

## SUBMISSION TO NZARE FOR AERA SYMPOSIUM 2017

### Title: Diversity in community: Indigenous scholars writing

Presenters:

Dr Mere Kēpa, Ngāi Tūhoe, Te Whakatōhea, Ngāti Whātua, and Ngāpuhi, University of Auckland,  
Dr Cheryl Stephens, Te Arawa (Ngāti Hinekura, Ngāti Pūkiao, Tūhourangi-Ngāti Wahiao); Taranaki Iwi  
(Ngāti Moeahu, Ngā Mahanga ā Tairi, Te Ati Awa), Te Horomai Consulting Ltd,  
Dr Linitā Manu'atu, Haapai, Eua, Niua Fou, Loto'Ofa WhatuManawa Educational Services, Mt Roskill

Chair: Dr Charmaine Kaimikaua Communication Studies Department, Loyola Marymount University.  
Discussant to be advised

### ABSTRACT

In the contemporary era where publish or perish has become the dictum for academics amid the mushrooming of numerous journals, the Māori and Indigenous Graduate Enhancement (MAI) programme [for doctoral candidates] and the International Indigenous Writing Retreat (IWR) [for senior scholars] organised by Ngā Pae o Te Māramatanga, New Zealand's Māori Centre of Research Excellence (CoRE) offer sanctuary, par excellence, for a community of diverse Indigenous scholars to learn to write better than before. These retreats are where distinguished quality Indigenous research, exemplary enthusiasm and devotion to good spirits are interwoven with affection and sympathy for other people, and appreciation for beautiful things to provide the scholars impartial platforms where the outcome of their relentless toil to know Indigenous wisdoms and to seek western science finds expression in writing.

### Session summary:

**Purpose:** In Aotearoa New Zealand, few stories are passed on through the generations of extended families and tribes of a diverse Indigenous community of scholars in the western academy and tribal institutions.

In this book project, the purpose is to pass on narrations of a group of Māori, Pasifika and international Indigenous scholars becoming better writers, researchers and wise sages, to the present and generations of Indigenous scholars to come. These stories might be understood as quintessential-defining, in some way, of the scholars mostly from urban, English-speaking upbringings, and researching and teaching in the tertiary education sector.

**Overview of the presentation:** The book entitled, *Diversity in community: Indigenous scholars writing* is predicated on good spirits or values from Te reo Māori me ngā tikanga [Māori language and culture] including whakawhiti whakaaro [dialogue], whakahihiako [inspirational, recharging], kaitiaki [care], katakata [humour], ako [teaching and learning], tika [ethics], pono [reality], tuakana/teina [senior/junior relationship], and tūmanako or manawa ora [hope]. The authors, except for Professors Linda and Graham Smith, were given one of these good spirits through which to create their narration of retreating from the mundane world.

The book's foreword written by Professor Linda Smith is followed by the chapter written by Dr Waiora Port, she is our Kuia [Elder] at 80 plus years old, her chapter addresses the good spirit called in Māori language, tika. As well she touches on the Treaty of Waitangi and sets the political history for schooling and education by Māori.

Distinguished Professor Graham Smith then narrates the history of the MAI doctoral candidates' retreat and Ngā Pae o te Māramatanga. Dr Josie Keelan clarifies the spirit of manawa ora and tumanako and then relates the principles to her narration. Dr Pauline Harris, like Waiora, Graham and Josie discusses the MAI retreat and begins to open up the spirit of whakawhanaungtanga and the benefits of the MAI retreat for physical scientists who are Māori. Dr Cheryl Stephens follows with her narration of both retreats though the spirit of tuakana/taina. The narration by Dr Mere Kēpa focuses on the spirit of pono among the scholars at the IWRs 2006-15. Dr Linitā Manu'atu opens up an international perspective on the IWRs by drawing on Tongan language and culture to discuss fononga [movement of a group of people with a common purpose]. Professor Beth Leonard, a member of the Shageluk Tribe of interior Alaska, narrates her experience of the IWR in 2010 through the spirit of whakahihiko or dinayetr. Dr Fiona Te Momo and Professor Huia Jahnke close the book on both a somber and humourous note with their narration of Māori politics in the academy through the spirit of katakata.

### **Structure of the session**

This 90 minutes session features three (3) of the book's authors discussing their narration all of whom are willing to participate in the AERA Online Paper Repository.

Panelist one:

Title: **Tuakana-Taina – a pedagogy of Māori doctoral study and research**

Panelist: Dr Cheryl Stephens

### **Abstract:**

From 2002-2010, Ngā Pae o te Māramatanga, the Māori Centre of Research Excellence at the University of Auckland, New Zealand focused on addressing disparities in Māori participation and success in tertiary education and research training. One of the initial goals was to attain a total of 500 Māori PhDs in five years. In order to reach the target a number of strategic programmes were initiated and funded by Ngā Pae o te Māramatanga. Thus the writing retreats for Māori PhD candidates began in 2004 and the retreats for senior Māori academics and researchers began in 2006.

In traditional or tribal Māori society, the principle of kinship is a significant determinant for belonging to a hapū [sub tribe] or iwi [tribe]. Whakapapa is the genealogical marker determined by a mother and a father. The order of birth determines seniority, the oldest child having the mana or status as the tuakana [older sibling] to the taina [younger sibling]. In Māori society, knowledge continues to be highly valued and vital for the social, economic, political and spiritual sustenance of the whānau [extended family], hapū and iwi.

