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Toku toa, he toa rangatira (My courage is inherited)

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Abstract *Primarily relying on critical Kaupapa Māori analysis and comparing the existing and prospective fields of knowledge, this article considers the potential of Indigenous research as a collective of holistic research strategies. It underlines some of the challenges associated with implementing Indigenous knowledge and diverting from disciplinary norms. This is in our ideation, approach to succession planning, and the ways we conduct abstract reviewing and the formal examination of people's work.*

Keywords *Courage, screens, discipline, Kaupapa Māori, Indigenous*

Toku toa, he toa rangatira (Minha coragem é herdada)

Resumo Baseando-se principalmente na análise crítica Kaupapa Māori e comparando os campos de conhecimento existentes e futuros, este artigo considera o potencial da pesquisa indígena como um coletivo de estratégias de pesquisa holística. Ele destaca alguns dos desafios associados à implementação do conhecimento indígena e ao desvio das normas disciplinares. Isso está em nossa concepção, abordagem ao planejamento de sucessão e as maneiras como conduzimos a revisão abstrata e o exame formal do trabalho das pessoas.

Palavras chave Coragem, telas, disciplina, Kaupapa Māori, Indígena

Toku toa, he toa rangatira (Mi coraje es heredado)

Resumen Basándose principalmente en el análisis crítico de Kaupapa Māori y comparando los campos de conocimiento existentes y futuros, este artículo considera el potencial de la investigación indígena como un colectivo de estrategias de investigación holísticas. Subraya algunos de los desafíos asociados con la implementación del conocimiento indígena y el desvío de las normas disciplinarias. Esto se encuentra en nuestra ideación, enfoque para la planificación de la sucesión y las formas en que llevamos a cabo la revisión abstracta y el examen formal del trabajo de las personas.

Palabras clave Coraje, pantallas, disciplina, Kaupapa Māori, Indígena

Introduction

Toku pepeha mai i te taha o toku Koroua;
Ko Mātaatua te waka;
Ko Putaūaki te maunga;
Ko Te Orīni te awa,
Ko Ngāti Awa te iwi.
Ko Ngāi Taiwhakāea te hapū,
Ko Taiwhakāea te whare tipuna,
Ko Te Pāroa te marae, me taku tūrangawaewae,
Ko Whakatāne te rohe,
Ko Wairaka te wahine.

Toku pepeha mai i te taha o toku Kuia,
Ko Mātaatua te waka anō;
Ko Pouerua te maunga;
Ko Waitangi te awa;
Ko Ngāpuhinuitonu te iwi matua,
Ko Ngāti Kawa te hapū me te whare tupuna hoki,
Ko Oromāhoe te marae, me te papakāinga ki te nōta,
Ko Taiāmai me Pewhairangi ngā takiwa,
Ko Rāhiri te tangata.

Nō Pāroa au.

Ko Jani Katarina Taituha Wilson toku ingoa.

Tēnā koutou katoa.

My tribal saying on my grandfather's side;
Mataatua is the canoe
Putauaki is the mountain,
Te Orīni is the river,
Ngāti Awa is the tribe.
Ngāi Taiwhakāea is the clan,
Taiwhakāea is the ancestral house,
Te Pāroa is the traditional residence, and my standing place.
Whakatāne is the district,
Wairaka is the woman.

My tribal saying on my grandmother's side;
Mātaatua is the canoe,
Pouerua is the mountain,
Waitangi is the river;
The continuously growing Ngā Puhi is the tribe.
Ngāti Kawa is the clan and also the ancestral house.
Oromāhoe is the traditional residence, and home in the north,
Bay of Islands is the province,
Rāhiri is the man.

I hail from Pāroa.

My name is Jani Wilson

Greetings to everyone.

Wairaka – the context

A well-known whakataukī (aphorism, proverb) tells us toku toa, he toa rangatira, quite literally 'my courage is inherited'. Wairaka is known as an impressive young woman who, in the face of a life-or-death situation, stood up to adversity to supersede an important, long held tikanga Māori (protocol) to save the Ngāti Awa iwi (tribe). She is my whāea tipuna (ancestress) and because of her bravery, I like to carry her with me in my academic career as a Māori screen studies scholar.

