



Whaia te iti kahurangi

Relationships of Promise



Presentation to 21st Reconceptualising Early Childhood Education Conference, Kenyatta University: Re-claiming the Indigenous Child, Family and Community; Pedagogies of Place Nairobi, Kenya, Nov 3-7, 2013
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Crisis

- The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (2013) has confirmed that our planet Earth is facing an urgent climate crisis.
- As waves of industrialisation/colonisation/globalised corporate capitalism have engulfed more and more of the Earth/Papatūānuku, there is an ongoing devastating loss of both linguistic/cultural- and bio-diversities.
- This calls us to account both as citizens of the planet and as educators to consider what our responses might be in the face of such overwhelming matters of concern. Indigenous onto-epistemologies have maintained a close relationality with the Earth and fellow co-habitants.
- This talk will draw upon my recent writing, and on work from our Teaching and Learning Research Initiative project *Titiro Whakamuri, Hoki Whakamua*: We are the future, the present and the past: caring for self, others and the environment in early years' teaching and learning.
- Pedagogies of care and affect, which resonate te ao Māori conceptualisations of inter-connectedness will be proposed as a source of optimism in response to the challenges that we face.

Crisis of Capitalism

“The problem, it seems, is a loss of balance. In the pursuit of profit, everything in the world - the earth itself, other species, knowledge and indeed, other people - has been turned into a ‘resource’ to be exploited, often without care or conscience” (Dame Anne Salmond, NZ Herald, Oct 18, 2013).

“At the same time, our lakes and the sea are polluted, forests are falling silent and the rivers are turning brown. Land is farmed and forests felled right to the water's edge in the pursuit of profit. In a recent study of 179 countries, New Zealand had the highest ratio of indigenous species in danger of extinction. Oil companies are encouraged to drill in deep waters, inject chemicals and set off explosions in our ‘shaky isles’”
(Dame Anne Salmond, NZ Herald, Oct 18, 2013).



'Matters of Concern'

- Bruno Latour's suggestion that we renew our theoretical considerations to make our practice more responsive to 'matters of concern'.
- Two inter-related matters of concern are the endangered status of both Indigenous peoples' worldviews and of the wellbeing of the planet.

- Anthropogenic climate change is now recognised as threatening the stability of life on the planet (Costello et al., 2009; Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, 2013).
- As colonisation/globalisation exploits geographic locales, both the linguistic/cultural and biodiversity of those areas is impacted (Gorenflo, Romaine, Mittermeier, & Walker-Painemilla, 2012).

Bruno Latour

- Latour argues that ‘matters of fact’ are “only very partial and...very polemical, very political renderings of matters of concern” (Latour, 2004b, p. 232).
- ‘Matters of fact’ suffer from being decontextualized from their locatedness within ‘gatherings’ or assemblages.
- They can also be captured in service of the capitalist machine, which has cleverly devised the capacity for “recycling everything aimed at its destruction”(Latour, 2004b, p. 231).
- Latour asks: “Can we devise another powerful descriptive tool that deals this time with matters of concern and whose import then will no longer be to debunk but to protect and to care, as Donna Haraway would put it?” (Latour, 2004b, p. 232).

So what are some tools?

- One conceptual tool in response to these matters of concern is an ethic of care (Noddings 1995), applied in our recent study as the notion of 'caring for ourselves, others and the environment'.
- A second conceptual tool is re-visibility and revalidation of Indigenous onto-epistemologies, which position humans as part of and reliant upon, rather than superior to and detached from our local and global world(s).

Ethic of care as response/adapt-ability

- An ethic of care is here theorised as an affective force, underpinning the necessary 'response-ability' which is an adapt-ability in service of sustaining the life and wellbeing of a natureculture, or common world assemblage (Haraway, 2012; Latour, 2004a; Whitehouse, 2011).

Deleuze-Guattarian Lens

- “Desire is revolutionary because it always wants more connections and assemblages” (Deleuze & Parnet 2002, p. 79)
- “Ethical evaluation of space according to the kinds of bodies and social relations it makes possible”. “Smooth” (rather than striated spaces) “where bodies can interact – and transform themselves – in endlessly different ways” (Hickey & Malins 2007, p. 11-12)
- Exploring early childhood education via these concepts of affect, desire, and smooth spaces, makes it “possible to articulate the ways in which even a small alteration to a socio-spatial assemblage can affect ethico-political changes” (Hickey & Malins 2007, p. 12)
- A pedagogy of affect, is always a process of affirmation, allowing discernment of “moments of escape from territorializations in a profoundly positive way, as desire is unleashed to generate new sensations, to create new lines of flight” (Albrecht-Crane & Slack, 2007, p. 105)

Deborah Bird Rose

- Deborah Bird Rose, whose extensive anthropological work has been conducted alongside Indigenous peoples in Australia, has critiqued the adequacy of modernist, humanist responses to the crisis of the Anthropocene, suggesting an alternative “Earth-wise” conceptualisation of ways of knowing and being “that are relational, ethical, inclusive, open and responsive to the vulnerability of the living Earth” (2008, p. 166-167).

