

# Pepeha



Ko Mataatua te waka  
Ko Mauao te maunga  
Ko Tauranga te moana  
Ko Ngāi te Rangi te iwi  
Ko Ngāi Tukairangi te hapu  
Ko Whareoa te marae  
Ko Ruawahine Puhi te tangata  
Ko Lewis Williams ahau.

# CAPABILITY DEVELOPMENT FOR THE REINDIGENIZATION OF HUMANITY TO MOTHER EARTH.

---

## THE ROLE OF INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES





*Koia tēnei: ko te toroa noho au, e tangi  
ana ki tōna kāinga; e mihi ana  
This is a fact: I live like an albatross, crying out to its  
nesting place  
and greeting you (in sorrow).*

# Anthropocene - Need for Relational shift (Re-Indigenization): 3 Key tenets

1. Capability of being human
2. threatened by the dissonance between our often (fleeting) experiences of an interconnected reality(ontology) and everyday priorities and actions as anchored in and influenced by our everyday contexts and political ecologies (epistemology).
3. The resurgence of Indigenous languages can play a key role in addressing this dissonance between ontology and epistemology.



## Whakauae Research for Māori Health & Development

Transforming  
Māori Lives  
through research



Key Values:  
Rangatiratanga;  
Hauora Tangata &  
Matauranga Maori



He Tomokanga  
Hōu Project





- To Increase social-ecological resilience through Indigenous resurgence and intercultural action
- Intergenerational resilience key
- Ecology of well-being project; Land based learning
- 2019 Year of Indigenous Languages

<http://www.intergenresil.com/>

# Evoking Re-indigenization – what does it mean?

Co-founder of the Bioneers Network Kenny Ausebell as the work to “re-indigenize ourselves to our common home, mother earth” (Ausebel, 2008, p. Xxii).

“learning to live within the requirements of place” (Armstrong, 2015) through becoming ‘of place’ wherein knowledge of how to live (our ethical relationality) derives from an extended sense of ecological family rooted in place (Salmon, 2000).



# Intergenerational Resilience Capability

Ensuring to the best extent possible that future generations have what they need to flourish, and more specifically, to practices which foster connectivity and knowledge transmission between humans (specifically between Elders and youth), and between humans and other species (Williams, Bunda, Claxton and MacKinnon, 2017).

# Three sub-capabilities for Re-indigenization/intergenerational resilience

- 1) The capability of being human;
- 2) The capability for onto-epistemological differentiation; and; and,
- 3) The capability to understand, speak and construct one's worldview through Indigenous languages of place.

Sen's view of human agency as the ability 'to live a life that one has reason to value' (Sen, 1999).

# Neo-colonialism and the unravelling of life

- The economics of extraction
- Unprecedented Human-ecological degradation
- Species extinction and depletion; Displaced humans
- Intergenerational rupture
- Bio-cultural attrition
- KILLER LANGAUGES (Decline in Indigenous languages)
- Epistemic Injustice
- Relational crisis



# Indigenous ontologies: Transformation of our global and social order

- So interconnected on every level - Collective Effort
- Indigenous Life-world view & Western Scientific Materialism
- Digging underneath identity politics and the indigenous-non indigenous binary to issues of ontology and epistemology
- Infusion of Indigenous ontologies throughout institutions – policy and practice (E.g. Maori Health Strategy)
- Role of Indigenous Languages

# Theory

- Break with *Indigenous – non Indigenous binary*
- *Reproduction of culture in place* – embodied and discursive (theories of relational consciousness and post-structuralism); reflexive relationship between embodied experience and cognition
- *Onto-epistemological Rupture*: Divergence or incongruence that can occur between seemingly shared understandings of the nature of being or reality and subsequent action within culturally and socially diverse collectives.

# Examples of Onto-epistemological rupture

## Ecology of Wellbeing Project



- Issues of forced migration, cultural dislocation - Explored mental well-being in relationship to land
- Interview and dialogue groups with 38 I and non I women in A and Can
- Explored MWB and place using Turangawaewae/ place of power
- Experience of Turangawaewae different; anchored in diff political ecologies



For me turangawaewae is having a sense of belonging and having that connection to the land your ancestors walked on and knowing that's where you're from... my ancestors are an important link to my mental health as well because for maori we believe they're always with us. So when you are walking onto a marae for a powhiri, it's not just for you, you've actually got thousands of people behind you in spirit (Ngai te Rangi, woman, Tauranga).

Relationships are very important. they may actually be the essence of wellness for me... .connections to family.....and when I am there (ancestral lands), i absolutely feel when I am there that I am a part of that land... the experiences we have in our dreams (of other than human life) are really important, they help us nurture our relationships with the land and the animals

Back in the islands we grow our fruits and we grow our crops... we get things straight from the land... But like here in New Zealand I am still floating... because you don't own the land you know, you just float around on the surface, you don't have any hard foundations that you own your own land... whereas in Tonga your land is your land... here my sense of belonging is my parish my church, my relationships... my turangawaewae is my mana<sup>35</sup>, it comes from my heart and it makes me who I am (Tongan migrant woman, Aotearoa)



We often view new migrants with suspicion.....[Our] treaty settlement is still not ratified in parliament  
.....yet the expectation is that we should be welcoming to newcomers ..... we haven't learn to do that



Conflicting Priorities 1. strategies and tactics;  
vs understanding own Indigenous roots and finding connection.

