

REBUILDING A “WHARE” BODY OF KNOWLEDGE TO INFORM “A” MĀORI PERSPECTIVE OF HEALTH

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Abstract

The whare tapa whā has been simplistically depicted in New Zealand curricula and in educational literature as a contemporary Māori model of health, as a Māori perspective of health, as a Māori philosophy of hauora and as a four-sided meeting house construct (Durie, 1985; Ministry of Education, 1999, 2007). The whare tapa whā model of hauora is located in an interesting site of tension, working with and against official formations of power and knowledge within the education sector while simultaneously claiming to represent a Māori view. I argue that a whare model of hauora needs to be understood beyond its simplified dominant interpretations within national education policy in New Zealand. I briefly extend the somewhat lifeless four-sided whare discourse by promoting otherwise silenced voices and ways of thinking about a whare and its relationship to human well-being.

Keywords

whare tapa whā, hauora, Māori health, well-being, curriculum, education

Introduction

The inclusion of the whare tapa whā model as a model of Māori health, hauora, in English-medium curricula and the subsequent dominant

discourses within the educational field have simultaneously been liberating and confining for Māori. It is emancipating in that a space has been created for the inclusion of a Māori perspective of health in English-medium curricula,

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yet it is restrictive in that the dominant whare tapa whā discourses sanctioned within English-medium curricula potentially omit many of the ways a “whare” model of health and its contribution to well-being could be known. In the context of this paper, discourse refers to a series or a set of statements and practices that refer to a particular time, place and phenomenon (Markula & Pringle, 2006) and have meaning, force and effect within a social context. Discourses are not linear or continuous, but can be cyclic as “discourse can be both an instrument and an effect of power, but also a hindrance, a stumbling-block, a point of resistance and a starting point for an opposing strategy” (Foucault, 1978, p. 101). As a starting point, I have chosen to utilise some of Foucault’s tools from his toolbox as I draw together ideas in order to briefly deconstruct some of the dominant whare tapa whā discourses in English-medium curricula. Whilst Foucault’s work does not demarcate the potential arguments I make, his work serves to signpost issues as an effective way of speaking about the following critiques I make. As a prelude I invite the reader to reconsider an architectural restoration of existing dominant whare tapa whā discourses, wherein resides the potential to consider “othered” notions of hauora from “a” Māori perspective.

Rummaging through the toolbox

Foucault’s writing about discourse as a “toolbox” was intended for people to find tools “which others can rummage through to find a tool which they can use however they wish in their own area” (Foucault, 1994, p. 523). In this way the writer as well as the reader may feel predisposed to using a “sentence or an idea as a screwdriver or spanner to short-circuit, discredit or smash systems of power” (Foucault, 1975, as cited in Paton & Morris, 1979, p. 115). Furthermore, controversial statements within this paper may be used “as a

hammer” with which to rebuild ways of thinking about a whare, and the contribution it could make to a Māori perspective of health: hauora. Even a piece of writing such as this exercises a form of power in its circulation by building on or rebuilding the ways we know or think about an object, such as a whare and its relationship to being.

There is a dialectical relationship between a whare tapa whā discourse in education supposedly reflecting the practices of given groups, such as Māori health educators, whilst also recognising that discourse has a formative power within groups. On one hand, a whare tapa whā discourse within curricula is shaped and constrained by social structure and on the other hand this same discourse can be socially constitutive. Within the New Zealand education system, curricula and their content are constrained by social relations and systems of classification that draw heavily on Eurocentric views of education and European ways of knowing and being. In this context, in-depth ways of knowing about hauora, such as those implicit within the whare tapa whā model, are marginalised. It seems worthy of attention to consider that if discourse constitutes various dimensions of social structure, then discourses as practices that systemically form the objects of which they speak not only have the power to include the objects worth talking about but also can exclude those discourses deemed untruthful or inappropriate within a dominant discourse. In this way the combining of disciplines and authors’ commentaries constitute a kind of machine in which discursive fields edit out, exclude and condemn anything that doesn’t “fit” within a particular or desirable “discursive formation” (Hall, 1992). This has significance when considering the whare tapa whā as a Māori perspective of health if we also consider the constitutive power of the discourse.

