the intellectual has to be operating for tauira to remain motivated enough to push through their discomfort. As tauira are being taught to engage in a process of collective reflective practice, all the elements of the Rangi Parauri experience are coming together. Whilst there are deliberate phases of the wānanga in which certain tools, rituals and information are introduced, the process of conscientisation draws on many elements and senses. The pūrākau and various ways used to communicate them are meaningful not only because they reclaim and indigenise space, but also because they make available to everyone, irrespective of their ability or comfort levels, a place to land and points of connection which are visually, aesthetically, and audibly enticing - calming and soothing to wairua, hinengaro, and tinana. As an embodied, experiential process, Rangi Parauri brings to life how Mataora and Niwareka brought the arts back into chaos to create a sense of order. Rangi Parauri facilitator Tina Ngata describes the essence of this process.



This morning, I did my Doctrine of Discovery kōrero at Mahi a Atua. I felt like there were big emotions in the room, and knowing the content, I kept looking around at the faces, thinking about the journeys they'd all been on and what this would bring to the surface. And just wanted them to all know we had them, while we talked about this massive injustice against our ancestors, and us, and all we hold dear.

We talked about it all ... the attack on our sacredness ... the deep hara that sits at the heart of colonial nation building and why it's so important for us to know this story in order to put things right for our mokopuna ... How important it is to restore our sacredness through ceremony, reo, karakia, all of our arts, through honouring our stories and through protecting women, children, whenua, wai and mātauranga.

Then we went for pure ... this time we decided to go to Waikanae ... where Cook first landed in Aotearoa ... the entry point for the Doctrine of Discovery on these lands. After the pure, we broke off into wheako - one roopu took taiaha ... another went into pūrākau and Tūporeariki ... another undertook karanga ... another was doing maramataka. I took a small group and told them the story of Cook, from the Seven Year War in so-called Canada to his arrival here, and the Doctrine of Discovery's arrival here in Aotearoa ... What it meant and that this is really what Te Tiriti and He Whakaputanga is meant to protect us from. Then we talked about the Treaty Principles Bill and what they might want to put in their submission.

There was a moment, where, from our spot on the beach, I looked out and saw all of these wānanga happening at once. After we'd all held ceremony. On the very spot where the Doctrine landed here and I thought – 'yeah, check us out, restoring our sacred on this very whenua. You failed, Doctrine' (Ngata, 2024).

Despite clear evidence that transformative solutions require visioning beyond outdated professional boundaries and workforce silos (Health & Disability System Review, 2020; Waitangi Tribunal, 2019), resistance to seeing beyond the status quo in psychology persists. The late Moana Jackson spoke of how colonisation in Aotearoa stole our 'belief': belief that our language and culture was worth retaining; belief that our systems and ways of living were good enough; and belief in our ability to make decisions for ourselves (cited in Morrison, 2022, April 2). One of the most damaging consequences of stolen belief is narrowing vision and creativity, with solutions only seen within the boundaries of the existing system.

However, fundamental to freeing Indigenous imaginations stolen by colonisation is the capacity to

dream well beyond the limited parameters of 'participation', 'cultural' competency, and institutional and professional co-option of Māori kupu and processes which relegate an Indigenous worldview to the margins (Smith, 2017). When captured by the 'politics of distraction' (Smith, 2003), a commonly used colonial tool, our attention is concentrated on the actions of others. Yet, as Kaupapa Māori theory tells us, the ultimate struggle is the battle for control over our own minds (Smith, 2017).

Reformative solutions in psychology are premised upon the taken for granted, unchallenged, 'common-sense' presumption that psychology is of benefit for Māori. However, Kaupapa Māori shows genuine liberation lies in the power of whānau to not only imagine solutions, but to activate them. Extending well beyond existing systems, structures and boundaries of a siloed psychology discipline, Kaupapa Māori solutions first and foremost will be owned by and make sense to whānau. As was emphasised in the first Indigenous psychology text published in Aotearoa, although as Māori psychologists we are protagonists in our own story, without whānau there are no stories worth telling (Levy, 2016).

Kaupapa Māori therefore challenges us to not only ask the right questions, but to look in the right places for the answers to those questions. Workforce development is not about increasing numbers or getting psychologists through the goal posts quicker. As demonstrated over the past 40 years, these actions do not address the fundamental reasons underpinning why we are thinking the way we do. From a Kaupapa Māori perspective, the development of counter-hegemonic thinking which prioritises whānau aspirations for rangatiratanga cannot have 'psychology' as its assumed starting point: whānau rangatiratanga must be the starting point. Whānau responses to this starting point may or may not lead to psychology. The implications of starting in the wrong place are clearly evident in the ongoing prioritisation of the Psychology Wellbeing Practitioner/Assistant Psychologist model as the principal strategy for addressing unmet mental health and wellbeing need for Māori. This has occurred despite considerable opposition in terms of feasibility, lack of evidence, and inappropriate discipline capture. Crucially, by starting in the wrong place, a substantial opportunity to collectively as Māori grow meaningful solutions focused on whānau rangatiratanga has now been lost.



