

# Editorial

*John O'Connor and Wiremu Woodard (Tuhoē)*

Korihi te manu  
Tākiri mai i te ata  
Ka ao, ka ao, ka awatea  
Tihei Mauri Ora!

The bird sings  
The morning has dawned  
The day has broken  
Behold, there is life!

E ngā mana, e ngā reo, e ngā manu tioriori, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou katoa!

This special issue of *Ata: Journal of Psychotherapy Aotearoa New Zealand*, commemorates and celebrates the aroha, wairua, māhi, heart, soul, work, and spirit of Waka Oranga, National Collective of Māori Psychotherapy Practitioners (NCMPP), the New Zealand Association of Psychotherapists (NZAP) Te Tiriti o Waitangi partner, over more than 10 years since the inception of this remarkable waka. It is with great pleasure that we offer this taonga to all those engaged with, or with an interest in, the practice of psychotherapy in Aotearoa New Zealand.

In her book *Tears of Rangi: Experiments across worlds* Anne Salmond (2017) skilfully articulates both Indigenous and European constructions of early encounters between Māori and Non-Māori in Aotearoa New Zealand. For example, in exploring the death of the Māori Chief Ruatara in 1815, she notes,

Convinced that Ruatara's hau was being assailed by atua (powerful ancestors), perhaps those of the Europeans, the tohunga (priest) isolated the young chief from all but his closest relatives and tried to prevent the missionaries from visiting the tapu enclosure. The Europeans, on the other hand, understood Ruatara's affliction to be a "violent cold ... attended with inflammatory symptoms". Accordingly, they visited him, and tried to assist his recovery with gifts of food, drink and medicines. The scene was set for an ontological collision, with Ruatara's life in the balance. Competing cosmology swirled around his sick bed. Ideas of ora and life, mate and death, tapu and the Christian God, atua and Satan, hau and the immortal soul battled it out over his wracked, tormented body (p. 58).

As the above example illustrates, in these earliest of cross-cultural encounters in Aotearoa New Zealand, cosmologies collided, and we would suggest, have collided ever since. Further, European constructions of these encounters have come to dominate the majority of

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written historical texts exploring such events and their meanings, with the consequence that these “histories” have powerfully influenced the subsequent theory and practice of much that influences the practices of health and healing in the contemporary Aotearoa New Zealand context, including and specifically, psychotherapy. As Woodard notes in his 2014 article *Politics, Psychotherapy, and the 1907 Tohunga Suppression Act*,

Tohunga incorporated a dynamic repertoire of healing methods ranging from rongoa Māori (pharmacopeia) to mirimiri (massage), karakia (incantation) and waioroa (water therapy, infusions and heat applications) (Durie 1998: Gillies, Tinarau and Tinarau, 2011). As well as possessing specialised knowledge about remedies and ailments, traditional healers combined physical treatments with ritual interpretation of symbols and signs (such as dreams), prognostication, spirituality and understanding of human interaction including interaction with the environment. Like all medicine and medical practice, these methods and methodologies were embedded within the wider cultural context and drawn from culturally specific epistemologies (DiGiacomo 1987: Gains, 1991: Kleinman 1998). Indigenous methodologies reflect detailed understandings of complex systems, interactions represented through symbolic relationships between the environment and the person/people (Plouffe 2002: Gillies, Tinarau and Tinarau 2011). Simply put, the interconnected realities of our universe and intimate relationships within this universe create a complex system of symbolic understandings of human beings. As Durie observed tohunga function to mediate between the interconnected realities of the patient, families, communities and society (p. 40).

With the passing of the Tohunga Suppression Act came the driving “underground” of indigenous knowledge and perspectives regarding the nature of, and practice in relation to, psyche, the “Māori patient” inevitably positioned as marginalised resisters of this dominance, a theme which runs throughout the life of psychotherapy in Aotearoa New Zealand subsequently. Indeed Mika and Stewart (2016) suggest that the West has a “primal need” ... to control how and when Māori will manifest as this or that, including as a wanting entity... [that the West] has... canonically guessed Māori in advance as either needing or wanting something in particular, or generally being needing and wanting” (p. 305). In this, the colonial gaze on the indigenous other is evident even before contact, constructed as the gaze of the Western Christian colonial power “gazing” on the heathen indigenous other in need of salvation.