My intention is to briefly extend understandings of a whare tapa whā by contributing a whare discourse as an approach to thinking about “a” Māori world view or perspective.

The world exists through particular discourses or systems of meaning and at the same time the discourse produces the world. So rather than describing what the *whare tapa whā* is, I question how the *whare tapa whā* has come to exist at a particular time and in a particular place, and more importantly why this particular discourse and not an-“other”.

An historical context for a *whare tapa whā*

Retracing through the “archive” of historical conditions that have built a *whare tapa whā* discursive formation in curricula reveals how this discourse came into being and some of the circumstances that have governed what has been said, or not said. Since 1999 the *whare tapa whā* model and its nuances have officially been embedded within English-medium curricula as an underlying concept at the heart of the health and physical education learning area. The *whare tapa whā* model draws exclusively on Mason Durie’s (1985) seminal work “A Māori Perspective of Health”. The *whare tapa whā* model compares health to the four walls of a house, each being necessary to ensure strength and symmetry, “through each representing a different dimension of: *taha wairua* (the spiritual side), *taha hinengaro* (thoughts and feelings), *taha tinana* (the physical side), *taha whānau* (family)” (Durie, 1994, p. 69).

The *whare tapa whā* model was mooted in August 1982 during a training session for the Māori Women’s Welfare League research project Te Rapuora. Each of the key presenters at this gathering discussed points that later contributed to the formation of the four-sided model.

Tupana te Hira, an elder highlighted *wairua* as being “the starting point” to health. Psychiatrist, Henry Bennett spoke about mental illness and mental health, while Dr Jim Hodge of the Medical Research Council

described some of the common disorders such as kidney failure, which affected Māori disproportionately. (Durie, 1994, p. 69)

Erihapeti Murchie, the president of the Māori Women’s Welfare League, talked about the importance of *whānau* for the health of Māori women. Dr Mason Durie, also a psychiatrist, drew these themes together, calling them *taha wairua*, *taha hinengaro*, *taha tinana* and *taha whānau*. The *whare tapa whā* model later appeared in the Rapuora report and thereafter Mason Durie tested the framework with Māori communities in a range of settings (Durie, 1985). Apart from the cultural knowledge implicit within the model, the model was deemed important because it gave Māori a voice within health care services; a Māori world view was endorsed and an ecological approach to health was prescribed (Durie, 2011). Meanings conditioned by discourses and practices, which, although in some instances are not always easy to discern, can be identified through a process of historicity or a compilation of the archive of what has been said, written and recorded within policy and practices.

Nuances of a *whare tapa whā* in curricula

The discursive statements of the *whare tapa whā*, being “a contemporary Māori model of health”, “a Māori perspective of health”, “a Māori philosophy of *hauora*” and a “four-sided meeting house”, were initially made explicit within the English-medium *Health and Physical Education in the New Zealand Curriculum* (HPENZC) (Ministry of Education, 1999). Thereafter within the health and physical learning area of *The New Zealand Curriculum* (Ministry of Education, 2007) only the dimensions of the *whare tapa whā* model, such as *taha wairua*, *taha hinengaro*, *taha tinana* and *taha whānau*, were mentioned, but the *whare tapa whā* model itself was not cited. Under

the guise of “hauora—a Māori perspective of well-being”, the *whare tapa whā* dimensions were identified as one of the underlying and independent concepts at the heart of the health and physical education learning area. The entry into a *whare tapa whā* or Māori perspective of health discourse has drawn heavily on a person’s authority and credibility to speak in a particular field. Mason Durie’s (1985) seminal *whare tapa whā* work continues to hold a privileged position and carries cultural capital within health and physical education curricula. Yet there are commentaries made in his original paper, “A Māori Perspective of Health” (1985), that suggest he may not have intended the model to become “the” Māori perspective of health. Within Durie’s subsequent scholarship, various models of health are discussed (Durie, 2001); however, these have not been considered within English-medium curricula. National curricula policies are not an objective, isolated or ahistorical space; rather, they operate as interchanging points for a multitude of health, social, political and cultural discourses to converge.

