

TE WAI A RONA

The well-spring that never dries up –
Whānau pedagogies and curriculum

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Competing knowledge systems and ways of being

What happens in whānau (families, including extended family members) and what happens in educational settings in Aotearoa¹ have historically been seen as discrete, seemingly unrelated pedagogical and ideological domains to be kept apart. From a western perspective whānau Māori, as the smallest unit of the tribal assemblage, were seen as communal groupings that did not fit with European nuclear family models, thus seen as traditional and static, therefore deviant and irrelevant. Education institutional arrangements on the other hand (initially through the missionary schools) were the advance guard of the nation state. The State viewed these as progressive, productive and valuable for promoting individualism. Not much has changed. Recently we were given a critique of the individualistic, competitive nature of the schooling system which is driven by “. . .national standards, market driven privatisation, systemic racism and hierarchies of knowledge, languages and achievement that privilege some individuals over others” (Pihama, 2017, p. 3). But when we talk about school epistemologies and pedagogies and whānau epistemologies and pedagogies, there is some cognitive dissonance. The concept of whānau pedagogies is a foreign concept to many involved in education, particularly teachers and especially for those who adhere to the philosophies of the global north, which have dominated the field of education for millennia. Historically, educational settings in Aotearoa from 1840 into the 1900s determined a structural relationship of Pākehā

domination and Māori subordination (Walker, 2016). Continuing institutional provision by the State, including the policy-making apparatus of parliament (through its administration), functions to maintain those unequal structural arrangements in a one-size-fits-all system. This is in line with the notion that, from a western ontological perspective, there was/is just one universe, one world ruled by one god, one standard way of thinking, and one typical or “normal” way of being and viewing of reality – a universal given, seen through one ontological/epistemological frame. This translates to the notion that there can only be one curriculum standard, nestled in one language of the core curriculum, English. That is the dominant standard in the nation state of Aotearoa.

The expansion of the capitalist state is therefore promulgated through such institutions as education through its technicians, administrators, and symbolic workers (teachers) in the exercise of power and ideological justification of the social order. Walker (1996), however, argued that Māori “were not supine victims of British imperialism. . .” (p. 2); the tribes engaged in continuous counter-hegemonic struggles of emancipation. Currently, teachers as symbolic workers, are required to address the disparities in our education system through responsive curriculum to language, culture and identity of all children.

In the latest Education Review Office (2017) report on newly graduated teachers’ preparedness to teach, however, it highlighted that many teachers in early childhood education settings were unable to plan a curriculum responsive to children’s language, culture and identity stating “This aspect, along with self-review, inquiry and reflective practice, managing children’s behaviour and promoting social competence, bicultural practice, te reo Māori and tikanga Māori were all cited as areas of weakness” (p. 11). Of concern is the inability of many teachers to work with and alongside Māori children and their whānau (wider families). It is argued here that teachers must engage with whānau, and the notion of whānau pedagogies (which is explained later in this paper), if the curriculum is to transform the structural relations of inequality reproduced in those settings. This chapter unpacks how the refreshed early childhood curriculum both provides for transformational praxis through pedagogies of resistance whilst, paradoxically, serves to maintain the unequal structural arrangements of the hegemony of reproduction.

Curriculum: Free, secular, compulsory

The 1938 education edict by the then Labour Government Prime Minister Peter Fraser (written by Clarence Beeby, the Assistant Director of Education) asserted that,

...every person, whatever his level of academic ability, whether he be rich or poor, whether he live in town or country, has a right, as a citizen, to a free education of the kind for which he is best fitted, and to the fullest extent of his powers.

(Beeby, 1966, p. 4)

This cemented the enforcement with a “free, secular and compulsory” directive, but at great cost to Māori children growing up in the “system” who came from very diverse realities, with often incommensurable ontological and epistemological bases. When you analyse it, the much revered and celebrated Beeby dictum of 1938 has not ventured far from the 1848 mantra of the evangelicals and their godly-ordered world reflected in the third verse of the Anglican hymn, “All things Bright and Beautiful”. The verse: “The rich man in his castle, The poor man at his gate, God made them high and lowly, And ordered their estate,” is poignant in its systematic ordering of people, position and power. The then British school system, under the control of the clergy, was imported into Aotearoa, and children and young people so aligned according to the Beeby dictum “for which he is best fitted”, as determined by those in power. In such a system Māori ways of knowing and being were seen as inferior, not fitting, subjugating Māori into the lowly order in the estate.