However, in recent decades, within many contexts in Aotearoa New Zealand, and certainly within the psychotherapy context, indigenous Māori have challenged us to recognise indigenous wisdom. The publication of this special issue is a manifestation of this challenge; this issue invites all of us as readers to engage deeply with the rich opportunities this challenge offers all who are engaged in the complex art of healing the psyche. Whilst it is tempting to be frightened, and to resort to responses of submission, idealisation, rejection, and bystander denial, the opportunity of this issue, and of the indigenous challenge which our Te Tiriti o Waitangi partner, Waka Oranga, offers us, is to meaningfully engage with the indigenous wisdom the papers in this special issue offer us. In this we are engaging in a

unique and vital experience of psychotherapy, one which many overseas psychotherapy guests have commented on with awe and profound appreciation. So, we invite you the reader, to allow the writing in this special issue to challenge, enrich, and inspire you, as we all continue together to explore the relationship of psychotherapy and indigenous understandings concerning this most sacred of healing arts.

The issue opens with a Mihi from the kaumatua of Waka Oranga, Haare Williams, in which he reflects upon, and invites us to commune with the “amazing Grace” embodied in the members of Waka Oranga and its associates. Hinewirangi Kohu-Morgan, the kuia of Waka Oranga, then offers her mihi, reflecting on the immense gifts of learning that the waka has offered her and so many others, and the challenges ahead as the roopu seeks to “gush forward” into the future.

This is followed by an exquisitely moving piece in which members of the roopu reflect on the enriching opportunities membership in and association with the waka have offered them. The reflections are deeply personal, and a gift to us all.

Alayne Mikahere-Hall, Margaret Poutu Morice and Cherry Pye offer us an overview of the history of Waka Oranga and its development. Embedded within this history is an evocation of the core values and beliefs which inform the mahi of this roopu, including relational principles which arise from Te Ao Māori and which inform an indigenous perspective on psychotherapy.

Alayne Mikahere-Hall then offers us two articles; the first outlines the philosophical and conceptual basis of her current research, in which she explores the urgent challenge to develop services in Aotearoa New Zealand which are informed by Te Ao Māori perspectives that serve the needs of vulnerable indigenous Māori children, and which facilitate emotional security for Māori children and their whānau. This is followed by Alayne's second article (which builds on the first article), this articulating the principles and approach underpinning Tūhono Māori, a qualitative research project led by Alayne, which aims to develop Māori theory that will shape trauma-informed interventions for Māori children and their whānau. Given the contemporary challenges faced by Māori tamariki and their whānau, this research is extremely timely, and we are very pleased to present an overview of this research in this issue.

Anna Fleming and John O'Connor then invite us all to listen in on their ongoing conversation regarding indigenous Māori perspectives on attachment and connection. This conversation takes the form of an interview in which John invites Anna to articulate and build upon the ideas she has previously offered us in recent NZAP publications and presentations. The conversation is stimulating and evocative.

In the next paper Wiremu Woodard and John O'Connor explore ideas originally developed in Wiremu's 2008 dissertation (which John supervised), in which Wiremu considers the consequences of colonisation for the experience of self for indigenous Māori, and the challenges this presents for all psychotherapists working in the Aotearoa New Zealand context. The paper offers a forceful and potentially creative challenge for all who work in psychotherapy in this country.

Tiana Pewhairangi Trego-Hall, Lucy Te Awhitu, Alayne Mikahere-Hall offer a moving exploration in which one of the rangatahi of Waka Oranga, Tiana, describes the gradual depletion of the toheroa (a staple food source for Tiana's whānau for many generations), and

the impacts of this for her and her whānau. Tiana's reflections are moving and painful, as they reveal the symbiotic relationship between indigenous Māori with whenua and moana, and the tragic consequences when cosmologies collide, leaving Māori dispossessed, and psychologically undone. Yet there is much hope in Tiana's writing, as the voice of rangatahi points the way to the future.