The inclusion of “a Māori perspective” such as the *whare tapa whā* in English-medium curricula could be deemed as a strategic and political discursive positioning for Māori. Its inclusion was celebrated as valuing New Zealand’s bicultural heritage in a similar way to how bicultural education and *taha Māori* programmes that promoted “the” Māori dimension or “a” Māori perspective in education valued the learning of two cultures (Hokowhitu, 2001). Yet being bicultural surely assumes equal understanding between, and equal value being given to, both Māori and Pākehā cultural realms. According to Jackson (2009) the labelling of a *taha Māori* perspective in education as “a” or “the” Māori dimension/perspective allowed Māori to get some intellectual purchase on the world, yet labels are never commensurate to the complex processes and human experiences of being in the world. The homogenous labelling of “the” Māori perspective delimits the heterogeneous

pan-tribal identities of Māori, who often are grouped according to *whānau*, *hapū* and *iwi* identities, located in a geographical landscape rather than as a collective national identity. Groupings of *whānau*, *hapū* and *iwi* are also considered as *tangata whenua*, whereby the synergetic and symbiotic relationship of people, land and place are fundamental to well-being. Controversially, the very notion of being “Māori” is an ongoing site of social and political struggle whereby the rights and privileges of Māori as *tangata whenua* and *iwi* within Aotearoa continue to be contested (McIntosh, 2005).

However, existing distinctly, yet within political choice, is a discursive field that constrains what a Māori, *iwi* or *tangata whenua* perspective could be. Commentaries within English-medium curricula continue to circulate, ensuring that the *whare tapa whā* as a Māori model of health and its dimensions exist as legitimate and valid knowledge, yet simultaneously limiting what is purported to be valid knowledge. Māori informants, in their role as *tangata whenua*, were involved in the HPENZC (Ministry of Education, 1999) development and insisted that a *taha whenua* dimension be added to the *whare tapa whā* model, acknowledging the implicit interrelationship of *whenua* as the foundation for a *whare*. Sadly, a *taha whenua* dimension was excluded in the final document. Māori writers had limited authority to have their perspectives acknowledged (Hokowhitu, 2001). The inclusion of *taha whenua* may have been too contentious, considering Treaty of Waitangi land grievances before the state, and the marginalism by the state of the crucial importance of land to Māori well-being (Hokowhitu, 2001).

Ministry of Education officials and principal curriculum writers involved in the HPENZC development, albeit unintentionally, exercised a “juridico-discursive” model of power. A juridico-discursive model of power is possessed, flowing from a centralised, top-down, primarily repressive view, which creates relations such

as oppressed/oppressor, colonised/coloniser and dominant/subordinate. Through legislative functions, dominant views that protected the distribution of power and privilege to certain groups were selected and legitimated. The formation of discursive statements within curricula continues to be a contentious site where power/knowledge and ideas of “truth” struggles are played out. A power/knowledge relationship exists where:

there exists a system of power which blocks, prohibits, and invalidates this discourse and this knowledge, a power not only found in the manifest authority of censorship, but one that profoundly and subtly penetrates an entire societal network. (Foucault, 1977, p. 207)

The dominant discursive formations of the *whare tapa whā* within English-medium curricula have become an institutionalised force that profoundly influences the way individuals think and act when implementing a Māori perspective of health and well-being. As mentioned earlier, this inclusion is both beneficial and disadvantageous—on the one hand a space has been created within English-medium curricula that values a Māori perspective of health, yet on the other, educational commentaries have uncritically adopted the hegemonic discursive statements made about the *whare tapa whā* (Van Meijl, 1993) from some 30 years ago, without necessarily considering whether the commentaries made earlier and the subsequent standardisations are still reflective of the communities it purports to represent.

The blatant exclusion of a *taha whenua* dimension within the model is one rubric that would appear to be particularly difficult to reconcile, but even the mere inclusion of a dimension, such as *taha wairua*, does not necessitate full engagement with the term by curriculum developers or practitioners. The juxtaposition of the dimension *taha wairua* with spiritual well-being opens up a space for interpreting what *wairua* and maybe what spirituality may look like in

curricula, and signalled a shift in New Zealand English to include Māori words to become labels of social inclusion. Yet to ensure that the inclusion of Māori words such as *wairua* is not counterproductive, it seems imperative that the potential distortion of meaning through literal translations and simplified definitions is reconsidered. Including Māori words alongside Western thought somehow needs to ensure that a space is also provided to readdress the essence, depth, epistemological and ontological ways of knowing implicit within the Māori language, a reorientation of heart and mind and an expanding of focus beyond a superficial gaze.