Curriculum: Powerfully productive

The etymology of the word *curriculum* comes from modern Latin, related to the word *currere*, used in English in the 1630s at Scottish universities (Skerrett, 2017). With meanings which included “the course of a race, a fast chariot, career”, there is the inherent idea of the “course of a race to the finish line”, the operative words being course and finish line. The *course* outlines (and controls) the content or the course it will take, the rules that regulate the race, and together they shape the outcomes. Collectively the *course*, the *race* and the *outcomes* are manufactured. The curriculum was both the process

(regulatory control, standards) and product (qualification). In short, the curriculum powered the production lines. As Ranginui Walker (1996) put it, “Clearly, those who control the curriculum control the outcome of schooling” (p. 3).

Embodied (land and language) Māori knowledge systems as whānau pedagogies

Māori knowledges melded Māori ancestors in the lands of Aotearoa and the surrounding oceans for over a thousand years before the coming of the “white man”. Māori elders embodied knowledge and a strong desire to perpetuate certain forms of knowledge, reflected through the language in a variety of forms; naming people, places, phenomena and things, waiata (songs), karakia (highly ritualised ceremonies, prayers and incantations), whakapapa (geneology), pūrakau (narratives and storytelling), and through tikanga (cultural ways of being and doing), spirituality and beliefs. Rather like the ancient Greek views of time, Māori knowledges and ways of being are timeless, and allow one to keep an eye on the days that have been before us (ngā rā o mua, viewed as the past from a western perspective) and the days that are still behind us (ngā rā o muri, viewed as the future from a western perspective).

According to Jackson (2011) Māori knowledge systems allow us to know who we are, our environment and all aspects of the ecosystem, and thus enable us to face challenges through broadening thinking, providing pathways in all directions, including into the future. Metge (2015) discusses the different sides of Māori knowledge systems, the sacred aspects (those that are “tapu”) that are not always readily available to everyone, and the knowledge that is available to all (the “noa”) that is needed for daily living and wellbeing. These knowledge systems related correspondingly to each other. So too does the notion of “ako”, teaching and learning. Māori language (intimately related to the environment), both forms the fundamental basis of “ako”, which in turn shapes thinking and Māori world-views. Māori patterns of *thinking and relating* which shape Māori world views and identity, are bound up with one’s mountains, rivers, lakes, streams, marae and other landmarks. When Māori meet and formally introduce themselves, the format of the pepeha (statement of identity) locating mountains, rivers, marae and other land marks, is generally used.

Māori cosmological knowledges

Most cosmological traditions speak of an event or act that brought about the world as we know it. In the Judeo-Christian tradition, it is God who creates the world in a finite time, over a period of seven days. In the Māori tradition, and vastly abridged here, there is a source of growth, *te kune* (the rising or movement), which occurred over an inestimable amount of time, after which came thought into memory, from memory to mind-heart, from mind-heart to desire, to knowledge and consciousness which dwells in dim light and darkness, and then nothingness comes out of darkness, unpossessed nothingness, boundless nothingness, but is full in its boundlessness, and embracing of darkness, but within which the *Atua* (the Gods, over 70 of them) appear. Then follows the stirring of life which eventually leads to the separation by *Tāne Māhuta* (the God of the forests) of his parents, *Papatūānuku* (our Earth Mother) and *Ranginui* (our Sky Father) (NZME, 2009; Salmond, 2017). The separation of the earth and the sky then is not really a story of “creation” as such, but a cosmological world view that is ageless and timeless and enduring. The *Atua* or Gods that stirred in the spaces between *Papatūānuku* and *Ranginui* are the basis of the various domains of the natural worlds. For example, *Tāne Māhuta* becomes the divine presence in the natural domain of the forests, *Rongo-mā-tāne* of cultivated foods, *Tangaroa* of the seas, *Rūaumoko* (the unborn child of *Papatūānuku*), presides over earthquakes, *Tāwhirimātea* presides over the winds and weather, and so on. The weaving together of these deities with humankind and nature, in a vast genealogy, is the traditional Māori method for explaining the cosmos, the natural world and its creation (Te Ara, 2017).

