

Te Matahauariki Methodology: The Creative Relationship Framework

Rachel Parr

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The logo consists of three concentric ovals. The outermost oval is a vibrant green, the middle one is a darker green, and the innermost one is black. The text 'TE MĀTĀHAUARIKI' is written in white, uppercase letters across the center of the innermost black oval.

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TE MATAHAUARIKI METHODOLOGY: THE CREATIVE RELATIONSHIP FRAMEWORK

Rachel Parr

I. INTRODUCTION

This article sets out to document and explain the processes and the methods of the *Creative Relationship Framework* used by Te Matahauariki Institute. Te Matahauariki Institute endeavours to research and understand Maori culture, both in a traditional sense, and also as an evolving, dynamic expression of identity. The purpose of this research is to benefit both Maori and Pakeha by generation of greater cross cultural understanding, awareness and communication. Only by becoming aware of and then understanding the different threads that make up a society can we look to weave them into a creative cohesion.

1. Te Matahauariki

Te Matahauariki, currently headed by Adjunct Professor Michael Brown, is a government funded research institute. The choice of Te Matahauariki as a name for the Institute is significant. It conveys

in a literal sense, the horizon where earth meets the sky; in a practical sense, a meeting place of people and their ideas and ideals, in a spiritual or metaphysical sense, aspiring towards justice and social equity. It alludes to a philosophy which reflects concerns that humans have for each other. It aspires to an environment of participation, of challenge, debate and justice in the world as it was, is and as we want it to be.¹

An integral part of Te Matahauariki is the Advisory Panel to the Institute. The Advisory Panel consists of such persons as Justice David Baragwanath, Justice Eddie Durie, Ombudsman Anand Satyananda, Dame Joan Metge, Dame Evelyn Stokes, David Oughten, Professor Matthew Palmer, Professor Margaret Bedggood, and Tamati Reedy.

¹ University of Waikato, Law School Committee, *Te Matahauariki: The Report of the Law School Committee* (1988). The term Te Matahauariki was also employed by the Waikato Law School Committee and this description of the term was taken from that document.

Twice yearly meetings between Te Matahauariki and the Advisory Panel are held both to stimulate ideas and ensure that the objectives of the Te Matahauariki Research Institute are faithfully and fully addressed.

The overall objective of the programme is:

[A] contribution to an intellectual climate to realize a vision of socially inclusive laws and political and legal institutions in Aotearoa/New Zealand derived from two polyphyletic traditions, which will have sufficient flexibility and robustness to meet the future needs of the citizens of Aotearoa/New Zealand as individuals and as members of collectivities.

Research conducted as part of the program is research carried out under the rubric of this general objective. The first phase of research was entitled ‘Laws and Institutions for a Bicultural New Zealand’. Under Objective 1 ‘Bicultural Methodology and Consultation Processes’, Te Matahauariki was required to identify the “range of methodologies and consultative processes for bicultural socio-legal evaluative research”.² During that phase several background papers on issues of research methodology and method were produced.³

As the programme evolved, it entered into a second phase,⁴ under the heading ‘Laws and Institutions for Aotearoa/New Zealand’. This second phase is characterised by ongoing commitment to the vision of socially and culturally inclusive political and legal institutions. In an attempt to avoid the entrenched limitations of much of the contemporary discussion, the project abandoned the word bicultural, and looked instead to a vision for Aotearoa/New Zealand where unity and diversity could coexist creatively, and enhance the whole. During this phase of the programme, we produced a discussion paper entitled *Collaborative Cultural Research for Laws & Institutions for Aotearoa/New Zealand: A Summary Paper*, which attempted to outline some principles employable by those wishing to engage in educational research seeking to transcend cultural or other boundaries in a bridge building exercise.

Currently, Te Matahauariki may be seen as entering a third phase.⁵ Among other things the third phase is characterised by a closer focus on the practical applicability of models under discussion. During this third phase, the challenge to Te Matahauariki is to

² Parr R, and Meredith P, (2001) 1.

³ Seuffert N, (1997) a b (1998)

⁴ Benton R, (1999).

⁵ Report of the AP Meeting 26 March 2001.

continue to contribute to a national conversation but also to identify new, creative, applicable models, informed by both Maori and Pakeha resources, appropriate to the New Zealand context. Part of informing the debate and looking for new models involves encouraging others both to look for alternatives and to test such alternatives.

2. Te Pu Wananga: Te Matahauariki Maori Seminar Program

This article is written in the third phase of the programme. It also deals with the issue of methodology, but it is restricted to the methodology employed by Te Matahauariki as it attempts to identify and analyse those fundamental Maori concepts, philosophies, beliefs, values, customs, ethics and practices which inform Maori law and jurisprudence.

This research endeavour has led to the ‘need to examine carefully with a number of Maori scholars the records of the past...and the ideas which have survived, developed or arisen in more recent times’. In this way Te Matahauariki hopes to gain a

clearer idea of what constitutes ‘Maori jurisprudence’, the degree to which this is internally consistent and the points of convergence, compatibility and contrast between this system or set of systems and that which at present forms the New Zealand mainstream.⁶

This task is being approached in two ways. First, research is undertaken on a variety of sources ‘for implicit and explicit theoretical definitions and operational examples of Maori jurisprudence’.⁷ These sources include those held in the Turnbull, Hocken, and Grey Collections, university libraries, Maori newspaper collections, books, journal articles such as those in the *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, international collections such as the archives of the Church Missionary Society, personal collections, church archives, oral history records, Native Land Court records, official historical documents, Statutes and Appendices to the Journal of the House of Representatives and other government documents.

Second, over the last eighteen months Te Matahauariki has also been conducting a number of seminars with key individuals, experts in tikanga, and scholars in both Maori

⁶ Benton R, (1999).