As mentioned earlier, the *whare tapa whā* model represents the four walls of a house and is synonymous with the four dimensions of life. Each dimension is equally important for holistic health, strength, symmetry, integrity and balance (Durie, 1985). The *taha wairua*, the spiritual component, is recognised as “the most basic and essential requirement for health” (Durie, 1985, p. 70), offering a unique contribution to Māori health, yet is often overlooked and difficult to implement within curricula when considering general education is based on a secular rather than a spiritual activity (Besley, 2005). Mason Durie (1985) explains that *taha wairua* lies in the

capacity to have faith and to be able to understand the links between the human situation and the environment. Without a spiritual awareness and a *mauri* (spirit or vitality, sometimes called the life-force) an individual cannot be healthy . . . spiritual well-being also implies a spiritual communion with the environment; land, lakes, mountains . . . (p. 70)

Durie’s earlier description of *wairua* seems to be interpreted simplistically by Ministry officials when considering the Ministry of Education website Health and Physical Education Online, which provides an example of how *taha wairua* can be addressed in sports studies by “seeking personal identity and meaning through meeting

challenges in games and sport” (Ministry of Education, n.d., para. 5). An example such as this may seem somewhat superficial in application, but may delve somewhat into what Eade (2008) argues is central to any understanding of spirituality in that there must be a search in relation to the “big questions” related to meaning of life, identity and purpose (seeking personal identity in the sports context?), and what Hay and Nye (2006) call relational consciousness, sometimes also referred to as connectedness. The idea of searching for one’s identity and meaning may correlate to the connectedness one has in the context of games and sport, and the relational consciousness may be evident in meeting challenges, but it is uncertain how this Internet example delves into deeper understandings of wairua from a Māori perspective. Even the explanation of taha wairua offered by the Ministry of Education (2010) as “the values and beliefs that determine the way people live, the search for meaning and purpose in life, and personal identity and self-awareness” (para. 6) makes little reference to the Māori perspective of this dimension and its relation to a whare tapa whā discourse. At first glance, the ideals of a “spiritual communion with the environment”, a “connectedness” and a “relational consciousness” seem to be minimised, or maybe even subsumed with an individualistic and Eurocentric understanding of spirituality.

Conceptual definitions of spirituality as well as wairua are elusive for many educational practitioners and scholars. Subjugated interpretations or silenced voices that could contribute to whare tapa whā dimensions, such as taha wairua, within the education field need to be unearthed. Scholarship outside of the health and physical education field have described wairua and its various facets from national and tribal perspectives. For example, wairua is defined within *The Māori-Polynesian Comparative Dictionary* (Tregear, 2001) as a spirit; the soul of a human; a shadow; an unsubstantial image; and a reflection. In Best’s (1954) writing on the *Spiritual and Mental Concepts of the Māori*,

the soul is the spiritual part and immortal part in man, the immaterial spirit which inhabits the body, the moral and emotional part of man’s nature, the set of the sentiments or feelings, the animating or essential part, the vital principle. (p. 2)

The soul is often termed as being synonymous with spirit and the terms mauri, manawa ora and wairua often animate these spiritual qualities, or vital principles in man. In Durie’s book *Mauri Ora: The Dynamics of Māori Health* (2001), the importance of mauri and its contribution to a Māori perspective of health was emphasised. In a similar way, in 1998 Vicki-Marie McGaughran, the national administrator for Physical Education New Zealand, wrote a letter to the English-medium curriculum developers arguing that “Mauri was a more appropriate concept to convey the notion of total wellbeing . . . and [we] urge you to consider the construction of the diagram and to embrace the concept of Mauri” (V.-M. McGaughran, personal communication, 1998). These words went unheeded. Foucault discusses the processes of exclusion which operate upon a discourse to limit what can be said and what can be counted as knowledge. There is a proliferation of ways of thinking about taha wairua needs—an array of statements, artefacts and practices which could enrich and elaborate on the place of mauri and a taha wairua dimension within a whare tapa whā discourse.

