

# Shifting Ground: Reflecting on a Journey of Bicultural Partnership

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## Abstract

The return to Ōtautahi | Christchurch in 2015 provided an opportune moment for us to participate, observe, ponder, and reflect on the partnership agreement between Waka Oranga and the New Zealand Association of Psychotherapists (NZAP). Ōtautahi is significant as the place where, in 2009, the membership of the NZAP voted for a constitutional change which recognised Waka Oranga, an allied Māori organisation, as its bicultural Treaty partner. This article reflects on a journey taken thus far and discusses the shifting ground that emerges as a consequence of bicultural partnership, specifically with the NZAP which is predominantly Pākehā and Tau Iwi. The opinions expressed are based on the authors' personal experiences and engagement with both Waka Oranga and the NZAP.

## Waitara

I te hokinga ki Ōtautahi i te tau 2015, ka whai wāhanga mātou ki te kōrerorero, ki te titiro, ki te whakahoki whakaaro ki te kirimana rangapū i waenga i a Waka Oranga me te Rōpū Whakaora Hinengaro o Aotearoa (NZAP). Ko Ōtautahi te wāhi, i te tau 2009, i takahurihia ngā ture i te pōtitangahia tōna peka Māori, a Waka Oranga, hei hoa Tiriti kakanorua mōna. He whakahokinga whakaaro tēnei tuhinga ki te hikoi mai i reira ki konei. Ka matapakihia ngā whakanekenekehanga i ara ake i tēnei hononga kakanorua, inā rā hāngai atu ki te Rōpū Whakaora Hinengaro o Aotearoa (NZAP), tōnā nuinga nei he Pākehā, he tauiwi. Nāku, nā te kaituhi ngā whakaaro o tēnei tuhinga, ā, koi nei ōku wheako whaiaro i a au e hikoi haere ana i roto i a Waka Oranga me te Rōpū Whakaora Hinengaro o Aotearoa.

**Keywords:** Waka Oranga; NZAP; Te Tiriti o Waitangi; shifting relationships

Psychotherapy in Aotearoa New Zealand is a profession in which Māori are increasingly

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represented as both client and therapist. Much of what is taught, written, and researched in this land about psychotherapy is based on the Western thinking of Freud and post-Freudians, and some humanistic thinkers. What remains under-developed and under-researched are the socio-political, environmental, and cultural aspects that consider the context from which psychotherapy unfolds. Māori engagement with psychotherapy as a discourse for the healing of intra-psychic pain and anguish is at a relatively new frontier as we are challenged to integrate, shape, and reshape what heals us internally and externally.

In 2009, a small and fledgling group of developing and practising Māori psychotherapy practitioners gathered in front of Te Puna Wanaka Marae, Christchurch Polytechnic Institute of Technology with colleagues and friends from the New Zealand Association of Psychotherapists (NZAP) to form a much larger contingent of people. We were gathered together for the annual NZAP conference in Otautahi | Christchurch, anticipating with, no doubt, a mixture of anxious energy what was to come. Awaiting the shrill of the karanga, the call of welcome, acknowledgement, remembrance for both the living and the dead and the trampling of ground. The powhiri, a uniquely Māori exchange of engagement where the terms are exalted from speaker to speaker across the threshold of both separation and eventually togetherness. Each respective speaker provoking, effecting, and stimulating the cause that has drawn us together, and endorsed by appropriate waiata (song). The welcome is concluded with a koha, a gift of affection, appreciation, and regard from the visiting entourage, and completed with friendly handshakes, smiles, and, importantly, the hongī (traditional pressing of noses) to symbolise unity through the shared breath of life. The traditional and ritualistic practice of powhiri is the negotiated space as a result of which the shifting ground prevails.

This 2009 conference provided the impetus for important changes now occurring within the profession and set the scene for greater recognition of Māori health interests and the formalisation of a Te Tiriti o Waitangi-based partnership between two discipline-specific health organisations. We conclude this introduction with the following waiata that was sung by members of Waka Oranga at both the 2009 and 2015 conferences. The words in this waiata are often used in kaikorero (speech-making). Symbolically the tui (stitch bird) represents the bringing together of many threads to provide both the fabric and korowai (cloak) that adorns the shoulders of the recipient. Encouraged by our kaumātua (elder), Haare Williams, this waiata has become the source of inspiration for Waka Oranga as we draw strength from the labours and song of the tui. The waiata appears in our developing *He Ara Māori Advanced Clinical Practice* (Hall, 2016).