In concluding this paper, we return to our starting point. Liberating the mind is crucial for Indigenous health practitioners to recognise and address their complicity in perpetuating institutional and systemic racism. Through a Kaupapa Māori framework, becoming critically conscientised liberates practitioners to heal from and resist racism while simultaneously transforming the systems that uphold it. The possibility of mindset liberation is always available to us; there is no fixed endpoint. In the face of new evidence, Tangaroa changed alliances from the whare of Tūteāniwaniwa to the whare of Huaki Pouri, fully knowing this would enrage and draw the wrath of Tāwhirimātea. Mahi a Atua mātāpono ask us to Indigenise the spaces we occupy; stay active learners; and to give and receive negative feedback in order to grow collective potential. Rangi Parauri is a creative liberatory praxis which understands healing is fundamental to our liberation. Heal the workforce and you'll heal the system – that's the ideological shift from Tūteāniwaniwa to Huaki Pouri. A healed system will provide a healthy workforce. Utilising embodied experiences which prioritise te ao Māori, Rangi Parauri training activates personal and collective healing. Healing as part of the liberation process means moving beyond colonial frameworks that often marginalise Indigenous perspectives. With our own whakapapa framing the work needing to be actioned, taura in Rangi Parauri engage deeply with pūrākau and the practices derived from within them to foster a deeper sense of belonging and identity. In focusing on their own ahi kaa - a sense of returning home, whether literally or metaphorically - taura are empowered to heal, envision and enact transformative change in their whānau and across their communities. There is no greater form of embodied healing and mind-set liberation than Indigenising one's own skin.

Our 'common-sense' ways of thinking which originated from the colonial project need to be critiqued and challenged. Rangi Parauri provides opportunities to grow the courage needed to remain curious and in relationship with each other, even when faced with discomfort and negative consequences. Embarking on a process of 'unlearning' in an environment which although is deliberately uncomfortable, is also deliberately focused on safeguarding taura wellbeing, Rangi Parauri provides the tools by which to answer the questions, what do we hold on to and what do we change?

Confronting, challenging and uncomfortable, these are the most difficult battles of all, particularly for those long invested and deeply committed. But we

are willing to be like Tāne, trying and failing again and again, because we want the best for our whānau. Reflecting that the foundations of Kaupapa Māori lie in the liberation of whānau, taura in Rangi Parauri apply their learnings firstly with whānau. It is through the daily application of Mahi a Atua mātāpono that whānau are supported to collectively rethink and find ways out of dominant prescribed narratives and create pathways to transformative solutions (Kopua et al., 2024). When the starting point is whānau rangatiratanga, the terms of our conversations shift, and as our minds are collectively liberated, profoundly different and limitless possibilities for whānau emerge.

Kupu Whakamārama: Glossary

Ā tinana: In person

Ahi Kaa: This term has an origin from ancestral knowledge and is used within Mahi a Atua to assist taura to be deliberate in their learning, growing, and developing a critical lens.

Aotearoa: The land of the long white cloud, New Zealand

Āta whakarongo: Deliberate listening

Atua: This term refers to the environment, implying that Māori have ancestral ties to their environment and that atua are our tuakana. Although sometimes interchangeable with 'god', it is best referred to within Mahi a Atua as ancestor.

Hara: Mistake, sin

Hauora Māori: Māori health

Hinātore: A light seen in absolute darkness symbolising potential. Known to be the phosphorous light of the glow worm.

Hinengaro: Mind

Hinekauorohia: Atua of reflective waters, used in Mahi a Atua wānanga for reflection.

Hongihongi te Wheiwheia: Hongihongi te Wheiwheia is the third Mahi a Atua principle. It represents a culture of feedback individually, collectively, and organisationally. The words 'Hongihongi te Wheiwheia' originates from a Mātaatua whakatauki.

Huaki Pouri: The conceptual house of flexible thinking, growth mindset

Iwi: Tribe

Kaitiaki: Caregiver, guardian

Karanga: Call, a spiritual practise of calling to ancestors in the spirit realm

Ka mā te ariki ka mā te taura: The purpose here is to maintain balance between your role as a student and a teacher. A Mataora is encouraged to literally be at the two ends of transferring knowledge. To critique your way of thinking, feeling, and interacting with your environment; internal and external. It is also to maintain a critical overview of your practice. The aim is to broaden your perspective as you learn and unlearn, share knowledge and critique the impact of that knowledge. To live life



practising is to understand we are both the ariki and taura at the same time.