Ensuring academic disciplines endure and are relevant throughout the generations requires consistently robust research, dynamic teaching, and leadership; but challenging academia with Indigenous knowledge goes beyond this. As Indigenous academic scholars, we must commit to satiating the academy with our research and teaching to appeal to the discipline's status quo whilst at the same time upholding the cultural values, expectations and ideals of our communities, those to whom we return once research projects have been completed. Therefore, Indigenous research is never truly over.

The marriage between the discipline and our respective cultures however is never straightforward. Indigenous scholarship takes a much greater level of fearlessness because we must combat potential exclusion from the discipline that we are carving the outlines of our culture into whilst also trying to belong to it. Thus, we must choose to either blend into the grooves of the existing disciplinary carvings, or to accept that we are a new adze. This is often met with obstructions.

Primarily relying on critical Kaupapa Māori analysis and comparing the existing and prospective fields of knowledge, this article considers the potential of Indigenous research as a collective of holistic research strategies. It underlines some of the challenges associated with implementing Indigenous knowledge and diverting from disciplinary norms. This is in our ideation, approach to succession planning, and the ways we conduct abstract reviewing and the formal examination of people's work.

In the way that our whāea tipuna Wairaka did, we can challenge the long held tikanga - the rules and strictures - that have sustained and satiated our disciplines for generations, to evolve our disciplines into the Indigenous lead academic future.

Like Wairaka, and many of your brave ancestors before you, we must be prepared to stand alone, and to be courageous as per our inheritance.

Anchored with the women and children on the Mātaatua waka (canoe) in choppy seas in the Kākahōroa bay, Wairaka had to be incredibly brave; by handling a paddle, she defied tikanga (correct cultural practices/procedures) which at the time was part of the male domain, to save the others onboard from drowning. Over my twenty plus years in the academic system, I - like a good proportion of Indigenous researchers before me - have had to consistently exercise courage in various forms, and have more often than not had to draw on the strength of Wairaka to help me navigate myself forward in my research.

This article is most unlike those written in this series by my colleagues and friends. When I was asked to consider writing an article about design, I thought "What?! Design??!!" Aside from four doctorates I've supervised in design, what do I actually know about design and what could I proffer that would be useful in the design context? And how might I involve Wairaka and her courage in a meaningful discussion about design?

Then it came to me: how might we design the way forward into an Indigenous-lead academic future.

Like the majority of Indigenous scholars, I chose to progress through a conventional academic discipline that does not acknowledge Indigenous philosophies, knowledge or values. My specialisation is screen studies, but the majority of my conventional training was in film studies. Film itself reaches back to the 1890s, and although there were film schools in the 1910s, the study of it didn't materialise until much later. In terms of its tenure, film studies is still young. Even so, implementing Indigenous perspectives, values and concepts into it has taken two decades, many knock backs, and sheer determination. However, being one of only a few Māori in the world specialising in the discipline certainly helped.

Screens, how and why they are manufactured, and what materials are produced to be shown on them is ever-evolving. In their various iterations, screens are omnipresent in a high proportion of our lives; they serve many purposes: socialising, communicating and relaxing; they inform and educate us and are part of our work; they are leisure and within seconds can transform our pleasure to anger on repeat; we watch them, we permit

people to watch us on them, as we build wanted and unwanted audiences. Screens can be awkward. Not too long ago, screens were clunky, heavy, and stationary; either in theatres, gaming parlours or in the corner of the sitting room where the furniture was arranged in direct relation to where the screen was positioned. But now we have screens in cars, on planes, buses, they are jumbo billboards at the traffic lights, and at sports fixtures, festivals and competitions; we carry screens in our pockets, and we use them to schedule our lives on and around. Truthfully and disturbingly, screens are pervasive. They are not going anywhere. Studying what and who is on them, how, when and why we watch them is increasingly significant in this technological age.