Examples of iwi and hapū perspectives could also deepen ways of thinking about a taha wairua dimension. Samuel Robinson (2005) and Taare Teone Tikao (1939) allude to “the spiritual parts of man” as wairua, hau and āhua whilst Poua Tare identifies the traditional bodies of man as “four parts as wairua for the soul, hau for the breath part of the soul and ahua for the shadow part; no name was given for the body, which would have been kiko” (as cited in Robinson, 2005, p. 216). It seems timely that subjugated interpretations and silenced voices that could contribute to a whare tapa

whā discourse and its dimensions, such as te taha wairua, resurface within English-medium curricula. Questions and ongoing discussions about the uniqueness of the whare tapa whā as a Māori construct of health need to ensue to divulge buried Māori discourses that could contribute to ways of thinking about a Māori perspective of well-being.

Within a Eurocentric culture it seems difficult to talk about nuances of spiritual well-being as taha wairua and to elaborate on the whare tapa whā discursive formation. I suggest it is simply a discursive and institutional limitation, a rarefaction of discourse as an internal discursive constraint. That is, although the utterances and statements produced by a person are theoretically infinite, they can also be repetitive and remain within certain socially agreed-upon boundaries.

This paper shouldn't be viewed as offering "more alternatives", but rather as "an alternative thinking about alternatives which requires the symbolic amplification of signs, to new constellations of meaning as regards to both the understanding and the transformation of the world" (Santos, 2007, p. 10). It may be timely that tohunga, Māori healers' voices and esoteric knowledge are brought to the forefront and a mediation between the seen and unseen worlds and the many facets that constitute a human's well-being need to be restored.

A restoration of the whare

I advocate a theory of power where power exists when a subject exercises it, when it is mobile rather than held by a subject's positioning (Foucault, 1979). As a Māori scholar I view power of this nature not as repressive but as productive in producing and structuring actions within cultural contexts. To effect, as a subject in this section I exercise my own power and produce "a" Māori, iwi-affiliated person's reality in discussing objects and rituals of "truth". As such, I engage in a process

of re-storying, epistemological and ontological positioning from which "a" Māori perspective of the whare tapa whā can be remodelled, potentially mitigating against the tyranny of a single story. In adopting this position, I exercise my power and view that "truth" and "reality" exist because both the writer and the reader can invoke them. My epistemological positioning is clearly not for all Māori and not always a cultural reality; it does not frame the way all Māori live within taken-for-granted "Māori" realities, yet it provides an example of what I believe is being struggled for within educational policy when considering "a" Māori perspective of hauora.

Analysis of discourses by Foucault reveals they are "neither logical nor linguistic" (2000, p. 11). Rather, discourses are formed organically with assumptions, prejudice and habit, concealed by claims of rationality and objectivity. In this case I suggest that much of the whare tapa whā discourse attained meaning in the Māori language but was informed from a Western view of health for Māori. Sadly, the dominant whare tapa whā discourse has caused a narrowing of vision or focus and has excluded a range of other whare discourses to be engaged in, or to be considered as worthy of attention. The constriction of discourse that I speak of here resonates with Charles Royal's (2005) words:

Texts—and latterly screens—serve to narrow the aroaro. Consider what happens to our bodies when we spend some time either reading texts or sitting in front of a screen. This experience, the physical position, narrows and sharpens the aroaro. The more time and the more often we do this, the more the aroaro becomes fixed in a certain shape and the less "omni-directional" we become. (p. 16)

An example of this narrowing of focus can be considered when examining Charles Royal's (2007) think piece *The Purpose of Education: Perspectives Arising from Mātauranga Māori*.

Royal proposed three traditional models of curriculum design and arrangement, of which one was “the whare model” to be considered for Māori-medium curricula. The whare model was a fluid way of arranging curricula that did not necessarily relate to a physical structure, but activities and pursuits were arranged within each whare—for example, te whare wānanga as a house of higher learning, or whare tapere as a house for games, entertainments, storytelling and dance. Māori curriculum writers discussed alternatives to curriculum design but quickly dismissed a possible whare framework for Māori-medium curricula as the whare tapa whā model had already been incorporated into English-medium curricula.