John O'Connor and Verity Armstrong offer an overview of Masters' and PhD research undertaken by Māori psychotherapy graduates. This overview provides abstracts of some Masters' and PhD research with a kaupapa Māori focus, undertaken in relation to psychotherapy. It also provides electronic links to the full dissertations and theses, where the research is available electronically. We hope this will provide a very helpful resource for researchers and clinicians alike.

Lastly, and poignantly, Alayne Mikahere-Hall and Waka Oranga offer a moving tribute to Samantha, the daughter of Susan Green and Grant Dillon, who very sadly died in August of this year. The tribute reflects upon the manner in which Samantha so generously embodied meeting across cultures with humility and in a spirit of recognition, reciprocity, and respect. Our love, aroha, and deep respect are with all of Samantha's whānau at this time of immense grief.

At the end of this issue you will find a glossary of Māori kupu (words) which may be helpful in reflecting upon the meanings of different terms. In offering this glossary we are mindful of the impossibilities of conveying meaning across languages. We offer the glossary as an invitation to grapple with these meanings, rather than as definitive translations.

This special issue reflects the mahi of many. It is the most recent manifestation of a deep, complex, and often painful conversation within psychotherapy in Aotearoa New Zealand. As we reflect on the work of bringing this issue to fruition, we are reminded of the experience of standing at the waharoa waiting to meet across the marae ātea, preparing for the powhiri. Traditionally during pōwhiri challenges are uttered, in part to ensure that the manuhiri (visitors) come in peace. As we stand at the waharoa, the karanga (call) from the kaikaranga (caller) acknowledges the dead descendants which come with us, both tangata whenua and manuhiri, the whai kōrero speeches pay respect to all that holds us, the divine, the land, the dead and the living, the earth and sky, mountains and rivers, the natural world that enables our spiritual and physical presence on the land. The hongi which follows enables the sharing of the breath of life, the embrace of the ancestors which come with us and the grief of their presence and absence, the coming together of two groups as one and the possibility that something creative might emerge between us. Marae encounters are an invitation for encounter kanohi ki te kanohi, as we reach across worlds, in search of each other. This special issue offers a similar invitation to all engaged in the sacred art of psychotherapy in Aotearoa New Zealand. The possibility that our shared and separate griefs might be felt together, with the hope that mourning might allow the emergence of something new between us. We hope that, just as marae encounters facilitate a meeting across worlds, so this special issue might enable us to meet each other, to engage meaningfully with each other, and to continue the complex cross-cultural conversation that is psychotherapy in Aotearoa New Zealand.

As we publish this special issue, we sadly acknowledge the departure of Margaret Poutu Morice as a co-editor of *Ata*. Margaret completed her work as a co-editor with the publication of the previous issue of *Ata* in December 2018. Throughout her time as an editor over several

years, Margaret provided heartfelt input and in particular insured that Ata embraced and engaged with psychotherapy informed by Te Ao Māori. Margaret undertook her work with grace, intelligence and compassion. We thank Margaret for her dedicated work and will miss her; tēnā koe Margaret.

In addition, we also farewell Karen Begg, our editorial assistant. Karen has been superb in this role over several years. Not only is her eye for detail remarkable, and her reliability without question, she offered her expertise with generosity, sensitivity, and heartfelt commitment. The quality of the Ata journal owes much to Karen's abilities. Thank you, Karen, for your superb work. We will miss you; tēnā koe Karen.

We thank Hineira Woodard for her generous and expert work providing te reo Māori interpretations of the abstracts; tēnā koe, Hineira. Our deep thanks to our creative, skilful, unfailingly cheerful and always punctual designer Katy Yiakmis; tēnā koe, Katy. Finally, we thank you, the reader (NZAP member or subscriber), for your continuing support of the journal; we hope you will find this issue an evocative, provocative, enjoyable and engaging read, and we look forward to editing the next issue.

*Tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou katoa.*

## References

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