At the same time, despite some attempts to make it not so, Indigenous people are also not going anywhere. For the most part, screens serve Indigenous people by showing our histories, the vitality, dynamism, movement, the colours of our cultures, and of our skins. They proffer useful and throwaway knowledge to our rangatahi (youth) and taiohi (pre-adolescents) and build actively 'informed' citizens who have a universe of information at their fingertips at any time. However, there is also the damaging side of how Indigenous peoples are portrayed, the poor health and education outcomes, poverty, mental illness, suicide, violence and other criminal statistics that ultimately keep us far outside the mainstream and 'in our place'. Mass media, which in the digital age hinges on screens as a central apparatus, reinforces power and its opposite, by exposing, repeating and archiving these into a history that we can either feel proud of or extreme whakamā (ashamedness, inferiority).

Readers will see that the largely personal academic narrative that follows exemplifies that drawing on Wairaka's courage is essentially a daily necessity for an Indigenous academic, and indeed for this Māori screen scholar. Indigenous scholarship requires fearlessness, and fortunately, we inherit courage.

Toward an Indigenous-lead Film and Screen Studies

After a series of taught papers about 'film theory,' 'popular culture' and 'pornography' it was a relief to sink my teeth into something I cared about, which was my Master's thesis, *The Cinematic Economy of Cliff Curtis*¹. Primarily focused on Curtis as the vehicle, the thesis explored the influence of European art historical depictions, the construction of Māori representations 'worth remembering'², and the importance of the Victorian romance structure on early New Zealand films³. The historical overview continued through to the various factors attributed to ten of Curtis' cinematic performances, five Māori and five non-Māori. Curtis (Ngāti Hauiti, Te Arawa) is an immensely versatile - and the most successful - Māori and multi-ethnic character actor, starring in films such as *Desperate Remedies*⁴, *River Queen*⁵, through to *Three Kings*⁶, and *Training Day*⁷. Most important-

ly, *The Cinematic Economy of Cliff Curtis* underlined the need for Māori to examine portrayals of cinematised Māori as a means of moving future cinematic portrayals into a film/screen history we can be proud of, and not simply remain ‘Scary Black Bastards’⁸. My doctoral research explored this further.

During undergraduate film, television and media studies, we were taught that media productions hinge on understanding production, reception and text⁹. In brief, production is about the fundamental aspects that together lead to getting something broadcasted or screened, or the processes involved in constructing the messages; reception is how the intended messages are perceived by the audience for whom the messages are primarily composed; and the text is what is screened/broadcasted and how the messages may be interpreted¹⁰. Similarly, film studies pivots on some hefty continental theory (mostly psychology and philosophy), audience and history. Māori educationalist Kathie Irwin¹¹ said, “we don’t need anyone else developing tools which will help us... real power lies with those who design the tools”¹². Inspired by this, the purpose of Whiripapa¹³ was to design familiar tools for Māori film students to delve deeper into the discipline. Whiripapa, the doctoral thesis, explored these conventional film studies concepts, but they were reframed to centre on mātauranga Māori equivalents, namely tāniko (traditional fine-finger weaving) as a kind of theory with a beautiful, tangible end, whānau (family and extended family) as film audiences, and kōrero (talk, narrative) as history. The tools, terms, and concepts developed are likely unfamiliar to non-Māori, but why can’t academic tools that Māori are able to champion be designed to suit our knowledge base and skillsets? Why must everything considered academic be designed in faraway lands and the cultures and philosophies of others? It made sense, empowered by Irwin, to develop tools for us.

Theory

When considering a theoretical framework, tāniko one of our ancient and unique arts¹⁴, presented itself as a viable equivalent. Te Ao Māori comprises theories that are palpably demonstrated in all of our traditional arts, in our whakairo (carving), raranga (weaving) and tukutuku (lattice patterns), and is the heart of all of our many forms of waiata. Every artistic representation tells a story that emanates from the oral traditions; history, theory and practice are essentially brought together through the arts.