⁷ Ibid.

and Pakeha institutions. This consultation both informs our research conducted under other areas, and tests the veracity of our findings. As such it provides invaluable guidance and direction to the ongoing research. Hence the name of the process: *Te Pu Wananga*: *Pu* in this sense refers to a skilled or wise person.⁸

The participating *tohunga* are ‘strategically positioned’ to give Te Matahauariki the assistance and guidance needed. As Nena Benton, a member of Te Matahauariki, writes; they have

been gifted with a long life (the majority being in their 70s and 80s), their memory and knowledge of Maori culture and their reflections on where to go from here span more than four generations, starting with the knowledge of their own mentors – their own parents, grandparents and other elders – and now in their position as *tohunga*, *kaumatua*, parents and grandparents or great grandparents themselves, their younger kinsfolk look up to them for advice and wisdom.⁹

The process of consulting with such skilled and wise people, *tohunga*, necessarily must be sensitive to *tikanga* Maori and Pakeha, and appropriate both to the people involved and the knowledge exchanged. Te Matahauariki uses a seminar process to draw on traditional Maori practice of group learning and discussion. In this sense we can talk of the seminar process as *wananga*. The word *wananga* traditionally refers to baskets of knowledge:

Nana nga mahi nunui, nana nga rakau e tipu mai na i ro ngahere, nana i hanga a Hina-ahu-one ki te puke o Tuanuku: nana hoki tiki nga kete o te wananga i te Toi o nga Rangi, ara i Tikitiki o rangi.¹⁰

His deeds were extraordinary, his are the trees growing in the forest, he created the first being Hine-ahu-one at the hill of Tuanuku: he also retrieved the baskets of knowledge at the highest point of the heavens at Tikitiki o rangi.¹¹

In a broader sense, the word *wananga* refers to traditional knowledge and higher learning.¹² The seminars are designed to facilitate the exchange of traditional knowledge through consultation. Before the information sharing begins, the participants are welcomed in Maori, and a *karakia* is said. The purpose of the *karakia* is to bless the proceedings. The *karakia* gives voice to the peaceful intentions of those

⁸ Benton N, (2001) 1.

⁹ Ibid 3.

¹⁰ *Te Toatakitini* 1923 Number 25, Volume 1 p7.

¹¹ In house translation by Tonga Karena, Te Matahauariki Institute 2001.

¹² Benton N, (2001) 1.

present and their expectation that the proceedings will not only begin in peace but will also end in peace. Then the senior researcher, usually Adjunct Professor Mick Brown opens the korero, by explaining the kaupapa.

Elements of tikanga Pakeha are also employed in this process. Prior to the seminar, researchers investigate the areas they wish to receive clarification on. This research is conducted according to Western academic tradition by exploring a range of sources, both primary and secondary and accurately recording any information found. The Maori newspapers, a collection of historic newspapers published primarily for a Maori audience between 1842 and 1932, have provided a wealth of information. This resource is now accessible on line and can be searched (full text), browsed (by series) or accessed by date. This collection has been made available by the New Zealand Digital Library Project, which is based at the Department of Computer Science, University of Waikato. This resource is in itself an example of how exposure to different ways of doing things can enrich a final product.¹³

The findings of the research team are then outlined and the wananga develops a life of its own as the participants respond to the research before them. Participants and researchers freely exchange impressions of material that the Institute has uncovered. Participants in the seminars discuss their understandings of tikanga, both from a historical perspective and within the contemporary context. Participants discuss key Maori terms or concepts from their own understandings, and in their own words. Also exchanged is advice about avenues for future research, sources to locate and examine, other experts to consult.

The tohunga are men and women whose ‘knowledge is grounded in active participation in Maori community life.’¹⁴ These participants are often able to recall their experiences as children with their own elders, recalling the teachings of their elders – sometimes elders who had personal experience of pre contact Maori society. Stories are told, histories recounted, and a bygone era unfolds within the seminar room.

¹³ <http://www.nzdl.org/cgi-bin/library>

¹⁴ Benton N, (2001) infra note 12 at 1.

The seminars provide Te Matahauriki with exposure to the wairua of Maori culture and therefore are central to the progress of the research institute in a myriad of ways. As Nena Benton, writes, what we learn from them

extends and enhances the insights gained from written sources. In sharing with us their experiences and family histories along with their theoretical insights, they enrich our learning, by adding to our discussions that personal dimension that only people who have actually lived in functioning Maori communities are able to give. Thus, they help to deepen our understanding of those concepts, beliefs and values that were of critical importance to the way people regulated their lives in pre-settlement times and which still have relevance now.¹⁵

The participants are in control of the whole process, from being available and willing to participate, to the information and support given, to the continued involvement with Te Matahauriki after the seminar. During the seminar they decide what is too tapu to korero, and they decide what is not. They are free to determine the focus of the wananga. The process of the wananga must be flexible enough to include the unpredictable and subtle enough to discern the sensitivities and respond appropriately. It is the participants desire to have information available to future generations, their generosity, and most importantly, a mutual respect and sense of mutual trust between all concerned that makes the seminars possible.

This article is drawn from participant observation of the methodology used in Te Pu Wananga. It covers methods used while conducting the seminars, recording the information, and analysing the korero. These wananga are a sequence of semi-structured, in-depth, participant-driven discussions. Each of the seminars have been unique - reflecting the particular context and circumstances of the predominant speakers. Yet across the particular, common themes emerge, uniting the different threads of thought, weaving a greater unity. Consequently, it is important that the methodological framework is flexible to accept the particular and cohesive enough to support exploration of broader themes across the individual wananga.

In exploring the methodological principles that guide Te Pu Wananga, this article advances the premise that research methods need to be worked out within the context of the research relationship itself. This article does not seek to prescribe a set of standards or rules to be followed by researchers. Instead, it endeavours to inform the debate. In the same way that the research discussed in this article is an ongoing process, so should

¹⁵ Ibid 2.

this work be seen as seeking to contribute to the ongoing discussion. As always, one piece of research is the beginning for another.