The whare tapa whā as a health-related discursive field is implicit within the HPENZC (Ministry of Education, 1999) and was considered as legitimate knowledge, but proponents of Māori understandings of the whare as a traditional Māori school of learning were omitted from inclusion. Exclusion maps out what can be said, or what can count as a valid statement or knowledge and therefore be part of a discursive field. Foucault calls this transition a movement towards the “will to truth”, which imposes “on the knowing subject, and in some sense prior to all experience, a certain position, a certain gaze and a certain function” (Foucault, 1981, p. 55). One of the key issues of curriculum theory is primarily a philosophical question of what knowledge is valued—why we should teach it and its worth of what is taught for human life or well-being.

Valued knowledge found within iwi and hapū oral histories makes a conscious articulation of the relationship of a whare to the natural world and human life. In a Ngā Puhi tribal saying the whare is used to symbolise the world and reality in general.

THE HOUSE OF NGĀ PUHI

This is how it is made. The earth is the
floor
The mountains the supports

The sky we see above is the roof
From PUHANGA TOHARA look toward
TE RAMAROA
From TE RAMAROA look toward
WHIRIA
The seat of our war-like prowess
The ancestral line of RAHIRI
From WHIRIA look toward PANGARU to
PAPATA
To the thickly growing trees which extend
to the western sea
From PANGARU and PAPATA toward
MAUNGA-TANIWHA
From MAUNGA-TANIWHA look toward
TOKERAU
From TOKERAU to
RAKAU-MANGAMANGA
From RAKAU-MANGAMANGA to
MANAIA
From MANAIA to TUTU-MOE
From TUTU-MOE to MAUNGANUI
BLUFF
From MAUNGANUI look toward
PUHANGA TOHORA
This is the house of NGĀ PUHI
(Doutre, 1999, pp. 23–24)

The image of a whare strides the tribal landscape of Ngā Puhi. Significant landmarks demarcate the region of the whare, as the mountains equate with the posts that hoist the sky above. This demarcation is also evident in the celestial realm as depicted in Figure 1. Implicit within the Māori language is a spiritual belief system that suggests as it is above, it is below.

Metge (1976) summarises classical and contemporary physical and spiritual realities as being “irrevocably linked in a web of reciprocal relationships in a single cosmic system. Everything that happens in this World of Men is seen as having a spiritual as well as a physical explanation, cosmic, as well as earthly significance” (p. 58).

There is a symbiotic relationship between the body and the landscape, in that a knowledge of place is reducible to a sort of co-existence