The ontology underpinning Kōhanga Reo

A counter-colonial position centralises Māori ways of being, Māori spiritual beliefs, ancestral thought, language and life. These ways of being are interconnected in a relationship with *Papatūānuku* (our maternal ancestor – our placental nourisher, our lands) and *Ranginui* (our paternal ancestor). All Indigenous peoples are connected in this way to the land, seas and skies. Māori relationality is represented in the tribal, inter-tribal and sub-tribal groupings of *whānau*, *hapū* and *iwi*. *Whānau* is the Māori word for family.² It also means to be born into the world. *Hapū* is the Māori word for sub-tribe. It also means

to be pregnant. Iwi is the Māori word for larger tribal group. It also means bones. Whenua is the Māori word for land and also the Māori word for placenta, signifying the relationship of sustaining life to sustaining land. These Indigenous concepts speak of the centrality of relationships embedded and embodied in the mind-body, in the language-scape and in the landscape. Māori are tāngata whenua, deeply connected to this space, and place.

These are the Indigenous concepts underpinning the development of Te Kōhanga Reo (TKR), an alternative model of education based on whānau pedagogies, Māori epistemologies, Indigenous ontologies and a system of wairuatanga (spiritual interconnectedness) born in response to threats of the loss of te reo Māori (Māori language), coinciding with the neoliberal advance of the 1980s. The intention at the beginning of the TKR movement was to stay the decline of te reo Māori, and to address issues of educational failure, sociocultural disruption and identity interference due to colonisation. TKR have been contributing to a socio-linguistically rejuvenated iwi Māori (Māori people).

The first kōhanga reo opened in 1982. Within three years the number had risen dramatically, driven by a sense of urgency from within Māori communities. Between 1982 and 1993, the number of kōhanga reo rose by around 80 per year and their enrolments by more than 1,400 a year, to reach 809 and 14,514 respectively in 1993 when kōhanga reo provided for just under a *half* of all mokopuna in ECE (Waitangi Tribunal, 2012); however, 1993 was the zenith for Kōhanga Reo. The movement started to decline largely due to what has been referred to as “glacial” (Walker, 2004) and “leaden-footed” (Waitangi Tribunal, 2012) state policy responses.

Te Whāriki: A site of resistance?

He purapura i ruia mai i Rangiūtea e kore e ngaro. A seed sown in Rangiūtea will never be lost (NZME, 2017, p. 6).

As a key instrument of colonisation, the imposition of western constructs of curriculum in early education settings and schools fragmented the world’s many diverse Indigenous epistemological frames. But the competing knowledge systems and ways of being, knowing, doing, are contestable and contested. In the curriculum of Aotearoa, the interweaving of Māori world views, is one site of resistance.

The whakataukī (proverbial saying) above, leads the Introduction of *Te Whāriki: He whāriki mātauranga mō ngā mokopuna o Aotearoa: early childhood curriculum* (NZME, 2017, p. 6) (Te Whāriki). It speaks to the *purapura* (or seed) from Rangiātea that will never be lost. There are various places named Rangiātea throughout Te Moana nui-a-Kiwa (the domain of Kiwa—Pacific Ocean). Rangiātea is also situated in one of the upper-most heavens (te Toi-o-ngā-rangi), specifically at Tikitiki-o-rangi. It is the name of a whare (house) of the gods, their homeland. Rangiātea is a sacred place. Seeds sewn from sacred places are revered. Tamariki (children) are the seeds from the gods. In Māori society, children were ceremoniously welcomed into “te ao mārama” (the world of light) as the seeds of the gods, and so respected. Salmond (2017) recalls one of the very first missionaries, the Reverend Samuel Marsden from the Church Missionary Society commenting on the role of children in the early 1800s. He said

The Chiefs are in general very sensible men, and wish for information upon all subjects. They are accustomed to public discussions from their infancy. The Chiefs take their Children from their Mothers breast, to all their public Assemblies. They hear all that is said upon Politics, Religion, War &c [sic] by the oldest men. Children will frequently ask questions in public conversation, and are answered by the Chiefs. I have often been surprised, to see the Sons of the Chiefs at the age of 4 or 5 years sitting amongst the Chiefs, and paying such close attention to what was said. . . There can be no finer children than [those of] the New Zealanders in any part of the world. Their parents are very indulgent, and they appear always happy and playful, and very active.