(i) *The Cross Cultural Issue*

Within the general attempt to encourage and inform a conversation about research and research methodology, a more specific objective of this paper is to ventilate the issue of cross cultural research methodology. These two issues are often theoretically rent asunder, and cross cultural methodology is accorded a distinct treatment, estranged from the rest of methodology. In practice the differences between robust, appropriate methodology and robust, appropriate cross cultural methodology are often difficult to discern.

The term methodology describes the science of method, or a body of methods used in a particular activity, in this case, research.¹⁶ Usually when we speak of research methodology, we mean that body of methods used to obtain knowledge. Yet, methodology is not just the methods, but it is also the theoretical framework within which the methods themselves are developed and applied. In order for research methodology to be robust, the actual methods used to obtain knowledge must be consistent with and appropriate to the overarching theoretical framework that constitutes the research methodology.

The theoretical component of the methodology influences the development of research methods and guides the way in which the actual methods are applied. In order to be effective, research methodology must also be appropriate to and sourced within its context. The particular characteristics of both the knowledge being sought and the repositories of that knowledge will determine the context. In the particular example of Te Pu Wananga, the founding principle of the theoretical framework is *creative relationships*.

Fundamental values underpinning all interactions between Te Matahauariki researchers and their eminent reference group are based upon that principle of creative relationships and are those of mutual respect, trust, and reciprocal generosity. The relationship between those vested with the knowledge and those seeking the knowledge determines

¹⁶ *Concise Oxford Dictionary* 7th Edition (1982).

not only what will be revealed, but also how it will be revealed, and the appropriate methods and modes of operating. It is through this creative relationship framework that all other aspects of the research are conducted.

The cross cultural issue arises within this context. Cross cultural methodology is that which creates relationships between members of different cultures. In order for people to cooperate and learn to understand one another, there must be a way of relating. This is fundamental to the shared human endeavour. When researchers from one culture experience and attempt to understand to the all-encompassing context of another culture, the principle is no different. They also need a framework to guide them through the ethical dimensions of the relationship. If the research relationship is creative and cooperative, based upon rapport, mutual respect and reciprocity, the methodological framework itself supplies the tools to operate effectively within a cross cultural situation. In other words, cross cultural methodology is one aspect, or one application of good methodology.

This is evident in the research carried out by Te Matahauariki. A team of researchers carries out the methodology at the centre of this discussion. Those researchers are both Maori and Pakeha. During seminars conducted with Maori participants, there is a cross cultural interaction for some researchers, and an interaction within one culture for others. During seminars conducted with Pakeha experts the cross cultural relationship is reversed. The methodology used is the same. To suggest that some members of the team should use a different methodology to enable them to research effectively in a cross cultural context is nonsensical. To be effective methodology must be consistently appropriate to the circumstances, whether these be characterised by situations involving difference of gender, age, class, or culture.

A more noticeable distinction in *modus operandi* than that which operates cross culturally is evident across the age/seniority spectrum. Thus the senior researchers (both Maori and Pakeha) demonstrate a more express involvement in the seminar, carefully crafting a balance between asking more questions and guiding the seminar and letting the seminar participants navigate the waters of their own knowledge. It is the wisdom of the senior researchers, and their personal commitment to the co-participant and to the research that enables this delicate and constantly changing balance to be

achieved. At best there is a subtlety which can instinctively avoid questions that those present may not wish to answer and a recognition and acceptance of the boundaries.

In keeping with Tikanga Maori and the way the relationship was formed, it is the senior researcher/s who take the responsibility for welcoming co-participants to the seminar, introducing the other members of the research team, and explaining the nature of the research. They identify the areas the research team has particularly targeted for consultation, as a way of opening the session. The senior members guide the junior members of the research team, both Maori and Pakeha. Following the cues of the senior members, both express and implied, and listening to the korero, they take notes and manage the recording equipment. Careful not to disrupt the flow of the seminar, or interfere in the intricate process of revealing knowledge, they ask questions of their own when appropriate, often as invited by the senior members.

The methodology discussed in this article could be utilised in a variety of particular circumstances, both across and within cultures. However, the objective of research conducted by Te Matahauariki is to inform a debate about ways in which we can understand different cultures and ways in which we can translate our understanding across cultures. Hence the focus of this article is on the use of methodology to facilitate relationships and encourage understanding across cultures. The principles set out in this article are intended to be enabling and useful for those engaging in research on both sides of the research relationship.

II. UNDERSTANDING THE CREATIVE RELATIONSHIP FRAMEWORK

As an introduction to this way of looking at research, we can begin with the central theme of the theoretical framework: *creative relationships*. A relationship is ‘the state of being related’. To be related is to be mutually connected, by one or more modes, or circumstances.¹⁷ To cooperate is in its most simple definition, to work together to the same end.¹⁸

Creative, cooperative relationships are fertile, productive interactions among participants guided by common objectives. In such circumstances the research relationship becomes more than the sum of its parts, evolving into an inspirational endeavour, enriching all participants and potentially the greater society in which the endeavour is embedded. All of the principles guiding research undertaken by Te Matahauariki are based around the theme of creative relationships.

1. Principles of Creative Research Relationships

(i) *Intention and Reflexivity*

A prerequisite of entering into a creative research relationship must surely be the intention to do so, to the best of the ability of those involved. What is also required is scrupulous investigation of the capacity to enter and maintain such a relationship. In a sense this is ‘self research’, and this self-research is a forerunner of truly cooperative research. A thorough understanding of the researcher’s own context is of crucial importance to creative, cooperative research. As is true in all contexts, relationships are greatly enhanced when each member adds to the mix the richness of their own personal experience and the wisdom gained through lengthy personal reflection on that experience.

Within the Te Matahauariki process there is much room for reflexivity, both individually and collectively as an institute. Te Matahauariki is a team of researchers.

¹⁷ *The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary On Historical Principles* 3rd Edition (1933).

¹⁸ *Concise Oxford Dictionary* 7th Edition (1982).