- Rose (2008) proposes that we (re)enter an ethical, dialogic, intersubjective relationship with the more-than-human, entailing an attentiveness, a reflexive mutuality.
- This ethic of relationality is upheld by Indigenous/traditional peoples.
- Whilst their cosmologies demonstrate reverence for their planet, lands, and all that live alongside them, Indigenous people have suffered the losses of not only their own family members, but of their more-than-human kin (Rose, 2009), historically through the policies and practices of colonisation, and now, increasingly, through the impact of Anthropogenic climate change (Rose, Cooke, & van Dooren, 2011).

Indigenous naturecultures

- ‘Naturecentered’ Indigenous peoples worldwide share commonalities of understandings which include a view of interconnectedness and reciprocity between more-than-human and humans, and that knowledge and learning is sourced through participating in and honouring relationships between humans and the more-than-human world.
- These deep relationships enable Indigenous visionaries “to directly access knowledge and understanding from primary sources deep within themselves and in the natural world” (Cajete, 2005, p. 74).
- Indigenous peoples have long demonstrated that ways of knowing, being and doing are sensorially derived from entanglement within local naturecultures.

Te Whāriki: Early Childhood Curriculum

- *Te Whāriki* set in place the expectation of a radically different notion of curriculum, in its non-prescriptive philosophical, sociocultural, holistic and 'bicultural' nature.
- Not the least of these challenges was the requirement to deliver to all children, early childhood care and education practice that is inclusive of the Māori culture, values and language by a predominately non-Māori and unqualified teacher workforce.



Māori Text of Te Whariki

- Akohia te mokopuna ki te tiaki i a Papatūānuku...
(Teach the child to care for Earth Mother)
- Akohia te mokopuna kia aroha ki te whenua.
(Teach the child to love the land)
- Ka tipu te aroha i roto i a ia mō Papatūānuku, ka pai tōna tiaki i te whenua *(Grow love for Earth Mother, so that the care for the land is good)*
(New Zealand Ministry of Education, 1996, p. 37).
- Liaison with local tangata whenua and a respect for Papatūānuku should be promoted (p. 54).

Some Aotearoa NZ ECCE responses...

- In this section I consider some of the ways an onto-epistemology of ethical affect and care as naturecultures was enacted within an early childhood care and education setting.
- The data was contributed by the teachers and children of Hawera Kindergarten, which is located in a small rural community in the central North Island of New Zealand.
- This was one of ten early childhood care and education services from across Aotearoa whose teachers and families participated in our study, *'Titiro Whakamuri, Hoki Whakamua: We are the future, the present and the past: caring for self, others and the environment in early years' teaching and learning'*, funded by the New Zealand Teaching and Learning Research Initiative and more fully reported elsewhere (Ritchie, Duhn, Rau, & Craw, 2010).

Maramataka

- The teachers at Hawera Kindergarten introduced their 12 month project by focussing on ‘Ngā Marama Māori o te Tau -The Maori Months of the Year’ using the *maramataka* Māori.
- This traditional Māori calendar identifies lunar and seasonally determined optimal timings for traditional tasks.
- These knowledges have been ascertained over centuries of embedded and responsive lived practice within specific naturecultures.
- For Māori, the Indigenous peoples of Aotearoa, their *whakapapa* (geneology) positions both people and more-than-humans such as birds, trees, mountains and rivers as fellow descendants of Papatūānuku the Earth Mother and Ranginui the Sky Father and as cohabitants within shared naturecultures (Penetito, 2009).

- Over the course of the year, the teachers juxtaposed Māori traditional gardening and harvesting practices with those being carried out within their kindergarten.
- Traditional practices included: bird snaring; rat trapping; preserving game; gathering fish, eels, shellfish and seaweeds; breaking ground and planting of crops; and collecting fungi for medicinal purposes.
- Kindergarten practices included: planting seeds; weeding raised garden beds; saying a *karakia* (grace) before meals; composting food scraps; and making vegetable soup.