(p. 114)

Salmond argues that Marsden “. . .failed to connect their happiness, however, with the absence of contemporary British child-rearing practices which included harsh physical punishment” (2017, p. 114). Whilst Māori society was radically disrupted with colonisation, many of the whakataukī (proverbial sayings) were recorded by early missionaries from the Church Missionary Society. One such missionary was the Reverend William Colenso, who recognised that Māori proverbial sayings synthesise collective wisdom (tohungatanga) providing guidance from the past, into the future, including insights into

Māori thinking, and the human qualities prized by Māori (Colenso, 1879). Colenso recognised the deep interconnectedness of Māori with the natural world, represented in proverbs born from:

The regular appearances of the stars, planets, and constellations,-from the varied seasons of the year,- from the several winds and meteors,- from the ever varying forms and colours of the clouds, and of the rainbow,- from the sea, calm and raging,- from tides and currents, rocks and shoals,- from fountains, rivers, rain, hail, snow and ice,- from the weather,- from mountains and hills and from stones, both hard and soft, from fire and smoke,- from cold and heat,- from times of drought, and of floods, and of overflowing rivers, and from boiling springs and earthquakes.

(1879, p. 111)

Some of those proverbial sayings and Māori ontological concepts have been embedded into the refreshed *Te Whāriki* (NZME, 2017).

Concepts embedded into Te Whāriki (2017) via whakataukī

Te Whāriki, He whāriki mātauranga mō ngā mokopuna o Aotearoa: Early childhood curriculum was introduced in 1996, and widely celebrated for its originality, key features of which were its focus on Indigeneity, its sociocultural approach to pedagogy, and holistic approach to child development (Macfarlane, Glynn, Grace, Penetito, & Bateman, 2008; Soler & Miller, 2003). Twenty years later, in 2016, the NZME undertook to “refresh” the original early childhood curriculum. According to the Ministry’s website, “*Te Whāriki Online*” (NZME, n.d.), whilst “The aspiration for children, bicultural structure, principles, strands and goals remain the same,” the updated version “includes a stronger focus on bicultural practice, the importance of language, culture, and identity, and the inclusion of all children” (NZME, n.d.). In the following sections we outline a range of core Māori concepts which are illustrated in the “refreshed” *Te Whāriki* 2017.

Collective practice

We begin this discussion with the whakataukī, *Ehara taku toa i te toa takitahi engari he toa takitini* (I come not with my own strengths

but bring with me the gifts, talents and strengths of my family, tribe and ancestors) (*Te Whāriki*, 2017, p. 12). This whakataukī illustrates that for Māori, the unit of social analysis is the collective, not the individual and provides us with the reminder that whatever we do should be in the service of the collective wellbeing.

Time/whakapapa

Tū mai e moko. Te whakaata o ō mātua. Te moko o ō tīpuna. (Stand strong, O moko. The reflection of your parents. The blueprint of your ancestors) [p. 17]. As discussed in *Te Whāriki*, children are incited to stand tall in the knowledge that they are the continuity of their ancestors.

Valuing knowledge

Te manu e kai ana i te miro, nōna te ngahere; te manu e kai ana i te mātauranga, nōna te ao. (The bird who partakes of the miro berry owns the forest; the bird who partakes of education owns the world) [p. 51]. This demonstrates the importance of taking advice from nature and the embedded knowledges that are contained within it, a key to wider vision and understanding and exploration of the world.

The importance of intersubjectivity and collaboration

Waiho i te toipoto, kaua i te toiroa. (Let us keep close together, not far apart) [p. 59]. This whakataukī stresses the importance of teachers and children working collaboratively and supportively.

Respecting children as visionary

Mā te ahurei o te tamaiti e ārahi i ā tātou mahi (Let the uniqueness of the child guide our work) [p.63]. This reminds us to remain in touch with children, and allow children to take the lead in their journeys of discovery.

The above concepts are the antithesis of the individualised competitive nature of western curriculum, which imposes a hierarchy of compartmentalised, standardised “bits” of knowledge. They instead speak to a child embedded in deep relationships with whānau, including elders, and the natural world, including the gods. They speak to the rangatiratanga (chieftainship) of children, and the respect for

them that was inherent in traditional times. This notion of rangatiratanga was fundamental to the relationships laid down in one of the foundational documents of Aotearoa (New Zealand), the 1840 Te Tiriti o Waitangi. This treaty was initiated by the British Crown to provide legitimacy to the settlement of the country, and contained important commitments to Māori, as explained in the next section which provides background to understanding differences between the 1996 and 2017 versions of Te Whāriki.