Within that team are experienced Maori and Pakeha researchers, both male and female, and also Maori and Pakeha junior members from both sexes. Regular team meetings are held at which researchers discuss ongoing projects, and float ideas for new projects. Participants are encouraged by the Programme Leader to think critically about the processes of the Institute, to look for ways to improve performance and enhance cohesion. Individuals are periodically asked to self reflect and then comment upon their own involvement within Te Matahauariki, their skills, and strengths, their levels of commitment and availability, and their ability to produce.

The twice yearly meetings of the Advisory Panel to Te Matahauariki provide the ultimate incentive for undertaking reflection on the collective scale. In preparing for these meetings the group is required to take stock of and critically analyse all activities to date. These are measured against past indications of future outputs and achievements. The strategy for the next period is developed and presented along with work completed and the Advisory Panel comment freely and frankly upon the presentation. Such an exercise involves a full and thorough investigation into the Institute and can be a daunting prospect for researchers. Yet through honest, critical, reflection and generous advice and support the process significantly enriches the spirit and the practice of the research endeavour that is Te Matahauariki.

Closely related to the ability to reflect upon oneself and the enriched understanding ensuing from such reflection, is the ability to traverse both cultures. Until you are comfortable with your own culture and secure in your understanding of it, arriving at a worthwhile understanding of another culture will be problematic. For a creative relationship to also be cross cultural what is necessary are the skills to operate effectively *within* both cultures, and *across* both cultures in an inter-disciplinary capacity. In order to experience this, a researcher must have a solid understanding of themselves, of their own culture, beliefs, values and epistemologies. Only then can a proper understanding of another culture be attempted.

This understanding of one's self is crucial to the understanding of one's role as a cooperative researcher. Paradoxically perhaps, the effort to understand another culture also provides one of the sharpest tools for greater self understanding, enhancing the ability to compare cultures and then pare away the limited understandings caused by immersion in ones own culture. The ongoing exercises Te Matahauariki engages in not

only enhance and sharpen awareness of the current and future focus of the Institute, they also serve as a self education process, ensuring that the commitment to research through creative relationships issues in action.

Having established the need for self reflection, initiation of a research relationship also requires intention. This intention is a personal commitment. This commitment is reciprocal, but either those wishing to undertake the research, or those wishing to be co-participants can initiate and generate the commitment. This is particularly true in the contemporary context.

Increasingly cross cultural research is initiated in a diversity of ways. Maori and more specifically iwi are now initiating many research endeavours, a phenomenon which reflects both constantly changing circumstances and complex relationship dynamics within Aotearoa. As such the objectives of the research are often fundamentally different from those of the more traditional projects. The massive generation of research instigated by the Waitangi Tribunal is an obvious example. In this context iwi express the objective of the research, decide the substance, appoint the appropriate research team or individual and oversee both the process and the final statement. When appointing a researcher

there are a variety of hierarchically determined positions, some of which are open to the researcher, some of which are not. The extent to which researchers can be positioned within a whanau of interest is therefore tied very closely to who they are, often more so than what they are. Therefore positioning is not simply a matter of researchers' choice.... The researcher's choice of position is generated by the structure of the whanau and the customary ways of behaving constituted within the whanau.¹⁹

These changing dynamics need careful consideration and clearly suggest a need to look beyond past models, and also beyond past commentary on such models. Many of the traditional assumptions about cross cultural research relationships represent one model which does not fit with contemporary circumstances.

One such issue involves power and the formation of cross cultural research relationships. Certainly the issue of power arises in the formation of a cross cultural research relationship. Power issues arise in every relationship, to greater or lesser degrees. Power is about relationships, and ways and means of relating. However, much

¹⁹ Bishop R, (1988) 205.

of the historical discussion of this issue has described the power relationship from only one vantage.

Often it is assumed that Maori are in an invidious position when compared with a researcher presumed to be educated, carrying the authority of the Western academic tradition. This is an over simplification. As in any relationship, some qualities confer power, and others take it away. In some situations it may be advantageous to have an academic training and the trappings of Western society, and in some situations it may not be. It is simplistic to assume that having the training of a researcher automatically gives a status across cultures that can elevate the researcher into a position of power and render the potential subjects powerless. Often in such situations the power of the researcher is only perceived.

In the seminar process used by Te Matahauariki, due to the distinction of the participants and the specialised area of enquiry, this assumption is inaccurate. The objective of research is to find out something – something that was previously unknown to the researcher, or to receive corroboration on previous findings. The researcher is in the position of wishing to undertake the research, to have access to the knowledge. The power may rest securely in those who hold the knowledge. In our example all the power in the relationship was vested in the potential seminar candidates. Not only are they experts, and public figures, of high rank and standing, vested with mana in their own right, but they also had the power to refuse to participate.

When we look at the contemporary context it becomes clear that previously research and particularly cross cultural research, was dominated by a monocultural model that informed the values of researchers and coloured the methodology used. The inevitable and justifiable reaction against this created another monocultural model, with similar implications for the way in which research was done. What is needed now is a third model that moves beyond the embeddedness of prior antagonisms. The principles of the creative relationship framework may provide this opportunity.

Having established the intention, and reflected seriously upon the particular context that as an individual one brings to the research relationship, the next stage is to demonstrate that intention and form a relationship.

(ii) *Rapport: Formation of Research Relationships*

Perhaps the closest expression of what is required to form a creative cooperative research relationship is the French word *rapport*.²⁰ In this sense the expression denotes a relation with or a connection between people. This connection forms the basis of their relationship. *Rapport* also expresses a *state of harmony between people* (en rapport avec...) through relationships and connection.

It is very difficult to explain the sort of connection that is the *rapport* between parties involved in a creative research relationship. Certainly it is evident in such attributes as mutual respect and trust, generosity, even affection and enjoyment of the other's company. Certainly the opportunity to form such *rapport* is enhanced by face to face interaction (*kanohi ki te kanohi*), involvement in the community and other personal interactions indicating the genuineness of the researcher. Yet the connection itself is none of these things. It is indescribable. There is no set formula, no recipe that can be followed to create a connection between people.