Audience

For the audience study, hapū are interrelated whānau (families) who traditionally would reside together on papakāinga (home village); wānanga (intensive learning of traditional skills and knowledge) were conducted within the hapū where people of all ages would learn amongst each other. Directing whānau as a hapū-centric viewing audience therefore be-

came a feasible counterpart, and an opportunity for the hapū to express their distinct views about cinematic characterisations constructed supposedly to reflect them on the screen. I based four hunga mātakitaki (viewing groups) in my two predominant tribal areas in the Bay of Islands (Ngāti Kawa) and in the Eastern Bay of Plenty (Ngāi Taiwhakāea), and members of both of my hapū responded to a selection of Māori-centred film screenings.

History

And lastly, a well-known whakataukī (proverb, aphorism) says “ko te kai a ngā rangatira, he kōrero” (the food of chiefs is oratory), as it is believed that the true mark of leadership isn’t what goes into one’s mouth, but what comes out of it. Although there was data available in relation to how many people were going to cinemas throughout history, there was no information about what proportion of Māori there were in the audiences. Essentially, this gave way to an opportunity to produce an oral history. Kōrero, in the sense that our culture is orally transmitted, is a mātauranga Māori equivalent on which I could build an appropriate history, shaped by the views and voices of the whānau. How my hapū responded to the films became the historical thread in the research.

Ultimately, the involvement of whānau is the credibility Whiri-papa needed. Many Indigenous scholars are part of something bigger than themselves.

Kaupapa Māori contributions

Māori have provided unquestionably significant images throughout New Zealand film history ever since screen production ventured to Aotearoa over a century ago. Furthermore, according to the New Zealand Film Commission’s website (2019), half of New Zealand’s Top Twenty Films of all-time are Māori-centred narratives, and a good proportion of many of the most recent ones also have Māori in their creative teams. The study of Māori-centred film, and why they are significant, should then be encouraged and valued.

Māori stalwarts Rose Pere¹⁵, Graham Hingangaroa Smith¹⁶, Linda Tuhiwai Smith¹⁷, Ella Henry¹⁸, and Leonie Pihama¹⁹ have amongst various others developed Kaupapa Māori, a kind of framework that follows simple, Māori-centric values useful also in the academic space. Linda Smith’s²⁰ seminal text *Decolonizing Methodologies* lists guidelines for community researchers, essentially the ideal and/or expected behaviours by all Māori, are particularly salient for screen producers whose aim is ultimately to build loyal, skilled crews of creatives, and to inspire the best work from each person. These crucial values are:

- Aroha ki te tangata (a respect for people).
- Kanohi kitea (present yourself to people face to face).
- Titiro, whakarongo... kōrero (look, listen... speak).
- Manaaki ki te tangata (share and be generous hosts).
- Kia tupato (be cautious).
- Kaua e takahia te mana o te tangata (don't trample on people's honour).
- Kaua e mahaki (don't flaunt yourself)²¹.

Smith explains further that exercising these directives, that are common throughout Māori society, literally exposes quickly whether someone is a good person or not. Directly emanating from Smith's research values, Henry and Wikaire composed *The Brown Book*²² which encourage the Kaupapa Māori principles to be transferred into the screen production industry, and are equally relevant in Māori Media classrooms. These recommend that Māori screen productions are ideally:

- By, with, and for Māori (unless Māori decide otherwise);
- Empowering for Māori;
- Validating Māori language and culture; and
- Delivers positive outcomes for Māori people, language, culture and society.²³

Although the principles or values appear simple, their use would force a paradigmatic change in how/what Māori stories are screened, the lens through which Māori are portrayed, and how Māori productions are produced. There is a long way to go until we are in a position to say the principles are embedded into Māori screen production. However, at the time of writing, our Māori Media students continue to be taught and empowered by the values in classes, and on their student production sets.