New Zealand's constitutional foundations

In the 1835 *He Whakaputanga o te Rangatiratanga o Nu Tireni – the Declaration of Independence of New Zealand*, the signatory chiefs affirmed their country to be a Māori sovereign nation. Five years later, a second document, the Tiriti o Waitangi/Te Treaty of Waitangi, was signed by Māori chiefs and the British Crown representative, Captain William Hobson. The Māori language version, Te Tiriti o Waitangi, is the one that over 500 chiefs signed and that Māori have referred to ever since, despite the Crown's disregard for this in favour of the English version. Key differences between the two versions reside in the affirmation of tino rangatiratanga (absolute authority of Māori chiefs) over their lands, villages and all taonga (things that are highly valued) in Te Tiriti o Waitangi. This contrasts with the ceding by Māori of their sovereignty to the Crown in the English version. Instead, in Te Tiriti the Crown is ascribed the more limited capacity of “kawanatanga” or Crown governance. Te reo Māori, the Māori language, has been recognised by the Waitangi Tribunal (1986) as being a taonga that should have been sustained. Both versions of the treaty grant Māori equal citizenship rights to those of the British.

Despite ongoing Māori protestation, the New Zealand government and courts ignored the treaty (and the commitments made to Māori within that document), until 1975, when the Waitangi Tribunal was established to examine the numerous and hugely destructive impact of treaty breaches. A recent report by this Tribunal has categorically found that in signing Te Tiriti o Waitangi, Māori:

agreed to a relationship: one in which they and Hobson were to be equal – equal while having different roles and different spheres of influence. In essence, rangatira [chiefs] retained their authority over their hapū [sub-tribes] and

territories, while Hobson was given authority to control Pākehā [Europeans]. . . It is clear that at no stage, however, did rangatira who signed te Tiriti in February 1840 surrender ultimate authority to the British.

(Waitangi Tribunal, 2014, p. xxii)

The report goes on to confirm that tino rangatiranga, the absolute authority of the chiefs, was and continues to be viewed by Māori as superior in status to the kawanatanga, or role of governance ceded to the Crown. Whilst the Waitangi Tribunal recognises the international convention of *contra preferentum*, which gives precedence to the treaty version as understood by the Indigenous people as opposed to that of the colonial power (Waitangi Tribunal, 2016), the New Zealand government has instead historically favoured the English language text with the presumption of sovereignty.

*Differences between Te Whāriki 1996 and Te Whāriki
2017 in relation to Te Tiriti o Waitangi*

The original *Te Whāriki* (NZME, 1996) was visionary in its recognition of Te Tiriti o Waitangi, being the first “bicultural” curriculum for the country and stating emphatically that: “In early childhood education settings, all children should be given the opportunity to develop knowledge and an understanding of the cultural heritages of both partners to Te Tiriti o Waitangi” (NZME, 1996, p. 9). This statement is repeated at the very end of the “refreshed” 2017 version of the curriculum on page 69, an anomalous positioning, suggestive of an afterthought, rather than as a construct to be prioritised. The original *Te Whāriki* (1996) had posed a key “question for reflection”: “In what ways do the environment and programme reflect the values embodied in Te Tiriti o Waitangi, and what impact does this have on adults and children?” (NZME, 1996, p. 56). This important question, which invited teachers to reflect deeply on the way their programme demonstrated a commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi, is missing from the 2017 version.

The 2017 version of *Te Whāriki* contains an introductory page focussed on both Te Tiriti o Waitangi and The Treaty of Waitangi:

Te Tiriti o Waitangi | the Treaty of Waitangi is New Zealand’s founding document. Signed in 1840 by representatives of Māori and the Crown, this agreement provided the foundation

upon which Māori and Pākehā would build their relationship as citizens of Aotearoa New Zealand. Central to this relationship was a commitment to live together in a spirit of partnership and the acceptance of obligations for participation and protection.

(NZME, 2017, p. 3)

These three “p”s of partnership, participation and protection were first given weight as broad constitutional principles in the Supreme Court case taken by the New Zealand Māori Council in what has come to be known as the “Lands Case” in 1987. Those principles were later promoted that year by the New Zealand Royal Commission on Social Policy (1987). It was believed that the decision provided the mechanisms that would help facilitate Māori development and identity through propelling extensive socio-political change in New Zealand. Supreme Court Judge, Susan Glazebrook (2010) argued

...the decision, which has been seen as giving the Treaty of Waitangi an explicit place in New Zealand jurisprudence for the first time, was one of the catalysts for the creation of a general acceptance that the state has a responsibility actively to fund the promotion of Maori language and culture and language.

(p. 343)

Whilst elaboration of terms like “active protection” (the unilateral responsibility of the Crown) and notions of “participation” and “partnership” (bilateral) could give context to what they mean in a bicultural/bilingual educational frame, that has not happened in *Te Whāriki* 2017. These principles are often used as a convenient shortcut to “understanding” and applying the treaty, reliance upon which denies the opportunity to gain the deeper interpretations that emanate from a close reading of the text of Te Tiriti o Waitangi (or a translation).