When searched for, such *rapport* can often prove elusive, yet at other times, it can appear instantaneously, a spark igniting as the participants interact. Like any relationship, within a research relationship this connection is the most important thing. It creates and affirms the relationship. It provides the basis for the relationship, bringing the participants together, enabling, enhancing, and enriching the whole research process. As the relationship grows, so too can the connection between people grow, furthering the dynamism and the creative potential of the research relationship.

The decision to accept a researcher and participate in the research is a decision made on the strength of the *rapport* between the parties. It is not a decision made on purely rational grounds. It is a complex intuitive and emotional judgment made on the character and quality of the researcher, the intensity of the feeling of connection - the feeling of harmony between the people involved. It is always a particular and context specific decision, determined by the personal characteristics of the individuals involved and according to the circumstances and context of the decision maker. In the process of forming cooperative research relationships, the researcher must prove their genuineness, worthiness, integrity, appropriateness, and any number of characteristics that may be

²⁰ *Harraps Shorter French and English Dictionary* (1940) ed J E Mansion London, Harrap & Co.

desired by the potential research subjects. Who a person is and what their experience has been will largely determine their compatibility.

The willingness with which potential participants responded to Te Matahauariki overtures is in no small part due to the reputations and the personal integrity of its senior members. Members such as Project Head Judge Mick Brown, Associate Professor Richard Benton, Professor Margaret Bedggood, Kaumatua Tui Adams and Dr. Alex Frame have through their own worthiness, come to be seen as suitable recipients of knowledge. The extent to which frank consultation is freely given in the seminars is an indication of the extent to which the participants have decided that the research team is trustworthy.

The connection, the rapport between such senior members of the team and the seminar participants is also, in many cases, well established. Both parties in the research relationship thus feel a connection, a personal bond uniting them in the endeavour. That connection is given expression, not just through participation in the research, but in the willingness to participate, the openness of the korero, the jokes, the stories, and the laughter. After the seminar, the continued availability, involvement and support demonstrate the ongoing connection.

However, there is also a more complex dimension to the relationship. The personal bond between seminar participants and senior researchers is also being used to provide access to such knowledge for a research team with a specific objective. Thus we identify the extension of the personal rapport to a fellowship between the research team itself and the seminar participants. This process can be called *rapprochement*, meaning a bringing together, to create a fellowship. It denotes, nearness, proximity and closeness.²¹ Senior members of the research team demonstrate to such experts that the Institute is a worthy recipient of their time and expertise.

As led by the senior members a fellowship is created among the whole research team. For the junior members, this approach is also entirely consistent with the process of learning by apprenticeship utilised in Tikanga Maori. As such, this method of relationship forming enables the junior researchers to use a guide or mentor who would support the researcher in those circumstances where their skills in inter-cultural relating

²¹ Ibid.

may be inadequate. This Tiaki model²² is being utilised by Te Matahauariki, where Programme Leader Michael Brown and Kaumatua Tui Adams QSO act as mentors for members of the research project who may find themselves in cross cultural situations in which they do not have the appropriate skills or experience.²³

As with every other relationship, a creative research relationship will be defined by its particular characteristics. Every relationship is different. Most of the defining characteristics of each relationship will, in practice, be worked out within the context of the relationship. That is the great beauty of such a process. If the fundamentals are there, if the relationship is based on rapport, mutual respect and commitment, and the creation of the relationship from those principles was a process of rapprochement, a process of coming together, then this system has within it the potential to chart its own course, identify and rectify its own weaknesses, and resolve its own difficulties. How this is done is never according to one set pattern, but infinitely varied. All these are possible because reciprocity lies at the heart of any creative relationship.

(iii) Utu /Reciprocity

Reciprocity means simply, a mutual action, a practice of give and take. To reciprocate is to give and receive mutually, and also to return, or requite.²⁴ The creative research relationship originates from the personal connection, the rapport that both parties feel and reciprocate. We can say that the rapport between parties is the spark, the ignition. To continue the analogy, the ongoing process of reciprocity is the fuel for the fire, the wood, and the research endeavour itself is the fire. Without rapport or the spark, there would be no fire, no matter how much wood was used. Similarly, without the wood or reciprocity, the spark would soon burn out. In this sense, reciprocity can be seen as the major method in the creative relationship framework.

Reciprocity is that which constantly flows between all participants in the research, and enables the research itself. Using a theatrical analogy, in much the same way that a play

²² Smith G H, 'Research Issues Related To Maori Education' in Hohepa M, & Hingangaroa G, (eds) (1992)8-9.

²³ Other methods include the Whangai (adoption) model where a researcher is adopted by the community and is considered to be a member of that community, the implication being that as such, they will conduct research appropriately and effectively. The relationship between Dame Joan Metge and Te Rarawa ki Ahipara is often given as an example of the Whangai model.

²⁴ *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English* (1982) 7th Ed, ed Sykes J B, Oxford, Clarendon Press.

is what takes place between the audience and the players, created through their interactions and complementarities, research is what takes place in between the participants, through the reciprocation that is their research relationship.²⁵ How this method is actually used will be determined by the particular circumstances of the creative relationship.

What sorts of things will be reciprocated? Ongoing reciprocity between those who are related denotes an interaction across a range of levels, from the material to the non-material. As any relationship deepens and develops, more may be required of its participants, a higher level of trust and trustworthiness, openness and integrity. The deep personal commitment on both sides that underlies the forming of research relationships also underlies the methods of creative cooperation.

Similarly reciprocation takes place on a more practical level. In order to be able to consult with experts in tikanga Maori, the research team had to prepare themselves, with thorough investigation of the terms and principles. In presenting the fruits of their preparation they provided the seminar participants with texts and examples that were sometimes new to them and always of interest. This research was an indication of the intention and genuineness of the research team. Once the efforts had been made to identify key terms, the seminar participants responded freely with their knowledge and personal experiences. This was a mutual arrangement, resulting in mutual benefit and stimulus.