Karakia: Incantation, chant, ceremony

Karetao: Māori puppetry

Kēkerewai: An atua who represents speaking out about a problem

Kōrero: Talk, discussion

Kupu: Word

Kura kaupapa Māori: A school immersed in Māori language and tikanga

Mahi a Atua: Ancestral healing - a way of being that prioritises Māori knowledge and world view through exploration and reclamation of pūrākau orokohanga. It is also a philosophical approach that addresses racism and is driving transformation in health and wellbeing spaces.

Marae: Place or gathering space

Maramataka: Māori lunar calendar

Mataora: An early human ancestor who was the first change agent who brought the art of Moko into existence. A change agent trained in Mahi a Atua

Mātāpono: Principles

Mātauranga Māori: The epistemology from a Māori worldview. Māori knowledge and intellectual property. Māori philosophy

Mirimiri: Māori massage

Mokopapa: A ceremony where faces are tattooed in a group setting

Mokopuna: Grandchild

Niwareka: An ancestor, spirit maiden, who married Mataora. Within Mahi a Atua, a Niwareka refers to someone trained as a healer who engages Mahi a Atua principles and values while working inside a western system

Noho tatapū: Is about the space of being in distress, restricted and/or stuck

Papatūānuku: Mother earth, primal parent of this realm and existence

Pūrākau: Stories that share ancestral origins, relationships and epistemological knowledge that is transferred from generation to generation

Pure: A traditional ceremony of releasing inner burdens
Rangatiratanga: Autonomy/authority

Ranginui: Sky father, primal parent of this realm and existence

Ranginuikātika: A realm travelled to attain the knowledge required to be good guardians for the environment. Within Mahi a Atua this is a leadership course

Rangi Matauru: The seventh realm travelled to attain the knowledge required to be good guardians for the environment. Within Mahi a Atua kaupapa this is an online training programme to become a Mataora

Rangi Mātawai: A fifth realm travelled to attain the knowledge required to be good guardians for the

environment. Within Mahi a Atua kaupapa this is a refresher course

Rangi Parauri: A realm travelled to attain the knowledge required to be good guardians for the environment. Within Mahi a Atua kaupapa this is a training programme to become a Mataora

Romiromi: Māori deep tissue massage

Rongoā: Traditional Māori medicinal practices

Roopu: Group

Tā moko: Māori scarification, tattoo

Taiaha: A traditional double edged long staff Māori weapon

Taina: a younger sibling, particularly of the same gender

Tāne: An atua of the forest and birds

Tangaroa: An atua of the sea

Taonga puoro: Traditional Māori instruments

Tauira: Student

Tāwhirimātea: An atua of the wind

Te Ao Māori: A worldview unique to Māori

Te Ao Hurihuri: Forever changing world. The phase of evolving

Te Ao Mārama: The world of light. The phase of understanding and knowing

Te Kohanga Reo: Māori language nest for young children

Te Pō: Darkness. Night. The beginning phase. The past.

Tēnei te pō, Nau mai te Ao: The purpose of this principle is to prioritise the use of Mātauranga Māori in everyday life and is the conceptual translation of 'indigenise your space.' For some this may be to learn te reo Māori, for others it may be to adorn their whare with Māori art. For another it may be making the conscious choice to buy Māori music or switch to a Māori radio station. There are some who have indigenised their faces which has also meant that an important aspect of mātauranga Māori, Moko, is thriving in Aotearoa. It might appear simple, but privileging 'mātauranga Māori' is no easy endeavour when institutional racism is rife in our society. In fact, the act of indigenising your space is political and important in transferring mātauranga Māori into the next generation unapologetically.

Te Reo: Language

Te Whai Ao: A phase of time when the world was shifting from darkness to light. The pursuit of light. The phase of becoming aware

Tikanga: Protocols

Tinana: Physical, body

Tohunga: Expert in a specific field

Toi kupu: Poetry

Toroiwaho: An atua representing listening to a problem and sharing it with the collective

Tuakana: an older sibling, particularly of the same gender



Tūporeariki: A Māori approach to healing through a collective Mahi a Atua forum

Tūtēniwaniwa: A conceptual house of fixed thinking

Wai: Water

Waiata: Song, sing

Wairua: Spirit, spiritual, spirituality

Wānanga: To discuss, learn, exchange knowledge

Whakaari: A play

Whakamā: Shame, embarrassed, shy

Whakapapa: Genealogy

Wheako: Experience. Breakout learning workshops

Whenua: Land

Whiro: An atua representing protection of a sacred realm, atua of disease, atua of fear, atua of darkness

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