### Whakarongo ake au (John Tapiata)

Whakarongo rā	I listen
Whakarongo ake au	I listen, where up high
Ki te tangi a te manu	Its cry rings out
E rere runga rawa e	A bird flies
Tui, tui, tui, tuia	Sew, stitch, bind it together
Tuia i runga	From above

Tuia i raro	From below
Tuia i roto	From within
Tuia i waho	From outside
Tui, tui, tuia	Sew and bind it together
Kia rongo te ao	During the day
Kia rongo te pō	And the night
Tui, tui, tuia	Sew, stitch, bind it together

## Te Tiriti o Waitangi | The Treaty of Waitangi: Establishing a Balanced Relationship

We begin with an explanation of Te Tiriti o Waitangi in order to position the discussion that follows within an understanding of biculturalism in Aotearoa New Zealand based on a Te Tiriti o Waitangi relational paradigm (for an application of which, see Tudor & Grinter, 2014). We do not intend to elaborate extensively on the way in which Te Tiriti was formulated as much of this information is available through libraries and online sources (see Waitangi Tribunal, 2016).

Māori have continually asserted our rights to retain our autonomy and to exercise our cultural values, practices, and beliefs as Indigenous tangata whenua (people of the land) before and after the signing of Te Tiriti (Hall, 2013). There was robust discussion and debate amongst the many chiefs who gathered in Waitangi in 1840 to deliberate Te Tiriti. There were many observers to the events that unfolded during the making of Te Tiriti and, as Felton Matthew noted, “among the chiefs were many female chiefs of importance, who were distinguished by white feathers in their hair and ears, sometimes by the entire wing of a bird suspended from the ear” (Museum of New Zealand, 2015). The following quotes compiled by the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa (2015) provide a glimpse of some of the dialogue that took place amongst the chiefs prior to the signing:

“Let the Governor return to his own country ... We are not whites, nor foreigners ... This country is ours ... we are the Governor — we, the chiefs of this our fathers’ land.”  
Rewa of Ngāi Tawake from Kororareka

“We are free. We will not have a Governor ... go back, return, walk away.” Hakiro of Ngāi Tawake

“O Governor! Remain for us — a father, a judge, a peacemaker.” Tamati Waka Nene of Ngāti Hao

Signed in 1840, Te Tiriti specifies the terms of the relationship between tangata whenua and the British Crown (Orange, 2004) — and the use of the present tense is intentional. However, it did not take long for imperialist fervour to assume prominence within Aotearoa leading to this constitutional document dwindling in importance and eventually being completely overshadowed by a Westminster parliamentary system. Following decades of land loss and

economic marginalisation resulting in adverse effects on Māori health and education (Jackson, 1993, 2008; Walker, 2004; Mikaere, 2011), Māori dissatisfaction grew, culminating in a number of high profile protests including the 1975 land march from Te Hapua to Parliament. Māori resurgence throughout the 1970s pushed race relations in Aotearoa to a crisis point as a result of which decades of grievances were made much more visible to the nation. By the latter half of the 20th century the breaches of Te Tiriti were being recognised, as was their terrible impact on Māori (Durie, 1998). The *Treaty of Waitangi Act 1975* recognised the need to ameliorate those impacts and provide redress, as well as giving Te Tiriti legal prominence. Te Tiriti is now widely accepted as a precept for ethical health research in Aotearoa New Zealand (Health Research Council of New Zealand, 2010).

It was an important development for the NZAP to host the 2008 annual conference at Waitangi where our kaumātua Haare Williams generously recounted the significance of our bicultural history from Te Tii Marae and what are now commonly thought of as the Treaty grounds. Te Tiriti proclaims an association of equal partnership primarily between hapū groups and the Crown. The three broad principles embedded within The Treaty are those of partnership, participation, and protection (Durie, 1998). These principles have relevance to health research and wherever health care is delivered. Additionally, these principles provide a constructive foundation for engagement and a lens for understanding health equality and health inequity.

The provision of health care in Aotearoa New Zealand is of great consequence to Māori (Durie, 2001). While there have been improvements in the health of most New Zealanders over time, health inequalities persist for Māori (Reid & Robson, 2007). Numerous health disciplines and health professionals working in our communities are committed to improving the quality of Māori health through intervention and prevention-based services. However, despite their efforts, some receive the benefits much more reliably than others. Te Tiriti provides the foundations that establish a framework for a balanced relationship.