By discussing reciprocity and cooperative research we are able to progress beyond such words as empowerment. Through reciprocity a feeling of connectedness is created. This feeling of connectedness removes the need for 'empowerment' or for feelings of separateness, distance and the need to be in charge. Such assumptions as the need to empower the co-participant in the research are over simplifications. Potentially the desire to empower the co-participant within the research relationship may actually be a factor in creating separateness, a distance between the two parties. Yet the research itself could be, and possibly should be, empowering.

²⁵ I am extremely grateful to Dame Joan Metge for explaining things to me in this way, and am also, in gratitude, using her analogy.

In Te Pu Wananga, due to the rapport between members of the team and the seminar participants, the relationship is an equal one. The issue of empowering such notable public figures simply did not and could not arise. The attributes of the deep personal connection between seminar participants and senior researchers have created a situation of equality and harmony. Equality and harmony in such a relationship will be characterised by a unity based on openness and generosity. A connection may also be created between the participants and the objectives of the research. The experts in Te Pu Wananga and the researchers come to share similar feelings about the importance and necessity of the endeavour. Such unity of purpose and alignment transcends any power dynamics.

Through the adoption of reciprocity as the fundamental method operating within the creative research relationship, issues such as consultation, responsibility and control, are also addressed. All of these issues have generated much discussion, particularly in the cross cultural context.²⁶ All of these issues, if properly addressed give rise to a feeling of inclusion or 'ownership' of the research, a factor contributing to the popularity of such issues in methodological discourse. Under the creative relationship framework with the principle of reciprocity firmly established as a practical reality, evidenced by the interactions of the research participants, such issues may not need addressing. This is not because they cease to become important issues, but rather because they will be attended to and incorporated into the reciprocal interactions of the parties.

Through reciprocity at all levels, including, the personal and the emotional, there develops a degree of involvement by the researcher which is fundamentally different from the concepts of individual gain and investment. In other words there is a

common understanding and a common basis for such an understanding, where the concerns, interests and agendas of the researcher become the concerns, interests and agendas of the researched and vice versa.²⁷

The reciprocal process of the relationship is able to develop and lead the research, often to greater heights than previously imagined. Through a mode of participatory relatedness the researcher becomes part of this process, of this connectedness. Here it is appropriate to use the word and concept of whanau, whether the particular instance pertains to Maori or Pakeha or both. To use the term whanau is to identify a series of

²⁶ See for example Bevan Brown J, (1998) 233.

²⁷ Bishop R, (1988) 202.

rights and responsibilities, commitments, obligations, supports that are fundamental to the collectivity. Thus the whanau can be used to describe a 'location for communication, for sharing outcomes and for constructing common shared understandings and meanings.'²⁸ In the same way that a whanau (in the primary sense of the word)²⁹ has the mechanisms to resolve its own difficulties, so too does the creative research relationship, through reciprocal interaction.

(iv) The re-iterative process

One of the ways in which reciprocity is manifested is the re-iterative process. This describes a process where knowledge is encouraged to develop through the dynamics of the participants. The Latin word *iter* means to journey, and so, to reiterate is to make another journey, often a slightly different one. Thus the reiterative process is one of many journeys between the participants - journeys that shape and enhance the venture that lies between them.

The research becomes that which unfolds mutually, through the ongoing process, where openness, trust between participants, engagement and development of potentially long lasting bonds create a situation of real reciprocity. This process also entails 'recycling description, emerging analysis and conclusions.'³⁰ At each of these stages the researcher is obliged to make the journey back to the co-participant. At Te Matahauariki once the transcripts have been created from the seminars, they are taken back to the participant, for comment and analysis. Such a process is essentially co-operative and consultative and also respectful of tikanga and matauranga. The co-participant is free to indicate, after review, any material that he/she may not wish to be disclosed publicly. That decision must be the inalienable right of the experts.

A set of working principles as used in Te Pu Wananga demonstrates the reiterative process. In developing these principles we have been greatly aided by the scholarship and support of Dame Joan Metge. The principles are as follows:

1. The names of all those present at the Seminar should be recorded and indicated at the beginning of the transcript.

²⁸ Bishop R, (1988) 204.

²⁹ See Metge J, (1995) Chapters 3 & 4

³⁰ Lather P, (1991) 61.

2. Transcribing should commence as soon as possible after the Seminar.
3. A duplicate copy of the tape should be made.
4. The speaker's own words should be faithfully transcribed, omitting repetitions but refraining from correcting grammar or polishing style.
5. In the transcription the nature of gaps should always be indicated, within square brackets, for example [inaudible], [too many people talking at once], [interruption], [pause].
6. The transcript should be thoroughly reviewed by the research team as soon as possible.
7. Words should be added only when necessary to provide links or clarify meaning.
8. The transcript should then be given back to participants.
9. Allowing ample time, the participants should be invited to comment on the transcript.
10. The transcript must be authorised by the participants as an accurate account of what they said and want to say.
11. In all matters of doubt or dispute the speaker's decision must be accepted as final.
12. Senior members of the Team should carefully consider all suggestions from participants.
13. Thematic analysis should be carried out on the transcripts.
14. Themes thus identified should also be taken back to participants for comment.
15. Options for future participation should be discussed.

Our aim is that Te Matahauriki researchers analyse the transcripts to identify the emerging themes and broader contextual narratives. These become potential areas for further discussion and negotiation, where the participants are mutually involved in a process of generating understanding. In other words, the

thematic structures derived inductively from the material researchers have put together and from the observations they have made can provide hubs around which the story can be told. The stories told around these thematic situations can then be used for a summary of a story as a whole.³¹

As outlined in the working principles, this is only part of the process. Those themes must also be taken back to the co-participant for further comment. Integral to the

³¹ Eisner E W, (1991) 191.

reiterative process is the discernment by both participants of hubs around which their story can be told.