Researching for my students

Succession is part of Indigenous research. My research interests predominantly reside in three spheres. First, the ongoing examination of Māori in New Zealand feature film, and more recently, across screen studies. Integrating mātauranga Māori (Māori knowledge) is pivotal to this, particularly where portrayals of Māori on screen are concerned. Recalling some of the unpublished materials from my doctoral research for example, my Ngāi Taiwhakāea hapū (subtribe) responded to the short film *Kerosene Creek*²⁴ and were uncomfortable the treatment of the whareniui as a film set and manufacturing aspects of tangi (funeral rituals) for an audience. Culturally, the discussion - which didn't make the final cut of the thesis

- demonstrated how fundamental mātauranga Māori concepts can be utilised as robust tools of critical analysis. Moreover, how each iwi, hapū and whānau are likely to have distinct readings on key aspects of film according to the tikanga and kawa they were raised within.²⁵ Ngāi Taiwhakāea views for instance may starkly diverge from that of the Ngāti Rangitihi people who hosted the film's production, and to whom the filmmaker Bennett connects. Developing distinct hapū close reading/critical analyses in such a way aims to empower Māori screen scholars to read each film through their diverse worldviews²⁶, and is beyond my work because my views are coloured by the tikanga and kawa of my hapū which affects how I see what is on the screen. But as a Māori film/screen scholar, one of very few in the world at the moment, I am comfortable with not knowing beyond my own affiliations. This means other scholars can bring their connections into the discussion, too. Such whānau, hapū or iwi-based screen analysis is far more robust than close reading through production analysis or reception theory, because we must demonstrate we can utilise both sets of foci; the Western and the Indigenous. The potential of such analyses ventures beyond the existing discipline's paradigm.

My second research interest is motivated by my life time love of kapa haka (Māori Performing Arts). Since the advent of Māori Television (2004 -), how it is/has been produced for screens has advanced exponentially, and thus this research centres on the ongoing evolution of screened kapa haka from black and white showings of Te Hokowhitu a Tū (The Māori Battalion) through until now. A conversation between myself and two nieces fashioned the idea. In the week leading to a kapa haka competition our haka team was performing in, they asked if I was getting fake eye-lashes and a fake tan before we went to stage. I wondered how eye-lashes and tan could help my performance, and soon came to realise that the purpose was not how I performed, but how I looked when I performed for the screen. Further, as a kapa haka coach, I tell performers to hold their last move in each item because they might get a close-up. Among other things, I ask for more gnashing of the teeth, more pukana (eye dilation), bigger actions, straighter wrists, and more pronounced wiri (shaking of the hands) and chins up without looking down the nose, because the camera will catch you out if you're out of synch or if you look whakahīhī (arrogant, smug). And as a waiata composer, once I've managed to write a hook, I sometimes visualise the actions and choreography and how it might look on screen before I write the words, rather than simply concentrate on the central message, which is how I used to write.

How the world of kapa haka has changed.

The changes in approach may seem trivial, however on realising the paradigmatic changes to my own appearance, the way I coach, and the way I compose within my beloved performance art, the small modifications made me question myself about the lengths I would go to in favour of what kapa haka production looks like on screen. The focus of this research then concentrates on the impacts of screen production on the art itself; on the performances, performers and competition rules that have positively influenced kapa haka, and the not so. The research will explore when, how and why certain changes in kapa haka materialised, and the various pressures associated with screened kapa haka production²⁷. The potential project encourages kaihaka to pursue what they love and are good at to the highest academic level, and to transition their practice into research. If more kapa haka practitioners progressed to post-graduate study they will be in a position to contest existing writings about kapa haka, largely by non-performer academics. These practitioners will marry together cultural practice and academic theory, beyond the predominantly observational analysis. In this, the innovative creative practice of kaihaka can contribute to advancing kapa haka research and production, and meanwhile the development of research skills will feed back into our cherished art.

My third research interest is exploring the building blocks of Indigenous academic excellence in tertiary education, a kind of hang-over from the travesty of having lost my MAPI colleagues from the University system. The doctoral journey in particular is incredibly isolating, but as Indigenous scholars pursuing a qualification in a Western education system, it is even more so. Therefore, we must do all we can to ensure that these students have the necessary tools and encouragement to complete their studies to the highest quality, to leave a legacy, and to create space for those coming behind them, creating a kind of academic whakapapa (genealogy) that ensures resolute succession plans are in place for when we are gone and they remain.