Rongo/ā

- In *te reo* Māori (the Māori language) the term '*rongo*' means to sense (hear, taste, feel, smell), as well as peace.
- *Rongoā* refers to healing remedies, both spiritual and tangible. Implicit is the sense that human wellbeing depends on sensorial awareness and maintenance of states of interconnected, reciprocal, spiritual wellbeing within the local ecology.
- Taking up the notion of *rongoā*, the teachers began to introduce the story 'Koro's Medicine' (Drewery, 2004) to the children.

Judith Nowotarski and children of Hawera Kindergarten discussing 'Koro's Medicine'

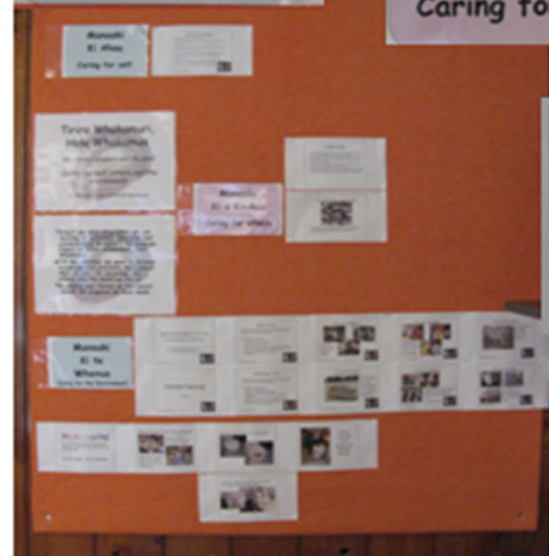


Manaakitanga

**Manaaki
Ki Ahau**
Caring for self

**Manaaki
Ki a Koutou**
Caring for others

For us it means...
Finding out from our whanau ...
Who has a garden? How do they prepare and look after their garden?
Who "stores" food? Do they freeze food, preserve food (fruit, jam etc), dry their food?
Who collects kai? Do they go to the beach and gather shellfish? Do they go fishing? Collect mushrooms?
Anything else?
Who has "homemade" remedies for aches and pains?
We really want to know about these things!!

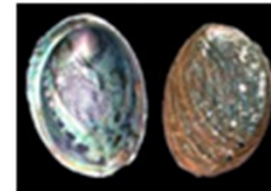


Vege Soup
This process was about bringing kai from home to make a combined meal, making it together and then sharing the product.
About a week before, as a group we talked about the kinds of things we might put into our soup. A notice was put on the board as that families could contribute.
The day before, the children sat down and made a 'recipe'. This was documented as a group story (previous slide).
On the day many of the children contributed vegetables, and by cutting, peeling and adding these to the pot, they then all had a stir. The soup was enjoyed by all and some children even had second helpings!

Our delicious vege soup

First we made a recipe, listing all the ingredients we could add. The next day we cut the vegetables, added them to the stove and made it all and cooked it. Yum, the soup tasted good!
Maree, 10 year old

**Manaaki
Ki te
Whenua**
Caring for the Environment



Hawera Kindergarten 2008

Identifying Indigenous plants and their healing properties



- Children were thus reconnecting with Indigenous plants, and their capacity to serve as *rongoā* (healing properties).
- This knowledge might otherwise have remained invisible, these plants usually ignored as irrelevant to the educational purposes of the kindergarten, merely decorative shrubs on the periphery.
- Moreover, this is an example of decolonizing re-narrativisation, honouring of the intergenerational transmission of traditional wisdoms still upheld by Māori elders within the local community despite over a century of legislative condemnation of traditional healers as dictated by the Tohunga Suppression Act of 1907 (Solomon, 2007; Waitangi Tribunal, 2011).
- This re-narrativisation addresses the ‘matter of concern’ of the suppression of Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing.

- Perhaps practices such as these can be seen as an Indigenous-informed Earth-wise historiography (Rose, 2008), an alternative naturecultures praxis that fosters relational and collective dispositions (Taylor, 2013) of ethical, compassionate, responsive care for both self and ‘Others’, the Earth, the more-than-human.
- It is also possible that such pedagogies may foster multi-sensorially felt and known awareness of naturecultures, an ecological consciousness (Oliver, 2009) founded in sensory-derived recognition of our interdependence with, and dependence upon the more-than-human in our entangled common worlds (Taylor, 2013; Taylor & Giugni, 2012).
- At this point in the Anthropocene, this pedagogical intention is undoubtedly a critical matter of concern, affect, and care.

Collectively Kids

- Invitation from a New Zealand early childhood education and care setting

- Website:

<http://collectivelykids.co.nz/>

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