In order to participate in and benefit from the reiterative process, the researcher must remain open and receptive in order to receive the additional guidance, encouragement, correction and criticism required. This input is required to transform a research endeavour from that which reflects in the main the personal understandings of the researcher, possibly limited by individual strengths, weaknesses, bias and idiosyncrasies, into that which transcends the personal and individual and instead accurately reflects the reality that the subject wishes to reveal. This process stimulates all involved in the research and inevitably enriches the research itself.

III. THE CREATIVE RELATIONSHIP FRAMEWORK AND ETHICAL ISSUES

Relationships are complex interactive entities. Often they are a fluctuating mixture of understanding and misunderstanding, communication and miscommunication and changing power dynamics. Relationships are characterised by the ethical responsibilities that are an integral part of the dynamics of relating. How those issues are resolved is often a matter of complex, ongoing, negotiations between all parties. Such negotiations can be expressed or implied, subtle or gross, and range from the practical/material to the transpersonal/spiritual.

Not only do ethical questions arise in relationships but ethical responsibilities can also come into conflict with one another. This is true of all research relationships, including cross cultural research relationships. A traditional approach would warn that a greater danger of conflicting ethical principles exists in cross cultural circumstances. However a robust ethical framework suitable for both cross cultural and intra cultural research interactions will do much to offset this risk.

The way to avoid ethical conflict lies within the particular circumstances of one's own research relationship. From the quality of that relationship and the degree of personal commitment should arise the faith that both parties can, through communication and negotiation answer any ethical considerations that might arise. Therefore, the creative relationships framework must have implications not only for specific research methods but also for specific ethical issues. Consequently, the following sections discuss some aspects of the ethical dimension to research relationships. More specifically the discussion focuses on the way in which the creative relationship framework can impact on certain much discussed ethical issues.

1. Potential Ethical Issues for the Researcher

The first issue is the 'subjective responsibility' of the researcher. This involves the responsibility to be genuine and committed to the research participants and the ongoing

relationships formed therein. This is the paramount responsibility.³² Part of the responsibility to the potential research participants is in practice offset by clear communication of the aims of the investigation. In a cross cultural context this requires commitment to the vision of cross cultural cooperation and understanding. Under the creative relationship framework, this issue is subsumed within the requirement of rapport. The existence of rapport creates a situation where the researcher can be relied upon to be genuine. Using Te Matahauariki as an example the genuineness of the senior researchers is evidenced by the rapport they share with the seminar participants.

However, the Te Matahauariki research endeavour is a team effort. While the intricacies of the research relationship may in most instances be the responsibility of the more senior members of the team, this does not indicate a lacking for other members. It is important for all members of a research team to feel a personal responsibility towards the co-participants and the information that they have transferred under the research relationship.

There is an ongoing challenge for any researcher and this also applies in the cross cultural context - to remain constantly alert for those elements of one's own conditioning that may impede a holistic understanding, and to diligently and honestly address such issues when they arise. These instances are not restricted to research across cultures, but also arise within cultures, where it is for example the age, gender, class and background of the researcher that threatens to influence and potentially limit understanding.

A requirement of objective responsibility also exists. The researcher must also remain committed to the responsibility of the discipline that he/she is operating within, and has been trained by. As Dame Joan Metge wrote (reflecting on her role in the Waitangi Tribunal process) the

greatest challenge is...that of reconciling my responsibility to my research participants with my responsibility to my discipline, my colleagues and my own integrity as a scholar.

Dame Joan Metge goes on to say that:

³² *New Zealand Society of Social Anthropologists: Ethics Code and Procedures*, (1987) s. 1.

Just as pressure from outside must be resisted, so must this temptation from within. The value to claimants of an anthropologist's submission depends totally on the author's reputation for scholarly competence and integrity. To compromise the latter is to work, in the long run, to the detriment of the claimants, not their benefit.³³

Another example of objective responsibility can be the responsibility a researcher owes to the funder or sponsor of the research. Te Matahauariki has contractually defined responsibilities to its funders. Consequently, this shapes the substance of the Institutes research and there are processes to follow in order to satisfy its obligations. Te Matahauariki is aware of the need to fulfil its general and specific obligations to the funding body and also to those who participate in the research.

Potentially any number of these factors can be in conflict. However, as both Dame Joan Metge³⁴ and Dame Evelyn Stokes³⁵ have expressed, the quality of sound academic research should not be compromised. No genuine interests are well served by poor research giving inaccurate, unreliable, or overly simplistic and generalised results. Conversely, all genuine interests are served by honest, robust research generated through meticulous attention to detail, personal integrity and a real commitment to co-participants. Researchers need to remain committed to their professional and personal integrity and not to be compelled to compromise either.

Traditionally ethical issues have arisen around the role of the researcher, particularly in a cross cultural context. It has been said that the role of the researcher has led to the marginalisation and impoverishment of Maori because it has been the

researchers rather than the people being researched who have determined the research agendas, controlled the research processes and reported the research outcomes in terms defined to fit their own world views.³⁶

To avoid such pitfalls in a cross cultural context, the role of the researcher will have to be clearly identified within that context³⁷ as is indeed the case within a creative relationship. The relationship itself defines the role of the researcher, to the benefit of both parties. Hence in the Te Matahauariki example the creative relationship

³³ Metge J, (1998) 56.

³⁴ Ibid 56.

³⁵ Stokes E, (1985) 5.

³⁶ Bishop R, (1995) 2.

³⁷ Stokes E, (1985) 11.

framework clearly demarcated the role of the research team. Such a role is consistent with and appropriate to the standing of those participating in the seminars.

In team research efforts care should be taken to clarify the roles, rights and obligations of team members. Particularly this is required in relation to matters such as the division of labour and responsibilities. Within Te Matahauariki the Programme Leader has allocated responsibilities in both the seminar process and the transcript process. These responsibilities are different and particular, allocated according to the strengths and seniority of the team members.