Improving Māori health, including psychological and emotional health, requires committed leadership, leadership that is prepared to re-establish and invest in meaningful and balanced relationships. It involves being mindful of what gets lost in translation between Māori and Pākehā as stated by Jackson (2010):

The causes of that loss come at us from many sides because if you still live as we do in a colonizing society, then colonization operates to privilege its own reality, to dismiss the realities of others or at least to control them. (p. 30)

Furthermore, committing to improving Māori health requires a recognition of a lived reality that differs from that of the more dominant group, as well as the re-positioning of power. Embedded in the principles of Te Tiriti are guidelines for the establishment of meaningful bicultural relationships, creating the potential to construct a bicultural identity within the psychotherapy community in Aotearoa. Invariably this leads us to ponder on what is meant by the term biculturalism and what this entails. Unlike many other countries in which there are such relationships and disparities, we have the benefit of Te Tiriti to guide us towards the more equitable balancing of positive culturally-orientated and -informed engagements with each other. Te Tiriti provides the foundations for a two-directional

process of relationship building that enables us to move between various cultural orientations from a clear understanding of ourselves. Here, we are suggesting that Te Tiriti provides the framework for this important and exciting development to occur between Waka Oranga and NZAP.

## The Establishment of Waka Oranga

In 2006 representatives from the NZAP's Council, its Admissions Committee, and its Te Tiriti Bicultural Advisory Committee embarked on a consultation hui with Māori members of NZAP, as well as prospective Māori members, at Whaiora Marae in Otara, Auckland. Important issues were raised concerning NZAP's commitment to existing Te Tiriti statements and their integration into NZAP's policies and procedures. The Admissions Committee presented what was then commonly known as the "Orange Book" (as the cover of the printed version was coloured orange) (NZAP, 2012). The Admissions Committee was then in the process of revising aspects of this book, so the consultation hui was also an opportunity for Māori to provide feedback on its work. In response the Māori caucus recommended a "Brown Book" pathway that would advocate for the inclusion of tikanga Māori as part of the formal process of admission to NZAP membership.

During the NZAP 2007 conference in Napier a serious cultural misunderstanding became contentious, causing frictions between Māori and Pākehā attendees. This led to an urgent meeting which all Māori members of the NZAP were encouraged to attend in order to discuss experienced and perceived transgressions against our cultural traditions.

The concerns of the Māori caucus group were hotly debated, contested, and defended late into the night resulting in factions between Māori who felt disenfranchised by processes that appeared to privilege individual Māori and Pākehā processes. Experiences of marginalisation throughout various aspects of both the present and past conferences were also central to the grievances that were expressed. A major point of contention was the lack of accountability by Māori to Māori and a lack of Māori collectivism within the profession. The issue of Māori accountability to each other became a critical turning point. It was seen to be important that Māori who held positions of responsibility within the NZAP had an obligation to fulfil the aspirations of Māori. Furthermore, the requirement for Māori to be formally mandated into positions of responsibility by Māori and for the benefit of Māori had been, until this point, overlooked within the structure of the NZAP. The discussions highlighted a further difficulty for Māori in that there was no established Māori rōpu (group) within the organisation. The tensions that arose from the 2007 conference became a catalyst for change which resulted in a group of NZAP Māori members emerging under the guidance of Matua Haare Williams and establishing themselves as Waka Oranga. As founding members of Waka Oranga, we reflect on this development in relation to the significance of whenua (land); the whenua which we stood upon while discontent stirred beneath the surface of our relationships with each other as Māori and with our Pākehā colleagues. Perhaps these were made particularly manifest by mother-earth's soul as we are cognisant of the 1931 Hawke's Bay earthquakes that shook us into greater consciousness. Likewise, Otautahi Christchurch has been a central point for earth-shaking experiences, giving us the metaphor of shifting ground to explore and describe the changes we experience

together in the bicultural relationship. For Waka Oranga the journey to acceptance by the NZAP as a recognised Māori allied organisation took a further two years after the 2007 Napier conference (Hall, Morice, & Wilson, 2012).

## The Journey to Biculturalism in Psychotherapy

The journey towards biculturalism within NZAP began with numerous discussions generated within the membership throughout the 1980s and 1990s. To progress these discussions a motion was put forward at the 1994 NZAP Annual General Meeting:

That the following be adopted at the 1995 AGM “That the Constitution be amended to include in the objects the clause: ‘to ensure that psychotherapy in Aotearoa New Zealand is conducted in accordance with the articles contained in the Treaty of Waitangi”. Moved by Merv Hancock, and seconded by Charles Waldegrave. (NZAP, 2015)

At the 1995 NZAP AGM Jonathan Fay proposed an amendment which Peter McGeorge seconded, so that the motion then read:

That the Constitution be amended to include in the objects the following clause: “to explore ways in which psychotherapy may be guided by the articles and spirit of the Treaty of Waitangi”. (NZAP, 2015)

Whilst the motions were passed unanimously, there has been difficulty enacting these constitutional changes. The inability to enact these changes highlights a critical learning point if we are to understand the essence of bicultural partnership.