Fostering Indigenous academic excellence and leadership has taken much effort beyond the job and political wrangling, particularly in my years as an early career academic finding her way. Alongside my own courage, this requires our students to be equally brave. Since the end of 2017, I've lead MAI-ki-Aronui, the AUT arm of the Ngā Pae o te Māramatanga initiative, MAI (Māori and Indigenous), set up to offer support to Māori and Indigenous doctoral students and potential doctoral students. MAI-ki-Aronui is, to be frank, an unapologetically kaupapa Māori-based cluster of Indigenous people who could be considered disciplinary 'misfits,' many of whom are one of the first - if not, the first - in their chosen specialisation to utilise their Indigenous cultural values to conduct and approach their doctoral research. The 'Old Girls/Guys' (MAI-ki-AUT graduates) and I give ear, space and advice throughout the challenging doctorate, and to celebrate every gain together as a whānau. This reciprocal practice fosters good rela-

tionships between students, and builds leadership in those who completed their doctorate with the support of MAI. Each graduate becomes a tuākana (experienced, older sibling) doctoral mentors, and the cycle continues. The network meets regularly to support each other, to tackle the doctorate as an iwi (tribe). There, we also exercise manaakitanga (kindness, generosity, showing respect), whanaungatanga (building and maintaining relationships) and kotahitanga (unity); we are often heard practicing our many waiata (songs) and haka, Mangarevan ditties, and a Samoan pese (song). Engaging in singing as a group is both therapeutic and confidence building; doctoral students who were once meek and unsure of themselves now stand securely amongst their doctoral peers and in pressure situations. Kapa haka may be uncomfortable for many, but indeed, so is academia. We need courage in both.

Challenges

Transdisciplinarity is by no means easy; Indigenous scholars often straddle both a discipline and a community. The Indigenous researcher is essentially the negotiating conduit, who must make every effort to ensure both parties are satisfied with how they are framed. An unquestionable challenge is when the discipline and community are in disagreement or misunderstand each other. Here, the researcher must present themselves as an envoy within both, which can be a distressing situation. For instance, presenting one's self to the whānau for the first time in a professional capacity can be tricky and has added pressures²⁸ because although you are a relation to the participants, you want something from them. When witnessing you in your role as a researcher, they are likely hoping your conditioning and commitment as kin is far more devout than 'writing a book' or 'getting a degree'. Here, Linda Tuhiwai Smith's²⁹ previously mentioned ethical research protocols are important. Smith says when you are presenting yourself as a researcher, the participants are considering whether or not you are a 'good' person³⁰. It is even more important to present one's self with humility when it is your own whānau; to be reliable, to stay consistently involved with whānau events (birthdays, funerals, unveilings and such) and to keep yourself accountable with goings on in the project so that they don't feel used or exploited³¹. Our communities are key to the research, and because the relationship with them continues beyond the project, they must be cherished and protected above all else. This is a major distinction between Indigenous research and non-Indigenous; when one project ends non-Indigenous researchers can simply move to the next, whereas Indigenous researchers are likely to have to front up to that community, sometimes frequently, long after the project has closed off and been reported on. In this respect, Indigenous researchers simply don't have the luxury of walking away.

Beyond the challenge of straddling roles as an Indigenous researcher and an Indigenous community person, as mentioned there can also be complications between academia and the community. For example, during my doctoral research, I presented *The Seekers*³² in our *whare tupuna* (ancestral house) to 11 of my Northern *whānau* as the final film on the agenda of our two-day screening *wānanga*. As I had for all of the preceding films, once the credits began rolling, I readied myself to take notes and record the dialogue. However, as the film was one of the less-than-savoury portrayals of Māori, the *whānau* didn't want to respond, and rather than discuss what they really thought, they performed it: without saying a word, they immediately began tidying the *whare* (house) and readied it for the next meeting. In the following days, I headed back to University and confessed to my supervisor about the silent response to *The Seekers*. She pitied that there was 'no data' proffered about this very controversial film. But having done preliminary research about silent responses, I discovered that the exploration of non-verbal or gestural reactions to film was minimal, and decided I would reframe the silent reaction to *The Seekers* as a political response through which I could then explore possible reasons as to why. Most significantly, I wanted to support the right of my *hapū* to articulate their *mana motuhake* (self-determination) how they wanted. Even so, it could have appeared that I was defying the discipline.