# Onto-epistemological differentiation

	Positivism	Transformatist / Critical Postmodern	Participatory	Indigenous
<b>Ontology</b>	Absolute reality, Universal truths	Reality constructed. Power-knowledge, and power-material interests.	Subjective-objective reality, co-created by mind and given cosmos	Physical reality is inter-penetrated by meta-physical (spiritual) reality. Essentialist
<b>Epistemology</b>	Objective, measurable, materialist,	How we see and know the world is an outcome of the above - knowledge & power	Critical subjectivity in participatory transaction with cosmos;	Place-based epistemologies,
<b>Political ecology; cultural alignment</b>	Western, neo-liberalist, Citizenship & economic prod	Identity politics- ethnic minority, women, GLBT2Q	Deep ecologists, environmental ethicists, Eastern philosophers; degrees of State align	Indigenous Communities, separatist & state political alignment
<b>Agency Imperative</b>	Antropocentric, rational unified actor, materialism economic growth, SQuo	Anthro Transformation of human social structure, equitable distribution of power, <b>Citizenship rights</b>	Reciprocal agency within the life world Well-being, flourishing of all life	Human agency – place thought Self-determination; Indigenous resurgence; Decolonization, Guard

# Tauranga Moana context

- Colonization
- Rapid development and environmental degradation
- Disconnect from land and bio-cultural attrition
- continuing loss of te reo Maori amongst Maori
- Power and Policy – Maori Health Strategy- Waioira-Hauora



# The Regenerative Capacity of Language

*Languages with their complex implications for identity, cultural diversity, spirituality, communication and social integration, education and development, are of crucial importance for people and planet. People not only embed in languages their history, traditions, memory, traditional knowledge, unique modes of thinking, meaning and expression, but more importantly they also construct their future through them*



# Indigenous Languages and the reproduction of culture in place

- UNDRIP
- Place of Indigenous languages
- Indigenous languages articulated as a human right for Indigenous Peoples
- Linkages to human sustainability rarely articulated
- E.g. Sustainable Development Goals- SDG 17 “Global Partnership”
- Royal Society of NZ example:



# From Human Right to Ecological Imperative

- The Royal Society of New Zealand

## LANGUAGE IS

- “the primary means of interpreting reality and therefore...basic to cultural evolution and change” (p.2).
- Given the “inextricable relationship between language and evolving social change, language practices will play an important role in emerging national issues.....” (p.2),
- Te Reo Māori in the report is expressed under the guise of the well worn narrative of ‘the endangered status of te reo Māori and its primary significance “as a marker of cultural persistence” that is of critical importance to Māori identity and well-being’ (p. 4-5).



# EXAMPLE TE REO MAORI MARAMATANGA

June to July: PIPIRI (to huddle together)

Sept-October MAHURU (Goddess of Spring – to be quieted/soothed)

Oct – Nov: WHIRING NUKU (beauty of the earth – whiringa – decorative plaiding, nuku widening of the earth)



Dr Lewis Williams, Whakauae Research for Maori Health and Development & the Alliance for Intergenerational Resilience

# EXAMPLE: TE REO MAORI MARAMATANGA





Dr Lewis Williams, Whakauae Research for Maori Health and Development & the Alliance for Intergenerational Resilience

**EXAMPLE:  
TE REO  
MAORI**

**MATARIKI**

# Capability # 1: to be human (Empathic connection and reasonance).



# Capability # 2: Onto-epistemological differentiation

	Positivism	Transformatist Critical Postmodern /	Participatory	Indigenous
<b>Ontology</b>	Absolute reality, Universal truths	Reality constructed.  Power-knowledge, and power-material interests.	Subjective-objective reality, co-created by mind and given cosmos	Physical reality is inter- penetrated by meta- physical (spiritual) reality. Essentialist
<b>Epistemology</b>	Objective, measurable, materialist,	How we see and know the world is an outcome of the above - knowledge & power	Critical subjectivity in participatory transaction with cosmos;	Place-based epistemologies,
<b>Political ecology; cultural alignment</b>	Western, neo-liberalist, Citizenship & economic prod	Identity politics- ethnic minority, women, GLBT2Q	Deep ecologists, environmental ethicists, Eastern philosophers; degrees of State align	Indigenous Communities, separatist & state political alignment
<b>Agency Imperative</b>	Antropocentric, rational unified actor, materialism economic growth, SQuo	Anthro Transformation of human social structure, equitable distribution of power, Citizenship rights	Reciprocal agency within the life world Well-being, flourishing of all life	Human agency – place thought Self- determination; Indigenous resurgence; Decolonization, Guard



# Capability # 3: role of Indigenous languages – e.g. Pepeha, whakatuaki



Dr Lewis Williams, Whakauae Research for Maori Health and Development & the Alliance for Intergenerational Resilience



*Whatungarongaro te tangata toitū whenua*  
*People pass on but the land remains*

# Key References

- Abram, D. (1996). *The spell of the sensuous: Perception and language in a more than human world*. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Awatere, S., Harmsworth, G., and Robb, M. (2017). Mātauranga Māori Māori Knowledge. In Taura, Y, Van Schravendijk-Goodman, C, and Clarkson, B. "*Reo o te tepo – the voice of the wetland. Connections, understanding and learnings for the restoration of our wetlands*". Hamilton, N.Z: Manaaki Whenua – Landcare Research and Waikato Raupatu River Trust, 2017.
- MacKinnon, I., Williams, L. and Waller, A. (2018). The re-indigenization of humanity to Mother Earth: a learning platform for cultivating social-ecological resilience to challenge the Anthropocene. *Journal of Sustainability Education*, <http://www.susted.com/wordpress/content/2018/01/>
- Maffi, L. (2002). Endangered languages, endangered knowledge. *International Social Science Journal*, 173 (3), 385-393.
- Stewart-Harawira, M. (2005). *The new imperial order. Indigenous response to globalization*. Wellington: Huia Publishers.
- Williams, L. (2018). Transformative sustainability education and empowerment practice on Indigenous lands: Part One. *Journal of Transformative Education*. Online First. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1541344618789363>