Bicultural partnership involves participation by Māori as a fundamental and key stakeholder group and the ability to form working partnerships and collaborations. Furthermore, it requires wisdom and an analysis of both oppression and liberation. It also requires the necessary protection to enable Māori the opportunity to effectively engage with important decision-making processes generally, through representation at all levels. The NZAP 2009 Conference in Otautahi | Christchurch became a vital and significant milestone in the history of both Waka Oranga and the NZAP. It was followed by the AGM in which the membership voted yet again for constitutional change, demonstrating that the membership was emphatically in favour of recognising Waka Oranga, an allied Māori organisation, as their bicultural partner. We are in no doubt that the coming together of Paraire Huata and Fakhry Davids along with their well-articulated and full-bodied discussions positively influenced this momentous occasion and outcome. Together Waka Oranga and NZAP have joined the journey together to forge an organisational working relationship where both must be cognisant of past breaches of Te Tiriti. As stated below the signing of the Treaty is both relevant and important today as it was in 1840.

With the signing of the Treaty in 1840, Māori and Pākehā began the long journey towards creating a nation together. Throughout this time, the Treaty has never lost

its importance. And today, perhaps more than ever, it is helping to forge productive working relationships between Māori and other New Zealanders. The journey continues — and it involves everyone living in this country. (Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, 2016)

To conclude, Te Tiriti has been a document of both celebration and controversy with many hotly debated issues concerning breaches arising since its signing in 1840. However, despite many attempts by successive governments to invalidate it and alienate Māori, both through acts of civil war and legislation, (Durie, 1998; Jackson, 2010) it remains an important document. Waka Oranga are working steadily alongside the NZAP and look forward to a long-lasting working relationship that sustains and serves the needs of people well (Hall, 2015).

## Holding (the) Ground in the Face of Obstacles

The 2015 NZAP conference provided group space to hear directly from all those local to Christchurch who wished to share their experience of living through the earthquakes. Themes emerged regarding the impact of the devastation and of the sometimes ineffective efforts to rebuild the city. Systematic differences were noted regarding which suburbs and ethnic groups were prioritised in the rebuild effort. Many issues related to the apparent lack of regard shown for Māori by the earthquake recovery authorities, particularly as the eastern suburbs, where many Māori live, experienced serious damage. Once again, Māori endured discrimination; the unequal distribution of resources throughout the earthquake relief and recovery programme left Māori bearing the greatest burden in unstable and shaky conditions.

Over and over again we experience desperation and shame as our needs are relegated to the bottom of the list. As experiences such as these are internalised and embodied by Māori, repeatedly and chronically, our profession is challenged to think about its response. For psychotherapy in Aotearoa New Zealand to become more relevant and effective in its response to local human suffering, it will have to re-vision appropriate and effective therapeutic responses to Māori suffering. Since 1984, successive governments have passed legislation that has entrenched the impoverishment and suffering of Māori and Pasifika individuals and their whānau. In our country, three generations of children have grown up, or are growing up, in one of the fastest growing impoverished classes in the developed world. Natural disasters amplify this inequity — losses on any scale have a greater negative impact on the most vulnerable in our society. It is vital that psychotherapy expands its reach to include such communities and the community services that are serving them. We must find ways to provide greater support to our colleagues working with vulnerable communities so they can develop more effective responses based on their knowledge of the specific, local conditions under which certain suffering occurs. Through national committees like the NZAP Public Issues Committee we have a vehicle to drive our collective voice. A shift in our professional focus is needed; taking us from the security of private practice to local community health centres which make services accessible to the most disenfranchised groups in our society. Therapeutic practice that is oriented to social justice and the embodiment of equity through therapeutic engagement can produce health and strength

amidst an unpredictably moving and shaking landscape. We are reminded once again of the importance of our relationship with Papatuanuku (mother-earth) and with each other, as the earth shakes, unsettles, and re-shapes our collective realities.

## Conference 2015: A Māori Perspective

So we gathered again in 2015 in Otautahi | Christchurch with colleagues and friends in the warmth of Te Puna Wanaka Marae with all our collective memories of people and places that once stood. The notable absence of Paraire Huata was formally and movingly acknowledged during our first evening together. Paraire was a man who privileged the values of his tūpuna (ancestors) and worked tirelessly and unashamedly to promote and develop what he understood in Te Ao Māori as a secure Māori identity. The loss of a man of Paraire's stature is profoundly felt by all of us but most especially, with grief and aroha, by all Māori.