The most important elements within this, was that silence was acknowledged as a valid response, and the *tino rangatiratanga* (sovereignty) of the *hapū* was sustained rather than simply binned as 'non-data'. Herein lies the misunderstanding between film studies which saw the reaction as a non-response, and *te ao Māori* which pivots on not trampling on people's *mana*, to be generous, to show respect, to listen and not speak too soon, and all of the temperaments Smith touched on in her community research protocols, which quite simply all reflect common decency. Indigenous researchers who do Indigenous research consistently traverse tight ropes: research versus relationships, and career versus relations, both of which are knotty, and neither of which are appealing. *Whānau* relationships are, quite simply, everything.

Hā ki roto, hā ki waho

A last challenge, which I don't have space to delve into too deeply, and at the same time don't want to skirt around, is to address the issue of *terri33torialism* by Indigenous academics in power; this could be for example within institutional senior management or equally those who review early career Indigenous scholarly publications. Here I want to briefly focus on the latter. One major component of the academic's job is to successfully publish their research, and many Indigenous scholars have had poor review experiences by unkind non-Indigenous and – more staggeringly –

Indigenous reviewers, likely a practice in disciplinary patch protection and/or to remind the ‘newbie’ they are only ‘baby academics’. As Māori academics, a major point of difference is that we are obligated to build Māori capacity in our institutions, research, and communities through manaakitanga. The root of manaakitanga is to urge another person forward by showing generosity, regardless of who they are or how we feel about them. Although their mana is upheld as the ‘guest’, the ‘newbie’ or ‘the baby academic’, those who perform this important value also receive mana as the ‘host’ or ‘the experienced academic’. In short, manaakitanga isn’t so if it’s reserved only for people whom one likes, and if you show no mana, in return you don’t receive any.

A number of my early career Māori and Indigenous colleagues – and I too, experienced this as a new researcher – have been subjected to negative and sometimes underhand, personal responses to draft publications by respected senior Māori scholars. This is a very complex situation which counters manaakitanga. With this in mind, in response to the anxieties of some of our MAI-ki-Aronui whānau, some of whom have encountered these behaviours, I share here a simple scaffolding which I use in reviewing and indeed encourage our members to utilise as a system that I’ve called ‘Reviewing with Manaakitanga’.

1. Acknowledge the work and their courage - kia māia, be brave;
2. Underline the work’s strengths - kia kaha, be strong;
3. Highlight ‘developable’ elements (the weaknesses) - haere tonu, keep going;
4. Guide a way forward - āwhinahia, assistance; and
5. Commend them and wish them the best - whakamanawatia, honour.

By utilising such a scaffolding, even if the commentary it garners is accompanied by a ‘rejection’, it aims to aid in the development of the researcher and the publication, and perhaps a successful submission in the future. Arguably, it does require a little bit of thoughtfulness and effort, however this could be a key practice to fostering an Indigenous academic future we aspire to be a part of. Academia does not need to remain the same, and Indigenous scholars are key to developing it into what it could be.

To sum

I asked how might we design the way forward into an Indigenous-lead academic future. Retrospectively looking over this article for the last time prior to submission, to sum it up, I proffer these thoughts. By designing Indigenous academic tools, experimenting and sometimes failing; by creative solution finding in the ways our mātua tīpuna found their way

to Aotearoa from Hawaikī; by including the work of inspirational and aspirational Indigenous academics who may be in other disciplines, but who are without fail, brave; by including and staying committed to our whānau and hapū; by researching for our students rather than ourselves; by confronting challenges with the truth and simple leadership; by accepting that succession is part of our academic duty; by giving nothing to territorialism and offering manaakitanga in return.

But most of all, Indigenous scholars must be fearless to achieve the Indigenous-lead academic future we aspire to. And we inherited the necessary courage from our tīpuna.

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