The introductory piece in *Te Whāriki* 2017 goes on to mention treaty implications for equitable outcomes for Māori and for sustaining te reo Māori, without linking these to the actual wording or commitments of Te Tiriti o Waitangi, which require upholding Māori rangatiratanga over such things as their lands and languages and equal citizenship status. The treaty is not mentioned again in *Te Whāriki* 2017 until a paragraph towards the end of the document making links to the school curriculum which states that:

Te Whāriki acknowledges that, for Māori, the child is a link to the world of the ancestors and to the new world, connected to people, places, things and the spiritual realm; they belong to whānau, hapū and iwi and they are a kaitiaki of te Tiriti o Waitangi.

(p. 52)

The above, whilst potentially a powerful statement in recognising the deeply connected nature of te ao Māori (a Māori world view) and the very important role of children upholding te Tiriti o Waitangi, seems to be sadly positioned so late in the document that it may be easily ignored. Furthermore, the insertion of the words “for Māori” in the quote above implies that it is only a Māori responsibility to oversee the honouring of treaty obligations, when in fact, this is a shared duty of the Crown, and by extension, teachers who are in the position of being agents of the Crown.

The 2017 document also misses the opportunity to have made the obvious link to the affirmation of tino rangatiratanga (self-determination) in Te Tiriti o Waitangi, with regard to the learning outcome of “Recognising and appreciating their own ability to learn te rangatiratanga” (pp. 23, 24, 37, 55). Whilst we see some inherent tensions and contradictions, there are also gems of wisdom within this document which we can only hope will be recognised and transferred into Te Tiriti o Waitangi-based practice.

Concluding thoughts

This chapter provides an overview of competing knowledge systems, critiquing ways in which western curricula have devalued and invisibilised long-held Māori world views and knowledges. It gives an overview of some ways in which the recently refreshed New Zealand early childhood curriculum can serve to reposition some of these knowledges, via whānau pedagogies, as articulated in whakataukī (traditional knowledge sayings), at the heart of early childhood practice. However, unless this embedding of te ao Māori (Māori world views) is actually attended to, by incorporating and enacting ahua Māori, Māori ways of being, knowing, doing and relating, the new curriculum will merely serve to maintain unequal structural arrangements, the ongoing legacy of colonisation.

The new version of *Te Whāriki* contains a very brief overview of a range of “underpinning theories and approaches” (NZME, 2017, p. 60–62). The original 1993 draft version of *Te Whāriki* (NZME, 1993) contained an extensive section on these which had been omitted by the Ministry in the 1996 document. The mention in *Te Whāriki 2017* of critical theories contains the statement that “Critical theory perspectives challenge disparities, injustices, inequalities and perceived norms. . . [and provides] guidance on how to promote equitable practices with children, parents and whānau” (p. 62). This very brief mention of the transformational potential of critical theory is lacking in any explicatory power. Without this critical capacity and the deep reflection required, it is unlikely that the largely non-Māori teacher workforce will be able to access the deeper Māori knowledges that are hinted at throughout the document, for example in the whakataukī that we have discussed. In the original *Te Whāriki* the Māori text of the document, contained in Part B, was highlighted as a prominent feature, in the 2017 version, however, the symbolic shifting of this Māori text to a separate, inverted version designated “*Te Whāriki a te Kōhanga Reo*” has created a perplexing dualism. Although the 2017 *Te Whāriki* is flawed and lacking in its emancipatory potential, it is not just written curriculum that informs children’s lived experience of curriculum. What will be of equal consequence is the nature and extent of teacher commitment to delivering a curriculum that truly honours te ao Māori and the commitments that were laid down in *Te Tiriti o Waitangi*. This is dependent on many factors including initial teacher education, requirements for having fully qualified staffing, the provision of professional development, commitment to a national languages policy and cross-sectorial cohesion. These policy commitments need to be led and financially supported by governments which share the vision of the transformational potential of early childhood education in viewing all children as kaitiaki (guardians and stewards) of *Te Tiriti o Waitangi*.

Notes

- 1 Aotearoa is also known as New Zealand but only referred to by one of its original names in this chapter.
- 2 Family, as used here, is not equivalent to the nuclear Pākehā style family but exists within a tribal grouping, inclusive of relationships outside mother, father and children.

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