It was therefore, comfortingly familiar to have Fakhry Davids return for this conference and to have him, again, commit to engaging in a fish-bowl style dialogue, this time with Pele Fa'auli, a Māori man of Ngāpuhi and Samoan descent. Pele has been providing cultural consultation to the Nelson/Te Tau Ihu te Waka a Maui Branch for some years and is held in very high regard for the loving and richly rewarding relationship he has forged with that group. We were provided a great insight into the cultural clashes that can occur between two such men who had been encouraged to commence their dialogue prior to their conference meeting. The assumptions of one regarding the other were starkly revealed with humour and great respect during their conversation. Their differences, of which there were many, and the manner in which they each had to shift positions to gain perspective and deepen understanding, were revealed, especially around assumptions of communication; who initiates, when, how, what occurs in the void of no response, what gets revealed, concealed, missed or mistaken over the distance, what to appropriate, what to "hold" until they are face-to-face and, once they are, how to connect meaningfully within the experience of their now rather difficult differences! Their encounter, taking place at the inter-cultural edge, began with Paraire in 2009 and, now, six years later, Fakhry is with Pele, whose oceanic and loving embrace could melt the most hardened of defences or, as was also revealed, frustrate the most skilled communicators. Fakhry had indeed shifted since his encounter with Paraire — he was known to us, perhaps we to him, and he appeared to have trust in that knowing and revealed himself as a wholesomely familial presence amongst us, feeling like an exotic and eccentric uncle from afar.

Māori relational principles such as *manaakitanga* (deriving from *mana*), the capacity to care for others that is experienced as a privilege and opportunity (Morice, 2003), and *whānaungatanga*, a uniquely Māori relational engagement that seeks connection, fostering a sense of belonging and cohesion with the group (Morice, 2003), gives us insight into Pele's more conscious motivations. Fakhry, on the other hand, was deliberately and unconsciously revealing himself as the older man in the position of learning something new from the younger man, sometimes bemusedly and impatiently, revealing also the whiff of a superior position.

Psychic movement is both necessary for our survival and vital to our wellbeing. Our resilience is testified by our ability to move, fluidly and flexibly, from position to position,

from basic survival at the baseline of Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs to the peak experience at its apex. At every level, in many different social, cultural, and political contexts, is the opportunity to uphold and enact mana, to elevate oneself and others spiritually by means of generosity and mutual respect. Pele and Fakhry's conversation revealed the shifting ground of their inter-cultural exchange, the commitment that each brought to the engagement, the trust that each held in the engagement and finally, importantly, the shared hope that what they were engaged in had a greater purpose. Pele embodied the ancient, nature-based, relationally-specific, ritualistically- and spiritually-grounded, indigenous presence on this land. With him we experienced a strong integration of traditional tikanga and the contemporary context of Māori experience. His presence was soul-full and profoundly loving. Fakhry, on the other hand, embodied the classical psychoanalytic position with roots dating back to the Kleinian child psychotherapy born in the cataclysm of Europe and, specifically, London during the 1940s. Fakhry was strikingly compassionate in his empathic resonance to trauma and psychopathology. Clear and declarative, he nonetheless held an openness to the possibility of something else as yet unknown being revealed and understood. His voice, his physical presence, his demeanour — his *ahua* (overall physical manifestation of a person) was entrancing — both charming and authoritative. Their engagement made much of their differences and provided a focus on difference as a learning opportunity for us all but, significantly, both men communicated their great shared humanity with certainty and grace.

Another shift in the conference was provided by the keynote address of Viv Roberts who recounted, in chronological order, Crown abuses of power over the indigenous people, over Māori land, language, and lore, enshrined and protected, as Māori have always understood them to be, in Te Tiriti. While emotionally harrowing, it was timely to be reminded of the comprehensive betrayals of Te Tiriti o Waitangi by the Crown, then and now. To this present day the uneasy relational journey continues.

As conference participants, we shared in the Māori concept and experience of *wā* — time and space — both within and beyond the conference, allowing us to consider more spaciously our respective cultural, bicultural, and multicultural positions, noticing how, when, with whom, and why we shift positions — reactively, defensively, knowingly, assertively, flexibly, empathically, spiritually — all our complex sets of selves, challenged and affirmed, *kanohi ki te kanohi*, eyeball to eyeball, in the life of our professional community; making sense as best we could of the disruptions and eruptions; seeking to create a space that was lively, rigorous, and robust for the purposes of healing both ourselves and each other in the noble pursuit of psychotherapy. The opportunities afforded us by these presentations and engagements were all ultimately hopeful.

## Legal Statute

*Treaty of Waitangi Act 1975*

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