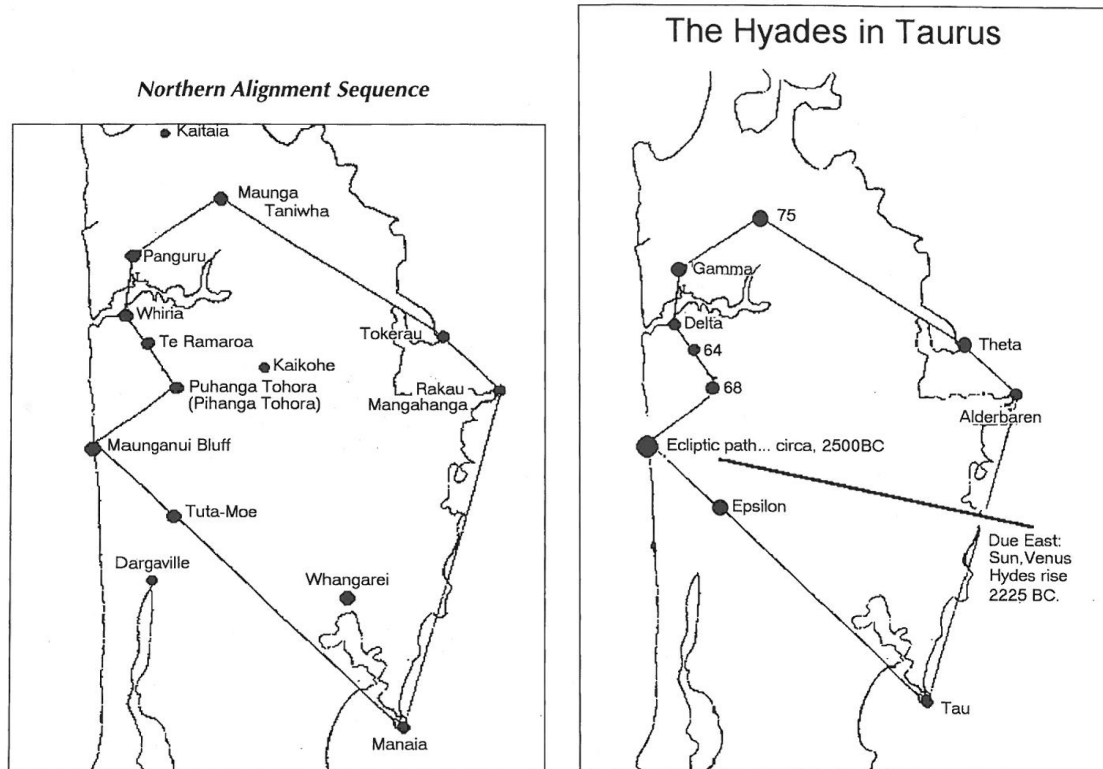


FIGURE 1 Two pictures showing the ground and sky aspects of the Northern Alignment sequence. The images are of the “whare of Ngā Puhī” and the shape of Hyades in Taurus (Doutre, 1999, p. 24, reprinted with permission).

with that place. I suggest a sense of optimal well-being, and the perceptions of one’s body functions optimally within a familiar geographical setting. The symbiotic and synergetic relationships between the person as the “house of man” (*sic*) within a particular environment bring to life a spiritual reconnection that can contribute further to a whare tapa whā discourse. Iwi and hapū ways of knowing could contribute to English-medium curricula ways of understanding the human being and their synergetic relationship to their environment and their being.

The whare construct itself can be viewed as more than a metaphor for health and well-being. The Māori meeting house is an artefact of historical, cultural and social significance (Sissons, 2000). Paradoxically, within educational literature the whare tapa whā simplistically compared to the four walls (ngā tapa whā) of the meeting house as the four dimensions of human well-being omits the laden covert

meanings entrenched within the symbolic and metaphoric representation of a whare (McNeill, 2009). Scholars outside of the education field freely cross-map whare discourses across more than one concept, category, space or domain (Melbourne, 1991; O’Connor, 2007). Metaphors processed in this manner invite us to understand one thing in terms of another, which involves various forms of analogy, personification, representation, symbolism, similarity and comparison in thought. For example, the whare is the personification of a tribal ancestor, the human body (Melbourne, 1991) is representational of the world, and symbolically represents the nuptial embrace of Ranginui and Papa-tūā-nuku (Royal, 2001).

By examining various parts of the whare, philosophical understandings of hauora can be elaborated upon. The dictionary translation of the tāhuhu as “the ridge-pole of a house . . . a line of ancestry; to run in a continuous line” (Tregear, 2001, p. 444) does not necessarily

consider a symbolic representation. The allegorical meaning of the tāhuhu of a whare is immanent when comparing a person’s direct line of ancestry to the tāhuhu or spine of a book and to Te Tāhuhu o te Mātaturanga, the Ministry of Education, as a linkage that binds together components. In each domain the tāhuhu provides a strong and necessary structural support for the whole object or subject. The heke, or ribs that ascend from the tāhuhu, represent the knowledge pertaining to the creation of the cosmos, whilst the pou toko manawa located in the centre of a whare is the heart pole of Māori tradition, indicating an inseparable connection between Māori language and people and their histories (Melbourne, 1991). Through the interpretation of whare metaphors, new ways of understanding the world and individuals’ realities that could contribute to hauora could resurface.

The pou toko manawa within the whare tūpuna signifies both the human heart and the heart of the whare. Prior to the construction of a whare, the mauri of the whare is implanted in the whenua below the pou toko manawa. In a strikingly similar way the mauri of a tangata is implanted into the manawa of a foetus that resides in the whenua, within the whare tangata of a woman. From the whare tangata, we are born into the whare o te ao (Royal, 2008) and become tangata whenua. This cycle is just another example of the symbiotic relationship that human beings share with the natural environment. I suggest there is an urgent need for further cross-cultural and cross-disciplinary dialogue where multiple ways of knowing about the whare and its relationship to human well-being are examined in an educational context.