Another ethical issue is the ongoing nature of obligations owed to the co-participant by those in the role of researcher. An unaware researcher may not recognize that their obligations might not end with the completion of their research project. Yet within a creative relationship framework this is undisguised and apparent for all involved. The obligation to reciprocate on both sides does not have to be indefinite. The relationship will certainly be ongoing as long as there are interests in common; however when those common interests are no longer pressing, there may be the desire on both sides to close the relationship. Often this is done for simple practical reasons, like time and distance, as is the case with any relationship. Alternatively, as all relationships are dynamic, they often out grow themselves and this too is a mutual process that the creative relationship framework provides for.

2. Potential Ethical Issues for the Co-participants

The other focus for ethical issues involves the co-participants to research. Within a creative relationship framework the involvement of both parties is based upon principles of mutual respect and reciprocity. In such cases the assumption of trust - which is implied in all research relationships - has been expressed through the ongoing nature of the relationship itself.

Within such a relationship, the co-participants themselves will determine their role during the course of the research. At the outset, consent is part of defining that role. In discussing consent in research relationships it is generally said that co-participants have the right to an informed consent. Under most situations, this consent should be

informed by such details as are likely to be material a person's willingness to cooperate.³⁸

Te Matahauriki undertook to inform potential candidates on such matters as: the purpose of the study; the anticipated consequences of the research; the identity of funders and sponsors; the anticipated uses of the material gathered; the possible benefits of the investigation; and the degree of anonymity and confidentiality that would be afforded the participants. Similarly, where technical data gathering equipment is being used, participants should be made aware of the capacities of such devices and have the authority to reject their use.³⁹ Te Matahauriki was careful to ensure that the recording equipment used is appropriate to the sensitivities of the people. Hence lapel microphones or hand held microphones are not used, nor are video cameras. Instead the equipment is simple, a recording device and a sound-grabber microphone, that can sit unobtrusively on the table, once consent to use the device is established.

Consent in research is a process, in the same way that the research relationship and the research project are processes. The issue of consent may, over time, arise again between participants. For example, all co-participants in Te Matahauriki seminars consented prior to the seminar. However at all stages during the processing of the information gathered as a result of the seminars, the issue of consent is still viable. Co-participants are re-presented with transcripts of their seminars, and the options for various themes arising from in-house analysis are discussed. Consent to further seminars would also have to be freely given. The issue of consent is ongoing and particular, defined by the context and circumstances of the relationship as much as by the participants themselves.

It is also generally expressed that co-participants have the right to a fair return for assistance.⁴⁰ This too is effectively covered within the creative relationship framework. Within such a framework, following such tenets as long standing mutual respect the issue of exploitation of co-participants simply does not arise. In the Te Matahauriki example the practice of koha was both appropriate and significant. A koha was presented to participants at the completion of their involvement in the initial stage of the

³⁸ Association of Social Anthropologists of the Commonwealth, *Ethical Guides for Good Research Practice* as adopted in 1999.

³⁹ One seminar participant did reject the use of the recording equipment, and the research team upheld that request. See also *ibid.*

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

research, the seminar stage. This was managed by Adjunct Professor Michael Brown himself. The issue of koha used by the Te Matahauariki team can also be seen as a figurative way of ‘initiating research’ or ‘of offering solutions to a problem’. In this sense it challenges traditional notions of empowerment, as referred to above. The laying down of a koha is the offering of the potential contribution of the researcher, and provides the opportunity to consider the intentions, credentials, quality, and character of the researcher. Notwithstanding differences in the process of the ‘laying down’ of the koha, it remains a ‘powerful recognition of the right of others to self determination’. It is an acknowledgement that both sides have power during the process.⁴¹

Ethical issues undoubtedly arise in all relationships, to greater or lesser degrees, and with varying levels of import. To acknowledge this phenomenon within research relationships is the first step. The creation of an abstract set of rules to be applied to situations of potential ethical import, regardless of the context, the characteristics of the people involved and the relationship between them does not seem the most appropriate response. As outlined in this section, it may be more useful to put the relationship in the centre of the framework, and accord the relationship the power to solve any ethical conflicts within the context of that relationship. Following this example, in the Te Matahauariki seminar process, ethical issues of the sort commonly referred to did not arise. This was due to the personal circumstances of the participants in the seminars, their understanding and wisdom, and the genuineness of the rapport and respect between both parties.

⁴¹ This paragraph is, in the main informed by that written by Bishop R, (1998) 207.

IV. THE POTENTIAL OF A CREATIVE RELATIONSHIP FRAMEWORK

Relationships are potentially unlimited expressions of the creative dimension to human existence. They are also the substructure of the human experience. We experience ourselves in relation to that which we are not. It is only through our relationships with other people, places and events, that we exist as a knowable quantity, as an identifiable something. Everything is relative. By this process of coming to understand ourselves in relation to that which we are not, and understanding that in relation to us, we learn.

In all matters of inquiry or research, the principle is no different: the discovery is made in the sphere of the relative. Establishing a relationship as the centre of the process is to make explicit what is implicit and to understand and facilitate the processes of learning.

Relationships must involve feelings. To those who insist that logical validity is enough, accepting the role of feelings in a research endeavour may seem strange. However, as Edward de Bono writes,

[U]ltimately, it must be feeling that matters most. Feeling is what makes a human being human. In the end it is to satisfy our emotions and values that we arrange our actions. It is this importance of feeling that makes thinking so necessary.⁴²

Awareness of the feelings and values of individuals and collectives leads to understanding of the same. Understanding is necessary for emotional security, inclusion and acceptance. To establish a relationship as the central framework for the research process is to open the research endeavour, the research participants, and society to these possibilities. By discovering who we are in relation to other people, other events, other cultures, we define ourselves. We take the first step in creating our vision for the future, a vision for all New Zealanders. Once we recognise the differences among us, we can begin to understand them and to rejoice in the richness of diversity.

⁴² Edward de Bono (1976) 41.

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