The status or mana of the group is determined by the manner in which knowledge is developed, protected and practiced.

This presentation is an account of the unique and distinctive whakapapa ['genealogical' markers] of the Māori doctoral retreats through the good spirit or value called in Māori language, tuakana/taina. The principle tuakana-taina is used, adapted and adopted to enhance positive outcomes for Māori doctoral candidates and senior Māori academics and researchers. Tuakana/taina is about a cultural space created by Māori for Māori to write, to share knowledge and ideas, to enjoy each other's company, laugh, debate; to be mentored and supported within a community of scholars to deal with the dictum, publish or perish.

The creation of this Māori space for doctoral candidates encouraged them to take being Māori as a given. They were encouraged by tuakana [senior academics and researchers] to build on their cultural values and systems, to think critically about their research and the inherent structural relations of power. Linda Smith's argument that "struggle is a tool of both social activism and theory...struggle can be mobilised as resistance and transformation" is an exemplary enthusiasm of the inexorable work to express in writing Indigenous wisdoms and western.

The significance of the retreats is the ability of a community of diverse Indigenous scholars to support collective potential through the development of a critical mass of Māori and Indigenous tuakana and taina. The retreats are a community of Indigenous scholars writing to publish rather than to perish.

Panelist two:

**Title: Fakakoloa he kaungāfonongá: a Tongan perspective of Ngā Pae o Te Māramatanga International Writing Retreats**

Panelist: Dr Linita Manu'atu

**Abstract:**

As a perspective of education, the International Writing Retreat is a tangible, spiritual, cultural and political interface of Māori, Tongan and Pasifika peoples in the western academy. This retreat brings together these kinds of scholars in an affirmative and vibrant meeting and is an indication of how we can work collaboratively as a tour de force, elegant, rich in insights, and correct in all details rather than competitively.

This interface is recognised in the Education Act 1989, which regulates the role and responsibility of university scholars to go beyond the "neutral" messages of scientific facts to contribute critically to public debates. The Act declares the freedom of scholars, including researchers and teachers, "within the law, to question and test received wisdom, to put forward new ideas and to state controversial or unpopular opinions" (section 161(2)(a)). The law, also explicitly asserts that the universities accept a role as "critic and conscience of society" (section 162(4)(a)(v)). These sections of the Act must provide the starting point for any discussion of the roles and responsibilities of a community of scholars in retreat to write.

The law's language is fortunate: the academy is more than a "service provider". The university has an out of the ordinary role in society as an independent voice and that voice is supposed to be truthful and sincere, but that does not mean that a community of Tongan, Pasifika and Māori scholars should limit ourselves to being "neutral" agents of received wisdom and public debate. Scholars who offer critical commentary on the impacts of current policies and other contentious matters serve the public good.

Through the Tongan concept of fononga and the derivations kaungāfononga, halafononga and fakaholofononga, I shall offer tangible, spiritual, cultural and political ways to enrich the "neutral" debate of received wisdom and public controversy at the interface of Tongan, Pasifika and Māori, while also affirming the distinctive role and responsibility of all scholars to engage the particular, New Zealand and global society at a more profound echelon than that of transmitting facts: namely in the common pursuit of wisdoms.

Presentation three:

Title: **Pono and a write retreat**

Panelist: Dr Mere Kēpa

**Abstract:**

Writing is an art and so I ask, how might a perspective of a more satisfying or 'write' retreat for a community of Indigenous scholars encourage a clearer idea of how Indigenous languages, cultures and knowledge can enhance education through high-quality writing and research that extend theory and practice?

In this chapter, the question is addressed by considering ways that Indigenous scholars might work together to make writing, as an art, as common and acceptable as writing an email or tweet. By considering the spirit of pono and the conception of a 'write' retreat to create goodwill and to silence critics of passion, the audience will be provided with ideas and approaches to establish a sanctuary of belonging and inclusion in which Indigenous scholars might write words of truth and beauty in peace and tranquility.

Presentation, Point of View and Scholarly Significance: In Māori language and culture, the word pono refers to love, beauty, authenticity, light and truth. This pono is a spirit of immaculate love and perpetual light, emanating from within people—our battles, our superstitions, and from our mystical insights and knowledges, intensifying and enhancing our sense of satisfaction and happiness.

Pono is about satisfaction, goodness, vitality and living, and not about fear, supine seclusion and pessimism. Principally, no distinction is made between satisfaction and goodness or words of truth.

Writing, as an art, is all about pono, which is why I ponder the spirit, as well as praising the principle, that embraces this knot of scholars who teach and, importantly, conduct research with Indigenous communities. The topics covered include being confronted with the knowledge that the university may be a dispiriting and lonely place for these scholars. In the university, Māori language and culture are not revered and our tribal histories are unclear. Māori scholars are confronted with policies that disadvantage us. There is a lack of qualified, knowledgeable people and funding to conduct research with Indigenous communities, and few like-minded people surround the scholars with whom to dialogue, to regain a spirit of satisfaction and a sense of vitality. We are human beings, after all, with a purpose in life: to write to change all of this dissatisfaction through theory and practice, not merely to publish and perish.