Contrastingly, Te Oo Mai Reia healing practices do not metaphorically process the whare, but acknowledge that the body of the person *is* a whare tūpuna, an ancestral meeting house with a genealogy (O’Connor, 2007). The torso of the person is the whare tūpuna, the feet are the whare tūpuna’s front door. Through mirimiri or romiromi, Te Oo Mai Reia healers

work on the dis“ease” manifested within the physical body. Just as literacies in the form of whakairo, pou and tukutuku are symbolically encrypted on the architecture of the meeting house, inscribed within the cells of the human body is encrypted “cellular memory”.

Cellular memory is “memory that has built some matter around itself, forming a specific pattern” and that manifests within the “body mind, two things come together—a bit of information and a bit of matter” (Chopra, 1990, p. 87). Cells embody memories and sediments of past and present experiences, which affect and constitute a human’s well-being (Chopra, 1990; O’Connor, 2007). In a similar way, hapū and iwi experiences and phenomena are inscribed within and on a whare tūpuna as pictures of ancestors, carvings and panel weavings, as are the emotions that are deep-seated within the organs. Just as the human body becomes our repository of knowledge—a body of knowledge—the whare is a repository where knowledge is stored and transmitted, and where links with the past are tangible (Melbourne, 1991).

Conclusion

If some of the Māori ways of thinking about a whare and how they could contribute to a Māori perspective of health are taken seriously, then certain questions still need to be asked, such as: What knowledge and stories and metaphors inform our thinking and how do they relate to hauora? What can be said about our locus of an utterance, or a subsequent discourse? What stories or metaphors could provide other possibilities for deepening ways of thinking about a Māori perspective of health, Māori models of health, or hauora in educational policy? Who should decide on the content and form of these redevelopments? How are these discourses different from (or how do they disrupt) previous constructions? And who will benefit from them?

This paper signals an age of curiosity, an

opportunity to highlight some of the epistemological and ontological ways of thinking about a whare, by perpetuating commentaries on the whare tapa whā construct and its subsequent discourses, constructing a new space, wherein resides the potential to deepen understandings of hauora for and with Māori. The reconceptualisation considers whare tapa whā discourses and the place of Māori knowledge and language. Decolonising whare tapa whā discourses by adding a whare discourse requires the different logics of asymmetrical power relations located within so-called Māori–Pākehā binaries to be taken seriously. It involves understanding that culture, especially academic culture, is a terrain of ongoing struggle (Mohanty, 1994) and making a commitment to creating new possibilities. As an initial step towards this potentiality, I invite educators to restore life back into the whare—synonymous with being human—to dwell, not to simply reside and to re-inhabit, not to merely occupy the space.

Glossary

āhua	shadow of the soul
Aotearoa	New Zealand
aroaro	focus
hapū	sub-tribe, pregnant
hau	breath part of the soul
hauora	health, well-being
heke	rafters of a house, ribs
iwi	tribe, bones
kiko	body
manawa	heart
manawa ora	breath of life
mauri	life principle, vital essence
mirimiri	therapeutic massage
Papa-tūā-nuku	Earth mother
pou	post, upright, support
pou toko manawa	centre post
Ranginui	sky father
romiromi	deep tissue massage

taha hinengaro	mental and emotional side/dimension
taha tinana	physical side/dimension
taha wairua	spiritual side/dimension
taha whānau	family dimension
taha whenua	connection to land dimension
taha tāhuhu	dimension, side ridge pole of a house, spine, direct line of ancestors
tangata	person
tangata whenua	people of the land
Te Oo Mai Reia	healing group
tohunga	expert
tukutuku	lattice work
wairua	spirituality, spirit, soul
whakairo	carving
whānau	extended family, to give birth
whare	house, Māori meeting house
whare o te ao	the physical world
whare tangata	house of humanity, womb
whare tapa whā	four-sided meeting house, a Māori model of health: hauora
whare tapere	house of entertainment
whare tūpuna	ancestral house
whenua	land, placenta

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